



Group Decision Tip

E-mailed every two weeks to help groups make good decisions

Free from past

In principle, every encounter, every meeting, is an opportunity to start anew. It is good to learn from the past but not be artificially constrained by it.

For example, just because we have spent a lot of money or effort on something is not by itself justification for spending more. Economists call past expenditures "sunk costs" and they should have no influence over the decision at hand. The proper decision criterion for spending money or effort is how it might affect the future, not how it might change the past. Revenge too may create the illusion of making the past better, but in fact only makes the future worse.

We can't change the past by the decisions we make today, but we can change our feelings about the past by making good decisions for tomorrow.

Practical Tip: Glance back over your shoulder, but not so much that you stumble on what's ahead. Let the past inform the future, but not dominate it.

Experiences from our past are like rocks, best used to pile up and stand upon, see clearly, and step off into the future in any direction; not to be used for building walls.

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