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Speaking of Intuition ...

By Susan Dunn

Speaking of Intuition ... by Susan Dunn, MA, Emotional Intelligence Coach & Trainer

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Excerpts from a recent interview

Interviewer: OK, what IS intuition? Does anyone really know? Do YOU know?

Susan: Well, that's how I started years ago when I learned that intuition (or "gut feeling") was an Emotional Intelligence competency (my area of expertise), and I was going to have to figure out not only what it was, but how to teach it to others. I had a teleclass, and I asked if anyone on the call knew a lot about intuition. There were two people. I said, "What is intuition?" and they both replied, calmly and with great self-assurance, "It's when you're absolutely certain about something."

Interviewer: And so you agree with that definition?

Susan: Well sure, but there's more to it. After years of studying it up one side and down the other, so to speak, I have several definitions. One is that it's "implicit memory" - things we know, but don't know how we know them.

For instance, you interview lots of people, right? So you probably had a keen sense that I'd be a good one to interview ... or not, right?

Interviewer: That's true! I read one of your articles and knew I wanted to interview you. That's intuition?

Susan: Yes. We also call it "gut instinct", and at deeper levels, we call it "basic instincts". For instance, there's a company in the UK - I work with the owner - who teaches occupational safety and accident investigation. They work with people in highly dangerous professions, such as engineers in nuclear plants. They teach them how to use their intuition, or gut feelings, to keep themselves safe.

Interviewer: How does that work?

Susan: Well, think about when you take your dog to a new place. He's "all ears," right? Sometimes he quivers. He's smelling. He's using all his senses to figure out whether he's safe there or not. And we have to get back to that. I say "get back to that" because consider, well, an engineer for instance. Years of training in logic and reason, data and facts. But what will warn him that something's about to explode? Only his basic instincts. Reason is of no use. Do you see what I mean?

Interviewer: Yes. Like when you walk in a dark alley and feel funny, or your hair stands on end. Or I guess when I meet someone I ... well, there's that word ... someone I INSTINCTIVELY don't like.

Susan: That's when you're using your intuition.

Interviewer: Well, does everyone have it?

Susan: Yes, but we're not all using it.

Interviewer: What do you recommend using it for?

Susan: It's the quickest and surest way to "know" something. I mean, don't you know right away whether you trust someone or not? You might do what I call "over-ride" it with your logic and analysis, but time and time again I hear someone say, "I KNEW he was a rat ... but I ..." and that's when we outthink ourselves. We go to using the thinking brain, the neocortex, when we should go with our feelings.

Interviewer: Well how do you know when it's your intuition instead of, for instance, wishful thinking?

Susan: If you're new to this, you may NOT know. We all have intuition, but in some of us it's poorly developed, in the sense that we aren't familiar with how it speaks to us.

Interviewer: What do you mean "How it speaks to us." Isn't it the same? What is it?

Susan: Some people get a visual picture. Others receive words. One person I know will start humming a tune, and when she gets conscious about what she's humming, there's a message in there for her.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Susan: Well, she was having a terrible time financially. She lost all her money in the stock market, then tried to start a new business and lived on her savings and credit cards, and at some point realized she was in a deep hole. As she dealt with the reality of it, she kept humming - well silently really, just a message, "I've come to the end of the rainbow." It was a very dark time for her. Then she started to work on the problem, checked on filing bankruptcy and found out the options weren't so bad. Then the internal 'song' became, "The long and winding trail." She was on the path toward recovery.

Well, she's also a coach, and she gets these songs sometimes with clients. One time she was listening to a client talk, and realized afterwards she was humming a tune that 'got' the essence of the client and

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what he was doing. It was "Ramblin' Man" and he was having an affair on his wife. "A rambler and a gambler and a sweet-talkin' ladies man..." She knew she was being led down a primrose path herself.

Interviewer: But what about decisions?

Susan: You get an absolute and sure feeling. Now think about that for a moment. How often, in important decisions, are you 100% sure and certain? If and when you are, it's your intuition.

Interviewer: How would you use intuition?

Susan: It's particularly good for the harder decisions in life; when the data runs out. For instance, you can meet someone who meets all your requirements for a partner. You know how people tell you to make a list? So you make a list, and this person comes along, and they're the right age, right education, right background ... but still there's something wrong. You just don't feel good with them, or they make you feel bad about yourself. You feel ambivalent, then, in conflict. Part of you says "yes" and part of you says "no."

If you continue logically thinking about it, you may convince yourself the person is RIGHT because they meet the criteria, when they're WRONG, because they don't work for you. It's not a good fit. They treat you badly, or make you feel bad about yourself. I'm sure a number of people have married people for the wrong reason - the logical reason. And we all know partners who seem so odd, so mismatched, but they're madly in love and singing a great song together. It's love, and it's beyond reason. You know how we say, "The heart has its own reasons"?

Interviewer: OK what about business or finances? Should we consult a psychic then?

Susan: This is about your own internal knowing. And yes, it's quite good for business decisions. Think about investing in the stock market, for instance. You (and stock brokers) can read the prospectus, and learn the fundamentals, and still lose your shirt. It isn't that easy. Unless you have good intuition and can go with that. That's what helps you pick a winner. The best stock broker I know also bets on horses and wins.

Interviewer: When would you recommend NOT using intuition?

Susan: When you aren't experienced in it. Then it can be wishful thinking, or fear, or both. You can get in trouble.

Interviewer: Do you have some recommendations for how to develop your intuition?

Susan: Yes. I teach it all the time. Start with something small and of no consequence. For instance, stand around in the produce section of the grocery and try and figure out what produce which person will buy. Or when the phone rings, try and guess who it is. It's a way of inviting your intuition to stand up and be known. That's how you develop it. Invite it into your life and start listening. Or seeing. Some people get it visually.

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By "invite it into your life," I mean this. When you're falling asleep at night, just silently say, "I'd like to have good intuition" and leave it at that. It's a time when your brain is very receptive, and of course you leave the details up to your higher self. It will get you there.

Interviewer: Why are some people leery about it?

Susan: Because it seems like blackmarket knowledge; too "easy" for some people to accept. Also because it can't be explained. It's knowing without knowing how you know. People who are highly intellectual and rational, want reasons. They want a logical explanation for everything, and that's not what intuition is about. However, many people turn around and rationalize it for others. In the business world, some of the best people go on their "gut instinct," but then they turn around and give reasons. That's okay. That's fine. It's just now becoming acceptable in the work world, so a person's justified.

Interviewer: Can you give an example?

Susan: Yes. Say you have narrowed it down to three candidates who all look the same on paper, same credentials, all equally qualified. How do you choose the right one for the job? You have to go on your gut feeling. That's your guide. Great HR people have keen instincts.

Interviewer: What about in science, or medicine for instance? Would anyone use it? Or accept it?

Susan: Well, I work with a physician now. He's been practicing medicine, internal medicine, where it's all hidden, for 40 years now, and of course he's uncanny in diagnosing. He's also a friend of mine, and when we're out, he'll say, "That person's got ulcers," and I'll say, "How do you know that?" He'll wink and say, "A little birdie told me." He sees the most incredible things ... from years of experience, you see. Sometimes he gets tests for confirmation, but it's his instincts that have to lead him to the right test. There are millions, you know, and they're expensive.

Interviewer: Is there anything you'd like to add about intuition? How someone could develop it, or learn more about it?

Susan: Belleruth Naparstek has written a great book called "Your Sixth Sense: Unlocking the Power of Your Intuition." (<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0062513605/susandunnmome-20>) They can also work with a certified EQ coach. And then try the exercises I mentioned. You can't just read about it. That's why coaching is good. You have to put it into practice, for months, and it's good to get feedback.

Interviewer: And everyone has it?

Susan: Yes, I think, or they wouldn't be here. Think of all the times "something" has saved you from an unsafe situation. That was your intuition. Thank it, use it, develop it, and enjoy the certainty and safety it brings to your life.

Coaching, Internet courses, teleclasses and ebooks around Emotional Intelligence. I train and certify EQ coaches. Visit me on the web at www.susandunn.cc, and <mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc> for information on coaching program.

10 Ways to Develop Your Intuition

By Susan Dunn

10 Ways to Develop Your Intuition by Susan Dunn, Coach

Intuition is innate to all of us; it's hard-wired. To develop this crucial lifeskill and learn how to trust it takes practice. Here are some ways to do that.

1. Suspend disbelief.
2. Be relaxed and not in a hurry.
Nothing grows well when it's rushed.
3. Don't try to use willpower or force.
4. Some people's intuitive ability increases if they ask an inanimate object (a rock, a leaf, whatever) to "give" them the information.
(It takes the pressure off!)
5. Establish a regular place, time and routine for practising accessing your intuition.
6. Start slowly and practice on inconsequential things.
7. You'll know when it's your intuition, because you'll have great clarity and certainty.
8. Intuition is contagious.
Therefore, hang out with people who have strong intuition, value it and use it.
9. Don't do anything you feel confused or uncomfortable with under the guise of "intuition." If you're confused or uncomfortable, it isn't your intuition.
10. Get an intuition coach or teacher. Feedback is good when you're learning, it helps you keep the ego-aspects in perspective, and keeps you from overload.

Susan Dunn is a personal and professional development coach, speaker, writer, and director of a distance learning school. Email her for FREE ezine.



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