

BOOK REVIEW

From Bob's bookshelf



DECISIVE

By Chip and Dan Heath

I READ IT BECAUSE: I had read the book *Switch How to Change Things When Change Is Hard* back in 2013. I purchased this book because *Switch* was a very insightful book. I had a friend tell me about this book as well.

STYLE: This book inspires the motivated to make better decisions. It could make some feel guilty for the decisions that they have made in the past.

CONTENT: This is a book on decision making. It can be applied to every aspect of life. It will help in the professional and business realm. It can prove to be helpful to those who just want to make better decisions. We all make thousands of decisions through a week's time. It is important to evaluate how we make decisions.

SUMMARY: Heath and Heath begin the book by identifying the four villains of decision making. Here they are; 1. You encounter a choice. But narrow framing makes you miss options. 2. You analyze your options. But the confirmation bias leads you to gather self-serving information. 3. You make a choice. But short-term emotion will often tempt you to make the wrong one. 4. Then you live with it. But you'll often be over confident about the future will unfold. They proceed to develop a strategy for defeating each villain. Heath uses a four step strategy to create opportunities for making better decisions. The first is to widen your options. The authors explore habits of people who are expert at uncovering new options and share their findings with the reader. The second step is to reality-test your assumptions. They help the reader understand that confirmation bias leads us to gather information that is self-serving. The reader learns how to craft questions where the answers can be more trusted and information can be collected outside of your confirmation bias. The third step attaining distance before deciding. They teach the reader how to overcome short-term emotion and conflicted feelings to make the best choice. Simple questions are presented to help the reader make much less painful decisions. The last step is to prepare to be wrong. They help the reader to prepare for an uncertain future so that we give our decisions the best chance to succeed. One of the highlights of the book for me was the one page summary provided at the end of each of the twelve chapters. I was able to review what I had read in a short and succinct manner. The summary included the main points of the text and a brief description of the illustrations used.

QUOTEABLE: "The discipline exhibited by good corporate decision makers – exploring alternative points of view, recognizing uncertainty, searching for evidence that contradicts their beliefs – can help us in our families and friendships as well. A solid process isn't just good for business, it's good for our lives." Pg. 6

"Our normal habit in life is to develop a quick belief about a situation and then seek out information that bolsters our belief. And that problematic habit, call the "confirmation bias" is the second villain of decision making." Pg. 11

"What if we started every decision by asking some simple questions: What are we giving up by making this choice? What else could we do with the same time and money?" pg. 45

"The confirmation bias leads us to hunt for information that flatters our existing beliefs..... The meta study found that confirmation bias was stronger in emotion-laden domains such as religion or politics and also when people has a strong underlying motive to believe one way or the other".... Pg 95

WHO SHOULD READ THIS BOOK? This book is a must read for anyone about to make a major decision. Business and professionals should read this to refine the decision-making process. Leadership teams and board members would benefit greatly by the content. I would recommend this book to those who are serious about the outcome of their decisions.

RECOMMENDATION: Buy it!

