

# Improving Your Decision-Making



by

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# Imagine Your Life with No Decisions

Consider the familiar metaphor that a life is like walking down a path on which there are forks that represent decisions at various locations.

Now imagine your life if it had no decisions, **no forks**.



Fortunately, your life will include numerous decisions.

# Your Life with Decisions

- Your life is the result of
  - Decisions you will make,
  - your previous decisions,
  - your actions,
  - the decisions and actions of other individuals and organizations, and
  - happenstance.
- The only way that you can purposeful influence anything in your life is by the decisions that you make.
- Those **decisions represent the power** that you have to **influence the quality of your life.**

# How Good are We at Making Decisions?

Almost all individuals routinely fall into decision traps that lead to inferior decisions.

Over the past 50 years, psychologists, decision scientists, and behavioral economists have identified over 175 separate biases, errors, and shortcuts that regularly affect our decisions.

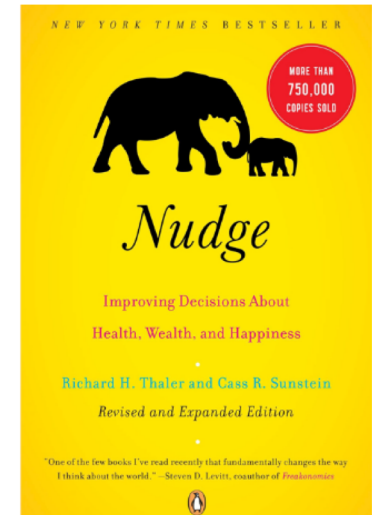
Examples include:

- addressing the wrong decision, not clarifying objectives of the decision, maintaining the status quo, selecting the default alternative or the easiest to implement, anchoring on first thoughts, choosing alternatives to justify earlier decisions (sunk costs), overweighting confirming evidence, and underweighting conflicting information.

# Nudging

A **nudge** is a mental push that helps you make a better decision.

The revolutionary 2008 book Nudge by Thaler and Sunstein indicates how the presentation of decisions nudges individuals to make decisions more in their own interests.



Examples: lines in middle of highways, retirement accounts, cafeteria eating

Nudge units now exist in 200 countries and in numerous organizations, and collectively they have helped millions of individuals make some better decisions.

# Give Yourself a Nudge

For most important decisions that you face, no government agency or organization can nudge you. **So any nudging for your decisions must be done by you.**

The rest of this presentation is about numerous nudges that you can use to help yourself make better decisions, and hence positively influence your quality of life.

These ideas will be in a new book, titled [Give Yourself a Nudge](#) to be appear in early 2020 by Cambridge University Press.

# How Are Decisions Typically Made?

**Something happens that leads you to**

1. recognize a decision problem
2. Identify an alternative (or maybe more than one) to solve it
3. evaluate the alternative(s) and implement one

**This is **Alternative-Focused Decision-Making**. It is**

**Reactive** We rarely exert influence over which decisions we end up facing. Nor do we deliberately conceive of decisions to face that would surely enhance our lives if we did.

**Constrained** We often do not spend the time and effort to create alternatives better than the first acceptable one.

**Backwards** For most decisions, we do not know all that we want to achieve by making that decision. Not knowing what you want to achieve, how can you thoughtfully achieve it?

# How Should Decisions be Made

Once you recognize any decision:

1. Your first thoughts should be about your values for that decision – what you want to achieve.
2. Your values then guide all else that you do regarding this decision.

This is

## Value-Focused Decision-Making.

A more useful and empowering approach that requires being proactive.





# Value-Focused Decision Framework

## Front-End: **Define the decision that you face**

1. State the decision that you want to face.
2. Identify your values and state them as objectives.
3. Create alternatives that contribute to achieving your objectives.

## Back-End: **Analyze or thoughtfully examine your alternatives and make your decision**

1. Describe possible consequences to indicate how well each alternative achieves your objectives.
2. Evaluate alternatives by weighing the pros and cons of each.
3. Select an alternative using insight from your analysis.

**My presentation only concerns the front-end.**

# Why the Front-End Is So Crucial

- Defining your decision takes you from a vague thought that you must do something about a problem or opportunity to a unambiguous understanding of the decision you should address
- Most decisions will not have a back-end analysis.
  1. Very few individuals could do such an analysis
  2. It is rarely worth the time and effort
- In these cases, the only contribution to a quality decision is the front-end decision structure, which nudges you to make better decisions.
- The quality of the front-end greatly enhances the insight from and the quality of any back-end modeling, analysis, and/or appraisal of the alternatives.

# Understanding Your Decision: **Your Decision Frame**

## Front-End

1. State the decision.
2. Identify your values.
3. Create alternatives.

from the set of alternatives that best achieves

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Value 1 Objective 1				
Value 2 Objective 2				
Value 3 Objective 3				
Value 4 Objective 4				

Choose the alternative

your stated objectives

**Decision Frame**

**Your clearly framed decision:** Choose the alternative from the set of alternatives that best achieves your stated values.

# Six Crucial Nudges

I am going to discuss six key components of good decision-making, with practical procedures to implement them, that you can use to make significant improvements to your decision-making.



1. defining the decision you face
2. stating the objectives you want to achieve
3. creating alternatives
4. identifying decision opportunities
5. constructing alternatives acceptable to an authorized decision-maker
6. developing strategic objectives to guide your life.

# 1. The decision statement

- Your decision statement should clearly and concisely state the decision you want to address.
- Its purpose is to provide guidance for identifying your values for the decision and an appropriate set of alternatives to consider.
- These define **your decision frame, which then replaces your decision statement.**

# Composing Your Decision Statement

Develop a statement of your decision that is clear and concise.

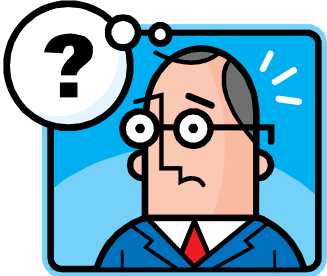
Begin any decision statement with the *decide* typically followed by which, what, when, whether, how or if.

Your decision statement clarifies what it is that you wish to decide. The 'what it is' specifies either the values you hope to achieve or the alternatives you want to consider. Respective examples are '*decide* how can I have more enjoyable weekends' and '*decide* which new pair of skis should I buy'. Then, make sure that it summarizes the decision that you want to make.

# Poor Decision Statements

- Decide what to do because my job isn't interesting. vague: improve current job, transfer within your organization, get a new job?
- Decide whether to visit Mexico on my vacation this next summer. unclear: what would you otherwise do?
- Decide whether or not to visit your grandmother next weekend. versus decide when to visit your grandmother the next four months; you may never go with sequential decisions
- Decide whether to exercise today. versus policy decision to decide whether to exercise regularly. Then rarely make the daily decision.

## 2. Identifying and Organizing Your Values



If you don't know what you want to achieve by making a decision, how could you possibly make a good decision?

- Whenever you face a decision, your first thought should be 'what are my values for this decision'.
- A **value** is anything that you care about achieving in making a decision. It can be stated in any convenient form; just articulating each value is the key.
- Your values should guide your decision-making.



# Where Do Values Come From?

**From the minds of decision makers**  
based on thoughts and feelings



## Key Questions

- Can individuals list their values for a decision?
- Can they do this well?

The answer to both questions is “often not”.

# Experiment: Creating MBA Internship Objectives

**Step 1:** *DMs generate as many relevant objectives as they can.*

**Step 1a:** *DMs try harder*

### Objectives List

- DM Objective A
- DM Objective B
- DM Objective C
- DM Objective D
- ....
- ....
- ....

**Step 2:** *DMs see the master list and check all objectives that are relevant.*

### Master List

<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective
<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	<input type="checkbox"/> Objective
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective
<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	<input type="checkbox"/> Objective
<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective	
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective	
<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	

**Step 3:** *DMs map objectives from Step 1 to the master list. Checked items that map back are **self-generated objectives**; all others are **recognized**.*

### Master List

<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective <b>B</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective <b>D</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	<input type="checkbox"/> Objective
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective
<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	<input type="checkbox"/> Objective
<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective <b>A</b>	<u>DM Objective C</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	_____

**Step 4:** *DMs rate the importance of all checked objectives.*

### Master List

<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <sup>①</sup> Objective <b>B</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective <b>D</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	<input type="checkbox"/> Objective
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <sup>⑤</sup> Objective	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <sup>②</sup> Objective
<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	<input type="checkbox"/> Objective
<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	<input type="checkbox"/> Objective
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective <b>A</b>	<sup>③</sup> <u>DM Objective C</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <sup>④</sup> Objective	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Objective	_____

# Master List of Summer MBA Internship Values

## I would like to choose an internship that...

Is at a well recognized / respected company  
Allows me to meet interesting people  
Is with an organization that I am passionate about  
Uses skills I have learned in my first year of B-school  
Improves my attractiveness for full-time job offers  
Makes me more savvy about office politics  
Allows me to experience a new geographical area  
Gain experience leading team projects  
Helps me improve my analytical skills  
Is in near family or friends  
Is enjoyable to do  
Enhances my knowledge in a particular industry  
Could lead to a full time offer from that firm  
Compensates me well  
Provides information to help select a job after graduation  
Enhances my resume  
Helps me develop my leadership skills  
Helps me improve my communication skills

Provides flexibility for personal interests during the summer  
Gives me a substantial project of which I can feel ownership  
Provides opportunities to interact with senior managers  
Is with a company whose culture I identify with  
Gives me pride from landing a prestigious internship  
Provides a structured program for learning and training  
Is professionally challenging  
Let me work with a diverse group of people  
Offers the chance to learn new skills  
Helps me decide what courses and skills I need to develop next year  
Is at a company that sponsors work visas for placement in US offices  
Helps me make good networking contacts  
Is a job that I would like to do full-time after graduation  
Helps me decide whether the internship field is good for me long-term

# Summary of MBA Internship Experiment Results

	<u>Average Number of Values Created</u>	<u>Importance of Values</u>
Original list	6.4	7.28 average
<u>Then think more/work harder</u>		
Review/add as appropriate	0.5	
Research shows ..., think		
• Add any you think of	2.8	
• Add at least 3	3.1	
• Add at least 6	3.9	
• Add at least 9	4.9	
• Use categories: Tangible Benefits, Intangible Benefits, Develop Professional Skills, Enhance Attractiveness to Potential Employers	3.6	
Checked Objectives	20.1	

7.23 average

# Summary of Experimental Results

For real decision problems:

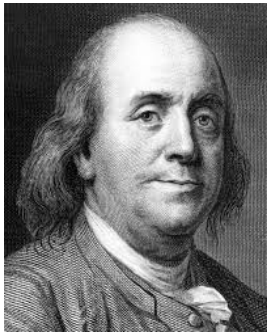
- Individuals often identify **less than half** of their values
- They miss values roughly as important as those identified



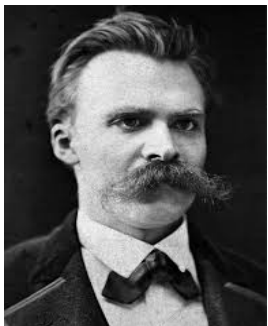
The implication: It is important to **dedicate serious effort to** help decision makers **specify** their **values**

# Identifying Values Requires Focused Thought

Some world-renowned individuals have recognized that **identifying all of your values for a decision is extremely difficult.**



- **Benjamin Franklin** said that important decisions “are difficult, chiefly because while we have them under consideration, all the reasons pro and con are not present in the mind at the same time, but sometimes some set present themselves, and at other times another, the first being out of sight”.
- Franklin’s pros and cons refer to values.



- **Friedrich Nietzsche** said “forgetting our objectives is the most frequent stupidity in which we indulge ourselves”.
- Nietzsche’s objectives are values.

# A Process to Help Identify Your Values

- Step 1** Create a wish list. Include every value you hope to achieve in the decision situation.
- Step 2** Stimulate additional values by using mind-probing techniques.
- Step 3** Ask others for suggested values. Their suggestions may be one of your values or stimulate you to think of others.
- Step 4** Use previously identified values to identify additional values

## Step 2: Stimulate Values Using Mind-Probing Techniques

Technique	Questions
<b>Emotions and Feelings</b>	Articulate your emotions and feelings evoked by the decision situation. Ask yourself why you care about these and how your alternatives may address them.
<b>Alternatives</b>	Identify a perfect alternative, a terrible alternative, some reasonable alternatives, the status quo. What is good or bad about each?
<b>Consequences</b>	Think about what might occur after you make your decision. What might occur that is good or bad?
<b>Goals and Constraints</b>	Review any goals and constraints you have. What are your reasons for setting these?
<b>Different Perspectives</b>	Suppose a friend or a competitor you know faced your decision. What might their values be? If you faced this decision at some time in the future, what would concern you?
<b>Strategic Values</b>	Consider the strategic values for guiding your life or your organization that are relevant to the decision? Are any of these values, or aspects of them, relevant to this decision?
<b>Disappointment and Regret</b>	After you have experienced the consequences of your decision, what might disappoint you and what might you regret?
<b>Generic Values</b>	What values have you had for the same or similar decisions that you have faced? Are these relevant now?



# Step 4: Using Recognized Values to Search for Missed Values

For each recognized value, ask yourself:

- a. Why do I care about this value?
- b. How can you best achieve this value?
- c. What does this value mean?
- d. What is the general category of this value?



# Clarifying Values

- Once you have a list of values for a decision, it is useful to state them in the common format.
- An **objective** is a value stated in a **verb-object format** that also clarifies the meaning of the value, for example:
  - ‘money’ becomes ‘maximize my salary’ or ‘maximize profits’ or ‘minimize cost’
  - ‘dirty lake’ becomes ‘reduce pollutant inflow’ or ‘restore habitat’ or both
  - ‘successful’ becomes ‘increase my skills’, ‘be promoted’, or ‘be respected by peers’

Suppose someone you know has been diagnosed with cancer. What would be a good set of values to guide the creation and appraisal of alternatives? Think of some potential values.

# Objectives for Cancer Treatment

- Get all the cancer
- Avoid a recurrence of cancer
- Ensure that the cancer doesn't spread
- Minimize medical risks of treatment
- Minimize medical risks of cancer
- Reduce the likelihood of death in the near future
- Reduce the likelihood of serious complications
- Minimize personal costs of the entire procedure
- Have insurance pay the maximum possible
- Limit any pain and suffering
- Minimize inconvenience to self
- Have a comfortable hospital room
- Avoid worry about treatment
- Have trust in doctors
- Minimize inconvenience to family
- Receive good communication
- Have the best physicians
- Receive quality healthcare
- Limit time in hospital
- Minimize limits on activities after recuperation
- Receive friendly service at the hospital
- Provide future financial security for family
- Have the treatment soon

It is difficult to make sense and gain insight from such a long and multifaceted list of objectives

# Organizing Your Values

Stating your values as objectives helps to understand their relationships and to facilitate their use.

Relationships between objectives

- **Means Objective**: an objective whose importance stems from its influence on achieving another objective, referred to as an **ends objective**.
- **Fundamental Objective**: an objective that defines a basic reason for caring about a decision.

# Means and Fundamental Objectives for Cancer Treatment

## Means Objectives

Get all the cancer  
Avoid a recurrence of cancer  
Assure that the cancer doesn't spread  
Minimize medical risks of treatment  
Minimize medical risks of cancer  
Receive friendly service at the hospital  
Reduce the likelihood of serious complications  
Have insurance pay the maximum possible  
Have a comfortable hospital room  
Have trust in doctors  
Receive good communication  
Have the best physicians  
Receive quality healthcare  
Have the treatment soon

## Fundamental Objectives

Minimize the likelihood of death in the near future  
Minimize personal costs of the entire procedure  
Limit any pain and suffering  
Avoid worry about treatment  
Minimize inconvenience to self  
Minimize inconvenience to family  
Minimize limits on activities after recuperation  
Provide future financial security for family  
Limit time in hospital

# Uses of Means and Fundamental Objectives

- Only fundamental objectives should be used to evaluate and compare alternatives.
- Means objectives can be used to create alternatives.

### 3. Creating Alternatives

- Alternatives are the potential choices for pursuing your objectives.
  1. Alternatives must be completely under the control of the decision maker
  2. Alternatives are defined such that only one alternative is chosen for a specific decision. This is not a limitation.
- **Two important facts about alternatives:**
  - You can never choose an alternative that you haven't identified
  - Your chosen alternative can be no better than the best of those that you have identified

# Pitfalls when Creating Alternatives



- Stopping your search after one alternative is identified
- Thinking too narrowly (e.g. Business as usual)
- Inappropriate constraints
- Focusing on alternatives presented by others
- Incrementalizing existing alternatives
- No (or little) time spent creating alternatives
- Lack of guidance for creating good alternatives



# Conventional Advice: Think Outside of the Box

The spirit of this advice is worth following.

With this reasonable advice, it is natural to think that one should not think inside of a box.

However, outside of the box is everywhere else, which is a phenomenally large space to look for anything.

You cannot look everywhere effectively or efficiently.  
Guidance on where to look would be useful.



“the proverbial box”



“outside the box”

# My Advice: Think Inside the Right-Sized Box

You need to think “outside of *the* box”, but not “outside of *a* box”. You should think inside a bigger ‘*right-sized*’ box.



*The* proverbial box  
(a too-small box)



The Alternatives Box  
(a right-sized box)



Outside of *The* box  
(a very large space)

The size of this right-sized *Alternatives Box* is defined by your objectives.

# How Should You Create Alternatives Inside the Alternatives Box?

- Since alternatives are the means to achieve the objectives ...
- Thinking about 'how to better achieve each objective' can suggest alternatives or elements of alternatives that will contribute to achieving your objectives

# Creating Alternatives to Enhance One's MBA Internship

What alternatives could you initiate prior to and/or during your MBA internship that would enhance meeting your objectives?

<u>When Asked</u>	<u>Average Number Created</u>
Before listing objectives	5.5
After listing – using objectives	+3.9
After, focus separately on each objective	+5.7

# Some Alternatives Created to Enhance An MBA Internship

- Interact proactively with senior management
- Seek out mentors
- Be proactive in taking responsibility
- Talk to previous interns at the company
- Create a list of people to meet and make appointments
- Network extensively during internship
- Review courses/concepts from first year
- Research the company and industry
- Prioritize what I want to learn from internship
- Choose useful elective courses

# Practical Guidance for Creating Alternatives

**Create alternatives using your objectives.**

First identify alternatives to achieve each objective.

Second, use pairs of objectives, and then larger sets of objectives.

Third, enhance alternatives that you have already created. Initially, work alone to create alternatives, so you do not anchor on suggestions made by others.

Fourth, have friends and other knowledgeable individuals suggest alternatives or enhancements.

## 4. Decision Opportunities

- It seems odd that the words decision and problem are so intertwined in everyday use. We say ‘I have a **decision problem**’.
- Yet our decisions are the only purposeful way to influence anything. Our **decisions are the opportunities** to guide our lives, hopefully for the better, and to positively influence the well-being of others, our communities, our countries, and our planet.

- So are decisions really problems?  
Most of our current decisions are!



# How Do Your Decision Problems Occur?

- Your decision problems are caused by the decisions of others, happenstance, actions that you take without thinking, and bad consequences of your decisions (from good decisions or poor decisions).
- Respective examples are when your employer eliminates your job, you contract a serious illness, or a fire damages your home.
- Each of these situations presents you with a decision problem and it is definitely a problem.



# Your Decision-Making

- Who should make your decisions?
  - **You should!**
- Who should choose the decisions that you face?
  - **You should, at least more than you do.**
- Making decisions on problems that you must face is **reactive**.
- Making decisions on ‘problems’ (i.e. opportunities) that you choose to face is **proactive**.

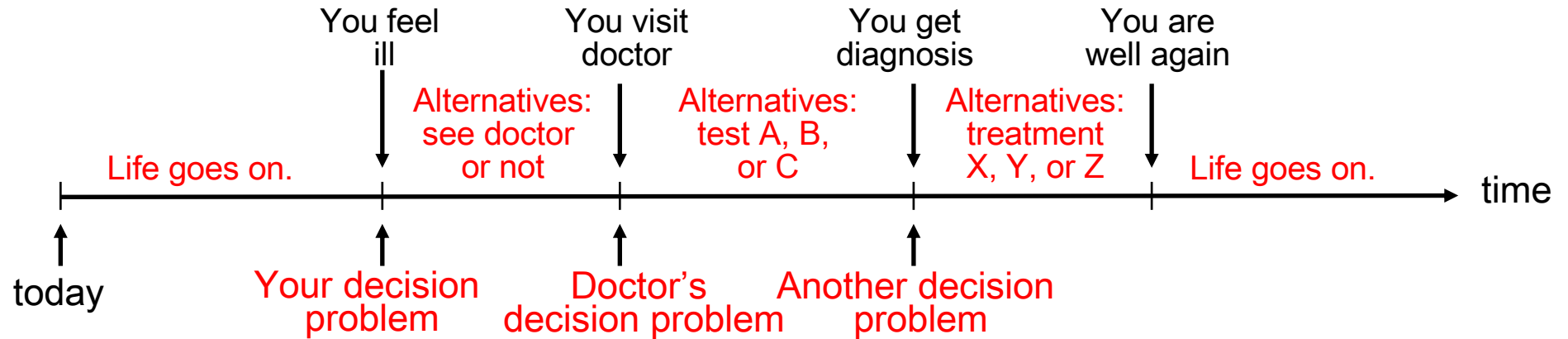


# Creating Decision Opportunities

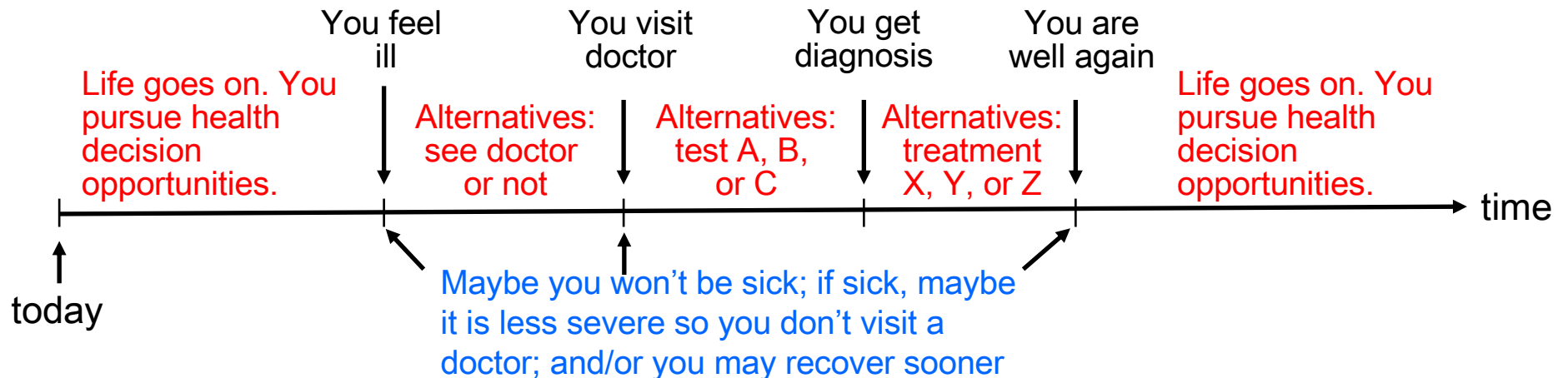
- You have the power to create some of the decisions you will face. I refer to these as **decision opportunities**.
- **Decision opportunities** are more attractive decisions than the **decision problems** that you must face.
- You can create decision opportunities by
  - **converting** decision problems into decision opportunities by creating a broader set of objectives and/or more appealing alternatives.
  - **proactively creating** decision opportunities that offer you the possibility to achieve very desirable consequences.
- **Value-focused thinking** helps you be systematic about creating decision opportunities.

# Reactive versus Proactive Decision-Making for Health Decisions

## Reactively Solving Decision Problems

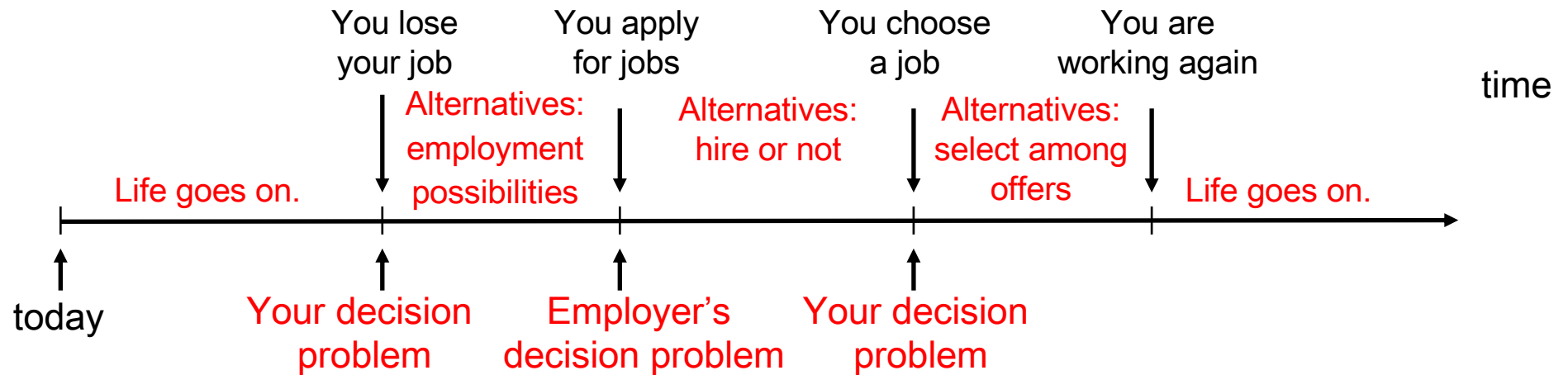


## Proactive Pursuing Decision Opportunities

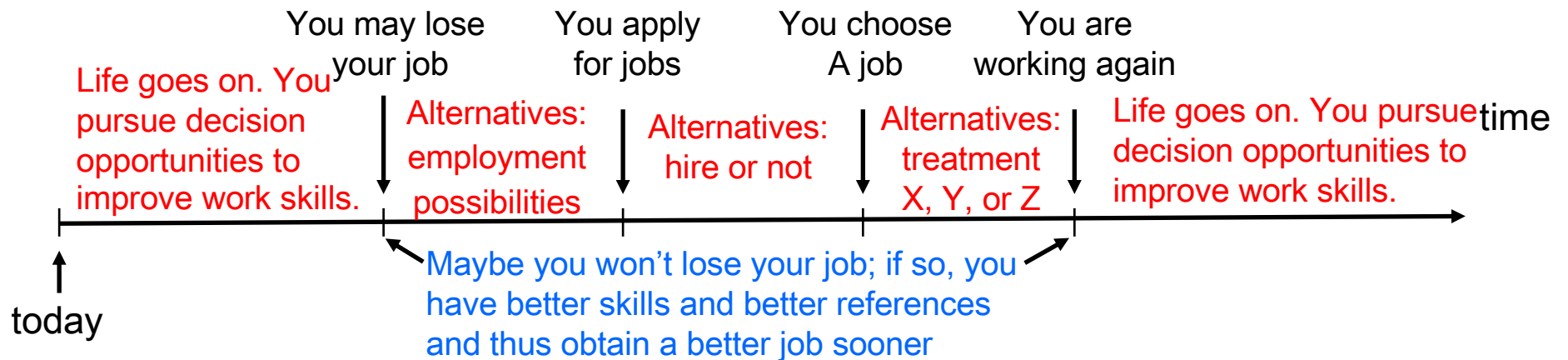


# Reactive versus Proactive Decision-Making for Employment Decisions

## Reactively Solving Decision Problems



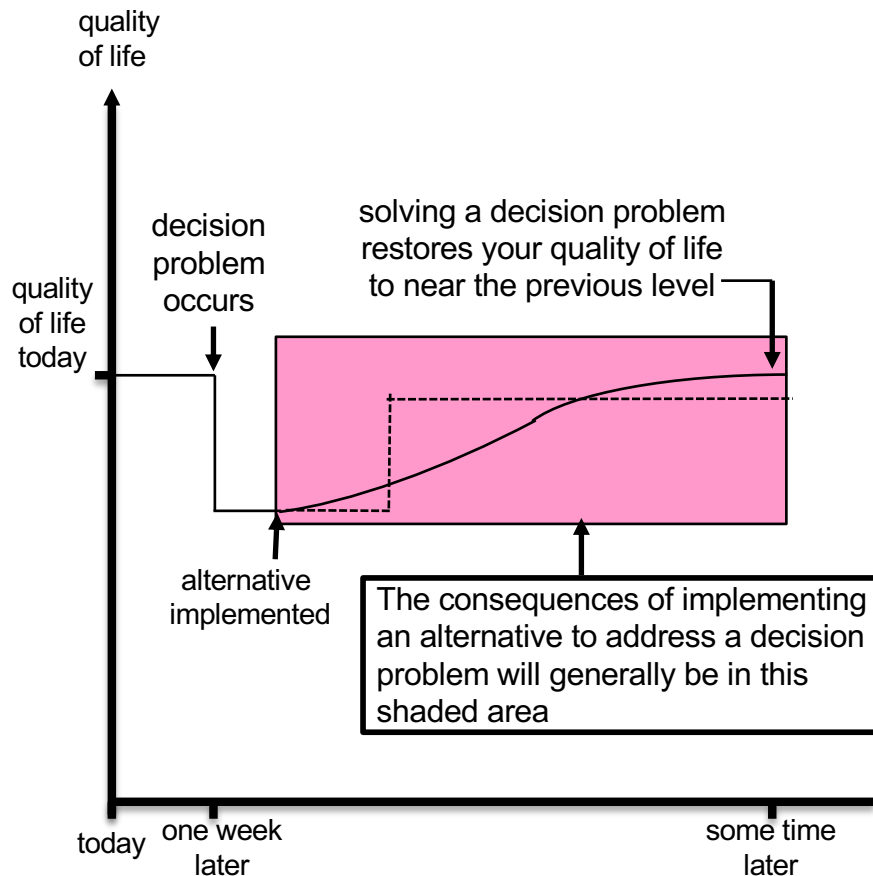
## Proactive Pursuing Decision Opportunities



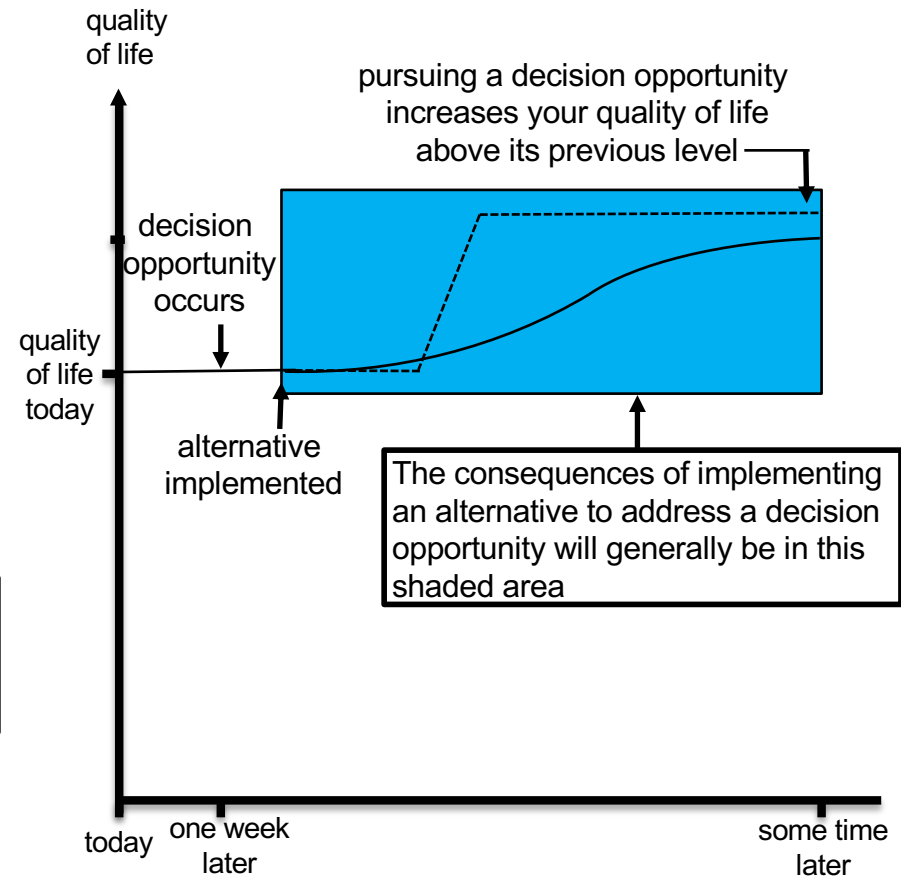
# A Key Distinction between Decision Problems and Decision Opportunities

**Decision problems usually do not improve your life**

**Decision opportunities usually do improve your life**



**A Decision Problem**



**A Decision Opportunity**

# Why Don't Decision-Makers Routinely Create Decision Opportunities?

Two main hindrances to creating decision opportunities:

- We don't have a distinct concept or name for what I'm calling a **decision opportunity**, so we not routinely think about utilizing this idea.
- We think of decisions as problems, we have enough problems already, we don't like problems, so why should we create any for ourselves?

# Stimulate the Creation of Decision Opportunities

## Initial Thought

My life is less interesting than desired

Experiencing Z would be great

I admire people who have skill S

I'd like to do X, but I can't because ...

Something is bothering me

## Decision opportunity: Decide

how to meet more interesting people

to experience Z

to develop skill S

to eliminate the reason why I can't do X

to eliminate the bother

**Do not accept a decision problem as presented; consider changing it into a decision opportunity, that is a better decision to face.**

**Before implementing an alternative, declare a decision opportunity, namely how can I improve my chosen alternative?**

# 5. Decisions Requiring Authorization

**The situation:** another individual - an authorized decision-maker - controls whether an alternative that you want can be implemented.

- You and an authorized decision-maker both recognize your joint authority to implement alternatives that you each pursue (a standard negotiation, buying - selling a house)
- Only you recognize that an authorized decision-maker shares the joint authority to implement an alternative that you jointly pursue (a silent negotiation, co-authoring an article)
- Only you recognize that an authorized decision-maker can allow you to implement an alternative that affects only you (a silent negotiation, working remotely)



# An Offer that Cannot Be Refused

For a decision opportunity, you create a ‘dream’ alternative, but you need someone’s (e.g. boss, friend, parent, teacher, colleague) authorization to implement it. *At this time, the authorized decision-maker is unaware of your thoughts.*

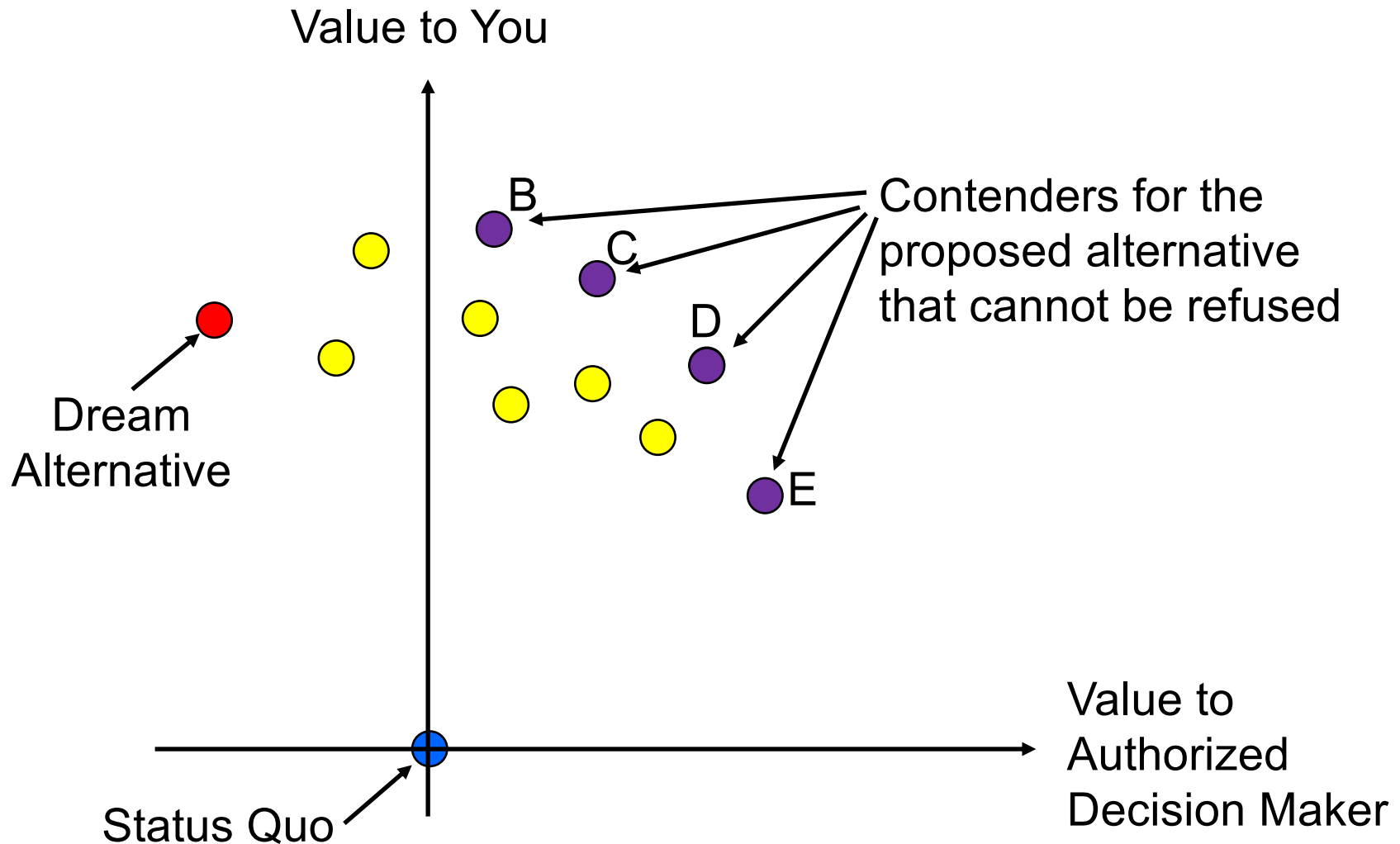
**Identify:** the values of the authorized decision-maker for the alternative that you want.

**Create:** an alternative that provides what you want and also is better than the status quo of the authorized decision-maker.

**Act:** propose that win-win alternative to the authorized decision-maker, which should be an alternative that can't be refused.



# An Alternative that Can't Be Refused



▶ *Co-authoring a book*

▶ *Leave of absence*

# Identifying Values of an Authorized Decision-Maker

There are **four possibilities for articulating the values** of a specific authorize decision-maker:

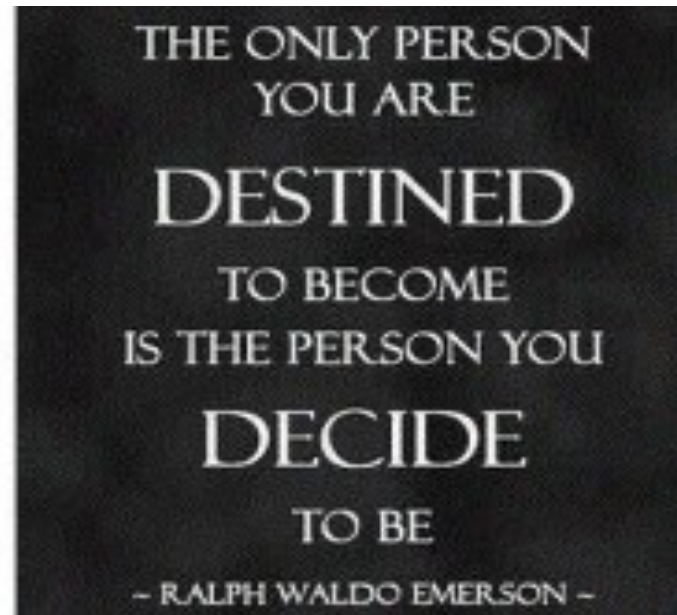
- You know the authorized decision-maker and articulate their values.
- You know the authorized decision-maker and ask them about their values. It's in their interest to indicate their values.
- You ask someone else, who knows the authorized decision-maker well, about their values.
- Use your general knowledge and common sense about likely values of the authorized decision-maker. Also, their values may have been documented.

*Practical note:* you only need to know some of the authorized decision-maker's values to create an alternative that is better for them than their status quo.

# Creating Desirable Alternatives for the Authorizing Decision-Maker

- Assume that there are such alternatives; the authorizing decision-maker has a multitude of values.
- For jointly implemented decisions, modify the dream alternative to reduce negative consequences or increase positive consequences.
- For separately implemented decisions, identify an alternative in a different setting that has sufficient positive value for the authorizing decision-maker to accept the two decisions together.

## 6. Developing Your Strategic Life Objectives



Your strategic values, stated as your strategic life objectives, describe who you want to be and guide your decisions to become that person.

**(same as strategic values for an organization)**

# A Comment on Life and Life Objectives

“I always knew I wanted to be somebody, but perhaps I should have been more specific.”

– *Lily Tomlin*



# Constructing Your Life Objectives

- **Your overall life value should be to “maximize your quality of life”.**

You need to define your quality of life:

- Identify your life **values** (what you care about)
  - Hard thinking over time
  - Expand to be complete
- Organize your values
  - Convert values to objectives
  - Relate means and ends objectives
  - Identify components of major objectives
  - Identify strategic life objectives

# Stimulating Thoughts to Identify Your Life Values

Each of these can suggest life values

- Consider activities (e.g. work and leisure) that you have spent a significant time doing that you like or dislike.
- Reflect on both very good and very bad decisions that you have made.
- Identify very good and very bad consequences that did or could have happened to you.
- Imagine your concerns at different ages in the future; think hard about your life values you may have then.
- Inquire about perspectives of your family and friends.



# Understanding Your Reasoning for Each Value

- State values as objectives (i.e. verb-object format).
- Ask yourself *why* you care about each objective.
- Then ask *why* for the response, and for its response. Push yourself to better understand what it is that you want out of life.
- Consider whether to modify or expand any objective to clarify its meaning.

# Organize Your Life Objectives

- **Cluster objectives.** Combine objectives into groups concerned with a similar focus. Clarify major objectives with components.
- **Identify relationships of objectives.** Specify inclusion and means-ends relationships.
- **Select your strategic life objectives.** Your strategic life objectives are the fundamental objectives of your life. They essentially define what you ultimately want to achieve in your life.
- **Strategic life objectives should be stable.** Otherwise, they are not life objectives.

## Means Life Objectives

### Make Good Decisions

Pursue worthwhile activities

Pursue worthwhile relationships

Maximize freedom of choice

Maximize opportunities for choice

Minimize constraints on freedom of choice

- Maximize health
- Maximize financial well-being
- Maximize available time

Minimize constraints on opportunities for choice

- Maximize creative thought
- Minimize constraints due to others

Have Enriching Experiences

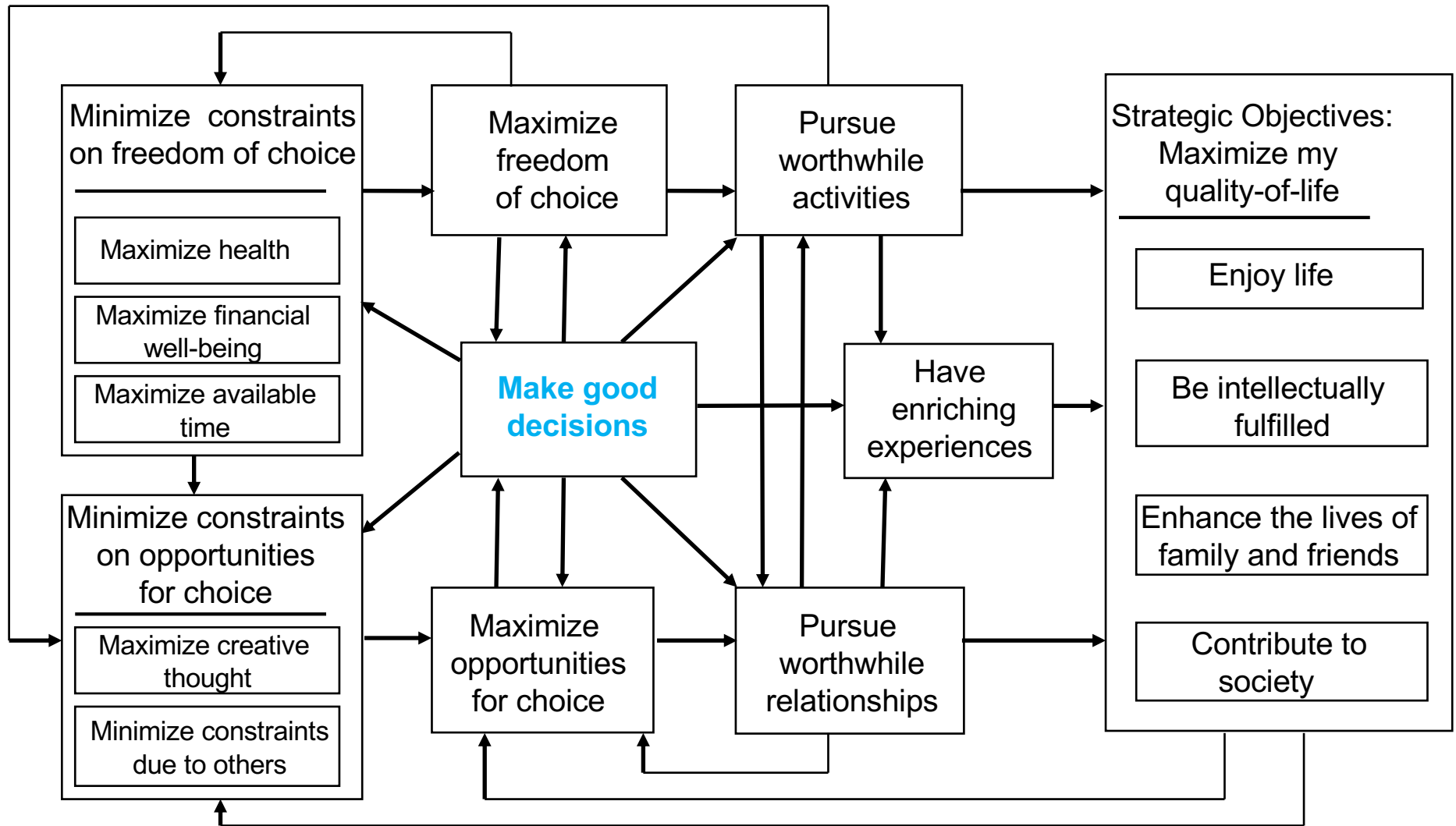
influences →

## Strategic Life Objectives

Maximize my quality-of-life

- Enjoy life
  - Have fun
  - Have excitement
  - Revel in emotions
  - Relish experiences
- Be intellectually fulfilled
  - Learn
  - Know
  - Understand
  - Reason
- Enhance the lives of family and friends
  - Wife Janet and Son Greg
  - Other family and friends
- Contribute to society
  - My employer
  - Organizations to which I belong
  - My professional field
  - My community
  - Individuals

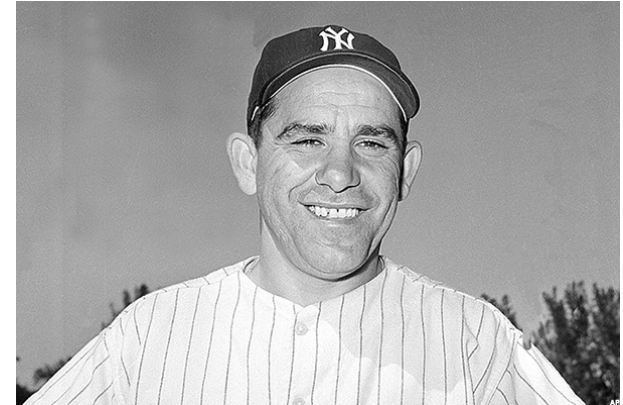
# My Strategic Life Objectives Network



Note: an arrow means “influences”

# Pursuing your Life Objectives

“If you don’t know where you are going, you just might end up somewhere else.”  
*Yogi Berra*



- **With a clear understanding of what you hope to achieve in life, you have a better chance of achieving it.**
- The logic is simple. If you do not know what you want to achieve, you are less likely to think of ways to achieve it, less likely to pursue it, and so less likely to achieve it.

# Your Life Objectives Guide Your Life

Your strategic life objectives help coordinate all of your decisions toward enhancing your quality of life.

- Your life values are like a car navigation system.
- A car navigation system provides guidance for any travel. Your life values provide guidance for your life travels (i.e. decisions). Many vehicle trips are familiar, so you don't use your navigation system explicitly, but your travel is consistent with its suggestions.
- Many of your decisions are also familiar, so you do not need to explicitly use your life objectives. They are internalized and naturally used to guide your decisions.

# Becoming a Value-Focused Decision Maker

Being a value-focused decision maker requires mastering a set of skills. This requires that you:

- Learn what the concepts are and their the usefulness,
- Learn how to use those concepts on decisions.
- Practice using these skills.

Notice that this is analogous to what is necessary to become competent at any other skills, such as any sport, playing a musical instrument, being a good parent, or cooking. You can learn how to be skillful by reading, but you will not be skillful without significant practice.

# Last Thoughts

Being a proactive value-focused nudging decisionmaker is conceptually easy, but requires some thoughtful effort.

Most of us have years of experience and a life-long habit of being a reactive alternative-focused decision maker.

It is hard to break such an engrained habit, but I hope that you recognize the usefulness of value-focused nudges and, therefore, of the effort necessary to develop your skill at using it.



# Thank You

## Improving Your Decision-Making

by



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# Steps of Value-Focused Brainstorming

## When a group is creating alternatives

1. State the decision to be solved.
2. Identify the values of the decision.
3. Individually generate alternatives.
4. Collectively generate alternatives.

Avoids the shortcomings of traditional brainstorming;

# Value-Focused Brainstorming: Emergency Evacuation of Large Buildings

- In the 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, 2,602 individuals lost their lives. Many fewer would have died had they been able to evacuate the buildings.
- A federal investigation recommended developing much better emergency egress systems.



# A Value-Focused Brainstorming Workshop

**Purpose:** to identify new, creative, and useful ways for emergency evacuation from buildings. The need could be due to fires, natural disasters, or human-caused problems including terrorist attacks.

**Response:** A 2.5 day invitation-only workshop sponsored by the National Institute of Standards and Technology and the National Institute of Building Sciences

**Participants:** Approximately 35 experts with expertise about architecture, fire safety, legal issues, standards and codes, people with disabilities, emerging technologies for egress, and human behavior.

# Results of the Workshop

On day 1, objectives were elicited from all participants.

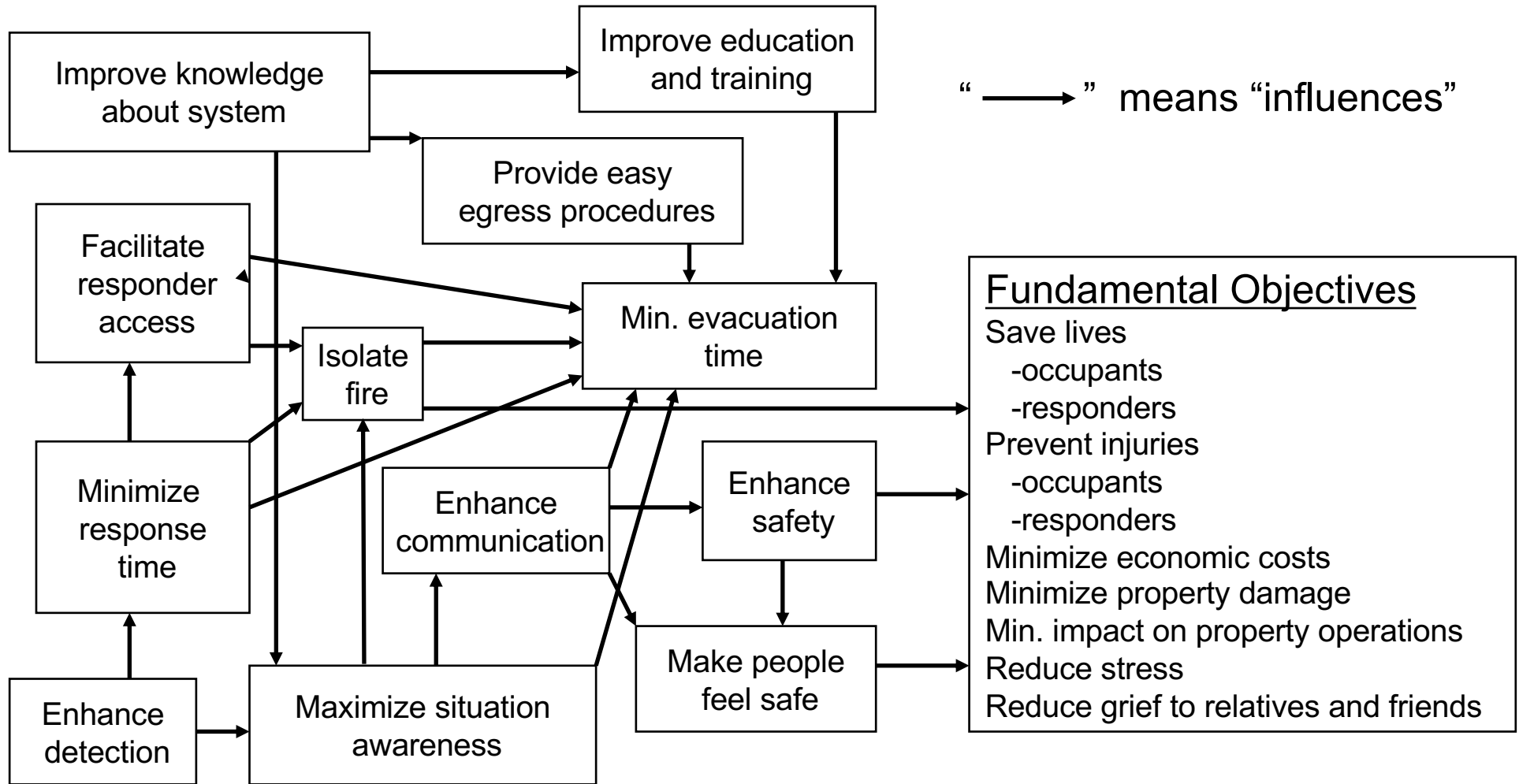
That evening, facilitators constructed a means-ends objectives network to provide a basis for creating new alternatives.

On day 2, participants use the objectives to create alternatives working individually at first and then in small groups.

That evening, facilitators identified about 400 alternatives or elements of alternative that could facilitate evacuation from large buildings. These were categorized into several types of alternatives to facilitate understanding, communication, and use.

The collections of alternatives and of objectives should provide a sound basis for further fruitful thinking about emergency evaluation and its consequences.

# Means-Ends Objectives Network for Emergency Evacuation



# Some Alternatives Suggested to Improve Emergency Evacuation

## **Involving Sprinklers / Active Suppression Systems**

Increase sprinkler density with building height

## **Involving Protect in Place / Areas of Refuge**

Zoned floors to create “safe” areas for people awaiting evacuation

## **Involving Building Construction Changes**

Reduce fuel loads in buildings

## **Involving Building Material Changes**

Hardened evacuation routes

## **Involving the Fire Service**

Equipment lift for fire fighters

Dedicated firefighting stairwell

Stairwell mini-door for firefighting hoses

## **Involving Elevators**

Protected elevators for evacuation of transitional refuge areas

## **Involving Societal /Regulatory / Legal Changes**

Don't build high buildings

Make occupants more fit

## **External to the Building**

Chutes / slides / controlled descent devices

Horizontal egress or skybridge

## **Involving Communication**

Use technology such as cell phones, PDA's, computers, phones for timely communication

Universal emergency ringtone

## **Involving Information Systems**

Dynamic reactive signage

## **Involving Pre-event Planning**

Present occupants with actual simulation/videos of what could happen in a real event

## **Involving Efficient Use of Egress System**

Enhanced stairway descent devices

## **To Enhance Stairwell Evacuation / Reduce Stairwell Load**

Use electroluminescent strips in hotels

## **Impacting the Design Process / Risk Informed Performance-Based Design**

Perform analysis to evaluate emergency procedures

## **That Enhance Reliability of Building Systems**

Two remote sources for sprinkler water

## **That Involve Event Procedural Changes**

Stairs to refuge floors, elevators from there

## **That Enhance Event Detection**

Use thermal imaging systems for detection

Note that understanding the decision context is important for developing alternatives.