

Intuition & Confidence

Unlike your inner critic, the little voice inside that you DO want to listen to is your intuition. Did you know that the word confidence comes from the latin *confido*? *Con* (with), *fid* (faith) and *in deo* (God). Literally the translation of confidence is *with faith in God*. I love this because whether you're religious or not, you can figure out who or what your God is – a higher being, universal energy, humanity, yourself - and have confidence that it's never going to let you down. But again, it's a choice to have faith in anything, right? So the faith I want to talk about here as it relates to confidence is that still, small voice inside, the wise sage – your intuition.

The dictionary defines intuition as the apparent ability to acquire knowledge without inference or use of reason. Everyone's heard lines like 'listen to your intuition' or 'follow your intuition'. We've also heard of people who are quote unquote intuitive, as if only some people have such ability. The reality however is that we're ALL intuitive. The question isn't whether you are or aren't but rather how to identify your intuition and then tuning in.

Albert Einstein once said "The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind a faithful servant." In western society, we're taught to over-rely on our logical left-brain processes when making decisions or drawing conclusions. It is as if logic, ration and reason are considered the more valid pathways of information. Intuition, however, is just as valid a source if only we'd use it more.

Have you ever experienced any of the following?

- Just knowing something (e.g. an answer, what to do) – you feel it in your heart or gut.
- You can't think your way to a solution and instead go with what feels right.
- Walking into a room and sensing the emotion and energy.
- Second-hand stress.
- You see a road sign or hear a song on the radio that reminds you of the single, most important thing you needed to do that day that you had forgotten.
- Visceral sensations, like butterflies, spine tingling, feeling ill.

Some would say these are all intuitive hits. We don't always notice them as such but they're there and part of a primitive guiding system operating just below conscious level. The exciting part is that just in the last 5 years, real science has developed to back this up. For example, there's literally a mind-body connection. Neuroscience has shown both the heart and gut have neural networks as

sophisticated as the brain, with cells that can learn, store memories, feel and sense. The cabling behind this connection - the *vagus* (latin for wandering) nerve - is the longest cranial nerve and reaches deep into most major organs. Almost 90% of the information traveling along the vagus nerve flows from body to head, not vice versa. And when it enters the brain, it enters the right hemisphere, not the logical left. The right brain is the intuitive half, using the language of images, music, color, emotions, metaphor, connection and synthesis. It's where those random thoughts poke through our unconscious. However, because intuitive hits are imprecise and amorphous, we quickly use our left-brain to interpret or give meaning to them based on our experiences and bias'. The result then is often some loss of the original right-brain essence.

So how can we better harness our pure intuitive source that's not only valid and reliable but can be used as a way to trust ourselves and act with more confidence? Try tuning into body sensations and asking what they might mean. Trust your gut by giving yourself permission to walk away from someone or someplace because of bad vibes, with no explanation necessary. Follow your heart in making decisions when you can't logically get there. Try just doing what feels right. Practice noticing first thoughts that are seemingly random and look for broader connections.

Last, try literally asking questions of your intuition. As in, you come to a fork in the road, ask yourself, should I go left or right? Listen for the immediate answer. There is one if you pay close enough attention. Follow these responses. If you need some convincing, start keeping track of your intuition-based decisions and see what you find!