

Philosophy & Decision Making

**Maidenhead
3 June 2017**

Philosophy & Decision Making:

What is the Right Action, Right Now?

Philosophy & Decision Making

- **Making decisions all the time**
- **Process not specific answers**

Philosophy & Decision Making

“No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man.”

Heraclitus (535-475 BC)

Philosophy & Decision Making

- **Philosophy literally means Love of Wisdom**
- **We each have unrealised potential**
- **Can decisions help us grow or can they limit us?**

Decision making and action



Decision making and action



Decision making and action



Decision making and action

***"The Moving Finger writes; and,
having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a
Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word
of it."***

**(Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam verse 51
11th or 12th century)**

Decision making and action

- **Right decision?**
- **Right action?**
- **Right now?**

Decision making and action

Greek tragedy has given us some of the most strange, dark and brutal stories of all time. There are tales of murder, vengeance, and incest, of insanity and mutilation. ... These are bloody and violent stories but they are much more than some sort of weird form of entertainment for the ancient Greeks. They spoke to the dark side of humanity and to the harsh and unpredictable nature of life itself.

And here in the Greek theatre, these stories did something more than that as well. They were lessons. They were challenges.

My favourite line in Greek tragedy is in Aeschylus' Libation Bearers and it's when Orestes is about to get his revenge. He's there knife in hand, about to kill his mother and he panics and asks the question "ti draso?" – "What shall I do?" That is the key question of tragedy.

Tragedy didn't just tell a nasty story and let the audience walk away. No!

It asked them to respond, it challenged them. What would they do if they were caught in such an impossible situation?

Decision making and action

- **Being a single US soldier, would you choose to stay with your Vietnamese love and be captured, or leave Vietnam and her behind**
- **And would it have been different if you knew that she was pregnant**
- **And what would you do if, 6 years later, now happily married in America, you discovered that you had an illegitimate child in Vietnam**
- **And what would you do as the wife if you discovered that your husband had an illegitimate child from before you met him**
- **And what would you do if you were the mother of the illegitimate child and there was a possibility – if you gave him up – of him having the opportunity to live in America**

Right action

Characteristics of a wise person:

- **They act from knowledge not ignorance**
- **They are open not closed**
- **They are compassionate and caring**
- **They listen**
- **Their advice and guidance is relevant and timely**
- **They do not criticise or cause harm**
- **They see the bigger picture**
- **They are not selfish**

Right action

- **I act from knowledge not ignorance**
- **I am open not closed**
- **I am compassionate and caring**
- **I listen**
- **My advice and guidance is relevant and timely**
- **I do not criticise or cause harm**
- **I see the bigger picture**
- **I am not selfish**

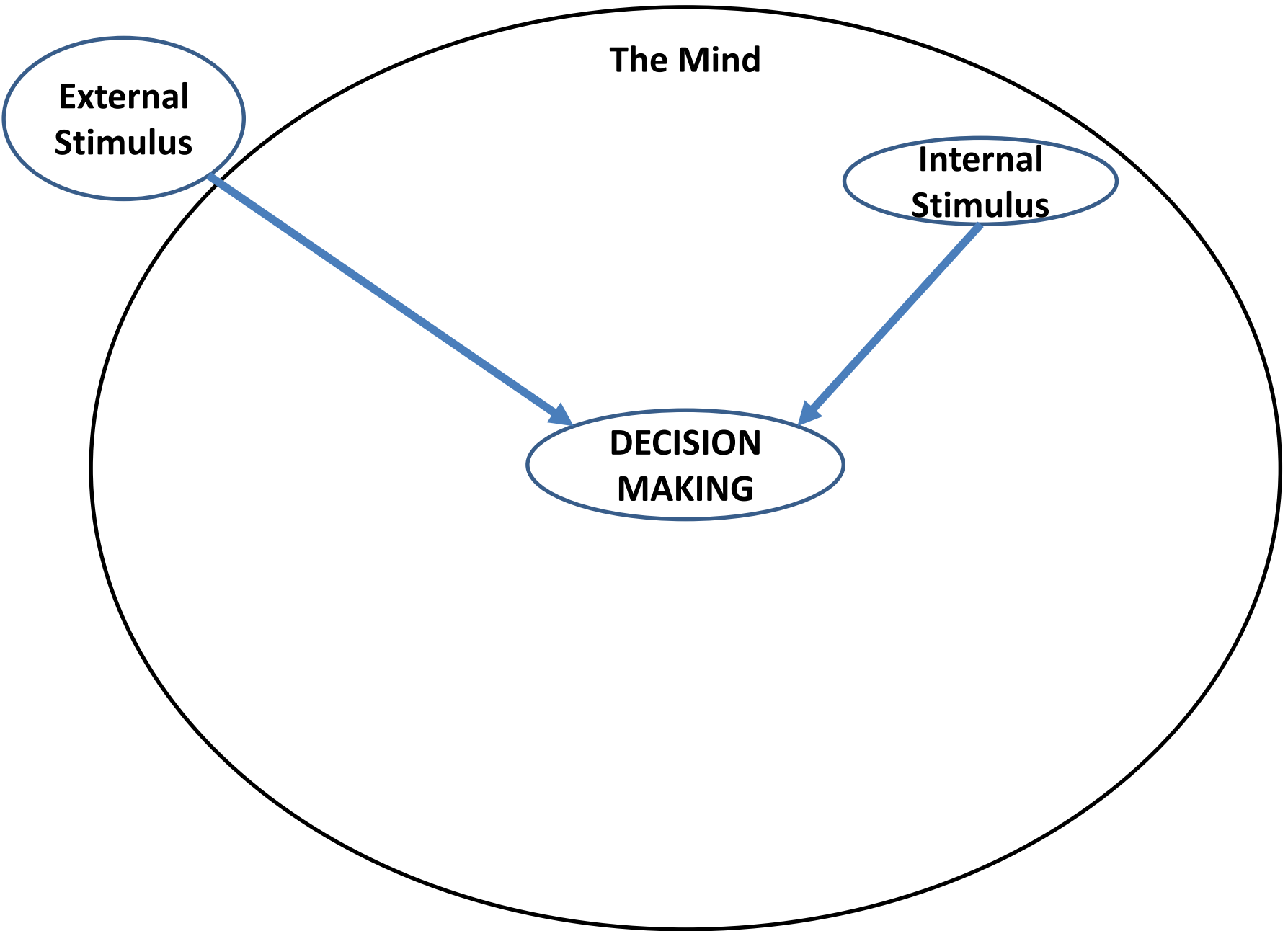
Right action

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Sometimes

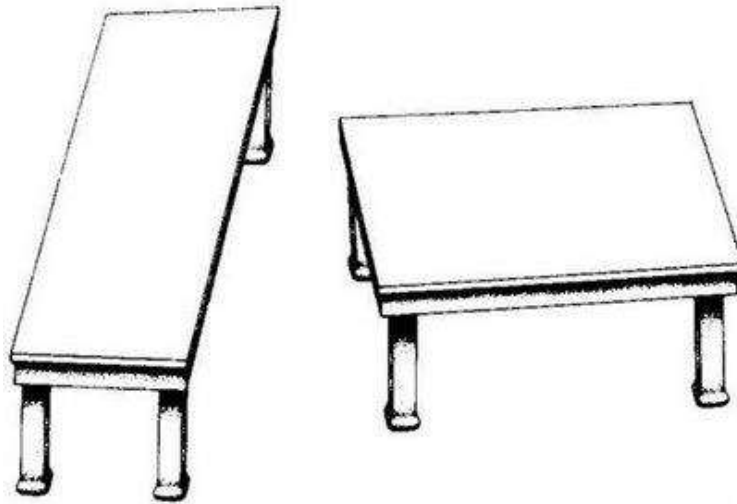
Timing

- **Future is unreal**
- **Past – it's too late**
- **The only time that the decision can be made, the only time that it is made, is now – in the present.**





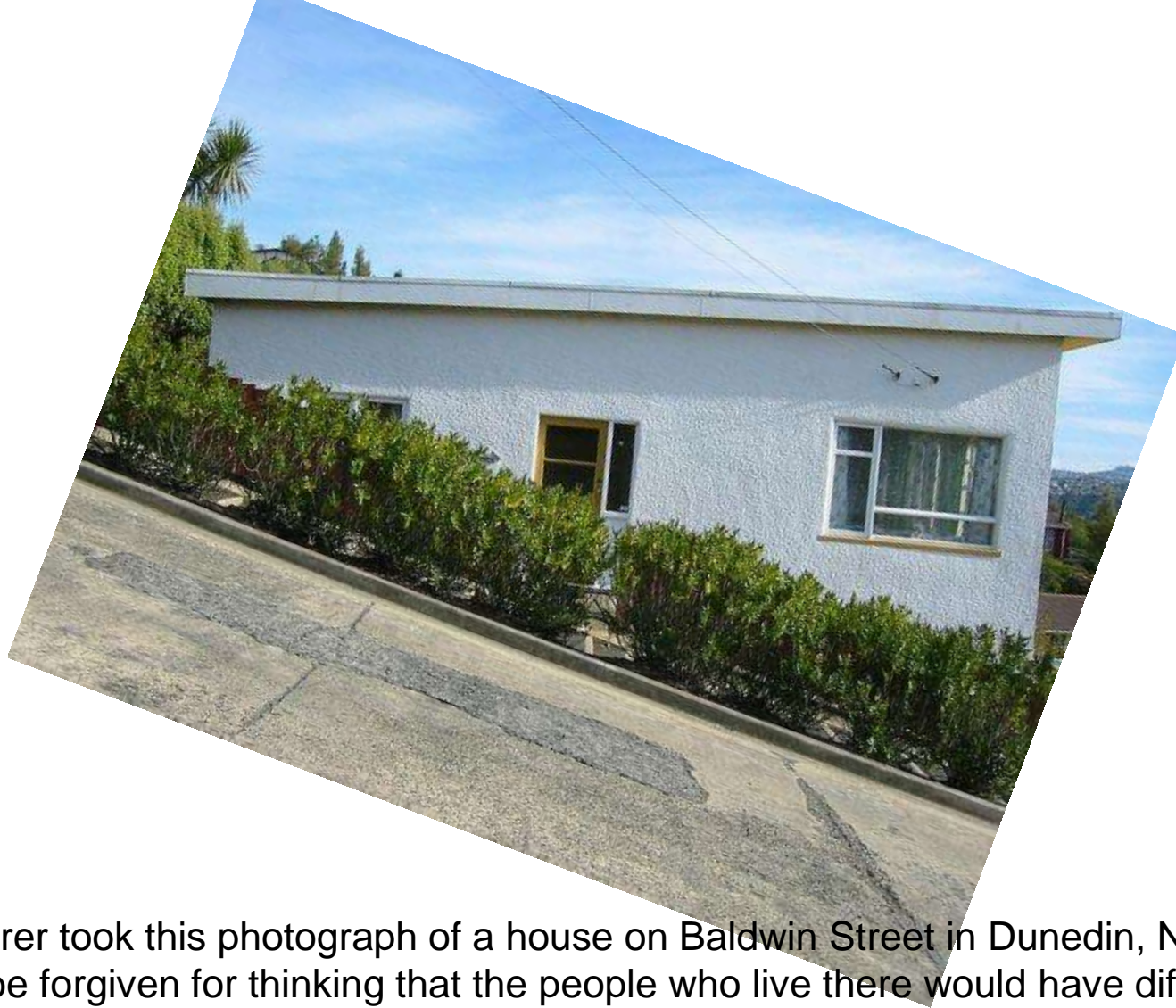




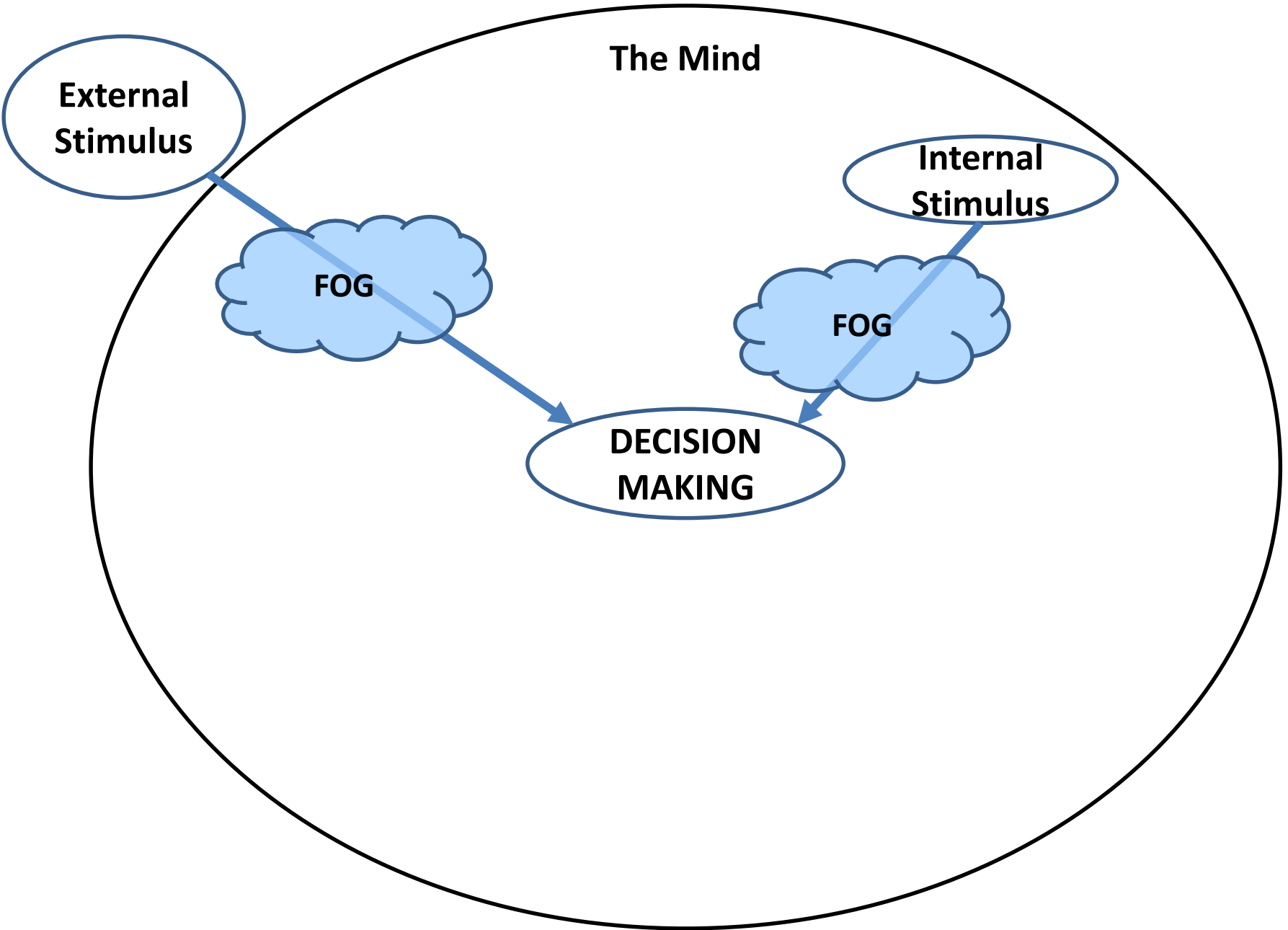
These two tables in this image by Roger Shepard appear to be different sizes, the one on the left is oriented vertically and seems to be longer and thinner. Remarkably, both tables are actually exactly the same size.



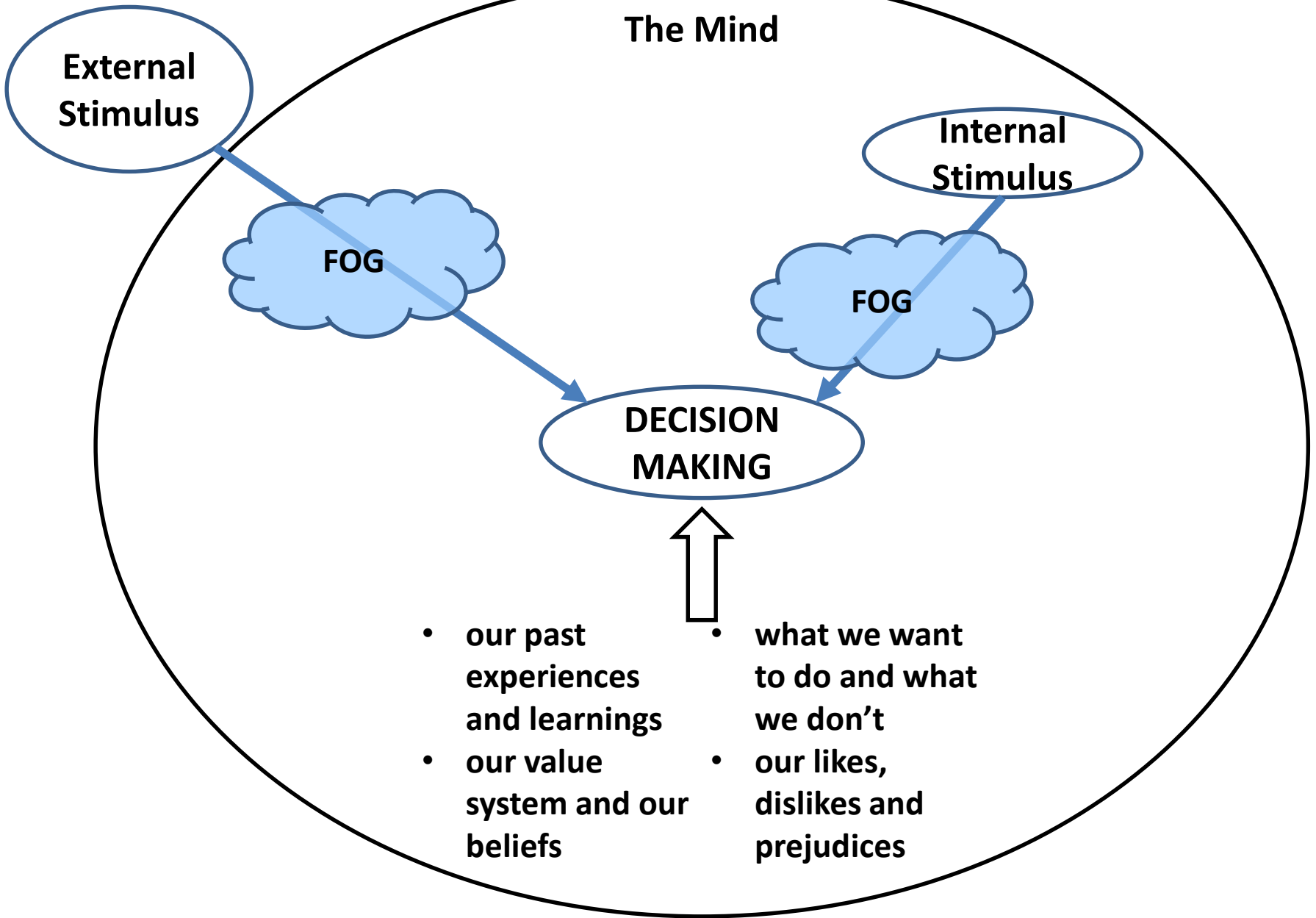
Tobias Thierer took this photograph of a house on Baldwin Street in Dunedin, New Zealand. You might be forgiven for thinking that the people who live there would have difficulties getting in and out of their front door without falling over, but is it the house that's slanted, the hill it rests on or the cameraman ?



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The Mind



Decision making – Boston Square

Important?

YES

NO

NO

YES

Want to?

Decision making – Boston Square

Important?

YES

1

NO

NO

YES

Want to?

Decision making – Boston Square

Important?

YES

1

NO

4

NO

YES

Want to?

Decision making – Boston Square

Important?

YES

?

1

NO

4

?

NO

YES

Want to?

Decision making – Boston Square

Important?

YES

1

NO

4

NO

YES

Want to?

Decision making – Boston Square

Important?

YES

2

1

NO

4

3

NO

YES

Want to?

The decision making model

- **Receiving and interpreting stimuli**
- **What is called on from our past, from our beliefs, values, experiences and emotions**
- **Making the decision itself**

Philosophy & Decision Making

- **Investigate carefully**
- **Decide correctly**
- **Follow faithfully**

Investigate carefully

I kept six honest serving men

They taught me all I knew

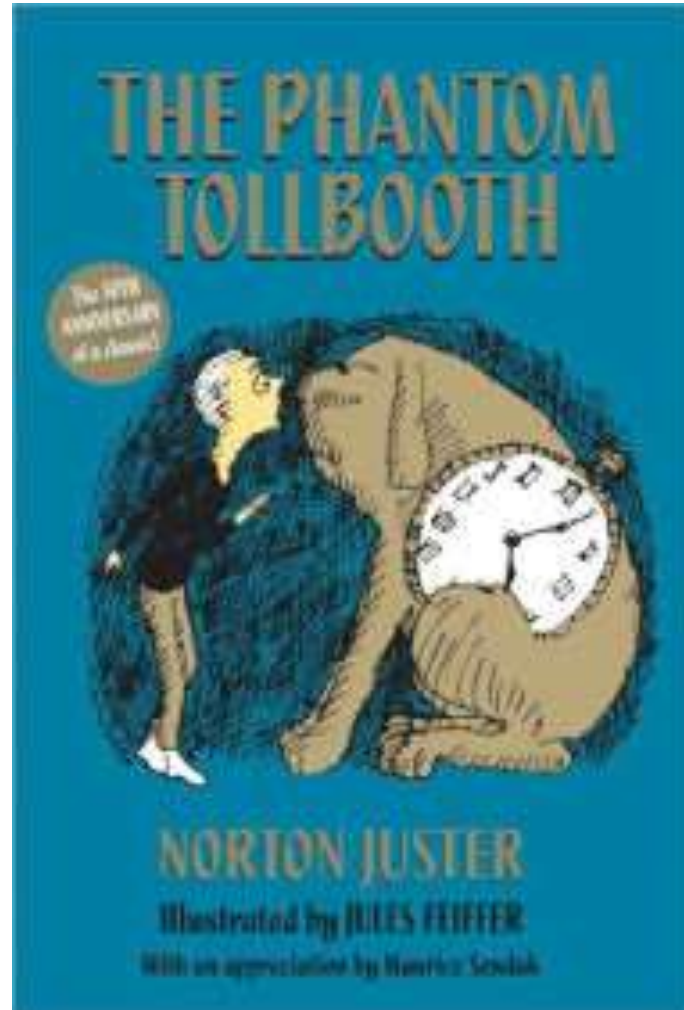
***Their names are What,
and Why and When;***

and How and Where and Who.

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

Decide correctly

Decide correctly



Golden Rule

"That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn."

Talmud, Shabbat 31a



03/06/2017



36 Values

HOW WE THINK

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Self-Control | 2 Stillness/Inner Silence | 3 Calmness |
| 4 Mindful Awareness | 5 Service | 6 Duty/Responsibility |
| 7 Fearlessness/Courage | 8 Detachment | 9 Temperance/Moderation |
| 10 Faith | | |

HOW WE RELATE TO OTHERS

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 11 Respect | 12 Tolerance | 13 Compassion |
| 14 Constancy | 15 Truth/Honesty | 16 Integrity |
| 17 Trust | 18 Freedom | 19 Energy/Strength |
| 20 Enthusiasm | 21 Generosity | |

HOW WE ACT

- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 22 Discrimination | 23 Patience | 24 Justice/Lawfulness |
| 25 Harmlessness | 26 Equanimity | 27 Steadfastness |
| 28 Determination | 29 Fortitude/Perseverance | 30 Love/Care |
| 31 Selflessness | 32 Wisdom | 33 Humility |

THE RESULTS

- | | | |
|--------------|----------|----------|
| 34 Happiness | 35 Unity | 36 Peace |
|--------------|----------|----------|

Follow faithfully

I am the master of my fate:

I am the captain of my soul.

William Ernest Henley (1849–1903)