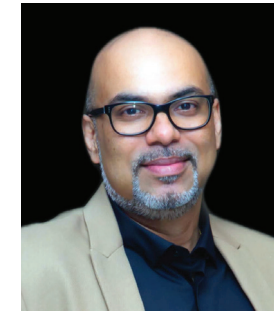


TO BE OR NOT TO BE



By **Baby Sam Samuel**

Has it ever happened that you go to a shop and like an item, and just as you are about to pick it up, your mind suddenly gets engulfed with confusion? Conflicting thoughts start hovering over your head – Should you buy this model or the other? Should you buy now or wait for a discount later? Ultimately, you leave the place without buying the item, unable to decide.

For many, this may seem like a trivial issue of not being decisive, but for some, this could be a routine day in their lives. The uncontrolled spiraling can make it very difficult to make or hold on to any decision.

Sounds familiar? If yes, then this article is for you.



The vicious cycle of analysis & overthinking

As much as we like more options, they can also create more difficulties. The “Paradox of Choice,” a phrase coined by Psychologist Barry Schwartz, also refers to the increased anxiety that often accompanies increased choices.

This inability to decide because of overthinking is colloquial-

ly called “analysis paralysis,” a state of mental paralysis that is often triggered by the anxiety or fear of making a wrong choice. It can happen when people are faced with multiple options as they dwell on different possibilities and weigh the pros and cons of each option.

This can be a frustrating and exhaustive process, resulting in more worrying. And if someone

is already prone to anxiety or suffers from depression or other mental health concerns, then the impact of this on their quality of life would be even more.

There could be another surprising yet common reason for indecisiveness: fear of change.

We may be so comfortable with the current status quo that we delay any decision that changes it.



How can we overcome this?

Here are a few ways by which you can make a decision without letting anxiety get the better of you

1. Practise the art of Mindfulness

As Paul Tillich quotes, “Decision is a risk rooted in the courage of being free.” A mind stuck in a web of overthinking and anxiety will find it harder to take decisive action, aggravating the frustration. Thus, it is pertinent that whenever one makes a decision, whether small or life-changing, make it with a free mind.

By embracing “mindfulness,” we can allow our minds to be present in the current moment. When faced with a dilemma, as an easy first step, try taking a few deep breaths, counting each breath, and focusing attention on each inhalation and exhalation. This will ground you and help you deal with any surge of emotions.



2. Have a clear goal and set deadlines

Consider the specifics. There's always an end goal to every decision. And there are steps and sub-goals to every end, and we can identify these. If you have defined objectives, it's easier to navigate through confusing thoughts.

Likewise, giving yourselves a deadline, an ultimatum of sorts, can create a sense of urgency to make up our minds. That way, you would still get to analyze the pros and cons, but the limited timeline helps to get a quicker and clearer perspective on what you are intuitively leaning toward.

3. Every decision cannot be

the right one.

Stop expecting yourself to make the right choice every single time. Taking risks is a part of our lives, and some decisions are best made without the fear of failing but with the determination to take the first step. As much as life may seem comfortable with safe decisions, life would also be lighter if you let go of absolute perfection.

4. You are more powerful than your negative thoughts

You are your power, a force that can conquer your negative thoughts. If we observe our own reactions and behaviors, we can identify the patterns that trigger the irrational cycles of thinking. So, sit with yourself and under-

stand your triggers. Once you recognize these, it becomes easier to overpower harmful thoughts. Also, speak to a friend, family member, or therapist who can guide you through your confusing thoughts and help break the patterns.

5. Practice

Implementing all these methods in a life-or-death scenario would not be practical. So, start small. Practice making inconsequential decisions. As you gain more comfort and confidence, move on to bigger challenges.

So the next time you are at a shop, make the right choice. Choose to dwell on the positive side of life.

