

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 C is adopted, four hundred people will die. If Program D is adopted, there is a one-third probability that nobody will die and a two-thirds probability that six hundred people will die. Which of these two programs would you favor?
2. You are playing a gambling game, you have a 40 percent chance of keeping the entire 50 dollars you have, or a sure thing of losing thirty dollars. Do you decide to gamble or keep the thirty dollars?
3. Imagine that you have decided to see a movie where admission is \$10, but you have not yet bought the ticket. As you walk to the theatre, you discover that you have lost the \$10 bill. Would you still pay \$10 for a ticket to the movie?
4. Would you drive twenty minutes out of your way to save five dollars on a \$125 leather jacket?
5. You are standing on a footbridge over the trolley tracks. You see a trolley racing out of control, speeding toward five workmen who are fixing the track. All five men will die unless the trolley can be stopped. Standing next to the footbridge is a very large man. He is leaning over the railing watching the trolley hurtle toward the man. If you sneak up on the man and give him a little push, he will fall over the railing and into the path of the trolley. Because he is so big, he will stop the trolley from killing the maintenance workers. Will you push the man off the footbridge? Or do you allow five men to die?