Week 4 - Decisions

Squiggly Careers
Videobook Club

Dan Ariely

Squiggly Careers bring more change and choice into our work.

Each choice represents a decision about our development. When we understand our decision-making flaws we can make smarter decisions for our future.

Dan Ariely's work identifies ways in which we are 'predictably irrational' and the action we can take to counteract irrationality and improve our approach.

Ideas for action

1. Watch out for self-motivated reasoning

We see the world in the way that it works for us.

Motivated reasoning is the tendency for people to interpret information in a way that aligns with their beliefs or preferences. It means that we favour outcomes we want to be true, even if they conflict with reality.

In the context of your career, motivated reasoning could mean you overestimate your skills for a role because you want the job or dismiss constructive feedback because it conflicts with your self-perception. This can hinder growth, lead to poor decisions, and create blind spots.

Use these questions as a sense-making tool for your decisions.

What assumptions am I making about this decision?

Who could I speak to who sees things differently?

What can I learn from my past decisions?

2. Close some development doors

Keeping too many doors open acts as a distraction for decision making.

While choice is good, too much choice decreases your commitment.

What can you say 'no' to now to create more space for things you want to say 'yes' to?

3. Focus on future you

Temptation leads to short-term decision making that can affect our long-term health and happiness.

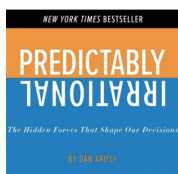Make decisions with your future self in mind.

What 'temptations' are affecting the quality of your decision making at work?

Recommended resources

Watch the LIT Videobook on Decisions for an engaging and useful way to learn about the topic.

Read Predictably Irrational to dive deeper into Dan Ariely's work.

Episode 330
How to derisk your career decisions

Helen and Sarah discuss how to derisk your career decisions in episode #330 of Squiggly Careers.