

Decide



Three-minute Decision-making

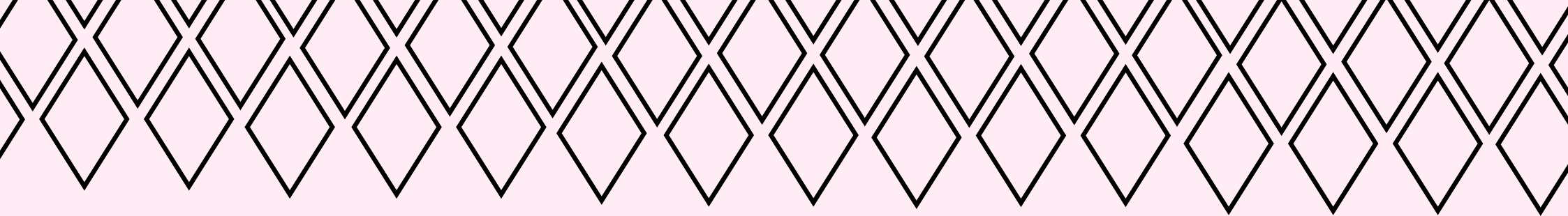
A Self-help Tool

Introduction

We use intuition every day. It is a natural and valuable part of life. Unlike logical or analytical processes that require time and deliberate effort, intuitive decisions are made very quickly and often without conscious thought (Kahneman, 2011).

Intuition is especially associated with the ability to perceive connections between related things and to make satisfying choices (Wiseman, 2009, p 245-248, citing Dijksterhuis and Zeger Van Olden, 2006). It offers a potentially valuable way of making career choices.

The 'Diamond 9' method is a simple way of providing structure to guide your intuition. It enables you to take quite a lot of occupations (up to 9) that you are considering and intuitively sort them into those that are really appealing and those that are less appealing. The technique also works if you want to sort ideas more slowly.



Before you start, make sure you have researched what the occupations are actually like. This is very important. Otherwise, your intuitive responses may be affected by inaccurate information (Kahneman, 2011, p69, citing Alter, et al. 2007).

Remember that Prospects is the most comprehensive source of information on graduate occupations in the UK. Use the 'Jobs and Work Experience' section to explore 'Career Sectors' and the 'Jobs Profiles'.

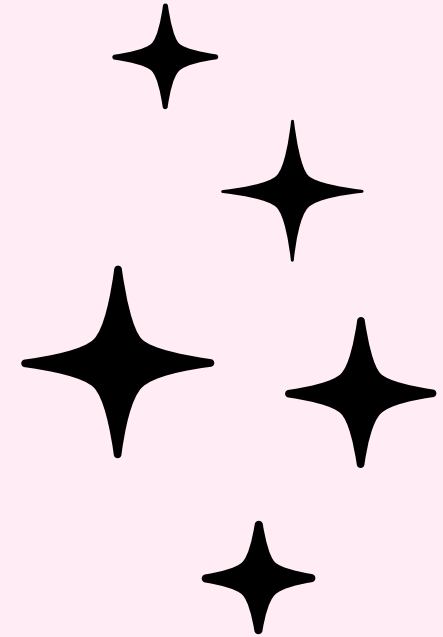
You can use the Diamond 9 tool to make a firm career choice ('this is the career I am going to do'); or a tentative / temporary decision ('this is the career that appeals to me most, at this point in time, but I might change my mind later').

This tool is designed to...

- Help you use your intuition in making a career choice.
- Provide an alternative to decisions based upon pros and cons.
- Give you a way to make a decision about your career quickly.

Consider using this tool if you...

- Are someone who really trusts your 'gut instinct'.
- Have done a lot of thinking about career choices, but still feel stuck.
- Are being held back from developing your employability because you do not know what career you want to do and need to 'call it' so you can take action.



How to use this tool

1

First, write each of the occupations you are considering on a separate post-it note.

To avoid unconscious bias, it is important that you use the same colour post-its for each and write each out carefully and clearly, to the same standard. Ideally write each in block capitals (Kahneman, 2011, p63). Lay them out randomly on a table.

2

Second, make sure you are in a positive mood.

For example, you might play some positive music, or recall some happy memories. If you can make your immediate environment 'feel' creative, that can help too. Things that create a creative environment include having potted plants in the room, or pictures of creative artworks (Wiseman, 2009, p136-138, citing Forster, 2005).

How to use this tool



Third, quickly read each in turn.

It does not matter what order you do this in.



Four, distract your conscious mind for 5 or 10 minutes.

There are different ways to do this. For instance: word puzzles, crosswords, anagrams, or a computer game like Tetris (Wiseman, 2009, p142-143), or reading an absorbing book.

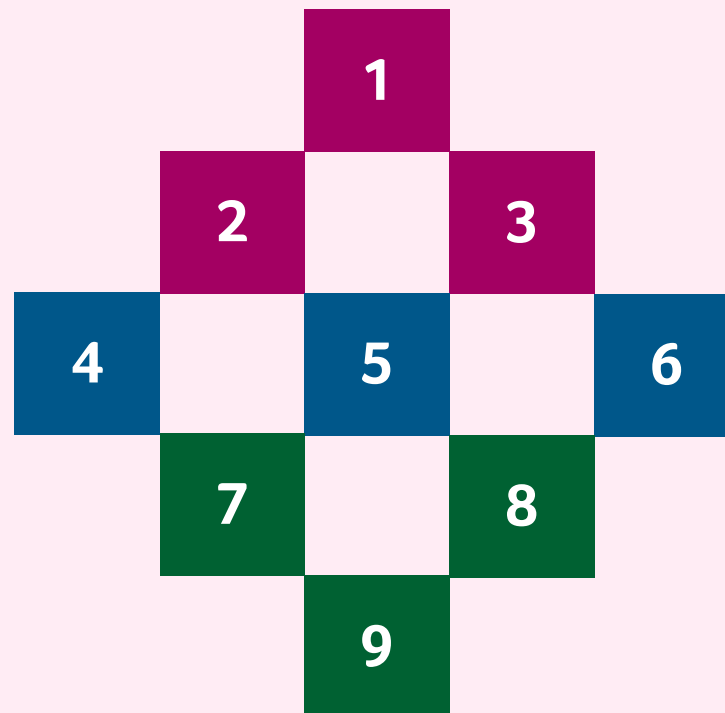
5

Five, quickly arrange your post-its into a diamond shape.

Put the occupations that most appeal to you at the top and those that appeal least at the bottom.

Try to pick your top three and then your bottom three, and finally add in the three that are left. Aim to take no more than 60 seconds to complete the whole exercise.

When you have finished, you should take a photo of the arrangement for future reference.



Pause, Reflect, Act.

You might want to discuss the results with a careers professional or someone who knows you well.

- What surprised you about the way you ordered them?
- What do you feel about the top three choices?
- What are the insights you have gained from this exercise?
- What questions and issues does it raise?
- What actions do you need to do now to build on this exercise?
- Are there other related Self-help Tools that you would like to use as well?

NB: Because everyone is different, this tool may not work for you, so please look at our other Self-help Tools as well.

References and Resources

- Kahneman, K. (2011). Thinking Fast and Slow. Allen Lane, London.
- Wiseman, R. (2009). 59 Seconds Think a Little Change a Lot. Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Dave Stanbury, March, 2023.



If you are a member of staff from another educational organisation and want to use a limited number of our Self-help Tools with your students, we would love to hear from you and share good practice. We would ask that you retain references to University of Huddersfield as a matter of courtesy and acknowledge the other sources we have used. Thank you.