

Before You Decide You Can't

TRACE THE SYSTEM

Five questions to turn an assumption
into a useful investigation.



01 / NAME THE ASSUMPTION

What story am I telling myself?

“People like me don’t
get those opportunities.”

Write the thought down. Then ask what supports it.

A feeling can be real while a conclusion still needs evidence.

02 / IDENTIFY THE PROCESS

What has to happen?

RULES	What are the actual entry requirements?
RESOURCES	What will it cost in money and time?
PEOPLE	Who can explain or make the decision?
TIMING	What deadlines or schedules matter?

03 / CHECK THE EVIDENCE

What do I know—and what am I guessing?

I CHECKED

“The published class meets on Tuesday evenings.”

I ASSUMED

“There is no way my schedule could work.”

Next evidence: shift options, attendance rules and available support.

04 / LOCATE THE BARRIER

What kind of obstacle is it?

Missing information

Ask for a clear explanation.

Money, time or access

Identify the resources or support required.

Eligibility or institutional rules

Verify the rule and any review route.

Some barriers require changes beyond the individual.

05 / TAKE ONE VERIFIABLE STEP

Turn “I can’t” into a question.

“Can you send me the evening options,
total costs and attendance rules?”

ASK THE RIGHT PERSON

Record the answer. Decide what it changes.
If the obstacle remains, name the support needed.

Trace one decision in your own life.

Choose a course, a job application,
a payment problem or a workplace
process.

**CONFIRMED
UNKNOWN
NEEDS REVIEW**

Mark each statement with a word,
symbol, pattern or color you choose.

What record—or whose answer—would help you decide?

Your five-question field guide

- 1 What am I assuming?
- 2 How does the process work?
- 3 What evidence do I have?
- 4 Where is the actual barrier?
- 5 What can I verify next?

FOLLOW THE CONNECTION. CHECK THE EVIDENCE.

