7 Key Questions to Guide Your Next Decision

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I don't have to tell you that decisions are getting more and more complex. Even picking out a box of cereal has gotten complicated. While it may seem fairly straightforward to pick up some Chex breakfast cereal at the grocery store, you will need to choose from nine different kinds of Chex cereal when you get to the store aisle!

Too many options, polarized positions, lack of civility, fatigue, fear, and uncertainty only increase the complexity of decision making. Often a good question can help you find greater clarity.

Seven questions to guide you through the fog of complexity.

1. What principles and values can guide you?

Connecting your decision back to established key principles and core values helps save energy and time. It also grounds your decision in who you are and what you have already identified as important.

For instance, one of our values at Arrow Leadership is *Kingdom First*. Based on Matthew 6:33, this value calls us to be Kingdom seekers not empire builders. So, when facing a complex decision this value encourages us to discern what decision would best advance God's Kingdom. We can also check our motives by asking if our motives are to get or receive or to bless and serve.

2. Have you inquired of the Lord?

Remember the *Gibeonite Deception* from Joshua 9? Here's the bottom line: what God sees, thinks, and wants matters most. We need to seek and obey. Make sure to start with what is clear from Scripture. Where Scripture isn't explicit, ask for wisdom and listen for clarity. Invite prayerful discernment in community.

3. What role might fear be playing?

Fear isn't a friend to good decision making. Fear is insidious and holds back people, teams, and organizations. Seek to identify any fears. Test them against reality. Bring them to God, community, and truth to break their power. Choose to trust God and pursue His best above all.

4. What's the horizon of this decision?

Not all decisions are equal. A decision that will have implications for three hours usually requires less time than a decision that will impact the next three years or three decades.

Invest more time in decisions with a longer horizon and less time in decisions that won't matter long term.

5. What does good process look like?

Have you ever heard these words, "It may have been the right decision, but the process was awful"? To avoid this outcome, spend time mapping out a good process on the front end of your decision.

Asking these questions can help map out your process:

- What is the decision that needs to be made?
- What are the key criteria of a good decision?
- Who needs to be part of creating the process, and who needs to be made aware of the process?
- Who needs to be involved and invited for input along the way?
- What information do we need?
- How will we keep key stakeholders updated along the way?
- From an outsider's perspective, does this process seem clear and fair?

6. How will the decision be made?

Will the decision be made democratically (by the most votes) or by consensus (through shared agreement) or by the leader's final say? To avoid surprises and frustration for stakeholders, be sure how the decision will be made is clear to everyone up front.

7. Is this a right decision or a best decision?

There can be *right decisions* and *best decisions*. Sometimes you clearly know which decision is the right decision. It may not be easy to act on, but you know it is right and there's really no other choice. A right decision is different than a best decision. We are faced with making the best decision when there is no clear or perfect right answer. Instead, there might be multiple possible options, and it's possible none of the options is a great option.

Recognizing when you are forced to make a best decision can prevent you from getting stuck searching for a right or perfect decision. Sometimes a best decision is about choosing the least bad option. So many decisions these days are not easy!

May God give you wisdom, courage, and unity as you lead!