

INTUITION AND DECISION MAKING



Leading with the Power of Intuition

Intuition in leadership is that powerful, almost whisper-like guidance a gut feeling or a sudden insight that nudges you in a certain direction. Yet, so often, we choose not to trust it. Why? Because it feels intangible, unproven. We are reluctant to trust it. How many times have you ignored that inner voice and later realized you missed an opportunity? Exactly.

For women leaders navigating high-stakes environments, trusting the insights from our intuition can be the difference between hesitation and decisive action or good to great decisions. In a world of constant evolution, women leaders can have an edge and disrupt even more



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organizations for the better.

Why Intuition Matters for Women Leaders

For executives, intuition isn't just a soft skill; it's a leadership superpower. Relying on intuitive decision-making can boost your confidence, strengthen self-trust, and help you achieve faster, more impactful results. Intuition doesn't cancel out logic; it enhances it. By tuning in to those subtle hints, we ask smarter questions and notice details that pure analysis might miss. It's like having an extra layer of data guiding your decisions—data that's often overlooked.

Research shows that leaders who effectively utilize intuition can significantly improve decision-making processes, especially in complex and fast-changing environments. When hard data isn't available, decisions still need to be made. In these moments, soft skills like self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and active listening become critical in sharpening the reliability of our intuition.

There Is Science Behind Intuition

Here's where it gets fascinating: our brains are scanning thousands of pieces of information every second—body language, micro-expressions, shifts in tone—processing it all without us even realizing it. Emotional awareness and interoceptive

signals (that science speaks for the physical feelings we unconsciously pick up) are working behind the scenes, giving us those gut reactions. Have you ever walked into a room and instantly sensed the mood? Or felt drawn to something without knowing why and later found out you were right? That's your intuition quietly working for you.

Eugene Sadler-Smith, a leading voice in the study of intuition and decision-making, offers some truly eye-opening insights into how we make choices—especially the tough ones. His work beautifully connects logical thinking with that gut feeling we often brush aside but shouldn't. In *The Intuitive Mind: Profiting from the Power of Your Sixth Sense*, Sadler-Smith talks about the idea of the "ambidextrous mind"—blending instinct and logic. It's not about picking one over the other but knowing when to lean on each. For women leaders making big moves, this balance can be a game-changer.

He also introduces the concept of "intuitive mindware," the mental tools and shortcuts we develop through experience. Think about how you can spot red flags or great opportunities without overthinking—that's your intuition, sharpened by experience. It's a solid reminder that intuition isn't guesswork; it's built on years of learning and doing.



Sadler-Smith even pulls in neuroscience to back this up. He references Antonio Damasio's idea that our emotions and physical reactions (like that gut feeling) quietly influence our decisions. Our brains blend emotions and logic to guide us, so its worth paying attention to those subtle signals especially when you're in a high-stakes situation.

Developing Intuition as a Leadership Skill

But lets be honest intuition isnt foolproof. It can be influenced by biases, fears, or assumptions. Thats why self-awareness is key. Reflective practices like journaling, mindfulness, coaching, or even 360-degree feedback help you distinguish between true intuition and misleading impulses. Personally, I rely on my bodys response to situations.

Over time, Ive learned to spot patterns in my reactions whats a bias I can let go of, and whats real insight I should act on. It requires practice and intellectual honesty. I journal regularly offering myself the gift of listening to the chatter and being able to turn the volume down so I can access my intuition more easily. Is it perfect? Certainly not. Nevertheless, more often than not, I receive information leading me to make better decisions. I then confront my insights with facts and more tangible data and it becomes with experience, a readily available skill.

Some of my clients have become more intentional listeners, embracing silence and observation instead of rushing to speak. This creates mental clarity, allowing intuition to rise above the usual mental noise. Others tap into their intuition through movement walking, stretching, or even dancing to create a state of being that invites clarity and connection.

Developing intuition is like building any muscle it takes practice. Reflective practices, mindfulness, coaching, and feedback are all ways to sharpen this skill. Journaling can help you spot patterns in your decisions. Meditation and contemplation create the quiet space needed to hear those subtle nudges. Coaching offers a mirror to examine your thoughts and behaviors. And of course, experience itself is a teacher learning from past decisions, both good and bad, refines your intuitive edge.

Benefits of Intuitive Decision-Making

In high-pressure, complex situations, intuition is often the only tool we have that works fast. It sharpens our agility and provides immediate insights that can guide our next move. Beyond quick decisions, intuition also sparks innovation and creativity. It brings new ideas to the table topics and solutions that pure logic might never uncover. Think of intuition as data another stream of information you can



analyze and use to fuel generative collaboration.

Blending intuition with analytical thinking isn't just a strategy; it's transformative leadership. When you honor both your logical mind and your intuitive insights, you lead with more confidence, clarity, and impact. For women leaders focused on creating meaningful change without regrets, developing and trusting your intuition is not just helpful; it's essential.

So, start listening. Trust those quiet whispers. And lead from a place of deep knowing.

If you're ready to dive deeper, explore Eugene Sadler-Smith's work:

- The Intuitive Mind: Profiting from the Power of Your Sixth Sense
- Inside Intuition
- Intuition in Business

These reads will inspire you to lean into your intuition and lead with confidence.

What's your relation to your intuition?

How would you lead if you could tap more often and at will into your intuition?

What decisions did you miss to take for not trusting your intuition?

What is a practice you would like to start to muscle this skill?