



Trauma
Care

Newsletter

TraumaCare

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Trust your Intuition

Do these statements sound familiar?

"I should have trusted my gut."

"I knew what was really going on but I didn't say anything."

"I wanted it so badly but I still walked away."



In its effort to protect you, to keep you alive and safe, your brain can keep you from speaking up or getting what you truly want if you don't know how to listen beyond your rationalizations.

When you face an uncomfortable decision, your brain will spontaneously give you a fabulously credible rationalization for avoiding possible failure, embarrassment, or even minor discomfort. As humans, **we are master rationalizers.**

First, we tend to compartmentalize problems into two options, yes or no, do it or don't, with the choice often being the easier way out. We rarely see the middle ground or the creative solution.

Second, we ignore what our heart and gut are telling us. There are 100 million neurons and every class of neurotransmitter in your gut (link is external) used to process external stimuli and send signals to your brain. Your heart (link is external) also receives input and sends out signals. The brain translates these signals so we can make decisions and act. It also edits, censures, and resists some of the data it receives especially if emotions are triggered.

We all have intuition but we don't consciously listen to it, trusting only what appears to be rational in our often irrational mind.

Your *head brain* reasons, analyzes, synthesizes, and makes meaning of what is perceived. Your *heart brain* activates based on how the presenting situation relates to your dreams and desires, including your hopes, disappointments and feelings of betrayal if you feel promises were broken.

Your *gut brain* reacts when your fear is triggered, whether the threat is real or you are just afraid of letting go of what you now have. This is also where you will feel the courage to act in spite of your fears.

Scientifically, these divisions are simplified because impulses in the neural network are constantly interacting; all parts of the nervous system overlap, making it hard to clearly define what controls our thoughts and actions. Practically, they make sense. Your tense shoulders, nervous stomach, and little smile are giving you clues all the time.

Alan Alda said, "At times you have to leave the city of your comfort and go into the wilderness of your intuition. What you'll discover will be wonderful. What you'll discover is yourself."



Intuition is not from outer space; it's from inner space.

Practice Exercise in Decision Making

Choose one decision you need to make now or in the future. Follow these steps:

1. Listen to your head. Be curious. Consider all options other than yes or no, do or don't do. List out everything you might do that is in your control or ability to influence others to help you. Think about the facts. Consider the pros and cons. What points come to the forefront? What are all of your options around this choice you have to make?
2. Take a breath and clear your mind so you can listen from your heart. Think of someone you care about or something you love to do. Say the word *love* or *gratitude* or choose another word that opens your heart. Now consider the decision you need to make keeping your awareness around your heart. What points come to the forefront? How do these points differ from what emerged when you considered the decision using only your head? Notice how the points relate more to your desires than to the facts and details. Which option will you regret more if you don't decide on it?
3. Take another deep breath and relax so you can listen from your gut. Make sure you are sitting up straight. Take a deeper breath into your belly. Recall a time you felt gutsy and determined in spite of your fear. Remember the moment you moved forward, took action, or spoke your mind. As you inhale, say and feel the word *courage*. Let the word settle into the core of your body as you exhale. Consider your decision one more time. What points come to the forefront? What is the worst that can happen if the option you take doesn't work out, really? How likely is the worst to happen? How painful will a failure be? What will you lose if you don't try? How do these points differ from what arose when you were thinking through you head and heart?

I'm going to share an extremely easy way for you to zone into your intuition.

1. Find a quiet space.

The first thing you need to do is find a place that is relatively quiet. It doesn't have to be completely noise-free, but it does have to be quiet enough for you to hear your own breath. If there is still background noise, don't stress: You will eventually zone out anyway. Don't fuss too much over where this place is: It could be in a bathroom cubicle or in an office cupboard. The point is, it simply doesn't matter. All you need is yourself.

2. Be alone.

Preferably, only you should take up this space. When we are in the company of others, a part of us is worried about what the other person is thinking about us. Therefore, we are not fully able to lose ourselves in the moment. Remember that this is slightly different from meditation. Many people like to meditate in classes or groups with an instructor. This is great, but this small exercise takes less than five minutes.

3. Breathe.

Begin by concentrating on your breath. Start by trying to breathe as deeply as you can. Concentrate on sending your breath down toward your stomach, and then releasing. Personally, I don't like counting my breaths. It becomes more of a task than a natural sense of relaxation.

4. Be patient.

Humans can't flick a switch and turn off their minds. As much as we wish we could, it is simply impossible. However, as you lose yourself in your breath and begin to feel relaxed, your mind will naturally start processing your day in a way that feels effortless. It will start filtering through everything you did, almost like a movie on playback. It will only start replaying the key points of your day. These thoughts might naturally make you stressed if you're faced with a big decision or have a lot of tasks you are yet to complete. Getting stressed is a natural bodily response. If this occurs, immediately take your attention back to your breath. Your mind will continue to process other events.

5. Listen.

As much as I'd like to tell you that there's one moment when you know all the answers in your life, there isn't. However, there is an inner voice within all of us that tells us everything we need to know. The key is to listen to it. There's a famous saying that goes, "When you quiet the mind, your soul will speak." As farfetched as it sounds, it is entirely true.

When you quiet your mind through this process, the only voice you will begin to hear is your intuition and your soul, all linked into one. As your mind continues to process everything – whether it's people, places, events, friends or relationships – your gut will fire a feeling that is associated with that specific person or scenario.

Depending on your personality, you will find it easier to access either your heart or gut over the other. People who tend to be helpers listen more easily from their heart than their gut. On the other hand, risk-takers who move quickly on instinct find it easier to listen from their gut than from their heart.

It is hard to know, really, if the action you take is going to have a good or bad outcome. However there will be less to regret if YOU make the decision instead of letting your protective, control freak brain do it for you.



"Trust your instincts. Intuition doesn't lie."

— Oprah Winfrey

This newsletter has been issued by:

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