

In Two Minds

Trust Instinct and Intuition, the guides to decision-making

We love watching the quiz show *The Chase*. Needless to say, when it comes to answering the questions we aren't always as well-informed as the Chasers, nor even some of the contestants. In the first stage called the cash-builder, the questions come quite quickly over a period of a minute; and it would seem that the answers are generally given based on prior knowledge or pure guesswork. Once a contestant is through to the next round, not only are they given a question, but they are also presented with a choice of three answers. This sounds much easier, until it becomes clear that, on occasions, both question and answers are truly obscure and way beyond the scope of many. Should this happen, any answer is better than none at all; and when asked why a particular one was chosen, often the contestant will say: "It was a pure guess, but something in the back of my mind told me." It is quite possible that something did.

Knowledge is gleaned over a lifetime, often intentionally because it is required for a specific purpose; but much more is picked up in some instances from quite diverse sources; fleeting glimpses barely noticed in passing. Once seen, heard or experienced, this information is stored away in the memory; and whether or not it will ever be of use, it stays there. Although not usually a conscious act of file management, these small, seemingly insignificant snippets may even group together when of a similar nature and about a subject in common; and here is the basis for guidance on a cerebral level. Trying to dig out this prior knowledge buried somewhere in the depths of the mental archives to help with a decision can be frustrating; and if the search proves fruitless there may be only one way to resolve a troubling issue – take a punt and have a guess.

Actually, it isn't such a bad idea. Instinct and intuition draw on the reserves of data floating somewhere in the mind, linking specific vague facts acquired back in time with those present and more obvious in a current situation. To simplify the matter, a problem that requires a choice to be made between two possibilities; and what is known about them seems to fit both with little difference; relying on instinct and intuition is frequently a wise move. Make no mistake, this way of decision-making is not merely a guess – it is the mind recognising relevant information and applying it automatically and in an instant. An even simpler axiom could be – when in doubt, go with your gut.

Here is one aspect, an important one, dealt with in my self-help book *A Season of Happiness*. At first, the solution might seem a very hit-and-miss way of making a decision because it is based on pure chance; but the method is only intended to promote deeper thought by analysing feelings once a result is known. Below is an excerpt from the book, and the advice is self-explanatory.

Borrowed from the self-help book A Season of Happiness by Dave Hawkins

TOSS A COIN



Heads you go for it, tails you don't.

Once the coin has been tossed, analyse your feelings about the result. Are you happy to stand by it, or are you experiencing some discomfort and wondering whether to toss again?

Your inner-self is talking to you. You'd be wise to listen.

A gut feeling, a hunch, a nudge somewhere deep in the mind; these and more are subconscious responses to problem-solving when the known facts don't seem to help. Instinct and Intuition aren't special talents gifted to a few – we all have them; so use and trust them. It will be better and far more satisfying than just lobbing an enigma into the too-hard basket and hoping it will go away – it won't.

For a look at some more informative articles on a variety of subjects just return to the webpage



Where every effort has been made to be accurate and fair-minded, comments and opinions expressed on this website are based on personal experience and do not necessarily reflect the views of the wider community or those groups and institutions mentioned. A Season of Happiness and its staff accept no responsibility for any outcome based on suggestions offered. What works for one may not work for others. Please bear this in mind.