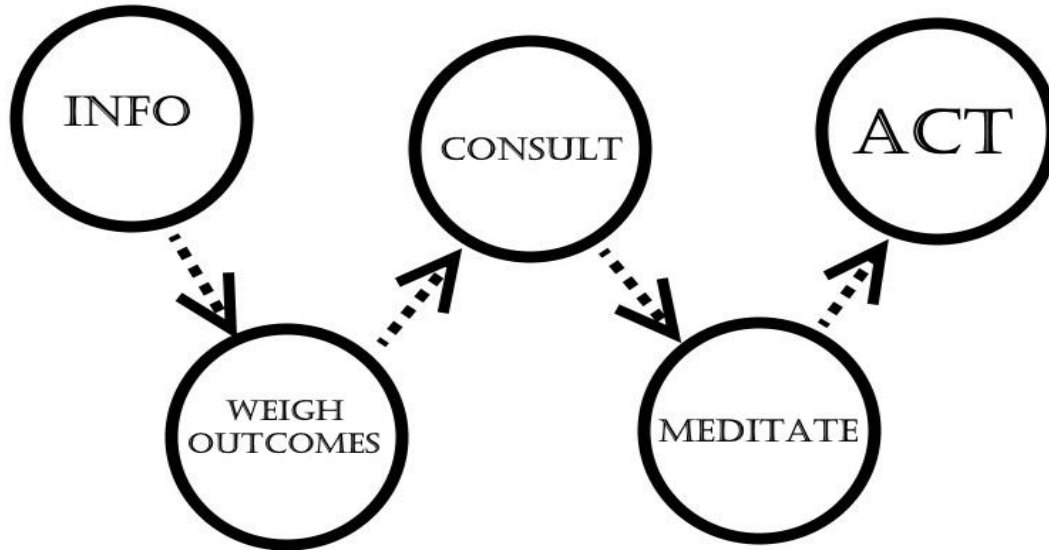




The Five Basic Elements of Effective Decision Making



- 1. Gather Information:** As time allows, get as much information as possible before making a decision. Then you can make what is referred to as an **informed decision**. Information gathering can include:
 - a. *Research* – Nowadays if you have a smart phone there is no excuse not to at least “Google it”
 - b. *Talk to trusted others and others with experience* – Why learn the hard way when instead you can talk to someone who has been through it or someone who has more life experience?
- 2. Weigh Outcomes** – This can be the most commonly neglected step. Taking a little bit of extra time to think things through is probably the most important thing a person can do to avoid problems in life. Consider the following:
 - a. *Pros and Cons* – Risks (Possible Consequences) vs. Benefits (Potential rewards)
 - b. *Ethics and Morals* – “Right and Wrong” is an essential consideration in any decision we make
 - c. *Short term and Long term* – How may things work out now, but also what about later down the line?
- 3. Consult:** Again, as time allows, talk to trusted friends, family, mentor, etc. and review all of your choices. Choose wisely as consulting with someone foolish likely will bring foolish results
 - a. *Consider the Source:* For example, should you take job advice from someone who has been long term unemployed? Would you take financial advice from someone who is broke? You get it!
- 4. Meditate** – This is not they kind of meditation associated with clearing your mind of all thought. To the contrary, in this case to meditate means: **to think deeply or carefully about something – to focus one’s thoughts, ponder, reflect upon, contemplate.** This is with the goal of selecting your final choice
 - a. *In this case meditation is also not the same as anxiously obsessing about the same thing over and over.* The key should be to think with a goal and purpose in mind rather than to go in circles. A good comparison would be to be more like a runner in a race striving for the finish line as opposed to a rat on a wheel endlessly going around and around but getting nowhere fast
- 5. Act** – This is also a commonly neglected step. A good decision is useless if it isn’t acted upon. At some point it is important to make a move otherwise nothing will change
 - a. *“It’s hard to fail, but worse to never have tried to succeed”* – Theodore Roosevelt