

RICK'S TIPS

Rick's Tips explores the competencies necessary for successful leadership and provides activities to assist with the development and mastery of these skills.

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DECISION-MAKING USING INTUITION

“The only real valuable thing is intuition.”
– Albert Einstein

Some people are practical and pragmatic; using facts and data to make decisions. Some people are creative and intuitive; using their feelings to dictate decisions. We describe them as left brain vs. right brain thinkers. The fact of the matter is, we need to learn to use both. We call people who use both sides “whole brain” thinkers. Not to be confused with times when we say “so and so has half a brain”; that is something entirely different. This article explores using intuition as a means of decision making.

People who are very practical and make more fact-based decisions are less inclined to use intuition in their decisions and interactions with others because it is more subjective than quantifiable. Others rely only on facts to make decisions and while there is nothing wrong with that approach, it can be limiting.

Rich DeVos, the legendary cofounder of Amway Corporation talked about his observation that total dependence on facts limits the adventurous spirit which is crucial to the process of innovation and discovery. Facts alone, he believes, often end up being nothing more than a litany of reasons why an idea will not work. In essence, they often tell us to do nothing at all.

Intuition is the spark that ignites vision, not facts. Only when people and organizations integrate intuition along with facts and logic in the decision-making process will they advance. When we use our logical mind and focus on fact-based decisions we use the analytical, rational and verbal parts of our mind. This mind tells us how to do something by using words and sentences. The operations of critical thinking and linear analysis are components of this part of our brain.

Our intuitive mind goes beyond rational analysis; it is inspiring and nonverbal. This mind will show us how to do something by presenting pictures, symbols and metaphors. This mind functions through creative thinking patterns, spatial relationships, and visualization.

Intuition, innovation and paradigm shifts are all interrelated processes that require an inner knowing and deeper understanding of ourselves. Ralph Waldo Emerson’s quote, “What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us”, helps to look deeper into our own ability. The intelligence that lies within you can invent or discover different ways of approaching your daily affairs. Making a paradigm shift means discovering new and different ways of doing things as we become open to the potential for change.

REFLECTION – A GATEWAY TO INTUITION

In our hectic professional lives it may seem counterproductive to just stop and think, but it actually opens you up to possibilities and will eventually pay dividends in the form of quicker decision making and more effective problem solving. Taking the time to strengthen confidence in your hunches and gut feelings will enable you to be a more well-rounded and creative leader.

Before making your next decision, ask yourself the following questions:

1. If I were to draw a picture of this situation, what would it look like?
2. How will other people respond to my actions or decisions?
3. How do I feel about what is occurring?
4. If I am uncomfortable in this situation, what may be causing it?
5. Are my responses and actions in sync with my deepest value?
6. What unresolved issues from the past might be influencing my reactions?
7. What is important to me? What do I really care about? What matters the most?
8. What path feels right to me?
9. What's the worst possible thing that could happen?
10. What are the real boundaries of this problem?
11. What boundaries may I be imagining?
12. What have I been overlooking?
13. How is this like something that happened to me long ago?
14. How can I apply what I've learned?
15. How is this different from the problems I usually encounter?
16. How can I detach myself from this problem?
17. How big is this problem in proportion to the rest of my life?
18. What surprises me about this problem?
19. In what ways(s) am I responsible for this problem?
20. What would I be willing to sacrifice in order to solve this problem?

"Often you have to rely on intuition."

– Bill Gates

ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- **Find ways to center and calm yourself.** Intuition is difficult to achieve when you are in a tense situation, when you are stressed, when you are in turmoil or in conflict. When we are at odds or when words and emotions engulf our day to day ability to step back and think, intuition is not likely to emerge. Your intuitive ability is more apt to develop when you are still, centered and receptive.
- **Make yourself receptive.** Dominate people can be close minded when they do not respect the other person, when they feel their ideas are not being considered, or when their ideas were never asked for causing a mental shut down without even realizing it.
- **Learn the art of "Projection."** It will be beneficial for you to adopt alternative ways of exploring ideas. Practice imaging, visualizing, and running things forward in your mind while exploring them using the principles of "SWOT", (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) to capture every angle.
- **Learn the art of Mind Mapping.** Learn to use a schematic diagram to show options and possibilities. It includes all thoughts, ideas, feelings, qualities, details, and elements of a problem. Mind Mapping provides a systematic means for recording and encouraging the natural flow of the thinking process through a "positive feedback loop" between the brain and the process.
- **Learn to use Lateral Thinking.** This is a process that focuses on seeking new ways of looking at a problem rather than proceeding by logical steps.
- **Each day pay attention to your subtle, inner voice and your body reactions that have an immediate response to a situation or a person.** This voice or body reaction may caution you about something, offer advice, tell you something about a person or situation you wouldn't otherwise know. It could be about taking a certain route, parking in a particular space, avoiding something or someone, or receiving insight in how to communicate with someone. Often we ignore these little feelings, but I am asking you now to note them and to make note of them, in writing. Observe yourself. See what your feelings, body, intuition are telling you and where you feel it in your body.
- **Note how your intellect interacted with, and responded to, your intuition:** did you tell it to be quiet, or make fun of it, disbelieve it, shove it aside and replace what you think makes more "sense?"
- **Did you follow your gut instinct, your intuition, in spite of what would more commonly make sense?** How did it turn out? Was your intuition more accurate, or less accurate? If less accurate, examine potential reasons for being less accurate. Was something else influencing your thoughts? Doubt?

- **Make written brief notes about your intuitions and the outcome of either following them, or not following them.** What does this say about yourself?
- **Practice safely blocking off one of your senses, such as sight or sound, and use your other senses to see what you can pick up in terms of an object, energies, colors, information, emotions.** Put your hands close to a plant and its leaves and see if you can feel its energy. Can you tell if a glass is becoming full while pouring a liquid into it if your eyes are closed?
- **Give yourself a little test.** See if you can guess what someone will say before they say it, or if you know the outcome of a game show when it's half-way through, for instance.
- **Pay attention to how your body tells you that you are right on target.** There is a definite difference between true "knowing" and "guessing." Not knowing something for certain leaves you with a feeling of emptiness or jitteriness, you don't feel solid or centered. When you really know the information you receive is accurate, you feel confident and strong.
- **Just because you may have insight into things that does not make you solely responsible for anyone other than yourself, or the outcome of a situation.** Nor does it give you permission to manipulate others or abuse your intuitive abilities. (Just remember what goes around, does come around.) You have to also realize that what you receive might contain symbolism – so you have to figure out how to decipher the symbols for yourself. When you are focusing on what is for the highest good for yourself and others, your Higher Self, your intuition, will tell you the best course of action to take.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[The Intuition Workbook](#) by Dr. Marcia Emery

[Mind Mapping](#) by Joyce Wycoff

[Lateral Thinking Skills](#) by Paul Sloane

[The Six Thinking Hats](#) by Edward DeBono

[Paradigms: The Business of Discovering the Future](#) by Joel Barker

"Listen to your intuition. It will tell you everything you need to know."

– Anthony J. D'Angelo