

## Decision-Making Handout

# Decision-Making: A Personal Experience



Recall a significant decision you have made and then answer the following questions:

- *What was the decision you needed to make?*
- *What options did you have to choose from in deciding?*
- *What was your final decision?*
- *What were the steps you took in arriving at the decision? What were the reasons for each step? Please list and explain.*
  
- *Whom did you consult or include in the process? Why?*
- *What factors did you consider?*
- *What was most important in determining your decision?*

## Basic Guidelines

1. Avoid blindly arguing for your own individual preference. Present your position as clearly and logically as possible, but listen to other members' reactions and consider them carefully before you press your view. Consider what acceptable changes you could make to accommodate differing opinions.
2. Avoid changing your mind only to reach agreement and avoid conflict. Support solutions with which you are at least somewhat able to agree. Yield only to positions that have logical and sound foundations which you can understand and support. Know clearly why you agree or disagree with what's being presented.
3. Avoid "conflict-reducing" procedures such as majority vote, tossing a coin, averaging or bargaining in reaching decisions.
4. Seek out differences of opinion and involve everyone in the process. Disagreements are natural and to be expected. Encourage individuals to share the reasons and values behind their opinions. Often values are similar even when opinions differ. Differences of opinion ought to be seen as a way of gathering additional information, clarifying issues, and challenging the group to seek better alternatives.
5. Do not assume that someone must win and someone must lose when discussion reaches a stalemate. Instead look for the next most acceptable alternative for all members.
6. Discuss underlying assumptions, listen carefully to one another, and encourage the participation of all members. Include "thinking spaces" in the discussion for quiet consideration before the discussion continues. This encourages people to think about how they feel and what they have heard.