



Making Choices Learning Exercise

Learning & Skills: Creative Thinking
Problem Solving
Decision Making

Time & Tools

Total Time: 35 minutes
Necessary Tools: Pencils or pens
Three 3 X 5 cards for each person or Three card-sized pieces of paper
Optional Tools: Flip chart or writing board

Note: The room needs to be large enough so that partners or groups are not sitting directly beside each other. A classroom setting is ideal.

Step 1

1. Give everyone a pencil or pen and three 3 X 5 cards or three card-sized pieces of paper.
2. Tell everyone they will be performing an exercise that involves decision-making.
3. Tell everyone they have to think of **3 things that are very important** to each of them personally. These 3 things can involve anything they desire such as family, health, job, relationships, etc.
4. They must write 1 thing on one 3 X 5 card or one piece of paper. In other words, they cannot write all 3 things on one 3 X 5 card or one piece of paper.
5. They will have **5 minutes to silently write** down their 3 things (they do this as individuals).

Step 2

1. After 5 minutes, tell each person to select a partner to work with (they will work in pairs of 2). Have the partners move throughout the room so they are not too close to each other.
2. Tell everyone they have 10 minutes to share, with their partner, the 3 things that are very important. **AND**, during this time, they have to also exchange 1 thing with their partner. Each person gives the other 1 of their very important things.
3. **Do not tell the attendees they will be exchanging until after everyone has finished writing their 3 things.**

Step 3

1. After 10 minutes, everyone faces the person leading the exercise. Can have everyone return to their original location, if the room is large and it would be difficult to hear the exercise leader or others.
2. Have each person **share their 3 things** with the entire group, as well as the **1 thing** they gave to their partner. **Also**, ask each person to explain “how” she made the decision on what to give to her partner.

Step 4

Note: For this Step, if a flip chart or writing board is available, capture this information for viewing by everyone.

1. After all groups have shared their information, ask the following general “take away” question:

What does this exercise say about how we make difficult decisions?

Take Away Examples

Note: Below are some “take away” examples from the exercise. If the attendees do not mention these, the exercise leader could mention them.

1. Sometimes we have to make tough choices.
2. Sometimes it may be necessary to re-evaluate the things we believe are impossible to give up, to correct, or to change.
3. Even though some choices are difficult, some choices can still be made.
4. When we look at the Big Picture, some choices are not as difficult as they seem.

Optional Additional Question:

How could you use the ideas from this exercise in your personal life or your work life?

Adjustments to Making Choices Exercise:

1. Could have partners exchange 2 things rather than 1 thing.
2. Change the Time: The time for this exercise is based on 6 – 10 people. If the number of attendees is larger or smaller, you will need to adjust the time.