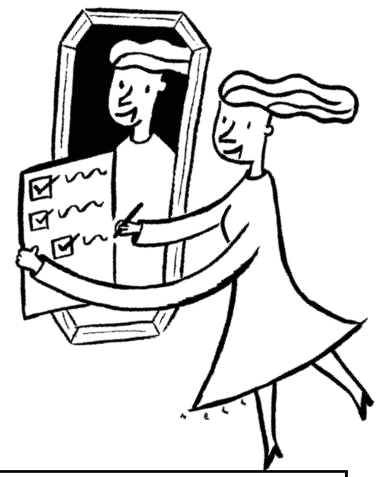


Qualities of a good decision maker



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A combination of all or some of these is a good start, but if you are willing to learn you can develop them along the way:

Willingness to learn new skills

It's been said that there are four stages in learning a new skill:

1. unconscious incompetence
2. conscious incompetence
3. conscious competence
4. unconscious competence

A first step in developing a new skill may be to identify other people with skills you admire, and study what makes them successful.

Patience and perseverance

It can take years to realise a dream. Setting realistic long term, medium term and short term goals is an important way of measuring how far you've come. That way you won't get discouraged when you come up against barriers or obstacles, or things don't happen or change as quickly as you would like.

Conscientiousness and attention to detail

These are necessary ingredients for a job well done. This can mean preparing for the meeting by reading all the papers provided, responding to requests promptly or sharing the workload with others.

Energy

As the saying goes: *'If you want something done, ask a busy person'*. You need energy to be active, well informed, prepared and well organised. That may mean looking after your health and well-being and seeing you include time for relaxation in your life.

Good self esteem

That is, feeling good about yourself and knowing that what other people think of you is none of your concern!

If you take yourself seriously, and believe in yourself, others are more likely to do so as well. Part of having a good self esteem is being able to:

- acknowledge others—their contributions and abilities (*I really liked the way you...*);
- acknowledge yourself as a unique person willing and able to make a worthwhile contribution;
- provide criticism in a way that does not blame or invalidate others (*In my opinion, one thing you could change is...*);
- accept criticism from others and decide for yourself if it is useful to you or not;
- accept and appreciate mistakes or failures for the learning experiences they provide.

Self esteem is a precious gift that needs to be nourished, protected and maintained.

Valuing your abilities

*'I think we (women) have this problem of looking at the negative side of why we can't do something, rather than really promoting the positive side, and I think my advice to young women now is always look at the way you **can** contribute to things, not the way you can't contribute.*

'Be confident that your opinion counts ...I think women need to have confidence in their own ability and confidence in their analytical ability, and ability to make good decisions and then carry them out.' Judy Henderson

Confidence

'I am certainly more confident than I was twenty years ago, but some of that confidence can come by getting experience in friendly environments like working in the community groups first ...That is one way of gaining confidence.' Clare Petre

Courage

Fear provides a great adrenaline rush. Being thoroughly prepared is one way of helping to break through the fear barrier.

'I think one of the most important qualities needed by women in decision making is courage—courage to stand up and be heard and courage to "have a go".' Judy Galloway

'If you have got a decision to make as to whether to do one thing or the other, always take the adventurous route. We can go through life taking the safe route and not doing something because we don't think we can do it, but it is much better to be a bit more adventurous.' Judy Henderson

Passion and commitment

These help us through the above.

Sense of humour

This is essential for diffusing difficult situations and keeping things in perspective—and it's good for your health.

'I think my personal style is to deal with those sorts of things—being patronised and marginalised and patted on the head—with humour. I find that I can actually say quite drastic things to men, but in a satirical humour, if that is the term, and that usually disarms the situation. It is hard and can often take time to get over that. But I can say I have started off being patronised, but I don't think I have ever ended up being patronised—and it is just a question of how long it takes.' Clare Petre

Generosity

Giving time and energy and having the ability to really listen to the viewpoints of others requires generosity.

Honesty and integrity

Be honest with yourself and with others, and never compromise your principles.