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life advice

## Listening To Your Intuition

When you have a gut instinct about something, what's an appropriate response?

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When your instincts are trying to tell you something, don't ignore the message.

Personal security experts that deal with stalking, terrorism and other such matters, often remark that people generally sense a potentially dangerous situation or person before the danger actually happens. For example, your wife may work late into the night and must take an elevator to get to her car. When the doors open, there's a man already inside the elevator and she has an instinctive fearful reaction to that individual. However, many more times than not, your spouse might say to herself, "Oh, that's silly, it's just my imagination" or, "I'm certainly not going to let him think I'm scared by not getting on the elevator" and proceeds to close herself up in a metal box alone with a stranger she's afraid of.

Unfortunately, too often, the fear was justified and sadly an assault occurs. All of us have intuition, that quiet inner voice that gives us a sense of a situation or a person long before our minds have had the time to process what's going on.

Intuition comes under many headings: "instinctive reaction," "gut feeling," "premonition," "vibes." What all of them have in common is that you can't logically describe what makes up the feeling or how your intuition comes about, all you know is you feel it.

Unfortunately, we often cut ourselves off from this information, which although not rational or explainable, is critical to your survival and your greater fulfillment. Intuition is most definitely of the heart and soul. It isn't logical if you fail to take advantage of such potentially valuable information! Yet we fail to do so regularly. Why? It can come in many different forms, such as:

**\* We don't listen.** Becoming sensitive to your intuition or gut feelings about things requires a willingness to listen to yourself. Often, it means just being quiet for a moment and listening. Or, should you just get a "gut feeling" about someone or something out of the blue, take a moment to recognize the feeling. Your gut feelings won't always be fearful ones. Sometimes you'll get a "don't go there" or "something's fishy here" sense, both of which are avoidance or caution signals, but sometimes you'll get a sense that "this is a great idea" or "oh, I feel excited about this," both of which are "explore further" signals from your inner self. Some people believe their intuition is a spiritual voice guiding them. Whichever is most appropriate for you—inner voice, or divine voice—listen to it.

**\* We don't act on the feeling.** Too often, once we've had an intuition or a gut feeling, we ignore it. We say, like the woman waiting for the elevator, "Oh, it's just my imagination" or "I'm being dramatic" rather than recognizing and honoring that intuition is as valid an information gathering device as the rational mind. Or we deny its value with something like, "Well, I certainly won't let him know I'm scared," and proceed to act without taking into account the intuitive information so as to protect ourselves.

Intuition, like anything else, needs to be exercised to become strong! Think of it as an inner muscle. If you don't use it, it becomes weak and atrophied, thus hard to hear. Respect your intuition, act on it and don't care what others may think of your decision to do so. Start with simple things. For example, if your intuition says, "Don't take the freeway today," take an alternate route. Some days you will be surprised to find out there was a major accident on the freeway. Other days, nothing may have apparently happened. That's ok. What's important is that you are strengthening your intuition so that over time, you will be increasingly hearing valuable messages and information that may very well be life saving.

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