

How intuition saved the world, and why you should read this book

On September 26th 1983 one man's intuition may have saved the world from nuclear Armageddon. That man was Stanislav Petrov, a 44-year old lieutenant colonel in the Soviet Air Defence Forces. His job was to monitor the possibility of a nuclear attack on the Soviet Union by the United States. If such an attack were to be detected he was required to alert his superiors immediately who would then order a retaliatory strike and mutually assure the destruction of both the Soviet Union and the USA.

Early in Petrov's shift on September 26th the alarm sounded and the unthinkable appeared to be happening: the computer system detected a missile launch from the West Coast of the United States aimed directly against targets in the Soviet Union. Initially Petrov surmised that it was a computer malfunction. Surely it was unlikely that the United states would launch only one missile. He dismissed it as a false alarm. Then a few minutes later the situation went from bad to worse: the computer system was showing that four more missiles had been launched.

Had Petrov stuck to the procedures, he'd have alerted his superiors who would have automatically launched a retaliatory all-out nuclear assault against the United States and the chances are I for one wouldn't be here today. Data from the satellite early warning system was the only hard information he had to go on; by the time Soviet radar was able to pick up the missiles once they came over the horizon it would be too late. But Petrov had a nagging feeling that all was not as it seemed with the data. He chose not to inform his superiors immediately. He waited, and waited, for what seemed a lifetime. After five nerve-racking minutes Petrov judged all five missiles to be a genuine false alarm. He was proven right. No missiles materialized because none had been launched. No Soviet cities were going to be

engulfed in a nuclear holocaust. The early warning error was caused by the satellite mistaking the reflection of sunlight from the top of the clouds for a missile launch.

Petrov later explained that it was a gut decision, at best “50:50”. He told the BBC that he “couldn’t move, I felt like I was sitting on a hot frying pan”. He told *The Washington Post* that “I had a funny feeling in my gut” that it was a false alarm. He put it down to his training *and* his intuition.¹ Petrov has been described as ‘the man who saved the world’; perhaps more accurately he’s ‘the man whose intuition saved the world.’

If, like Stanislav Petrov, decision-making is part of your job then *Trust Your Gut* will help you to develop a new and powerful tool in your decision-making toolkit: *intuitive intelligence*.

Who is this book for?

Trust Your Gut will help anyone, at any level of a business, to take decisions, large or small that affect both themselves (for example, their job performance, relationships with colleagues, career prospects and progression, etc.) and their organization (for example, its productivity, effectiveness, reputation, sustainability, etc.).

The advice in *Trust Your Gut* isn’t aimed at any particular type of job or industry; it applies across the board because intuition is found everywhere in business whether that’s in sales, marketing HR, finance, innovation, operations, strategy, or any other aspect of any business large or small.

Although the main focus in *Trust Your Gut* is on business decision-making, the principles it promotes and the tools and techniques it teaches can be applied equally to decision-making in your personal life; for example which course to study, where to study, which car to buy, which job to take, where to live, etc., as well as important decisions in friendships, family matters and personal relationships.

If you're not sure that intuition is for you because you've been schooled in the 'analytical' method—which let's face it most of us have—then *Trust Your Gut* is definitely for you because, as we'll discover, no one has the luxury of choosing between intuitive and analytical approaches to decision-making in life or in business: effective decisions involve a blend of *both* intuition *and* analysis. *Trust Your Gut* shows you how to get the best out of the intuitive half of the equation.

In other words, *Trust Your Gut* is aimed at people just like you.

In *Trust Your Gut* I define intuition as follows:

“Intuition is a quick, automatic judgement based on unconscious processing of information and recognition of patterns; it's a product of learning and experience which reveals itself as a 'gut feeling'.”

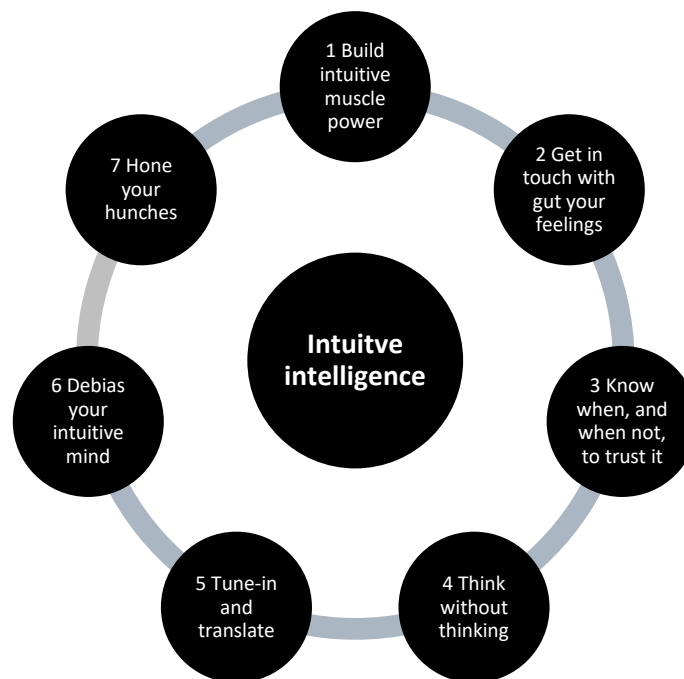
I've written *Trust Your Gut* because I want more people to appreciate the marvels and acknowledge the flaws of intuition; I want them to be able to use its strengths and avoid being sabotaged by its weaknesses. My aim is to make intuition powerful not perilous and turn it into your decision-making friend rather than your foe so that it'll help rather than hinder decision-making both in your professional and personal life. Ultimately, I want people to be able to use their intuitive intelligence to take better decisions and improve their own and other peoples' lives and, even if it's only in a small way, make the world a better place.

How does this book work?

Trust Your Gut takes you on a seven-step journey towards intuitive intelligence, which I define as:

“The capacity to be aware of, understand, interpret and manage intuitions in yourself and in others and hence make better judgements and take more effective decisions.”

Along the way you'll discover how to build intuitive 'muscle power', how to get in touch with your gut feelings, how to know when and when not to use your intuition, how think without thinking, how to tune in and translate your gut feelings into action, how to debias your intuitions, and how to continuously hone your hunches. The journey begins with a basic question of 'what is intuition?' and concludes by asking what role will human intuition play in the age of artificial intelligence (AI).



Each chapter begins with a power quote from a major public figure in arts, business, sports, science, etc. on the importance of intuition to them. In each chapter you'll find 'Spotlights' which highlight some of the key ideas from the science of intuition; you'll also find 'Big Thinkers' dotted about: these are the remarkable people whose insights have built the science of intuition over the past half-century. Every section in each chapter ends with a 'Take-Away' and at the end of each chapters there's an 'In a Nutshell' which captures the main point. In the 'Dig Deeper' section I'll signpost you where to go to find out more about the topics covered in each chapter. Each chapter ends with Work-Outs that will help you to apply the ideas to decisions you're currently facing and build your intuitive intelligence; these can

be used individually or in intuitive intelligence training sessions. Along the way you'll be invited you to stop-and-think about the ideas that are being introduced and reflect on how they apply to you in your professional and personal life. I've kept facts and explanations as simple and clear as possible, steered clear of dumbing down and not shied away from using technical terms (usually in brackets and 'single quotes') albeit in a user-friendly way.

Intuition is a rich but untapped source of decision-making power that's inside each and every one of us. *Trust Your Gut* will help to unleash that power by showing you how to use intuition to improve both your professional and your personal effectiveness.

That's it by way of introduction; let's get started.

I hope you enjoy the book.

Eugene Sadler-Smith

¹ Chan, S (2017) Stanislav Petrov, Soviet Officer who helped avert nuclear war, is dead at 77. *New York Times* 18.09.2017. Available online at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/18/world/europe/stanislav-petrov-nuclear-war-dead.html>