



Decision Making and Criteria Questions

Rudy Rodriguez ([00:06](#)):

Hello and welcome to TADD Talks with ADDA. My name is Rudy Rodriguez, ADHD and executive function coach, and I'm joining you today from Asheville, North Carolina. Today I want to discuss decision making and criteria questions. I had a client, Keith, who had moved into a new apartment and wanted to purchase a sofa, but he just couldn't figure out what to buy. In fact, he delayed a decision and ended up without a sofa for several weeks. Have you ever found yourself in a similar situation in which you wanted to make a decision about what to purchase or where to go or what to do, but you simply couldn't make up your mind? Being indecisive is a fairly common experience for those of us with ADHD and Neurodiverse brains. Let me explain Neurotypicals. This would be the our non ADHD counterparts. The neurotypical brains. Neurotypicals may consider thoughts, ideas, options, and then proceed to make one for many, meaning that they reduce, they contract, they zero in until they reach a single answer or decision. This process of making decisions appears fairly simple, actually as simple as 1, 2, 3, much like Betty Crocker's old slogan, shake and bake. And yes, of course, we all know that baking is a simple process, right? So in contrast, the neurodiverse brain, these are the brains common to those of us. With ADHD, the neurodiverse brain generally follows a very different and sometimes multifaceted and complicated process. Our neurodiverse brains conjure up an idea thought, which often leads to another idea and generally followed by another idea and maybe another idea and another idea, and so on.

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So in essence, our neurodiverse brains, they have a greater tendency to expand and multiply thoughts, ideas, and options rather than reduce and contract as our neurotypical counterparts do. Our neurodiverse brain entertain so many thoughts and ideas and options at times that we often become confused. I hear often people talking about feeling overwhelmed and ultimately indecisive. This decision making process may become so stressful that we actually turn away from the decision making process. I had a friend that used to say that her brain was simply a warehouse of useless information. Of course, it's commonly said that neurodiverse brains are factories for generating endless ideas, creative ideas, but often several ideas.

Rudy Rodriguez ([02:58](#)):

Have you noticed times in your life when you felt paralyzed by the inability to make a decision or informed choice? You may experience this when trying to purchase a car. What color car? What type of seats do you want? Leather? Do you want upholstery? What kind of gadgets do you want in your car? And maybe you experience this when going to a restaurant to to order a meal from a menu, but there's six or eight pages or so many items. How do you decide? And maybe when you're packing for a trip,



there's so many things you can take and not take variables and what's allowed, and you know, it becomes confusing, overwhelming at times. If this sounds familiar, how do you feel during these circumstances or situations? Do you struggle with overwhelm? Do you feel excited and motivated to make a decision under these circumstances?

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Or do you find yourself wanting to avoid this process and walk away without having made a decision at all? If this sounds familiar, what happens next? When you walk away from a decision today? Does it feel better tomorrow from having procrastinated on making a decision today? Or maybe you find that you walk away feeling stressed and exhausted from this decision making process and experience. So let's explore now. What may help you to make decisions easier, maybe less overwhelming and less complicated? When I was trying to help my client, Keith, to make a decision about what sofa to purchase, I began by asking him a series of questions. I call these criteria questions. For instance, one criteria may be the color of the sofa, another may be the size of the sofa, or maybe he wants to consider purchasing a sofa bed for house guests, or simply a comfortable sofa for himself to sit in.

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It may be that do you want a sectional sofa or simply a sofa that sit against the wall and maybe you want to consider the arms of the sofa? Are they tall enough for you, for you to lean your back up against, or are they simply small and decorative? You see, by creating criteria questions, your ambiguity can become informed choices and decisions. When a task or decision is ambiguous, it's no wonder that we can't decide what to do. The dictionary defines ambiguity as a lack of clarity where a word, a phrase or a statement, or even a task, can be understood in more than one way, leading to uncertainty and confusion. So maybe you can recall a time when you felt ambiguous about what to do first on your to-do list. You may have been in a state of ambiguity at that very moment. To reduce ambiguity, again, criteria questions, you

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May start by breaking down a seemingly simple task into its multiple subtasks. This simple action can make it easier for us to see the many steps the substeps to complete for the overall task, which makes it clear and easier to figure out where to start. The same would be true of selecting a sofa. Keith was simply ambiguous about a sofa. Yes, he knew he wanted a sofa, but he hadn't stopped to consider the variables, the criteria by which to make a decision. So by helping Keith to develop a list of key criteria questions, he found it easier to gain clarity about what type of sofa, color, and style to purchase. So in conclusion, I want to invite you to give criteria questions a try. See what happens. List out your criteria questions, and I recommend that often you don't have any more than six, or you may expand into more indecision and lack of clarity. So give criteria questions a chance, and see what your experience is making. Does it make your decisions easier and more gratifying? I'm glad that you joined me today for this brief TADD talk on decision making and criteria questions. If you want to reach out to me for any reason, you can email me at CoachRudy@ADHDcenterforsuccess.com. Thank you for listening. Bye now.



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