



WHOLE BODY DECISION MAKING

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We're all trying to make our way within a culture that teaches us not to listen to ourselves. When we're not listening to ourselves, though, we have to base our decisions off what other people value or believe, and that doesn't always work out very well. So how do we get back to ourselves?

There's a way of making decisions that involves listening to our heads, hearts, and bodies. I call this whole body decision making, and I'm so excited to share it with you.

Nicole's a Registered Psychologist with a private practice in Edmonton. Her approach is collaborative and feminist at its heart. She specializes in working with people who've experienced abuse and trauma, as well as those struggling with feeling burnt out and learning to say no. She offers groups and workshops in addition to her 1-1 work. She can be found at www.embodiedpsychology.ca





HEAD

The head is the part of you that connects with reason – it can help you to evaluate pros and cons to a particular course of action, it can help you look at evidence about how similar situations have been for you in the past, and it can help you remember what you already know about a particular person and what you can expect from them.

HEART

The heart represents your emotion center, connecting you to your feelings about a situation or person. It can also be used as a gauge - how would you feel about yourself if you made this decision?

BODY

The body connects you to your so-called “gut feelings” or intuition, as well as how your body holds the story of what you’re experiencing. For example, a tightness in your stomach or a heaviness in your chest can say a lot. Your body can also experience pleasant sensations like warmth or openness, Now, let’s work through an example.

STARTING WITH THE BASICS

First, think of an upcoming decision (big or small) you need to make. I have to decide about:

Next, list your options. At this point you don’t need to judge the options – just write them out.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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For each option listed on the previous page, I'd like to invite you to connect with your head, heart, and body to understand where you stand and what you really want.

Option 1: _____

My head says:

My heart says:

My body says:

Option 2: _____

My head says:

My heart says:

My body says:

Option 3: _____

My head says:

My heart says:

My body says:



Please note: Whole body decision making was adapted from a model of sexual decision making presented by Calgary's Centre for Sexuality. The original ideas can be found at www.centreforsexuality.ca

Based on what my head, heart, and body have told me, my decision is:

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