

Choices, opportunities & pathways questionnaire

★ YOUTH ★
EMPLOYABILITY
PROGRAMME



Our lives are shaped by the thousands of choices we make and what happens as a result of these choices.

Our mindset determines how we approach each day; either with the belief that we can shape and influence our destinies or that we are like rudderless boats on the ocean, with no control over which beach or rocky shore we land on.

Taking more care and responsibility for the choices we make will influence what opportunities come our way and how we make the best use of these opportunities. When we begin to appreciate the opportunities given to us, we learn how to carve out pathways that will lead us to lives of happiness, wellbeing and success.

Have a go with this questionnaire to see whether you are good at making smart choices and whether you use the opportunities provided with appreciation and wisdom.

QUESTIONS

1 Your car is getting old and you want to upgrade to a new one. You've found one you like, and the salesman says you can get a loan to pay it off over three years. When you have a choice like this to make, how carefully do you weigh up all your options before you act?

- a) I mostly just react to situations and tend to go with the first option I see.
- b) I get anxious when faced with choices, and this gets in the way of me thinking clearly and making good choices.
- c) I give things a bit of thought before making a choice. Depends on how I'm feeling on the day.
- d) I am reasonably careful about looking at all my options before making a decision. I would work out my budget before taking on extra debt.
- e) I am very careful with checking out all the options before making a choice. I would shop around to find the best deal before committing to the purchase.
- f) Other.

2 Think about the outcomes of choices you have made in the last few months. How satisfied were you with these outcomes?

- a) Not at all satisfied. Life is punishing.
- b) Pretty unsatisfied. I tend to make dumb choices.
- c) Meh. Some good, some bad.
- d) Mostly satisfied. Impossible to always get it right.
- e) Really satisfied with the choices I've made recently.
- f) Other.

3 How consistent are you about making choices that are in line with your values and beliefs? For example, you might believe strongly that you should financially support your whānau, yet you still choose to smoke marijuana on your way to work, even though you know that a drug test could result in you losing your job.

- a) My choices often don't line up with my values.
- b) I would like my values and my choices to be in tune but this doesn't ever seem to happen somehow.
- c) Depends how important it is. I wouldn't steal or major stuff like that, but I might do things like driving without a WOF or sneaking into a concert without paying.
- d) I try to live life in harmony with my values. I feel better when I do. I am not perfect and sometimes slip up, though.
- e) I work really hard to make choices that line up with my values. I like my walk to reflect my talk. I want to be a good person with good values, and I want my whānau to be proud of me.
- f) Other.

4 Do you sometimes get caught up and stressed out with small choices, like what to wear or what to eat for lunch, and then have little brain space left over for making the bigger choices, like what sort of job or apprenticeship you should look for?

- a) Yes. Life wears me down so much, I have nothing left for the big decisions. Makes me angry.
- b) Yes, I get stressed and anxious by the endless choices and decisions I have to make every day. Leaves me feeling very tired.
- c) Depends on my mood. Sometimes I sweat the small stuff and some days not.
- d) Mostly I don't get too caught up in small stuff, and I can focus on the bigger decisions I need to make.
- e) I don't sweat the small stuff. I focus on the choices that are much more important for the pathway I am carving out for my future.
- f) Other.

5 How would you describe your mindset: do you feel that you have real power to shape your life and have a positive outlook in being able to achieve this, or do you feel that life just happens to you and it is a daily struggle which you endure the best you can?

- a) Life is a daily struggle which I endure the best I can. It sucks!
- b) It is hard to be positive when life is such a struggle to get on top of.
- c) I have an OK mindset. I understand I can influence what happens, but some days it feels like I'm having to fight against the current to get ahead.
- d) I am a pretty optimistic person. I know that if I want to succeed, I need to work hard and take some knocks on the way.
- e) I have a growth mindset. I am positive and see opportunities all around. I just need to stay positive and determined and willing to ask for help when I need it.
- f) Other.

6 If you were given an opportunity requiring knowledge or skills you don't have, how do you think you would cope with this?

- a) I would be constantly worried I'd get caught. I'd probably end up exiting myself before they could kick me out.
- b) I would be hopelessly nervous and filled with guilt that I pretended I could do something that I couldn't. I would have no confidence and end up making mistakes and doing things wrong.
- c) I would try to bluff my way through, hoping no one noticed.
- d) I would cope OK. I would watch everyone around me to see what they were doing and just copy. I would try to learn as fast as I could.
- e) I would be really determined to learn what I needed to, to build on the skills I have. I would work hard to catch up and even do better than the more experienced people. I would see this as a challenge and an opportunity.
- f) Other.

7 ***“When people give me a chance or opportunity, like a job or a place on a team, I am always grateful, excited and positive.”***

Do you agree with this statement?

- a) No. I am usually suspicious and uneasy, worried it probably won't end well.
- b) Not really. Normally I'm very anxious that I won't be able to meet people's expectations.
- c) Maybe. I would be happy but also nervous.
- d) Yes. I would be appreciative that someone believed in me, and I would be pretty happy with being given the opportunity.
- e) Yes, absolutely! I would be grateful, excited and positive. I would do my very best to prove that they made the right decision in choosing me.
- f) Other.

8 **How well do you learn from the past when faced with a choice to make? For example, if you got a ticket for having no car rego, would you choose to risk getting caught again when your new rego expires, or would you put money aside each pay day to make sure you could afford to renew it?**

- a) I don't learn from the past. It feels like I get crushed whatever I do, so I can't see the point in 'playing by government rules', which really just suit the rich anyway.
- b) I try to learn from the past, but life happens, and it often gets in the way of me making good choices.
- c) I sometimes learn from the past, especially when things went well. I'm always keen to learn from the good stuff. I tend to blank out the bad.
- d) I am mindful about the past. I make an effort to never make the same mistake twice. I know what the right thing to do is, but I'll admit to sometimes doing things that are a bit risky.
- e) I learn really well from the past. I like to believe I am a fast learner, so I don't make the same mistake twice.
- f) Other.

9 Do you procrastinate when you have a choice to make? Do you put off making decisions when they feel too hard or complex or when it seems like there's no easy answer?

- a) Yes, I prefer not being cornered into making choices. I like to keep my options open.
- b) I find it hard to decide what to do when faced with choices, even things like what to wear in the morning. I stress about not getting things right. This means that sometimes choices are made for me.
- c) I sometimes put off making choices, hoping someone else might do it for me. When I must make a decision, I will do it. Most of the time things work out OK.
- d) I don't like putting off making a decision. When I do, I over-think what is needed and tend to get it wrong. I like to think things through, decide and then move on.
- e) No, I am not a procrastinator. I look at my choices, weigh them up and then make the best decision I can with the knowledge I have in front of me.
- f) Other.

10 Albert Camus once said, "Life is a sum of all your choices." Are you happy with the path that you're choosing for yourself?

- a) No, but there's nothing I can do about it.
- b) Not really. I am sure I could do better for myself.
- c) Mostly. Could be better, could be worse.
- d) Yes, so far so good.
- e) I am very happy with the path I'm choosing for myself. I have set myself some big work and life goals, and I am working toward getting there day by day.
- f) Other.

RESULTS

Now take a few moments to look back over your answers. Do you notice any patterns in the way you responded to these questions?

If you mostly chose As

You have a hard time making choices. You view your life as a struggle, filled with hard choices that you don't want to make. Because of your mindset, you avoid making any kind of choice, and when you do need to choose, you often don't think about it much beforehand. This has led to you being unhappy both with your past choices and with where your life is going.

You might believe that all hope is lost, but it's not too late to turn your life around. Start looking at life with a positive mindset and believe that you can make good choices for yourself. Even if it doesn't turn out how you thought, learn from it for next time.

Take a look at the resources, they'll be able to help you get into a positive mindset, so you can start making good choices and seeing your life as filled with opportunities.

If you mostly chose Bs

You get anxious when faced with choices, so you prefer not to make them. Your nerves often get in the way of you making a good choice. You also can get caught up in small decisions, leaving you with little energy to focus on choices that really matter. This means you sometimes make bad choices, which can lead to you viewing your life negatively.

It would be good for you to be more confident in yourself and your choices. It's not the worst thing in the world if you make a bad choice, if you learn from it. Try to focus on the positive and see every choice as a learning opportunity.

The resources can help you develop a positive mindset which will help you be more confident about life and having to make choices. Your opportunities will grow from there.

If you mostly chose Cs

How you see your life and your choices depends on how you're feeling that day. Some days your mindset is positive, you are happy to make choices and you are hopeful for the future. But you have your bad days too. You don't always learn from the past because you often only look at the positive outcomes instead of trying to learn from your mistakes.

Try to learn from your past choices that didn't go so well. Learning from the past will only help you in the future. Another thing you could work on is keeping a positive mindset even when things get tough. A positive mindset means you'll feel better about having to make choices and it'll help you see your life in as filled with opportunities rather than struggles.

Take a look at the resources for ideas.

If you mostly chose Ds

You're reasonably good about looking at your options first when you need to make a choice. You are mostly optimistic about your life, and you do try to learn from your past mistakes. Sometimes you take risks, and you might believe that it's impossible to make good choices all the time.

However, it is possible with a bit of effort. If you keep a positive mindset and see every choice as an opportunity, then you should be on the right track to creating the life you want.

The resources can help you with keeping a consistent positive attitude and can tell you how to make the right choice every time.

If you mostly chose Es

Well done! You have a positive outlook on life, and you're very careful with your choices. You also do well learning from your past. This has resulted in you being very happy with your choices and where your life is headed. Even challenges look like opportunities to you.

There is always room for improvement, though, so please do check out the resources as they still might have some pointers for you.

