

How We Decide

Directions: Read the following statements and determine for each scenario what outcome you would prefer. There are no correct or incorrect responses, just try to answer each question to the best of your ability.

Scenarios

1. The United States is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual Asian disease, which is expected to kill six hundred people. Two different programs to combat the disease have been proposed. Assume that the exact scientific estimates of the consequences of the program are as follows: If Program A is adopted, two hundred people will be saved. If Program B is adopted, there is a one-third probability that six hundred people will be saved and a two-thirds possibility that no people will be saved. Which of these two programs would you favor?
2. You are gambling, there is a 40 percent chance that you will keep the entire fifty dollars, and a 60 percent chance that you will lose everything. Or you can choose to keep twenty dollars, do you gamble or take the twenty dollars?
3. Imagine that you have decided to see a movie and have paid the admission price of \$10 per ticket. As you enter the theater, you discover that you have lost the ticket. The seat was not marked, and the ticket cannot be recovered. Would you pay \$10 for another ticket?
4. Would you drive twenty minutes out of your way to save five dollars on a fifteen-dollar calculator?
5. You are the driver of a runaway trolley. The brakes have failed. The trolley is approaching a fork in the track at top speed. If you do nothing, the train will stay left, where it will run over five maintenance workers who are fixing the track. All five workers will die. However, if you steer the train right which involves flicking a switch and turning the wheel, you will swerve onto a track where there is one maintenance worker. What do you do? Are you willing to intervene and change the path of the trolley?