

Ask our EXPERTS

WELLBEING NUTRITION FITNESS HEALTH STYLE

Deborah Smith is a positive psychologist specialising in the science of happiness and mindfulness. She has more than 25 years' experience as a psychotherapist and is here to help, so email her at weightwatchers@seven.co.uk

Q I am a terrible ditherer! From food to fitness or even small everyday life choices. How can I get better at making decisions?

Samantha Watersmith, Stratford

A The first thought that came to my mind when reading your question was, what's really causing you to dither?

Although it might appear to be coming from your subconscious, if you take the time to ask yourself what's really going on, a little voice inside you might come up with an answer you hadn't considered.

I wonder whether this could be an avoidance technique? Maybe you dodge decisions because you don't have faith in yourself? Or are you afraid of getting it wrong? These are two common reasons why people avoid or delay making their mind up.

You might even try to persuade people to make choices on your behalf because you trust their judgement more than your own. In that case, you might secretly tell

yourself that if it turns out to be the wrong decision, then it was their mistake, not yours.

This pattern of behaviour can undermine your confidence when making up your mind about anything and therefore reinforce a negative belief that you're not up to the task.

The only way to build belief in yourself is by challenging that negative view and telling yourself that you *can* be trusted. Push yourself to make simple choices, at first, and congratulate yourself afterwards. You'll feel your confidence building with every decision you make, big or small.



TALKING POINT

HOW TO STOP SWEATING THE SMALL STUFF

1

LEARN TO JUST LET GO

Take a deep breath in and, as you exhale, say to yourself 'let it go' and visualise breathing out your worry. You will immediately feel more relaxed and less anxious.

2

SWITCH YOUR FOCUS

Start doing something that requires complete focus – ideally an activity you enjoy. For example, cooking a healthy meal, calling a friend to chat or going for a walk.

3

AND REPEAT...

If you find yourself starting to worry again, repeat the first two steps above. It doesn't matter how many times you repeat them – you will be retraining your brain each time.

TRY IT THIS MONTH

INVEST IN FEELGOOD FASHION

Handcrafted by female artisans at fair-trade co-ops in India, the gorgeous **Malabar necklace (£32, ES.EM)** does good and looks good – especially when paired with a plain white tee.



MANTRA

'Act as if...'

Need a wellbeing boost this summer? Think: how would I behave if I felt happy/confident/relaxed? Try to act as if you are feeling that way and over time it could become genuine.

Find more advice from Deborah at: growyourownhappiness.com