

# ShadowBox

**Course:** Masterclass in Practical Decision Making

**Transcript** - Episode 1: Welcome

**Host:** Gary Klein, Ph.D.

Dr. Gary Klein, your host for this Masterclass in Practical Decision Making, has been studying decision making for over 40 years, studying how people make tough decisions in the real world under uncertainty, time pressure, and even danger.

Dr. Klein's research enabled him to develop the Recognition Primed decision making model which is a widely accepted description of how people actually make decisions.

This course is based on Dr. Klein's experience running training projects and developing the decision making tools that he has described in his six books, which have collectively sold over 150,000 copies and been translated into more than a dozen languages.

Here's your host, Gary Klein.

## **(Gary Klein)**

In this course, we're going to look at Decision Making under pressure that can tie us in knots and overwhelm us.

Too often the result is poor performance — our own performance and our organization's performance.

One reason this happens is that we have the wrong idea about how we're supposed to make decisions. We think we're supposed to carefully assess multiple options across a common set of criteria.

And that's wrong. People rarely do this, and there's little evidence that it works even if we try.

So, we feel guilty about not being "rational," and we feel clueless about how to get better.

What can we do instead?

That's where this course comes in. And that's why this course is so important, to correct and replace mistaken ideas with practical tips and guidance.

My discovery of how people actually make decisions is now widely accepted and has influenced the doctrine of the U.S. Army.

My Pre-mortem technique for risk assessment is used in many different settings, especially on Wall Street. I'll describe it to you in a few of the later episodes.

My findings have inspired a new generation of decision researchers spanning the globe.

This course is also based on the work my colleagues and I have done to train decision making skills. We have trained police officers, military leaders, power plant operators, nurses, child protective service providers, pilots, and many others.

Our training methods have proven themselves. After sometimes as little as a half-day of training, people's decisions can align 25% more closely with those of the experts.

I've ridden with police, conducted site visits with social workers, observed in Emergency Departments and Operating Rooms, slept in fire stations, and rushed into the fire trucks racing to put out the flames. We've interviewed auto mechanics about how they size up a car that's just been in an accident. We've worked with nuclear power plants to improve their responses to emergencies. We've traveled to a major forest fire (six mountains were ablaze) to inspect the scene and to interview the commander and his staff and observe their planning sessions. We've worked with Air Force weapons directors. I've ridden in tanks and Army helicopters during training exercises. We've spent time on aircraft carriers, looked over the shoulders of panel operators in petrochemical plants and climbed ladders into the units themselves in sub-zero temperatures during a Canadian winter. I thought I would freeze to death.

We've studied how naval commanders make difficult decisions during war. We've done cognitive interviews with financial specialists managing portfolios worth upwards of 100 billion dollars. We've also taught risk assessment methods to hedge fund managers.

We were part of the team that redesigned the Situation Room in the White House.

We've also worked at the other end of the scale, not the high-stakes end of senior military, medical or business leaders but the low-stakes end, working with everyday individuals, looking at how consumers make decisions about which products to buy as they walk down a grocery aisle.

We've learned by watching skilled decision makers and interviewing them rather than by conducting experiments with college students making decisions in controlled laboratories.

This course consists of 15 short videos, including this introduction. Future episodes will cover topics like:

- How to handle the toughest decisions
- How to become a better decision maker
- When to trust your intuition
- How to make decisions under uncertainty
- How to quickly and effectively assess the risks to a plan
- How to help teams make decisions
- How to understand the way customers make choices

Let's get started.