

**Excerpt from**  
***What Type of Leader Are You?***  
***Using the Enneagram System to Identify and Grow Your Leadership Strengths***  
***and Achieve Maximum Success (McGraw-Hill, April '07)***

**Part 3**  
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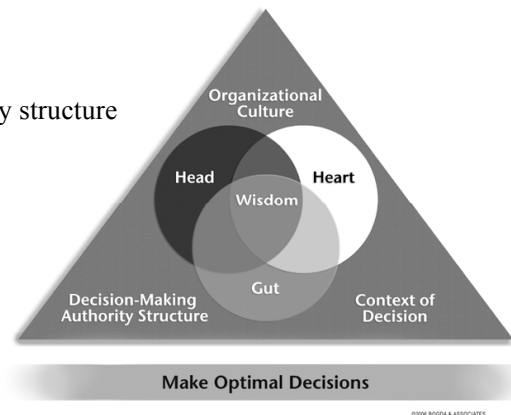
This final article, the last of three for the Enneagram Monthly, contains excerpts from chapter 7, “Make Optimal Decisions” -- with a focus on Enneagram Styles Four, Seven, and One -- and the last few paragraphs from the book’s conclusion: “Stretch Your Leadership Paradigms.”

***Excerpt from Chapter 7, “Make Optimal Decisions”***

Decision making is one of the most crucial tasks facing today’s leaders. Leaders must make decisions on a daily basis about issues both large and small. Globalization has added new complexities to the decision-making context, and leaders no longer have the luxury of time in which to consider their options. Today, leaders are frequently required to make wise decisions very quickly.

Having the ability to Make Optimal Decisions means that you are skilled in the following seven Competency Components:

1. Understanding the organizational culture
2. Honoring the organization’s decision-making authority structure
3. Factoring in the context of the decision
4. Using your head to make rational decisions
5. Using your heart by listening to yourself and others
6. Using your gut by trusting your instincts
7. Making wise decisions by integrating your head, heart, and gut



As you read further and reflect on the seven Competency Components of Make Optimal Decisions, rate yourself in each area on a scale of 1 to 5. This will help you determine your areas of strength as well as the areas needing development.

## The Seven Competency Components of Make Optimal Decisions

### Component 1: Understanding the organizational culture

Meeting organizational expectations about how decisions are made (e.g., collaborative, consultative, or authoritative); explaining honestly how and why decisions are made (within the boundaries of how much open disclosure is allowed within the organization); understanding organizational politics, such as who must be consulted before, after, and during the decision-making process; and being able to sell decisions to key individuals and groups within the organization.

Low High  
1 2 3 4 5

### Component 2: Honoring the decision-making authority structure

Respecting the lines of authority within the organization; understanding and adhering to your scope of decision-making authority; clearly defining decision-making roles, boundaries, and processes for those who report to you in order to foster compliance and accountability; delegating decision-making responsibilities according to the skill level and knowledge of the issues; and escalating complex or volatile decisions to higher levels in the organization when necessary.

Low High  
1 2 3 4 5

### Component 3: Factoring in the context of the decision

Knowing when a decision requires immediate action and being able to respond quickly; understanding when a decision is not urgent and time is available for consideration of options; being able to calculate risks and take action in the face of continuous uncertainty; knowing which decisions require extensive input and which can be made without a high level of involvement from others; understanding how a decision impacts other decisions, and being able to set priorities among multiple decisions that must be made; and making decisions with a broad context in mind so that the solutions benefit the entire organization and its customers, not just for one area or business unit.

Low High  
1 2 3 4 5

### Component 4: Using your head to make rational decisions

Collecting accurate data, including soliciting the most current and relevant information from groups and individuals inside and outside the organization; methodically analyzing situations and probing for underlying root causes of issues; detecting inaccuracies and flaws in both your own reasoning and that of others; specifying the decision-making criteria from which to evaluate alternative courses of action; being able to accept and integrate information that doesn't support your own ideas or preferred choice of action; and anticipating and weighing the impact of the decision on the organization's systems, structure, processes, and resources.

Low High  
1 2 3 4 5

**Component 5: Using your heart by listening to yourself and others**

Getting buy-in from key stakeholders for decisions, even when doing so takes additional time; seeking advice and input from others and factoring their reactions into your decisions; anticipating and weighing the potential impact of a decision on individuals and on groups such as employees, leaders, work groups, customers, and vendors; helping people feel they are part of the decision-making process; being responsive to people’s actual or anticipated feelings about decisions and developing constructive ways to respond to these; and making decisions that are congruent with both your own and the organization’s core values.

Low					High
1	2	3	4	5	

**Component 6: Using your gut by trusting your instincts**

Resolving problems efficiently and removing obstacles quickly; making timely and effective decisions, even when deadlines require that the decision be made with incomplete information; quickly sensing what decisions will help or hinder the accomplishment of the organization’s goals; knowing the right or best decision by consulting your gut; using your decision-making power and authority fairly and justly; and being able to readily translate decisions into plans and then transform plans into actions.

Low					High
1	2	3	4	5	

**Component 7: Making wise decisions by integrating your head, heart, and gut**

Factoring in logic, compassion, and gut reactions when making decisions; being able to use intuition as well as facts, feelings, and a desire to take action quickly; understanding your own personal biases and guarding against allowing these to influence your decisions; using a fair, consistent, and transparent decision-making process; making wise decisions that will stand the test of time, while simultaneously balancing such factors as risk, speed, difficult trade-offs, and uncertainty; having the courage to stand by a tough decision in the face of opposition; holding yourself and others accountable for the decision-making process and for the outcomes of decisions; and being flexible enough to reconsider decisions when new information becomes available, as well as knowing when to do so.

Low					High
1	2	3	4	5	

Making Optimal Decisions really means making wise decisions using your head, heart, and gut in an integrated way, while also taking into account the organizational culture, its expectations with regard to decision making and scope of authority, and the particular requirements or context of the decision itself.

Before examining the Enneagram style dimensions of Make Optimal Decisions, it is helpful to understand how the three Centers of Intelligence -- the Head Center, the Heart Center, and the Body (Gut) Center -- relate to making wise decisions.

We all have Head, Heart, and Body Centers, and we can use our Centers in productive or unproductive ways. For example, the Head Center's productive use is analysis, insight, and planning, but its misuses can be overanalyzing, projection, and overplanning. The Heart Center, which is supposed to be used for empathy, authentic relating, and compassion, can be misused for emotional manipulation, playing roles, and oversensitivity. The Body (Gut) Center's most productive uses are taking effective action, steadfastness, and gut-knowing, but can be misused by taking excessive action, passivity, and reactivity.

Imagine having to decide whether to reduce your staff by 35 percent in anticipation of a possible decrease in customer demand. To make a wise decision, the decision maker would do the following: (1) use the Head Center to analyze the relevant data, gain insight about the trends, and prepare a tentative plan; (2) use the Heart Center to consider the impact on both the employees and customers; and (3) use the Body (Gut) Center to answer these questions: *Is a staff reduction the right thing to do? If yes, what would be the best timetable for implementation? Can I stand behind this decision 100 percent?*

However, if a leader made this decision without using his or her three centers productively, the decision would be flawed. The decision might be based on (1) the supposition that there is a need for a reduction in staff rather than fact (e.g., no rigorous trend analysis); (2) insufficient consideration of the impact on people (e.g., no discussions with employees about possible transfers within the organization); or (3) the execution might be ineffective (e.g., no sense of the best timetable for the staff reduction). To make wise decisions means integrating the information you receive from the productive use of all Three Centers of Intelligence.

Individuals of all Enneagram styles can use and misuse their Centers of Intelligence in the ways described in the preceding paragraphs. In addition, each style misuses its own Center of Intelligence in a specific way. Fives, Sixes, and Sevens have specific misuses of the Head Center; Twos, Threes, and Fours have specific misuses of the Heart Center; and Eights, Nines, and Ones have specific misuses of the Body Center.

The productive uses and misuses of each Center of Intelligence, as well as the common Enneagram style-specific misuses, are described in the next chart. This chart is followed by the Enneagram

Dimensions of Make Optimal Decisions and the specific developmental activities for each Enneagram style that support the productive use of each center.

Centers of Intelligence	Productive Uses of this Center	Enneagram Style-Specific Misuses
<b>Head Center</b>	<p><b>Objective analysis</b> Understanding data without bias</p> <p><b>Astute insight</b> Understanding the meaning and implications of data</p> <p><b>Productive planning</b> Effectively structuring sets of activities</p>	<p><b>Overanalyzing</b> (Fives) Obsessive collection and examination of data</p> <p><b>Projection</b> (Sixes) Attributing one's own motives and behavior to other people</p> <p><b>Overplanning</b> (Sevens) Excessive planning; overscheduling</p>
<b>Heart Center</b>	<p><b>Empathy</b> Identifying with and understanding another person's feelings</p> <p><b>Authentic relating</b> Relating without pretense</p> <p><b>Compassion</b> Heartfelt kindness toward another person</p>	<p><b>Emotional manipulation</b> (Twos) Attempting to control others through the calculated use of feelings</p> <p><b>Playing roles</b> (Threes) Relating through an image or role</p> <p><b>Oversensitivity</b> (Fours) Excessive emotionality</p>
<b>Body (Gut) Center</b>	<p><b>Taking effective action</b> Taking well-chosen and timely action</p> <p><b>Steadfastness</b> Being firm and resolute</p> <p><b>Gut-knowing</b> Having a clear and trustworthy instinctive response</p>	<p><b>Excessive action</b> (Eights) Taking too much action</p> <p><b>Passivity</b> (Nines) Being inert</p> <p><b>Reactivity</b> (Ones) Reacting too strongly or quickly</p>

## Enneagram Dimensions of Make Optimal Decisions



### ENNEAGRAM STYLE ONES

The possibility of making the wrong choice and then having to live with the consequences causes Ones a great deal of concern. As a result, One leaders typically use their Head Centers to analyze the information they receive and their Body (Gut) Centers to sense the right course of action and execute a well-conceived plan. At various points during the process, they use their Heart Centers, consulting their own value systems to make certain that the decision and plan of action are congruent with their core principles.

Because One leaders usually trust their own judgment, they tend to make most decisions on their own. They will solicit input from those they respect, but only when necessary. It can be difficult for Ones to acknowledge that they don't know how to do something, and they usually perceive asking someone for

help as an imposition. At the same time, because One leaders like to be aligned with the organization's decision-making rules and roles, Ones will try to use a more participatory decision-making style if the organization's culture values collaborative decision making.

When Ones make decisions, they try to do the following: (1) understand the organization's decision-making authority structure, (2) clearly delineate the decision-making framework for their subordinates, and (3) make decisions they believe fall within their span of control.

Here's an example of Pat, a One leader, making an effective and timely decision.

Pat was asked to lead a 10-person team in which three team members had serious performance issues. Pat developed a plan in which she would do the following: (1) take no action for 90 days so that she could observe the performance of all team members; (2) investigate the past performance of the three poorly performing individuals via employee records and conversations with their prior bosses; (3) analyze the bases for the subpar performances to determine what, if anything, she could do to improve skills and attitudes of the individuals involved; and (4) take appropriate action. At the end of ninety days, the performance of one of the three had improved dramatically, one was moved to another group where there was a better skill match, and the third employee was terminated.

When faced with the need to make a decision, Ones may err in making a precipitous or overly strident decision when a more temperate decision would be more effective. In addition, Ones can become confused when the decisions they must make involve a great deal of emotionality. Ones prefer to make rational decisions that their gut tells them is the best alternative, rather than dealing with the many interpersonal issues involved. As a result, when confronted with emotionally charged issues, Ones can start to doubt their minds and their guts.

The following story illustrates a One's behavior when deciding whether to fire an employee:

Pat was extremely concerned about Keith's current performance. Although he had once been an excellent employee, his performance and interpersonal interactions had slipped in the past six months. Had Pat not seen Keith's prior excellent performance, she would have terminated him without hesitation. However, because she knew Keith's capability, she refused to give up on him. Because of this, she failed to recognize that Keith's sudden fall was the result of a home-related problem beyond her ability to solve.

Pat engaged in six months of emotionally draining conversations with Keith, during which time he blamed her rather than taking responsibility for himself. After each encounter, Pat blamed herself for not being able to remedy the situation. Eventually, she realized that as a One, she had a very difficult time accepting the fact that she could not fix the situation; Ones believe feel they should be able to fix anything

and anybody. Pat also recognized that she had ignored her initial gut reaction that Keith had problems that only he himself could solve.

### Development Stretches for Ones

Centers of Intelligence	Activities for Ones That Develop Each Center
<p><b>Head Center</b></p>	<p><b>Objective analysis</b> Be careful not to let your positive or negative opinions about another person overshadow the objective data; don't overthink your decisions.</p> <p><b>Astute insight</b> Go beyond the facts to the patterns implicit in the facts; understand the themes derived from the patterns.</p> <p><b>Productive planning</b> Make sure you don't overplan a decision or overorganize its execution; allow room for emergent information and activities.</p>
<p><b>Heart Center</b></p>	<p><b>Empathy</b> Consider both your own and other people's feelings in depth.</p> <p><b>Authentic relating</b> Be willing to share deeply held feelings when discussing issues.</p> <p><b>Compassion</b> Make certain you don't become too emotionally involved when making hard decisions, but don't be too cerebral either.</p>
<p><b>Body (Gut) Center</b></p>	<p><b>Taking effective action</b> Turn decision making into an art form; use just enough action to get the results you want.</p> <p><b>Steadfast</b> Hold firm in your decisions, but not to the point of rigidity.</p> <p><b>Gut-knowing</b> Learn to honor your gut reactions by asking yourself what it is you know very deeply to be true; watch out for reacting too quickly.</p>



### Enneagram Style Fours

When Four leaders make decisions, they use their Head and Body Centers but, above all, they trust their Heart Centers. Fours have feelings about many things -- the facts of a situation, the alternative choices they might make, the people involved, the likely outcome, and even their feelings about their feelings. Fours usually have strong opinions about their decisions, and they become particularly passionate when a decision relates to their most important values.

Because many Fours are highly analytical, they gather information (including information about feelings), scrutinize the issues, talk to others about their thoughts, feelings, and prior experiences, and then re-analyze the information to determine the best course of action. Fours also factor the organization's

culture and decision-making authority structure into the equation, and they stand behind the decisions they make.

Here's a story about Jacob, a Four leader faced with an important strategic decision:

Jacob was proud of the research center he had created. In five years, he led the center from infancy to its current status as an institution well-respected for doing first-rate academic research that could be applied in real world settings. In addition to hiring the top talent in the field, Jacob had decided that the center would only do research that had practical applications. Because of Jacob's clarity about his values -- making a difference by conducting research that could be used to improve people's lives -- the center has thrived.

Four leaders can err by making decisions that overemphasize their values and/or are overly focused on personal experiences and feelings, both their own and those of other people. For example, a Four may decide to raise an employee's salary because the individual has personal issues that cause him or her to need additional financial resources. However, the Four may pay insufficient attention to the fact that this employee's work performance is far below that of other employees who did not receive raises. In an effort to be compassionate, the Four may unintentionally be unfair and damage employee morale.

Many decisions don't have obvious answers, and Fours can become distraught when a decision is complex and none of the alternatives seems ideal. A Four leader will also experience angst over a decision where one choice, though profitable, may hurt some employees. Because Fours are so sensitive themselves, they tend to put themselves in the shoes of the other person -- or what they imagine to be their shoes -- and they have a difficult time making a decision that they believe will cause someone to suffer.

Here's an example of a time when Jacob had a very hard decision to make:

Jacob knew that for the center to grow, the older research scientists had to mentor the younger scientists. However, the two most senior scientists were unwilling to do so, believing their job was only to do research. They also had no interest in developing the skills of the scientists who had just recently received their graduate degrees. Jacob knew that (1) without these two scientists' support, he would never get the mid-level scientists involved in mentoring; (2) if he pushed the issue and alienated the senior scientists, they might resign over this issue; and (3) if he ignored the problem, the work of the center would be hurt. Jacob was unable to deal with this issue for two years, until he sought guidance from a consultant, who helped Jacob develop an incentive system that was successful in motivating the mid-level scientists to become mentors.



## Development Stretches for Fours

Centers of Intelligence	Activities for Fours That Develop Each Center
<p><b>Head Center</b></p>	<p><b>Objective analysis</b> Don't let your personal experiences and feelings bias your view of the facts; become more objective in your decision making.</p> <p><b>Astute insight</b> Develop insights of the mind in addition to insights of the heart. Ask yourself: <i>What do I think is true?</i> in addition to <i>What do I feel is true?</i></p> <p><b>Productive planning</b> Think through your decisions using a logical as well as an intuitive approach; if you get two different answers, ask yourself which decision will provide the best result.</p>
<p><b>Heart Center</b></p>	<p><b>Empathy</b> Examine your perceptions about what other people are feeling about issues and decisions; make sure you are not projecting your own emotional reactions onto others.</p> <p><b>Authentic relating</b> Let others tell you their real thoughts and feelings about a decision; be open to whatever is said.</p> <p><b>Compassion</b> Remember that excessive emotionality does not help either you or others when making decisions.</p>
<p><b>Body (Gut) Center</b></p>	<p><b>Taking effective action</b> Don't let feelings immobilize and prevent you from making a decision; action is one way to move through emotional reactions.</p> <p><b>Steadfastness</b> Being adamant and overly tenacious about a decision rarely enlists people, but neither does being overly compliant or passive. Find the middle ground.</p> <p><b>Gut-knowing</b> Ask yourself on a regular basis what your gut reactions are to these questions: <i>What do I really want?</i> <i>What should I do here?</i></p>



## Enneagram Style Sevens

Like Sixes, Seven leaders have extremely active minds. Unlike Sixes, however, Sevens make most decisions so fast, their decision making may appear nearly spontaneous. However, it is the result of their ability to process large quantities of information extremely quickly.

Sevens usually make decisions that push limits or encourage innovation. Ideally, they like to involve others in decision-making discussions because more possible alternatives are likely to be generated. Although Sevens often refer to themselves as egalitarian or democratic leaders, this does not mean they believe that all decisions should be made by a consensus or a majority vote. Sevens simply want everyone to join the conversation and express an idea or opinion.

When Sevens know that a decision requires considerable forethought and input, they will take time to make the best decision possible. Seven leaders may also assemble an informal set of respected advisors and use the new input as additional data upon which to base their decision.

Here's an example of a Seven leader who sought the counsel of others:

Steven, the leader of an important division of a large company, had abundant ideas for strategic activities, but his management staff complained that they were going in too many directions and had unclear priorities. Steven decided to convene a group of consultants and coaches who had worked with him in the past and asked them these three questions: *What do you know about my organization that might be affecting its ability to become more strategic? What actions would you advise me to take? What do I need to change in my own behavior?* Although Steven never revealed his reactions to their comments, he made several important decisions following this meeting that had a highly positive impact on his division.

The Seven's quick processing time can also interfere with their arriving at the best decisions, for the following reasons:

- Sevens may believe they have all the information required, but in fact they may be missing critical data or may not have sufficient depth of information.
- Others may need more time than the Seven to process the information related to the decision.
- Sevens may omit important information when they explain a decision, assuming that this information is obvious to everyone.
- Sevens may express ideas that are not intended to be decisions, but that may be misunderstood as such by others, who start implementing them.

A Head Center style, Sevens can become so stimulated by their own thoughts or by an interchange of ideas that they have difficulty calibrating the reactions and feelings of others. It is as though the Head Center is turned on at these times, but the Heart Center is switched off and thus unavailable as a source of data. Decisions based on what someone thinks others are feeling (a cerebral speculation) rather than on feeling what someone else is feeling (empathy) can lead to less than optimal decisions.

Finally, Sevens may not pay enough attention to the organizational politics surrounding the decision. Most Sevens consider politics to be an annoyance that impedes their ability to make decisions and take action. Unfortunately, many excellent ideas have been lost in organizations precisely because decision makers did not get the right people involved in the right way and at the right time.

Steven had learned this lesson the hard way earlier in his career:

Steven perceived himself as a model manager and began implementing new projects in his department immediately. He constantly made recommendations to his immediate boss about ways to improve the division, and he offered unsolicited opinions to the company president about the organization’s strategic direction. After six months, Steven’s boss sat him down and said, “You’ve been implementing projects that require prior authorization, indirectly criticizing me by making numerous suggestions about how to change the division, and telling the president how to run the organization. If you want to continue working here, you’re going to have to learn to show a little more respect for other people’s jobs.”

### Development Stretches for Sevens

Centers of Intelligence	Activities for Sevens That Develop Each Center
<b>Head Center</b>	<p><b>Objective analysis</b> Make sure you really have all the data, not just the highlights.</p> <p><b>Astute insight</b> To have insight takes time and reflection; allow yourself both of these in order to get a deeper view of the issues.</p> <p><b>Productive planning</b> Make a decision and a plan, and stick to them; focus your mind.</p>
<b>Heart Center</b>	<p><b>Empathy</b> Examine your feelings and read your internal cues; this will help you to read others’ body language.</p> <p><b>Authentic relating</b> Relate through more than your mind alone; when you relate through your heart as well, your decisions will be better.</p> <p><b>Compassion</b> Think about the potential impact on people for every alternative you consider.</p>
<b>Body (Gut) Center</b>	<p><b>Taking effective action</b> Slowing your pace will help you make wise decisions, not just decisions that intrigue or stimulate you.</p> <p><b>Steadfastness</b> Become confident in your depth of knowledge and in your capacity to feel; this confidence will enable you to make the best decisions and to stand by them.</p> <p><b>Gut-knowing</b> Bypass your tendency to overthink and overplan by developing your gut-knowing. When considering options, ask yourself: <i>What of these options does my gut tell me will lead to the best outcome?</i></p>

### *Excerpt from “Conclusion: Stretch Your Leadership Paradigms”*

Every one of us has the capacity to grow and develop. Choosing to take the path of accelerated growth is critical for both current and future leaders who want to achieve leadership excellence. A student from an MBA program where I teach addressed this issue in the following e-mail:

I was hoping you could help me find a term I’m looking for as part of a paper I’m writing for a leadership class.

I’m looking for a word to describe someone who’s extremely perceptive and in touch with the environment and the people around them him or her -- a word that describes someone who can walk into a meeting and immediately pick up on the type of energy in the room. This is the sort of person who can see

beauty where others overlook it -- for instance, if a group were hiking through the mountains, this person would be the first to stop the group to admire the view from a lookout.

It's someone who, on picking up an object, notices not only the object's function, but also the design, texture, quality of construction, time, and craftsmanship that went into its manufacture, and so on...someone whose senses are more open and acute than the average person's.

Words I've come up with so far include *perceptive*, *self-aware*, *emotionally intelligent*, and *spiritual*. However, none of these really encapsulates everything I'm trying to describe about this quality.

Any other terms you would suggest?

- Baron

My response to Baron was a single word: *conscious*. Organizations need conscious leaders. Becoming an excellent leader, not just a good one, means being conscious of many factors: (1) who you are and the assets you bring to the organization; (2) the impact your behavior has on others; (3) the areas in which you need to develop; and (4) the ways in which you handle your power and authority. Being conscious also means demonstrating integrity in dealing with the ethical challenges leaders face on a daily basis and being a role model for future leaders. In today's business climate of competing demands and constant change, conscious leadership is not optional; it is essential.

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