

## Intuition: When and How to Use it

*The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant.  
We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.*

Albert Einstein, Theoretical physicist

### A RESEARCH SUMMARY

#### When It's OK to Trust Your Gut on a Big Decision (Huange, 2019)

<https://bit.ly/3LHcTe4>

Gut feel can inspire you to make a call when the decision is risky.

Trusting your gut allows you to move forward instead of delaying decisions.

To make successful decisions based on gut feel:

1. Recognize gut feel is not a separate piece of information but draws on both objective and subjective information already available.
2. Gut feel is not impulsive and emotional. It is cultivated through experience.
3. Cultivate gut feel by paying attention to:
  - o Typical examples
  - o What works, what doesn't
  - o Tried and true patterns
  - o Models or systems to follow, imitate, or assist you in calculations and predictions

} Link what you learn  
with future decisions.

Before deciding on whether to trust your gut, do two things:

1. Recognize the TYPE of problem
  - o Reserve intuition for non-routine decisions
  - o Use intuition when there's not enough empirical data to determine probabilities or risks
  - o If you can calculate probability of outcome with reasonable confidence, use less gut feel
2. Identify the CONTEXT of the decision:
  - o If your environment has successful models developed, use them
  - o Gut feel is helpful with unusual, distinctive decisions

*Don't try to explain or justify intuition-based decisions.*



*If you try to apply logic and data to gut feel,  
the more likely you are to put off a decision or make a worse one.*



*Intuition can help with bold "diamond in the rough" decisions  
and may go against what data tells you to do.*

## Intuition: When and How to Use it



### RESEARCH SUMMARY, CONTINUED

#### When It's Safe to Rely on Intuition (and When it's Not) (Locke, 2015)

<https://bit.ly/3OWEfyE>

1. Expertise: don't make a high-risk decision based on intuition if you have little previous knowledge
  - It takes time to gain domain-specific expertise for accurate intuitive judgments
  - Repetition and feedback are essential, so practice using gut feel to get good at it
  - Implicit learning (subconscious learning over time) allows you to recognize signals/patterns
2. Type of decision: unstructured decisions are more conducive to intuitive judgment
  - Types of problems that do not benefit from intuition are those that already use clear deductive reasoning, objective criteria, or exist in a field with abundant data.
  - Intuition is less needed in decisions with clear rules, objective criteria, or abundant data to perform a logical or empirical analysis
3. Time
  - Intuition is helpful for quick decisions; however, lack of time by itself is not a good reason to use intuition if you need to collect critical information

Ultimately, we should use both intuition and analysis

- Intuition helps narrow down options, which can then be analyzed in a rational way
- Initial analysis may identify options, then intuition can single out the right one

#### Test Yourself: Are You Being Tricked by Intuition? (Beshears, Frederick, Gino, 2015)

<https://bit.ly/3LIbkML>

We all have two basic ways of processing information:

- Method 1
  - Your thought process is spontaneous or automatic
  - Happens when you're exposed to stimuli
  - When you don't have time for deliberation
- Method 2
  - Your thought process is slower
  - More reflective thinking
  - Kicks in when you check your System 1 (intuitive) response
- It's easier to rely on intuitions than to check them out with data, but performing that check can improve the quality of your choices.

*Intuition becomes increasingly valuable in the new information society,  
precisely because there is so much data.*

John Naisbitt, Actor

*It is through science that we prove, but through intuition that we discover.*

Henri Poincare, Philosopher