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### Sure

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## Sure

We like to be sure of ourselves when deciding whether or not to accept a line of thought, or a suggestion for making a change or trying something we have not previously experienced. We would like to have certainty, but we often find that we cannot be sure that we are making the right decision.

When we trust another person, we always do so with an element of risk. When we trust our own capacity to make decisions that have significant consequences for us and for others, we also risk making mistakes. With a little reflection and prayer we can usually avoid making decisions that are contrary to who we are, to what we believe at heart, or to what we hold to be true. Though trust is not a sure thing for us, we can hardly make any choices as all without relying on our capacity to trust both ourselves and others.

Developing trust in our decision-making process grows through experience, but not automatically. We learn from experience by reflecting on key aspects of our decisions, including not only the external observable consequences of our words and actions, but also the interior movements in our spirits. We might, for example, receive thanks from others for doing them a favor, which would seem to affirm a decision we made. But if our interior state is that of disturbance with a sense of having betrayed a well-made promise to not get involved in the situation, we have powerful information from within that invalidates: not the deed – which was good from others' perspectives – but our decision. By means of such reflections we learn how to say "no" as well as "yes" as we recognize the appropriate responses to make in particular circumstances. And, we rightly become more trusting of ourselves in making decisions.

Though we cannot be sure that each and every decision we make is the best of which we are capable at the time we make them, we can put more trust in our decisions if we test them against the criteria we have developed for truth, and by consulting others we trust, especially God. We can give conscious attention not only to all the reasons that come to mind, both for and against, but to the important difference we can observe within us between those feelings of peace that can even accompany the recognition that we might suffer, from the feelings of disturbance that accompany threats to our integrity even when there is nothing to fear of a physical or emotional nature. In addition, we are often able to recognize a gentle but wise caution not to "run ahead of grace" by making a decision before we are prepared to deal with whatever consequences might follow.

Though we might not always be sure of ourselves – our motivation, our interior freedom or our knowledge of all the relevant facts, we have sure access to God. And God is pleased to help us open our hearts with an ever greater desire to act rightly, more than in helping us to be sure that we are “right” in every decision we make.