

TRUST YOUR GUT

It's one of the four winds I use to travel. Every time I wonder if I've done the right thing, and I question myself more times than my conscious mind realizes, God gives me a sign that I am on the right path.

I had inklings that I should "fire" a client of mine, but I just kept thinking I could make the situation better and that I was the cause of the problem. When I trained the next person (victim?) to make the transition smoother and spent tons of time cleaning the books and procedures, my soon-to-be-former client didn't even acknowledge me at the end of the meeting. She said goodbye and thank you to the new accountant, and she went out of her way to make me feel invisible. Little did that client realize that I grew up where my father made a science out of ignoring me, and that reconciled past gave me a new super hero power to recognize bad behavior. My wise son's response to my client's silent treatment taught me that I did not pass my pain onto my children. "That's actually good that happened to you, Mom. If she was nice at the end, you'd always be wondering if you did the right thing." Ah, the wisdom of others is, as Martha Stewart says, "a good thing."

Yesterday a homeless woman told me to, "Screw off." She approached me in a parking lot and said she was pregnant. She wanted money to just buy a sandwich. When I told her I'd rather just buy her a sandwich, she upped the ante. "My husband had cancer and died last month." Then, she told me she just wanted to get a Subway sandwich. When she realized I wasn't going to just give her money, in addition to the above, she told me she decides how to spend her money. Good, it just wasn't going to be my money. In as much right as she has to spend her money, I do too. But, thanks to being told to screw off, I don't have to wonder if I did the right thing.

Why do we put our basic instincts through such tests? Why do we have to second guess ourselves, wondering if we are constantly doing the right thing? I once worked in New York for a month and lived in a convent in Manhattan. That was one of the best experiences of my life. The sisters taught me so much, and I taught them at least what tacos were. (Seriously, there are so many varieties of food in New York, but try asking a market in Manhattan for tortillas or avocados without seeming like a crazy person.) One of the sisters' lessons was that it was humbling enough for homeless people to have to beg for money but to be treated as invisible is even worse. I mentioned above that I have some experience with feeling invisible, and so I've made sure that I at least acknowledge someone who is speaking to me. So, after yesterday's experience, I was able to feel good with myself. It's not easy to ever be told to screw off by anyone, but I remained faithful to myself and my convictions. I treated the woman with respect, and I remained true to my instincts and beliefs.

The real lesson here for me is to go with my instincts. Don't second guess the gut! Our instincts are made up of ancient lessons throughout our ancestries. There's DNA, but this is our Instinctual DNA. Let's call it our IDA – our Instinctual DNA Ancestry. Just like Dory in Finding Nemo, if you have an inkling that something doesn't feel right, trust the inkling. Those gut instincts are a protective security system made from generations upon generations of learning from mistakes. Pay attention to what our IDA is telling us. Honor those who have gone before you in your ancestry by listening to the remnants of lessons. Just with every other way to solve a problem, you have to know yourself inside and out. You have to know what makes you tick, what interests you, what motivates you, what you love, and what you need to move forward in your life's path. As an accountant, I know a lot about trust. I have seen abuses of trust. I have worked with pathological liars. Yet, I have also seen others trust unconditionally without any reservations. Building trust with someone is a long process and takes many turns. However, the one

person you should always trust is yourself. Trust you'll do the right thing (as you define it); trust that you'll take the right road, especially when that is not the easy road. Get obsessed with knowing your past and what that taught you about life. Sharpen the past lessons in your tool box. Take your life's tools with you as you travel along your road. But, always, trust your gut.