

# Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	xi
<i>List of Tables</i>	xiii
<i>Preface</i>	xv
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xix
<b>Part 1. Sources of Error</b>	
Chapter 1. Man, the Reluctant Decision Maker	3
<i>Key Themes 4 / Quality of Decision Making 10</i> <i>/ Sources of Miscalculation 14 / Scope of the Book 17</i>	
Chapter 2. Decision-making Strategies	21
<i>Optimizing and the Perils of Suboptimizing 21</i> <i>/ Satisficing 25 / Mixed Scanning 35 / The</i> <i>Decision Maker's Repertoire 39</i>	
<b>Part 2. Hot Cognitive Processes</b>	
Chapter 3. A Conflict Model of Decision Making	45
<i>Decisional Conflicts as Sources of Stress 46 / A</i> <i>Model of Emergency Decision Making 52</i> <i>/ Extending the Model to All Consequential Choices 67</i>	
Chapter 4. Defective Search and Appraisal under High Conflict	81
<i>Bolstering the Preferred Alternative 82</i> <i>/ Implications of Conflict Theory 85 / Bolstering</i>	

*before Commitment* 88 / *Six Bolstering Tactics* 91  
 / *Defensive Avoidance and Preconscious Biases* 95  
 / *Defensive Avoidance and Unconscious Conflict* 98

Chapter 5. Defensive Avoidance among Policy Makers 107

*Wishful Thinking in the Nixon Administration* 107  
 / *Ineffectual Planning for Desegregation* 109  
 / *Admiral Kimmel's Failure at Pearl Harbor* 120  
 / *Groupthink: A Collective Pattern of Defensive  
 Avoidance* 129

Chapter 6. The Decisional Balance Sheet 135

*Four Major Types of Consequence* 137 / *Importance  
 of Nonutilitarian Considerations* 140 / *Analyzing  
 Modes of Resolution* 144 / *The  
 Defective-Balance-Sheet Hypothesis* 147

Chapter 7. Stages of Decision Making 171

*Five Sequential Stages* 171 / *Implications for Group  
 Decisions* 179 / *Implications for Responsiveness to  
 Information* 180 / *The Stages Prolonged: Fischer's  
 Break with Communism* 183 / *Reversions and  
 Feedback Loops* 188 / *Bolstering as the Final Step  
 toward Action* 193 / *The Combined Conflict and  
 Stage-Sequence Model* 194

**Part 3. Major Research Findings**

Chapter 8. Open-minded Exposure to Challenging Information 203

*Selective Exposure: The Hypothesis That Deserved to  
 Be True* 203 / *Implications of the Conflict Model for  
 Information Preferences* 204 / *A Field Study of the  
 Draft Resistance Movement* 207 / *Stages of Decision  
 Making and Information Preferences* 212 / *Deciding  
 Which Information to Seek or Avoid* 214

Chapter 9. Anticipatory Regret 219

*An Elusive Phenomenon* 219 / *Functional Value* 222  
 / *Determinants* 223 / *Five Unfavorable Conditions*  
 224 / *The Unknown Rub* 228 / *Fear of Unknown  
 Risks among Disillusioned Executives* 234  
 / *Constructive Procrastination* 239

Chapter 10. Threats to Freedom of Choice	243
<i>Coercive Demands during the Watergate Coverup 243</i>	
<i>/ Contrasting Theoretical Approaches 247 / The</i>	
<i>Conflict-Theory Position 248 / Threats and Losses: A</i>	
<i>Classification 251 / Threat by Chance Occurrence</i>	
<i>252 / Loss Due to Chance Occurrence 255 / Threat</i>	
<i>by Directive Agent 256 / Loss Due to Directive</i>	
<i>Agent 262 / Self-concepts and Freedom 263</i>	
<i>/ Human Costs of Losing Choice 264 / Coercive</i>	
<i>Pressure and Defensive Avoidance 266 / The Illusion</i>	
<i>of No Choice 268 / Governmental Power and</i>	
<i>Restrictions on Personal Freedom 271</i>	
<i>/ Counteracting Malignant Compliance 273</i>	
Chapter 11. Effects of Commitment	279
<i>Commitment as a Source of Constraint 279</i>	
<i>/ Degrees of Commitment 284 / Commitment</i>	
<i>Traps for the Unwary 287 / Stabilizing Effect of</i>	
<i>Commitment 298 / Effects of Commitment</i>	
<i>Warnings 301 / Developmental Aspects of</i>	
<i>Commitment 306</i>	
Chapter 12. Postdecisional Conflict	309
<i>When the Honeymoon Is Over 309 / Sources of</i>	
<i>Regret 310 / Reactions to Postdecisional Crises 312</i>	
<i>/ Three Modes of Resolution 317 / Uses of Regret</i>	
<i>321 / Spontaneous Regret 323</i>	
<b>Part 4. Effective Interventions</b>	
Chapter 13. Challenging Outworn Decisions	339
<i>Clinical Examples 341 / Cognitive</i>	
<i>Confrontations 344 / Emotional Confrontations via</i>	
<i>Role Playing 348</i>	
Chapter 14. Improving the Quality of Decision Making	367
<i>Decision Counseling 368 / Applying the Balance</i>	
<i>Sheet Schema 377 / Outcome Psychodrama 379</i>	
<i>/ Emotional Inoculation for Postdecisional Setbacks</i>	
<i>388 / Counteracting Defensive Avoidance in</i>	
<i>Policy-making Groups 395 / Implications for</i>	
<i>Professional Training and General Education 400</i>	

<i>Appendix A. The Balance Sheet Procedure</i>	405
<i>Appendix B. Procedures for Outcome Psychodrama</i>	411
<i>Notes</i>	415
<i>References</i>	445
<i>Name Index</i>	475
<i>Subject Index</i>	483

## List of Figures

1. <i>Changes in heart rate during a decision-making experiment</i>	48
2. <i>A conflict-theory model showing basic patterns of emergency decision making evoked by warnings of impending danger</i>	55
3. <i>A conflict-theory model of decision making applicable to all consequential decisions</i>	70
4. <i>A conflict-theory model of three types of defensive avoidance</i>	86
5. <i>Analysis of groupthink, based on comparisons of high- and low-quality decisions by policy-making groups</i>	132
6. <i>Week-by-week attendance for the relevant-balance-sheet group, the irrelevant-balance-sheet group, and the untreated control group</i>	154
7. <i>Model of the stages of decision making</i>	190
8. <i>Combined model of coping patterns and stages of decision making</i>	196
9. <i>Mean agreement ratings of men with different decisional positions on the We-Won't-Go pledge</i>	210
10. <i>Mean interest scores of men reading pro-pledge and anti-pledge articles</i>	211

11.	<i>Changes in attractiveness of draft-exempt and draft-vulnerable alternatives</i>	255
12.	<i>Amount of shock a subject inflicts on a "victim" as a function of proximity</i>	270
13.	<i>The leaflet used in the birth control information experiment</i>	300
14.	<i>Percentage of women in each condition willing to do volunteer work for an organization advocating the dissemination of birth control information to high school students</i>	301
15.	<i>Attractiveness ratings of job alternatives by accountant trainees before and after making their job choice</i>	315
16.	<i>Changes over time in attractiveness ratings of Army job alternatives by draftees</i>	325
17.	<i>Postdecisional evaluations of alternatives at varying time intervals following commitment</i>	328
18.	<i>Long-term effects of emotional role playing on cigarette smoking</i>	353
19.	<i>Percentage of surgical patients requesting drugs during postoperative convalescence: A comparison between control patients and patients given a cognitive reappraisal type of coping procedure in preoperative counseling</i>	377
20.	<i>The balance sheet grid</i>	407

## List of Tables

1. *Predecisional behavior characteristic of the five basic patterns of decision making* 77
2. *Manifestations of conflict and related symptoms of stress for each of the five basic patterns of decision making* 78
3. *A schematic balance sheet grid for conceptualizing decisional conflict* 138
4. *List of considerations that might affect career choice, used in the balance sheet procedure as tested with college seniors facing a decision about what to do after graduation* 151
5. *Illustrative balance sheet at the stage when a decision is being made: Examples of conflicting cognitions verbalized by a smoker challenged by the Surgeon General's report on smoking and health* 160
6. *The conflict model applied to information preferences* 206
7. *Four types of situation that reduce freedom of choice* 251
8. *Summary of predictions from conflict theory on how the draft lottery would affect attitudes toward choice alternatives* 254
9. *Percentage of subjects agreeing to a large request following a small request* 293

10.	<i>Mean scores on decision time and predecisional bolstering among subjects given different types of information about the degree to which they would be committed by their announced choice</i>	305
11.	<i>Effect of a commitment warning on mean time taken to announce a choice</i>	308
12.	<i>Preliminary set of diagnostic questions (based on the seven criteria for effective decision making) to be answered by the decision counselor</i>	371
13.	<i>Diagnostic questions (based on the conflict-theory model) to be answered by the decision counselor in order to determine the most appropriate interventions</i>	373