

How to Choose

In *How to Choose*, the chapter explores the decision-making process within creative work, emphasizing the role of comparison and instinct in refining artistic choices. It draws a parallel between developing a creative piece and a seed growing into a tree, where every choice serves as a branching point, shaping the final outcome. The initial idea forms the foundation, much like the trunk of a tree, while each decision sends the work in different directions, reinforcing the concept that artistic evolution is a series of deliberate yet sometimes intuitive selections.

Understanding and making these choices rely on the principle of relational comparison—the idea that without something to measure against, evaluation becomes meaningless. Artists often struggle with determining the best direction for their work, as creativity offers endless possibilities, making selection a daunting task. To navigate this complexity, the chapter advocates for A/B testing, a method of side-by-side comparison that allows creators to directly assess which option resonates more.

A/B testing simplifies decision-making by presenting only two options at a time, minimizing overwhelming choices and sharpening focus. Whether deciding on color schemes, script revisions, or musical arrangements, placing two alternatives next to each other offers clarity. The text suggests that instinct plays a crucial role in this process—when faced with two choices, an individual's natural inclination towards one over the other reveals a subconscious preference, making selection more intuitive rather than purely analytical.

Blind testing is introduced as a method to remove preconceived biases, illustrating how artists, musicians, and designers can discover unexpected preferences when unaware of which choice aligns with their assumptions. For instance, in the music industry, producers have found that when artists listen to recordings without knowing whether they were made using analog or digital equipment, their choices are often surprising. This method proves that personal taste is sometimes shaped by expectation rather than true resonance, reinforcing the importance of unbiased comparison.

When faced with particularly difficult choices, the chapter recommends a simple yet revealing technique—the Coin Toss Method. Rather than letting the outcome dictate the decision, the key lies in observing one's immediate emotional reaction while the coin is in the air. If a person hopes for a specific result before the coin lands, their subconscious has already made the decision, demonstrating that deep down, they know what they truly want.

The overarching message of the chapter is to trust instinctual reactions rather than overanalyzing creative decisions. It argues that the purest form of artistic expression emerges when choices are made with the same spontaneity and unfiltered clarity as children expressing themselves without hesitation. This uninhibited approach allows artists to reclaim the raw sensitivity that often gets clouded by external influences, self-doubt, or adherence to conventional expectations.

The chapter challenges creators to let go of restrictive thought patterns and external pressures that can inhibit originality. Many artists, in an effort to perfect their work, overthink decisions to the point of paralysis, when in reality, the best choices often stem from an intuitive response rather than prolonged deliberation. By fostering trust in one's creative instincts, artists can achieve greater authenticity, resulting in work that feels more organic and deeply personal.

Another key takeaway is that the most effective decisions are not necessarily the ones backed by extensive justification but rather the ones that feel inherently *right*. Throughout history, some of the greatest artistic and cultural breakthroughs were made by individuals who followed their gut instincts rather than conforming to external expectations. From choosing the perfect note in a melody to selecting the right shade in a painting,

many groundbreaking moments in art and innovation have occurred because the creator leaned into what felt natural rather than what seemed logical.

The chapter encourages artists to strip away unnecessary complexity in their creative process, allowing decisions to flow naturally instead of forcing them through exhaustive analysis. By embracing this approach, creators can cultivate a more intuitive relationship with their work, leading to a sense of freedom and confidence in their artistic choices. The ultimate goal is not to eliminate thoughtfulness but to strike a balance between mindful selection and instinctual flow, ensuring that creativity remains both intentional and uninhibited.

Ultimately, *How to Choose* reinforces the idea that making decisions in art is less about finding a universal “right” answer and more about uncovering what aligns with one’s personal vision. By practicing A/B testing, engaging in blind comparisons, and learning to recognize subconscious preferences, artists can develop a method that enhances both their efficiency and creative integrity. The more they trust their instincts and embrace the natural rhythms of decision-making, the closer they come to producing work that is authentic, powerful, and truly their own.