



Global Leadership Hub

DECISION-MAKING SIMPLIFIED

4 straightforward questions
you must ask





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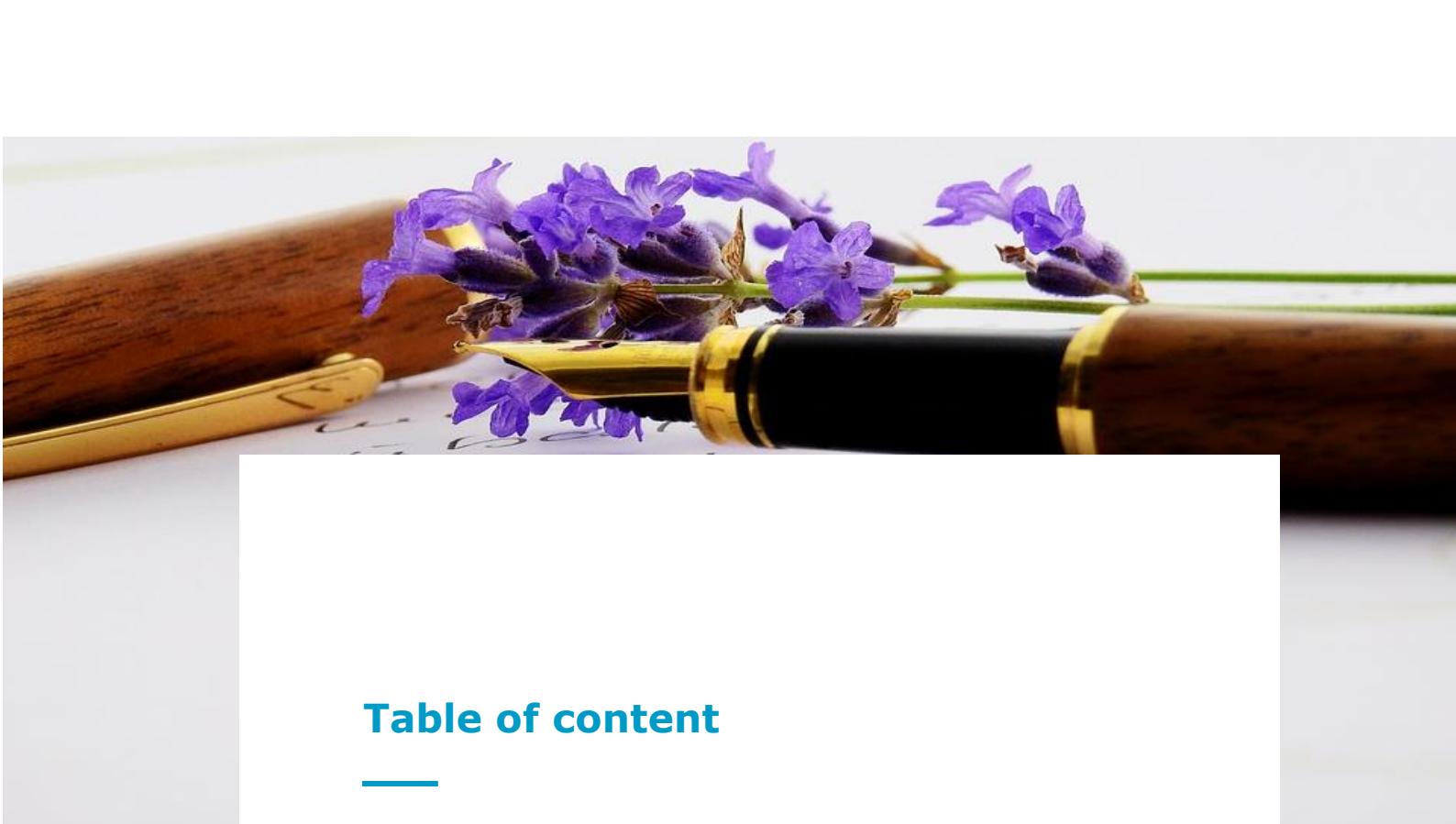


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“If you want to have a hard life,
you must make easy choices.
If you want to have an easy life,
you must make hard *choices*.”

Martin Probst

Cartesian Questions

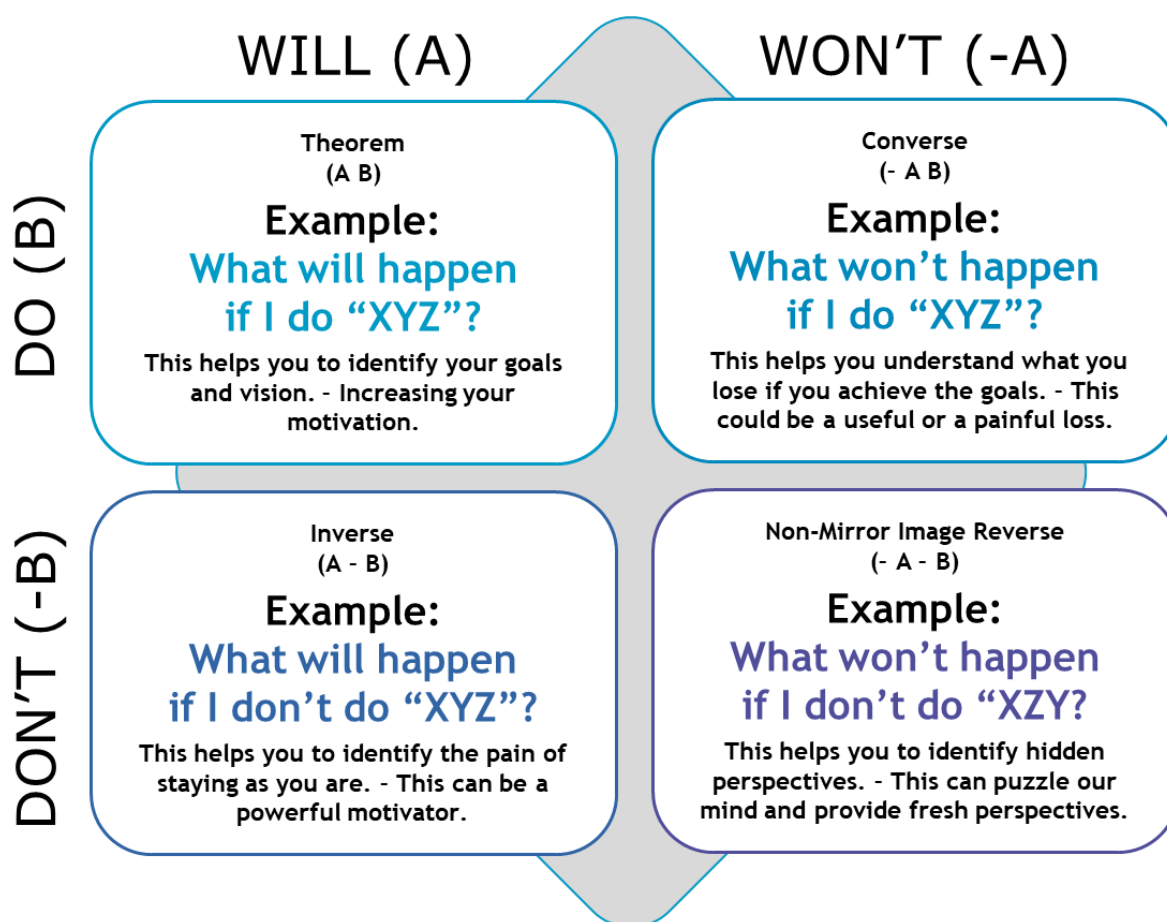
We often impose mental boundaries on ourselves and subsequently create barriers in our thinking and decision-making process. Cartesian Questions (or sometimes also referred to as Cartesian Coordinates) traditionally describe to a set of mathematical concepts but can be leveraged from for the purpose of decision-making.

Named after French philosopher René Descartes, Cartesian Questions are a set of problem-solving questions assisting us with an issue that is costing us too much energy, focus and time. They encourage us to delve beneath the obvious and unearth subconscious thoughts when we're trying to make decisions or work on a goal. We can use this strategy to:

- ☑ Find new, hidden perspectives and feelings for inspiration
- ☑ Think outside the box and discover different possibilities
- ☑ Examine the ecology of a goal or decision
- ☑ Think critically and consider various options

At the core of Cartesian logic is a set of four simple questions that are useful in exploring outcomes, consequences and ecology (overall relationship between a being and its environment) of any action or decision. These four simple yet highly effective questions are (where X is the question or action you or the other person are contemplating):

1. What will happen if I/you did X?
2. What will happen if I/you didn't do X?
3. What won't happen if I/you did X?
4. What won't happen if I/you didn't do X?



Legend: ~ means "not" | A means 'cause' or 'subject' | B means 'consequence' or 'direct object'.

This is how it works

To put this into a real-life scenario, following could be a possible resolution process for someone holding onto a lot of inner criticism.

1. **What will happen if I give my inner criticism a vacation?**
 - I will feel wonderful, happy and free.
 - I will definitely have more fun.
 - I will have a lot of time for positive and important things in my life.
 - I will be more spontaneous and try new things.
 - I will focus on action.
 - Etc.
2. **What will happen if I don't give my inner criticism a vacation?**
 - It will be easier to continue because I have been criticising myself for a long time. BUT nothing will change!
 - I will continue to put a lot of pressure on myself.
 - I will waste a lot more of my time and energy on negative "What if..?" questions.
 - I will be miserable and become sick.
 - I will lose my job.
 - Etc.
3. **What won't happen if I give my inner criticism a vacation?**
 - I won't beat myself up anymore.
 - I won't feel guilt when I have fun.
 - I won't have sleepless nights anymore.
 - I won't be fatigued in the morning.
 - I won't feel like a failure.
 - Etc.
4. **What won't happen if I don't give my inner criticism a vacation?**
 - I will never know what it would be/feel like without my negative self-talk.
 - I won't have fun.
 - I will never feel different.
 - I will never know my true potential.
 - I won't know what I will miss out on - Regrets!
 - Etc.

Putting it into practice

Ask yourself the following 4 questions, based on a challenge you currently face.

Answer each question in depth (ask yourself: “*What else...?*”, “*What else...?*” etc.). This will assist you in getting multiple answers for each question, which will help to make an informed and effective decision at the end of the process.

1. **What will happen if I do** [insert challenge here]?
This helps you to identify your goals and vision. - Increasing your motivation.
2. **What will happen if I don't do** [insert challenge here]?
This helps you to identify the pain of staying as you are. - This can be a powerful motivator.
3. **What won't happen if I do** [insert challenge here]?
This helps you understand what you lose if you achieve the goals. - This could be a useful or a painful loss.
4. **What won't happen if I don't do** [insert challenge here]?
This helps you to identify hidden perspectives and feelings. - This can puzzle our left or conscious mind and can provide fresh perspectives.

Next, review your responses and answer a few more questions, to ensure you can move forward.

- ☒ What did I learn about my challenge?

- ☒ What surprises me?

- ☒ How do my responses impact my decision or motivation to do it... or not?

☒ What values can I see reflected in my responses?

☒ What is my decision?

☒ What am I willing to do to make it the way I want it?

☒ What am I willing to no longer do, to make it the way I want it?

Conclusion

The Cartesian Question method is highly effective in decision-making, and in addition can also be used for goal setting, critical thinking, gaining new perspectives and understanding of what inspires or blocks us from achieving our desired outcomes, or to explore the consequences and how we feel about a decision or goal more fully.

I trust this resource assisted you to make an effective decision and to achieve better outcomes going forward.

Here's to living life on your terms!

“Dare to make a difference!”


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Bringing award-winning learning impact to you.

Dare to make a difference!



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