

YOU KNOW BEST

Gut feelings, that little voice in the back of your head, a sudden light bulb moment:

Intuition takes many forms.

And it's as important as cold, hard facts when it comes to making life's trickiest decisions—or saving yourself from a heap of trouble.

Here's how to tap into your sixth sense and know when to follow where it's leading you.

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◆ **KEEP A LOG**

To learn to distinguish your real intuitions from your worries (*I know this bump is cancer!*), Barbara Greenberg, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist in Connecticut, suggests you keep a record of the times you thought your intuition had spoken—as well as what actually happened. Maybe something seemed to tell you that your teenager was hanging out with all the wrong kids, she says, but when you got to know them, his friends were great. You can compare that with the calm assurance you felt when you chose your new house. "Over time you can develop a sense of the feelings that can be your best guides," she says.

◆ **DO A GUT CHECK**

There's a reason it is called a "gut feeling": Intuition often manifests physically. "Women come to my office with a lot of stomach issues. They describe a sinking feeling in their gut that something is not right," says Greenberg. "They might be dating someone new and get an old familiar stomach pain, for example. That's a sign that something is bothering them about the relationship that needs to be explored." Are you getting goose bumps or a tense feeling in your neck? "These are all physical signs that your body is trying to get your attention about something important," says Dr. Orloff. So learn to recognize your own signals and do a body scan when you're unsure how you feel.