

THE INTELLIGENCE OF INTUITION

People often confuse intuition with a sixth sense or the arbitrary judgments of inept decision-makers. In this book, Gerd Gigerenzer analyzes the war on intuition in the social sciences beginning with gendered perceptions of intuition as female, followed by the opposition between biased intuition and logical rationality, popularized in dual-system theories. Technological paternalism amplifies these views, arguing that human intuition should be replaced by perfect algorithms. Contrary to these beliefs, this book proposes that intuition is a form of unconscious intelligence based on years of experience that has evolved to deal with uncertain and dynamic situations where logic and big data algorithms are of little benefit. Gigerenzer introduces the scientific study of intuition and shows that intuition is not irrational caprice, but is instead based on smart heuristics. Researchers, students, and general readers with an interest in decision-making, heuristics and intelligence, cognitive psychology, and behavioral public policy will benefit.

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Preface

Intuition is an ultimate experience, beyond words: We know more than we can tell. This phenomenon upsets those who believe in rationality as a purely conscious activity. Its detractors tend to dismiss intuition as crazed superstition, while others have confused it with God's voice. *The Intelligence of Intuition* extends the argument for the rationality of intuition made in my book *Gut Feelings* (2007) with a deeper scientific analysis. I locate intuition in its larger societal context and argue that intuition is based on the unconscious use of adaptive heuristics. These simple rules make intuition smart.

Part I looks at the war against intuition. This battle began centuries ago to justify male paternalism by placing female intuition in opposition to male reason. With rising gender equality, this opposition was tailored to justify governmental paternalism by opposing female *and* male intuition to logical reasoning. In addition, the claim emerged that artificial intelligence (AI) will soon be, if it is not already, superior to human intuition, thereby justifying technological paternalism. All these clashes overlook that, like nature and nurture, intuition and deliberate reasoning act hand in hand. They are not antagonistic, nor is one of the partners superior. The false dichotomy serves obscured goals to exercise power over others.

Part II provides a closer view of the nature of intuition. Intuition is neither caprice nor irrationality, but unconscious intelligence based on long experience. The theoretical framework for understanding its nature is that of ecological rationality – the study of how mental processes are adapted to their environments. It is based on Herbert Simon's notion of bounded rationality, that is, how people make decision-making under uncertainty – in situations where the future is uncertain and the best action cannot be calculated. Good intuitions rely on adaptive heuristics that are not logically, but ecologically, rational. In this book, I weave together new chapters with previously published papers, which have been revised, updated, and integrated into a coherent structure.

In a nutshell, *The Intelligence of Intuition* explores the myth of intuition's fallibility by positioning it as a unique form of intelligence that complements rather than opposes rationality.

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