How to make smart decisions

eslvideo.com Quiz by: englishhopes

1. What was the focus of the 2011 study mentioned?

○ a.) Judges deciding on parole

○ b.) Doctors making medical decisions

○ c.) People choosing breakfast

2. What factor had a large impact on the judges' decisions?

○ a.) The crime committed

○ b.) The time of day

○ c.) The judge's experience

3. What is decision fatigue?

○ a.) A lack of sleep

○ b.) Cognitive exhaustion from making decisions

○ c.) A physical illness

4. What can lead to decision fatigue?

○ a.) Making too few decisions

○ b.) Taking breaks between decisions

○ c.) Making many complex decisions

5. How does the complexity of a decision affect decision fatigue?

○ a.) Simple decisions are more tiring

○ b.) Complex decisions can lead to quicker fatigue

○ c.) Complexity has no effect

6. What example is given for a simple decision?

○ a.) Buying a car

○ b.) Choosing what to eat for breakfast

○ c.) Choosing to have coffee vs. tea with breakfast.

7. What can happen after making a difficult decision?

○ a.) You may reach your decision-making threshold

○ b.) You feel energized

○ c.) You become more confident

8. Why are judges particularly at risk for decision fatigue?

○ a.) They work short shifts.

○ b.) They have too much time to decide.

○ c.) They make many difficult decisions in a row.

9. What is one strategy to avoid decision fatigue?

○ a.) Make more decisions daily. Don't procrastinate.

○ b.) Make decisions quickly. Don't dillydally.

○ c.) Imagine your hard decisions as someone else's, and offer advice

10. Why is it helpful to relax about small choices?

○ a.) It makes all choices equally important.

○ b.) It helps you forget about difficult problems.

○ c.) It helps you save energy for more important decisions.

Transcript

In a 2011 study, researchers followed
a group of judges deciding whether or not to offer
imprisoned individuals a chance at parole. Logically, one might expect things
like an imprisoned person's crime, existing sentence, and current behavior
to be the primary considerations. But while those details
were duly examined, one variable had
a remarkably large impact: the time of day. Imprisoned people who met
with the board in the morning were far more likely to receive parole than those whose cases
were reviewed in the afternoon, even if their crimes and sentences
were practically identical. This finding might seem strange, but the
researchers' explanation was simple: in the afternoon,
the judges were likely exhausted. Specifically, they were experiencing
decision fatigue. This kind of cognitive exhaustion occurs
after a period of extended decision making and it can make people more impulsive
and less confident while making choices. The dangers of decision fatigue are clear
in high-stakes scenarios like this study, but it can have a serious impact
on our day-to-day lives as well. So what kinds of choices
lead us to this state, and what can we do to fight fatigue? Everything our bodies do—
whether physical or mental— uses energy. But while it's unclear
exactly what resources are depleted during mental strain, studies have found many individuals
seem to have a daily threshold for making decisions. And once that threshold is met,
most people make the conscious choice
to "take it easy" and save serious thinking
about any new decisions for another day. How quickly you reach this threshold
depends on several variables, including the frequency, complexity, and
novelty of the decisions you have to make. For example, choosing what to eat
for breakfast isn't very taxing. Not only is this decision limited
by what's available, it's also a choice you expect to make
once a day with fairly low stakes. And even when you're not quite sure
what to eat, the time between this minor decision
and the next one should give you ample room to recover
whatever cognitive energy you expend. But let's imagine

something much trickier. For example, your car
suddenly breaks down and you need to replace it right away. This is an unexpected, complicated
decision with serious consequences. In this case, there are countless options
to choose from, and you won't find them all in one place. To make the optimal choice, you'll need to do hours
of thoughtful research to consider the various pros and cons. And since this is a decision
you don't often make, you'll also have to identify
what considerations are most important. The time pressure can
add additional stress both during the decision-making process
and afterward, as you expend more energy wondering
if you would have made a different decision with more time. After just a single decision
of this magnitude, most people would have already reached
their decision-making threshold. But in professions where individuals need
to make multiple high-stakes decisions every day, decision fatigue can
be much more dangerous. Judges, like those in the 2011 study, often encounter difficult decisions
back-to-back, with no time to recover. Many researchers are especially concerned
about decision fatigue in medicine. Doctors often work long shifts
full of life-or-death decisions, and some studies have found that medical
workers are much more likely
to make critical mistakes when working extended shifts. Addressing these issues requires
institutional changes, but there are much more direct ways most
of us can avoid fatigue in our daily lives. One simple strategy is to make
fewer daily decisions, tackling your to-do list
over multiple days, or even removing some rote decisions
from your day altogether. It's also typically less draining
to offer advice on a hard decision than it is to make that choice yourself. So it can be helpful to imagine
your decisions as someone else's before considering how the consequences
impact you specifically. Finally, it's essential to remember that
not every choice is equally important, and learning how to relax about the
small stuff can help you save energy for the decisions that truly matter.