

The Power of Intuition: How to Recognize and Strengthen a Tool We Often Ignore

We live in a world obsessed with data. Metrics, dashboards, KPIs, legal precedent, predictive analytics—these tools matter. But in our quest for certainty, we often forget we're equipped with something just as powerful: intuition.

Intuition isn't magic. It's pattern recognition, experience, and emotional intelligence distilled into a gut feeling. It's fast. It's quiet. And it often shows up before logic catches up.

In law, business, and life, learning to *recognize* and *trust* your intuition can give you a crucial edge—especially in moments when time, trust, or emotion is on the line.

Here are four ways to strengthen this underused skill:

1. Keep an Intuition Journal

Like any skill, intuition gets stronger with awareness and reflection. One of the best ways to build that awareness is to start tracking your intuitive hits.

What to write down:

- What was the situation?
- What did your gut say?
- What did you do?
- What happened?
- In hindsight, how accurate or helpful was your intuition?

Over time, you'll start to see patterns: when your intuition shows up, what form it takes (a feeling, a thought, a tension), and how often it serves you well.

Think of this as training your inner decision-maker.

2. Use Contrasting Scenarios to Test Your Instinct

When you feel a strong intuitive pull, try stress-testing it by imagining opposite outcomes or situations.

Ask:

- What would happen if I ignored this feeling entirely?
- What's the *opposite* of the path my instinct is pulling me toward?
- How would I explain my reasoning to someone who disagrees?

This technique forces you to shift context and look at the situation through a new lens. It's a form of mental simulation—putting your intuition through a wind tunnel before taking off.

3. Cross-Examine It—Gently

Not every gut feeling is gold. Intuition can be clouded by fear, ego, or bias. So, when your intuition says, "something's off" or "go for it," take a beat.

Ask:

- What might this be based on?
- Am I reacting to the current moment or something old?
- If this were a client telling me they had a feeling "something's off," what would I ask them?

This isn't about second-guessing. It's about partnering with your intuition, not letting it fly solo without a flight plan.

4. Compare Notes with People You Trust—or With Yourself at a Distance

Some of the best intuition checks come from conversations that start with, "Does this seem off to you?" or "Here's what my gut is saying—am I overreacting?"

But what if you don't have someone available to weigh in? Try:

- Writing an email to an imaginary mentor (or a real one you admire). What would they say?
- Drafting a short memo to your future self, explaining the problem and your gut response. Would that version of you agree?
- Asking yourself, "If I were advising a friend in this exact situation, what would I tell them to do?"

When in doubt, use the power of role reversal. It gives you just enough emotional distance to evaluate your instinct with more clarity.

Final Thought: Intuition Is a Tool, Not a Trick

We weren't built to run on spreadsheets alone. The human brain evolved to notice patterns, to feel before it knows, to react before it reasons.

Ignoring that is like owning a compass and refusing to use it because it doesn't run on batteries.

For lawyers especially, intuition is one of the most valuable tools we have. It's how we read between the lines of a contract, catch the hesitation in a witness's voice, or sense when a deal is going sideways. It's also the one thing that will never be replaced by AI.

So check the data. Do your research. And then? Listen. Your gut might be trying to tell you something your logic hasn't figured out yet.