

Who's The Boss?

Before making big decisions, many people consult with others first, people who they believe are qualified to help them weigh their options. In the workplace, you might seek the opinion of a particular person because they have the most knowledge about other employees or the customers, or about the workplace culture. Or, you might



ask a friend because you view that person as level-headed, or as having your back. However, when it comes to personal issues I often see people consulting a decision maker who demonstrates very few of the skills we would want in a good decision maker: People let Anxiety be the boss.

I'll point out that Anxiety (and other strong emotions, for that matter) has a really poor track record of accuracy and success when it comes to predicting what might happen. It's great when it comes to anticipating the worst, but more often than not, those things it says we should fear usually don't happen as often as Anxiety say they will. When the doom and gloom does happen, it usually isn't as bad as Anxiety leads us to believe it'll be. If weather forecasts were as inaccurate as Anxiety is, we wouldn't rely on them, but we continue to do so, often.

Most commonly, what Anxiety wants is for us to avoid something, and it's hard to resist doing that because Anxiety uses the intimate knowledge it has of our own thoughts and fears to get what it wants. It's important to remember that, while potent, Anxiety is not a qualified decision maker. Strong emotions rarely consider all the relevant data when weighing the options, so decisions based mostly on anxiety are

probably not well informed. Just as I wouldn't let a kindergartener be the sole decision maker for what my family should eat for dinner (cookies anyone?), it would be similarly ill advised to let Anxiety rule.

Truly effective decision making involves a balance of multiple factors that usually does include some element of emotion. Just as I might consult with the kindergartener about what to eat and take that input under advisement, I can also check-in on my feelings to help inform my decisions. But that shouldn't be where the conversation ends. Your life might feel (and function) better when you challenge yourself to be the boss and find ways to balance anxiety and strong emotions with other information to help you make decisions for your life. The most likely truth is that you are far stronger and more capable than you've given yourself credit for being. Tap into that strength and see what you can do.

Get in touch if you want to learn how to deal with your Anxiety.



[Dr. Kristina Wilder](#)

Shift Cognitive Therapy + Assessment
Oakville, Ontario