

## EAP Newsletter – December 2025

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### Making Time for Yourself and Your Family

Because of the stress of a typical work week, finding time for some fun and relaxation is usually difficult. Furthermore, it may seem like making time to enjoy your life takes a lot of effort. However, finding time for yourself and your family is well worth it: The hobbies and activities we take part in together or alone often bring us great happiness and help to enrich our lives.

#### Why Leisure Is Important

- Physical fun, like taking an aerobics class or going on a walk with a friend, helps soothe tension and clear the mind.
- Even an hour of leisure time a day is great for the body, mind, and spirit. It helps release stress and leads to a more balanced life.
- By taking time to do things that you like to do, you are better able to have healthier and more positive relationships with those around you.

#### How to Have Fun

If you've filled your life with so much work that you've forgotten how to play, take some cues from kids. They easily go from one fun activity to the next, typically with smiles and laughter. Watch your child at the playground and see how he or she becomes immersed in the present activity, whether it's playing in the sandbox, scaling a climbing wall, or going down a slide. Try to have a similar state of immersion and happiness when you get to take time for you. Here are some tips to make the most of your fun times:

- Choose activities that are just for you; choose others that involve the family.
- Schedule a time for leisure into your daily calendar.
- When having family time, pick sports, hobbies, or locations that everyone enjoys.
- Take time for unexpected pleasures. Occasionally, don't schedule an activity for your leisure time during the day. When leisure time comes, do what you feel.
- Quiet times during the morning can help you get ready for the day, and quiet times at night can help you unwind. Choose meditation or other relaxing, quiet activities to de-stress.
- Try to be fully present when you're having fun. Let go of cares, worries, and stress during fun activities; know that you can address what you need to after you're done with your fun time.

## Having Fun Solo and with Your Family

Here are some ideas for activities to do on your own:

- Try a new hobby or revive a former one.
- Join a gym or start going to fitness classes.
- Play a new sport.
- Join a book group or enroll in a class.
- Seek an artistic outlet -- go to a museum and sketch or take pictures in a park.
- Call an old friend.
- Take a walk in the neighborhood or watch the sunset.

Some activities to do as a family can include:

- Go to a sports game.
- Go see a movie or go to an amusement center.
- Take a day trip to a special spot.
- Take family walks together.
- Have a game night.
- Visit the museum.
- Participate in fundraisers together or volunteer together.
- Take dance, tennis, or other lessons together.
- Plan a family vacation and get the whole family involved in the planning process.



# How to Sharpen Your Decision-Making Skills

Making a decision involves careful consideration and analysis of numerous factors. Every day you are faced with numerous decisions, many seemingly small ones and occasionally ones that are more significant. Remember that no one is a perfect decision maker, and there is always room for improvement. Here are some tips for effective decision making.

## **Define the decision.**

First, define the specific decision. Try to avoid getting ahead of yourself or making assumptions about the future. Focus on the specific circumstance at hand.

## **Gather relevant information.**

Do your research and consult trusted individuals in your life who can provide valuable insight. This doesn't mean you do exactly what they say, but it can be helpful to hear other viewpoints.

## **Consider your values, priorities, and goals.**

Reflect on whether a potential decision aligns with your values, priorities, and goals—both short- and long-term ones. Brainstorm how you can adjust your decision to ensure it is.

## **Weigh the pros and cons.**

It can be helpful to write out a list of pros and cons. Assess the potential outcomes and consequences of each possibility. At the same time, try to manage your emotions and any catastrophic thinking. There isn't necessarily a "right" decision.

## **Check in with yourself.**

You might need some time to reflect. This is especially true if there are a lot of emotions involved. Research shows it can be helpful to sleep on it. Then in a day or two, see how you feel, what you want the outcome to be, and how you think you can best achieve that.

## **Make the decision in a timely manner.**

It's usually best not to make a decision impulsively, but you also don't want to be paralyzed and do nothing. Even if there is no deadline, avoid procrastinating. It's okay to take some time to think and reflect—just make sure the reflection period doesn't go on indefinitely.

**Learn from your mistakes.**

When you feel you've made the wrong decision, focus on extracting a lesson rather than beating yourself up. Think about what led you down that path and what you could do differently in the future. Strive to make decisions confidently, knowing that sometimes the outcome might not be perfect.

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