

Chapter Seven

The Power of Intuition

Truth is not far away. It is nearer than near.
There is no need to attain it, since not one of your
steps leads away from it.

Dogen Kigen
Zen master

Scientific theory has historically been the basis for moving technology forward. Once proven, a theory becomes fact.

The problem with this traditional model is that it is grounded upon perception through the five senses. “Prove it to me” and “I’ll believe it when I see it” are typical expressions of how much we rely on our senses to guide us.

When we rely solely on data, pie charts, line graphs, bar charts, and so forth, we deal only with the past and not the present . How did we do last year? The previous year? Last quarter? How was our performance last month? What was our inventory last week?

Data dies the second it hits the spreadsheet: yesterday’s news becomes the basis for tomorrow’s forecast. “The trend shows that sales are expected to climb 10% over the next eight months.” While some analysis is important, too much will inhibit growth. Remember the adage, “analysis brings paralysis.”

Trends and forecasts based on yesterday’s results limit how the emerging future can be perceived. As we mark the boundaries of the territory, people seem to live in the confines of that thinking. The set parameters become the ceiling for performance. Our imaginations become victims of the constraints of our own analyses.

Ultimately, we become in danger of under-performing, because real growth happens in the here and now.

To manage the movement of circus elephants, trainers will often tie a chain around the leg of an elephant. If the elephant tries to wander away from the area, the elephant will feel the pull of the chain, as the other end of the chain is secured to a large tree, for example. After a while, the elephant learns the roaming distance, as the chain prevent the large animal from going beyond the length of the chain.

Curiously, if a flimsy rope is substituted for the chain, the elephant's behavior does not change. It may stroll up to the point of the length of the rope. And while the strong elephant could easily break the rope and run away, the elephant does not.

A fish in a tank will react in much this same way. If a panel of glass is placed in the center of the tank, thereby creating half the space for the fish to swim, the fish becomes accustomed to its limitation. After a period of time, the glass may be removed, but the fish will not go beyond that point where the glass once was.

An interesting example of how measuring data and facts can be counterproductive was cited by John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene in their groundbreaking book Megatrends 2000. Naisbitt and Aburdene pointed out that the trade deficit in the United States is no longer a deficit. Trade is measured by the number of tangible products that are exported out of this country. The issue is that intangible items such as financial, consulting and computer services are not included in the government-published figures. Consequently, public alarm is raised when the trade deficit numbers reflect how well or how poorly America is doing with respect to other countries. Naisbitt and Aburdene argue that if intangibles were included in these figures, the trade "deficit" would disappear.

I might suggest that it is inconsequential to attempt measuring the balance of trade. With the dizzying speed of change relative to the information industry, it is virtually impossible to measure who is selling what information to whom, at what time, and determine how much that information is worth. Clearly, this anomaly demonstrates how our more universal world is dissolving the need for measurement and analysis. Businesses that wait for analysis will always be behind the curve, while those who put innovation first will always be ahead of it.

As we continue to evolve, we are moving toward multi-sensory perception, a step beyond relying only on the five senses. It is trusting your higher self, that natural and innate force within each of us that connects to all that exists. Call it intuition, your gut instinct, or whatever you choose to label it. It is arising within you to guide you beyond what you see, hear, touch, taste and smell.

When you rely on that intuition as a guiding force, it will be apparent that your five senses occasionally fool you, but you will always be able to trust your “higher self”, or that intuitive force within you.

Being guided by your feelings is quite different than guided by emotion. Emotions are reactions to something that is external to you. They are pulses of energy initiated by fear or excitement. Friends who have not seen each other for years feel overwhelming emotions of excitement. Emotions are relatively short-lived, as they come and go. Feelings, on the other hand, arise from the inner quiet and calm. Our true instincts, as we become connected with them, are always correct. The power of trusting our feelings, or instincts, is that we will always be guided in the appropriate direction.

For many, it will feel uncomfortable at first as the process unfolds of trusting intuition and relying less on the five senses. An “ungrounded” feeling bubbles up when listening for that intuition.

The process that will need to occur will be getting grounded to the force that connects us all. It is that field in which all truth exists, the place beneath conscious thought, beneath language.

The paradigm will shift from being grounded in “fact” to being grounded in less tangible forms. Keep in mind that what masquerades as fact is no more grounding than feeling or intuition. Quantum physicists have learned that material form is not as concrete, stable or permanent as we have believed for centuries. For example, if you examine a rock and begin to look at what makes up that rock, it will lead you to smaller units of matter. Molecules will lead to elements, and elements to atoms.

Consider the atom. It is 99.9999% empty space. Not air. *Empty space.* The electrons and neutrons on the atoms are made up of smaller energy particles, and from there, it becomes very nebulous. The particles or waves are fluctuations in time and space.

In short, the interesting thing about matter is that it changes form depending on how it is being observed.

The Internet illustrates how quickly our world is changing. The knowledge contained in the world doubles in less than a year. Technology evolves in lightning speed. Within months, computer models become obsolete. News that is a day old is old news.

We can no longer afford to ground ourselves completely on what we have traditionally considered to be “reality.” It shifts too rapidly. On the other hand, we are expanding our abilities to trust this deeper part of ourselves that transcends facts, data, and analysis. The writer Henry Miller wrote:

I obey only my own instincts and intuition. I know nothing in advance. Often I put down things which I do not understand myself, secure in the knowledge that later they will become clear and meaningful to me. I have faith in the man who is writing, who is myself, the writer.

(Source: Miller, Henry, “Reflections on Writing,” *Wisdom of the Heart*, Norfolk, Conn., New Directions, 1941 (repr. In Ghiselin [ed.], *The Creative Process*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1954).

For a moment, think about someone who professes his or her love for someone else. Ask that person how does he know that he is in love. He will simply reply, “I just know it. I can’t explain it. I just am.”

In much of the same way, this type of “knowingness” will redefine how we ground ourselves in life. Our decisions will be based more on our intuitions. You and your organization will be making more and more choices based on this new paradigm of spiritual grounding. Deepak Chopra has said to “go with your gut, for your gut cells have not evolved to the point of doubting.”

When I first began to trust my instincts, the results were very surprising to me and my co-workers. One particular customer, whom I will call Bill, was working on several key projects at his company. Usually Bill was very busy with internal and external meetings.

Consequently, he was difficult to reach by phone, as he was rarely at his desk.

Many of our team members would attempt to call Bill several times a day for several weeks. The frustration began to build in our group, as progress on our development program lagged, and program timing slipped.

As I began to tune in to my intuition and learned to experience the subtle feelings as they bubbled up, I started to get flashes of Bill in my mind from time and time. Whenever he came to mind “out of the blue,” I felt like it was time for me to call him. The unusual would happen...Bill would answer the phone at his desk...*every time*. Our team was absolutely dumbfounded that I could reach Bill.

It demonstrated the extraordinary power of trusting your higher self, the part of you that transcends space and is connected to all that is. Trusting in this Self requires a leap of faith, but it can have the most amazing results once this true nature becomes a guide.