

A Guide for Decision-Making through Principled Innovation

About this Guide

One way to integrate principled innovation into our decision-making is through the use of generative and reflective questions. They help us explore situations from multiple angles and anticipate consequences before taking action. Below is a suggested process to guide your decision-making using principled innovation. Starting a new reflective practice can be challenging - try to continue moving through the process without getting stuck on one specific step or getting overwhelmed.

What is Principled Innovation?

Principled innovation is the ability to imagine new concepts, catalyze ideas, and form new solutions guided by principles that create positive change for humanity. The question, **“We can innovate, but should we?”** places values and ethical understandings – our own character – at the core of the practice. Principled innovation recognizes four interconnected character assets – moral, civic, intellectual, and performance – that are developed over one’s lifetime through self-reflection, working with others, and learning through experiences.



1 Immerse

Immerse yourself in the challenge and clearly state the facts.

What is the dilemma or challenge you are facing?

Describe the challenge as if you are an observer. Focus on the relevant facts, removing opinions and emotions from the equation.

2 Reflect

Reflect using the questions below to prompt your thinking about the dilemma or challenge. These are suggested questions to get you started. Frame the questions in the context of your situation and reflect either individually or as a team. Try journaling to deepen your reflection.



Moral

Guides decision-making with open-mindedness, integrity, and justice

- What assumptions or judgements am I making? How do I maintain self awareness?
- What are my intentions? How are my values motivating my decision?
- What ethical concerns exist in the decision I need to make?
- Why do I believe this is the right decision?



Civic

Supports collaboration to address systemic problems for the public good

- Whose perspective, different from my own, do I need to solicit?
- How might I effectively receive feedback from others and ensure their needs and concerns are being addressed?
- Am I considering how the wider community is affected by this decision?
- Do I have additional relevant information I need to consider in this situation?



Intellectual

Informs problem-solving by combining creativity, evidence, and critical thinking

- What data, resources, and learning are informing this decision?
- What information did I gather? What information do I still need?
- What evidence do I have to support my perspective?
- Do I understand how data biases or perspectives may influence the decisions I make?



Performance

Enables navigation of uncertainty with initiative, courage, and resilience

- What kinds of unanticipated issues could emerge with this decision?
- How will I know my decision is effective?
- How will this decision support the well-being of the individual, community, and society?
- How might this action be perceived by others? How can I implement this decision with care and compassion for others?

Almost ready... Close your eyes and imagine yourself taking this action. Ask yourself: What emotions are coming up for me? Why am I feeling this way? Does this action align with my values? Is there something else I need to consider? Am I ready to act?

Act

Make the decision that feels like the right fit and take action. It's better to try a solution than be paralyzed by the fear of making a mistake.

Afterwards, examine your choice... How did it go? What have I learned from this specific situation? What would I do differently next time?

Reflection is a continual process and key to the development of practical wisdom as we learn from our experiences.