

Making “Good Choices”

By Penney Peirce

What *are* “good choices” anyway? Does it mean we go along with what society dictates? Or that we please those close to us? Or that we’re “responsible”? My inner voice says it means we are responsible to what is deeply true in our own core, what helps us live with kindness, generosity, joy, and positive creativity.

To make authentic, good choices, we have to be able to recognize, not just the facts, pros and cons, and possible outcomes that our logic can

provide, we also need a “felt sense” of *Yes*, *No*, or *Not Now*. That’s a deeper kind of knowing that is provided by our body—not from past experience, beliefs, rules, or wishful thinking. We might call it *common sense*, *instinct*, *intuition*, or *direct knowing*. And though it’s more subtle than logic, it’s often more accurate as a form of guidance and decision-making.

For example, when it’s time for dinner, how do you decide what to eat? Perhaps instead of having



“the usual,” you might ask your body, “Body, what’s your feeling tonight about fresh greens? Tomato soup? Pasta with cream sauce? Pizza?” Let your body inform you of its desires and needs—instead of choosing from habit—and see if you can discern its simple, real signals. Maybe your body would prefer a handful of crisp, cold radishes or half a grapefruit instead of a heavy meal.

ASK YOUR BODY!

Ask people how they recognize intuitive guidance and some say they depend on their tactile sense of good or bad “vibes” while more auditory people swear by their “little voice.” Highly visual people have a “flash,” “get the picture,” or “see the light.” Still others, although more rarely, rely on their sense of smell or taste, like a past CEO of Sony Corporation, who solved problems by pretending the potential solution was a piece of food, then imagining “eating” it to see if it went down easily and felt nourishing. Receiving insights via the five senses is a large part of intuition, but what if you could pick up cues at an even earlier point?

When you pay close attention, you notice that intuitive information first makes itself known through *instinct*—the deep preverbal language of your cells and nerves. Just as animals sense an imminent earthquake, your body knows what’s happening in the world long before your mind does—via energy waves—and it transmits instinctive vibrational signals from the cells to your ancient *reptile brain*. Learning to recognize these primitive attraction-repulsion messages can help you know who to trust, what’s true for you, or when it’s time to take action. These signals come as feelings of expansion, excitement, and joyful expectancy or as a sense of contraction, dread, or insecurity. Sometimes the signals are quick and intense, and sometimes milder and more pervasive. Sometimes they filter into your mind as attention-getting daydreams.

Honor your body . . . It is the framework through which your works must come; through which the spirit and the spirit within the spirit speaks.

—Ancient Sumari text

When I was writing my first book, *The Intuitive Way*, I decided I should have a snappy anecdote to open a new chapter, something that would demonstrate the body’s important link to intuition. My impatient mind wanted the perfect story to instantly appear out of the recesses of my brain and march in an orderly progression onto the page. After a prolonged period of staring blankly at my computer, I realized I was daydreaming about a special hiking trail near my home and was feeling a strong draw to go there. Managing to overcome my “shoulds,” I took a break to play hooky for a few hours.

It wasn’t until I was halfway into what had become a magical nature walk that I realized my mind and body were once again equally activated. I felt alive, involved with my world, easily inspired, and full of enthusiastic creativity. By noticing my body’s immediate responses to the environment and by allowing myself to become engrossed with what I encountered—the delicately-marked baby snake on my path, the high-stepping water birds, the dry grasses swishing in the wind—I remembered an important lesson. *It is only through deep connectedness and personal, physical resonance with life that we know what is real and true for us, that we derive our sense of direction.* Lose your body’s live connection to the world and intuition and creativity stop. To jumpstart that connection again you may need to look to your deeper animal nature, to your instinctive self. So this experience, brought to me by intuition and my body, became the very anecdote I needed for the book.





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↓ PRACTICE MAKING CONSCIOUS CHOICES

Perhaps you're thinking you "should" get a particular job or choose a certain university. You have options a, b, c, or d—and each has a benefit and some logic to it. Perhaps other people's expectations and recommendations color certain options. Maybe some seem easy but shallow. As you ask your body about each one, on some your stomach contracts, you get a headache, you want to take a nap, or you get nervous and irritable. On others, you feel happily curious, "deeply comfortable," or even bubbly. What is your body telling you? With the choices that cause you to contract, perhaps the timing isn't right, you don't have enough information, you're trying to force things, or it truly isn't right for you. When you align with the right choice, your body will let you know with a feeling I often call *peaceful excitedness*.

Sometimes, though, it's easy to confuse excitement and attraction with truth. Maybe you've met a

potential romantic partner and your body is giving you what appear to be a variety of truth signals: butterflies, high energy, or detailed visions of a positive future. The high excitement seems like a definite "go"! Instead of diving in immediately, you might sit with the sensations and see if they mellow a bit. Could the excitement actually be adrenaline, caused by the fact that the person is a little bit dangerous? Maybe the person is unreliable, unable to commit, or there's a negative aspect that will emerge after you get to know them. Maybe it's wishful thinking. It's always good to feel more deeply into your body's responses to see if they originate from fear and lack or from balance and harmony.

NOTICE NONVERBAL INFORMATION

Nothing in life is that complicated from your body's point of view. For the body, it's always a matter of one moment, one piece of information, one motivation at a time. And in each moment,

there is one choice that's a perfect fit. In the next moment the choice may be different, so don't be impatient and jump ahead. Don't make rules based on one situation. When you need guidance, relax. Ask the body's key questions: What's most interesting and crucial for this moment? What do I need to know?

You may notice when you pay attention to your body, you become aware of subtle sensations and ghostly images that blend into an instinctive "knowing" that can't be proven by logic. An answer pops into your awareness and even without words you know what to do. For instance, your body may have transmitted that it's excited about creating a new flowerbed, and it releases to you a desire for the feel of soft, well-turned dirt, the moist smell of the nursery where you'd buy plants, and the thrill of the colors you would combine. You might even have glimpses of the design of the bed, and how it might look in a year's time. And this may come all at once. Because of the body's immediate, visceral way of communicating, we often miss its messages, especially if we're caught up in fragmentation or preoccupations.

**"My commitment is to truth as
I see it each day, not to consistency."**

—Gandhi

To make instinctive information more conscious, you might talk with friends about "interesting perceptions I had today" or "interesting similarities I found between experiences," or ask, "What do you think *this* means?" *Notice what you notice!* You can become conscious of the data in your muscles and tissues by having conversations in your imagination with various parts of your body. Personalize your heart, the bottoms of your feet, your blood, or the pain in your knee. Let them tell you what they know and want.

Make an agreement with yourself that the moment you notice a contraction, you'll stop and discover what the message is. Make it a way of life to keep your body clear of blockages, ignorance, and negativity. Practice dropping below the surface of your normal daily distractions to find a deeper, more direct experience of common sense. Cultivate the habit of including your body in every choice you make, and even try to feel your cells communicating. By respecting your body's innate consciousness, and "conversing" with it, you'll have a reliable source of intuitive guidance. Good choices become natural and normal. And the more you validate your body's answers by acting on its information, the easier it will be to make good choices next time.



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