

Have Confidence in your *Intuition*

by Michelle Kelley, LCSW

*I*ntuition is the calm, small voice inside of you that speaks up at unexpected times. It is the ability to “just know” about a person, situation or decision without having to investigate. We have all experienced a hunch about something or someone; that’s our intuition.

Some people call it “a sixth sense,” but either way, intuition is real, not imagined. We are born with it and it is our gift to claim. However, we have become so reliant on facts or logical thinking to make decisions that we often block our quiet, inner voice. Just as Albert Einstein said, “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.”

When was the last time you listened to your intuition... or did not? What was the outcome?

How Your Intuition Speaks to You

- You had a sense of fear or danger about a situation.
- You had a nagging sense that you need to do something like go to the doctor or take a different route to work.

- You felt very uncomfortable around someone you just met but couldn’t pinpoint a reason.
- You had a “vision” that was reminiscent of déjà vu but you knew it was yet to be.
- You feel as though you are not doing what you are meant to do in life.

It has been said that women have an edge when it comes to reading people or being a good judge of character. This, in part, may be due to being socialized differently than men. Women and girls may hear the advice “listen to your gut” more often than men. Certainly girls and women are asked more frequently how they feel about something (usually by another female) and this encourages them to dig deeper and search for their connection to intuition even if they don’t realize it.

Furthermore, for women, learning to connect with intuition is directly linked to healthy self-esteem. See, when a woman ignores her intuition there is an emotional price to pay. Have you ever second-guessed yourself about a decision, didn’t go with your instinct and then regretted

it? Think back to multiple choice questions on an exam and how your first guess was usually the correct one but you changed your mind after over thinking it. Or you had a suspicion your significant other was cheating on you, but you “let it go” only to find out later it was true. We all have had these experiences. They should be reminding you to stop and think the next time you have a gut feeling about something.

Men can also be highly intuitive; it’s not only a gift for women. Unfortunately, in our culture we tend to view intuition as feminine, not masculine. Boys are encouraged to be linear thinking (using logic) while girls are praised for being sensitive. We live in a mind-dominated culture and I believe it has caused many men to also lose touch with their intuition.

I’ve heard many people – men and women – say that they don’t believe they have intuition... but everyone does! The problem is that many have been raised or socialized in a way which did not facilitate a connection to their gut feelings. Plain and simple.

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In our society we place a great deal of emphasis on the connection to the mind. This is reinforced in traditional schools. It's all about how smart we are, instead of HOW we are smart. Some people have a higher level of emotional intelligence. Others are more academic and have more book knowledge. One is not truly better than the other. They are different yet equally important!

While intuition by itself is effective, the most powerful combination is learning to use your mind and intuition together. It doesn't have to be an either or situation and it shouldn't be.

For example, recently I was working with a client who needed to make a decision about which job to choose. I asked her to close her eyes and visualize each work place, paying close attention to her body and emotions. It was difficult for her (as it would be for most of us) to stop her mind from making a pros/cons list. I wanted her to merely connect with her gut, nothing more. Later, we also made a list of pros and cons, taking into consideration salary, travel and other factors. She eventually made a decision she felt good about.

What you may not realize is that there are actually neurotransmitters in the gut just as there are in the brain. Therefore, I never suggest that a person only tap into their intuition when making major decisions. There is value in combining intuition with the mind.

I have such confidence in our intuition that I routinely encourage my clients to listen to their intuition, especially if it's a situation that involves danger. There's really nothing to lose. I also encourage parents to teach their children how to listen to their gut.

Connecting with your intuition is vital to your emotional well-being. If you believe you have lost the ability to distinguish when your intuition is speaking, it is possible to reconnect.

How to Connect to Your Intuition

- Silence the mental chatter. You will need to quiet your mind -- the constant mental chatter that many of us experience. In order to do this, you may need to learn how to quiet it through meditation or a relaxing activity. Silence is golden and it's also an essential component of connecting to intuition.
- Distract your mind. Engage in something you really enjoy which will keep you in the present moment and better able to hear your intuition. You should do this anyway as it helps increase creativity as well as productivity.
- Pay attention – inwardly. Your body is speaking to you. Some aches and pains or upset tummies are not caused by illness.

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- Distinguish fear from intuition. Fear of a new situation or change may simply be your reluctance to come out of your comfort zone.

One last tip: Practice. Practice. Practice. Once you get into the habit of listening to your inner voice (not the voices in your head), intuition will come to you more freely and you'll find that the choices you make in your life are better ones.

Recommended Readings:

The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment by Eckhart Tolle
Divine Intuition: Your Guide to Creating a Life You Love by Lynn A. Robinson, M.Ed.



Michelle Kelley, LCSW, is a licensed counselor and the owner of Girls Stand Strong in Warrenton. Michelle helps girls and women develop the self-confidence and self-esteem they need to achieve their goals and realize their dreams. Through her speaking engagements, workshops, and counseling—Michelle provides girls and women with the essential tools to select and cultivate healthy friendships and relationships. Such positive relationships foster a strong emotional well-being and successful social lives. Please visit www.GirlsStandStrong.com or call 703.505.2413 for additional information.