



Why we're right to trust our gut instincts: Scientists discover first decision IS the right one

By LEON WATSON

Last updated at 7:05 PM on 30th August 2011

Comments (41) Add to My Stories Share

Like Confirm

Go on your gut feeling when setting goals - because more often than not it'll be right, researchers have revealed.

According to a study by Canada's University of Alberta, when it comes to working out where the future lies your unconscious mind is both smarter than you think and can be a great motivator.

Alberta School of Business researcher Sarah Moore and colleagues from Duke and Cornell universities say unconscious feelings about objects in the environment influence the pursuit of long-term goals.

Search Advanced

Search

FEMAIL TODAY

White hot Kate Hudson shows off her bikini body just six weeks after giving birth to baby Bingham

In France with fiancé Matt Bellamy and sons



Skinny war! LeAnn Rimes fires back at slender Giuliana Rancic for calling her 'too thin'

Country music star was furious with TV presenter



Slash's wife slips back into her original wedding dress as couple renew vows 10 years on

Added a top hat in tribute to musician



Marc Anthony struggles to make coffee while



Exploring the mind: A representation of a man's brain



Go with your instinct: Researchers say our first thought is often our best

Their study explores how the unconscious mind responds to objects in relation to an individual's goals - and how the unconscious continues to influence feelings about these objects once the goals are reached, whether or not the outcome has been successful.

'In the past few years, we recognised that some of [Sigmund] Freud's ideas on the unconscious mind were, in fact, correct and that a lot of our decision-making and a lot of our feelings are based on things that we're not really aware of,' said Moore, who is an assistant professor in the Alberta School of Business.

More...

- [Wasting time with weights? The best way to burn belly fat is through aerobic exercise](#)

Find out what the stars hold for you



Get my new 'Guide to the Future' ▶

From just \$23.95

Jonathan Cainer

Jonathan Cainer Horoscopes



Get my 'Guide to the Future' ▶

From just \$23.95

Ads by Google:

The Perfect Baby Names

Use our powerful baby name finder to locate that perfect name.

www.ParentingWeekly.com

Top 2011 Online Grants

Grant Funding May Be Available Go Back To School!

www.ClassesUSA.com

What is Quantum Jumping?

Discover Why Thousands of People are "Jumping" to Change Their Life

www.QuantumJumping.com

Real Time Decision Mgmt

Improve Customer Interactions w/ Real-Time Decision Mgmt. Get Info

www.SAS.com

Indoor Outdoor Allergies

Learn About a

Jennifer Lopez is stopped at security: Ex-couple battle to be funniest in new Kohl's campaign



► Inside the two-bedroom love nest Jennifer and Justin are calling home The 1,761 square foot bungalow is nestled high up in the Hollywood Hills



► 'Equality, generosity and awesomeness': Jennifer Aniston reveals her relationship 'must haves' as she joins Demi and Alicia for stunning cover shoot



► Happy Families: Jon Voight is a proud grandparent as he takes Angelina's brood to the park Jolie has learned to trust her father again



► Kendall Jenner perfects her model strut as she takes centre stage in glitzy photoshoot Stealing some of her sisters' spotlight



► Kim Kardashian looks devilish in leggy red dress as she stocks up on snack food Left organic food store with sister Kourtney



Treatment that May Help Prevent Nasal Allergy Symptoms
www.Nasal-Allergies.com

Applied Psychology Course
Increase Your Marketability With A Degree At Franklin, Enroll Now!
www.franklin.edu/

Study Child Psychology
Find Online & Campus Schools With Child Psychology Programs, Apply!
CampusCorner.com/Child_

Save More on Electronics
Newegg - Best Place to Buy Online Save Where 16 Million Geeks Save
www.Newegg.com/Electro

• **When bacteria attack! Scientists make breakthrough in studying how germs infect people**

'In our study, we looked at how our unconscious feelings about objects in the environment influence how we pursue goals.'

Moore notes previous studies have shown when it comes to short-term, finite goals, such as responding to basic needs like thirst or hunger, the unconscious will evaluate objects and form preferences based on whether the object will help an individual achieve the goal.

She says in the case of thirst, items such as a water fountain or a bottle of Coke will be seen favourably, while a chocolate bar or KFC sign would not.

However, she explains that, once the goal is reached, those same objects will be evaluated differently.

'Once your thirst is quenched, you don't evaluate the water fountain positively anymore because you've accomplished the goal,' she said. 'But there are differences when we look at long-term goals.'

Moore's research focused on longer-term goals, such as getting in shape or undertaking educational pursuits.

For both types of goals, she says, the process is similar in that the unconscious identifies and responds to positively to objects and triggers in the environment that support the goal.

However, the unconscious deals differently with these objects during progress towards long-term goals.

Moore says, unlike with short-term finite goals, the unconscious will continue to positively value objects related to the long-term goals even after a level of success has been achieved.

She says this phenomenon points to the indeterminate nature of the goal.

'In some sense, we're never "finished" long-term goals,' said Moore.

'If we successfully finish the small steps toward our long-term goals, it becomes a cycle: we take a small step, we succeed, we feel good about it; therefore, we continue to feel good about the long-term goal.'

'This process makes us more likely to take the next small step toward achieving that goal.'

What was surprising for the researchers was how participants in their study reacted to objects after a failure.

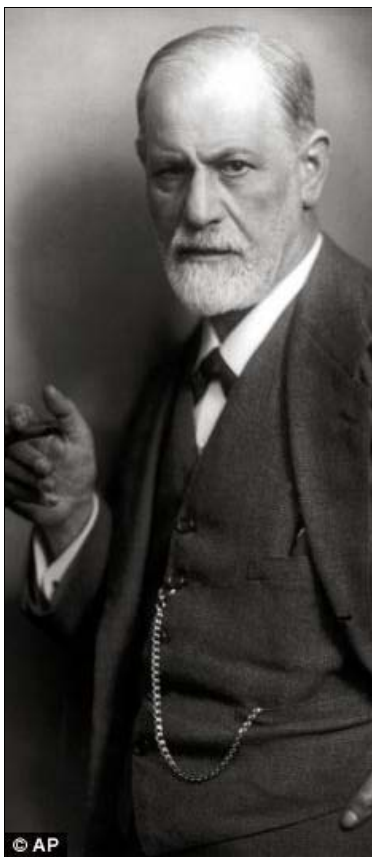
While the researchers expected the participants who failed to react negatively or express dislike for objects related to their test goal, Moore and her colleagues found that failure resulted in a neutral view of the objects.

'You don't hate the objects related to the goal because that goal is very important to you in the long run,' said Moore.

'Your unconscious is telling you 'now is not the time to pursue the goal. You just failed, let's leave it alone for a while.'

'We're not going to pursue these objects in the environment; we're going to switch to some other goal.'

[Explore more:](#)



Psychoanalyst: Researchers say their study confirms theories about the unconscious mind by Sigmund Freud, pictured

▶ **Spanx, swimwear and spray tanning: It's business as usual for reality TV's most voluptuous stars in new series Big Sexy**



▶ **Robert Downey Jr to become a father again: Wife Susan Levin is pregnant with her first child Couple have been married for six years**



▶ **That won't help! Reality star Maria Fowler chows down on a greasy burger as she admits she wants to slim to a U.S. size 2**



▶ **Sinead O'Connor explicitly bemoans lack of intimacy on her blog Irish singer insinuated she would even turn to inanimate objects...**



▶ **Pregnant Huma Weiner shows her husband what BlackBerrys are REALLY made for as she chooses business over romance on Paris vacation**



▶ **'I knew he was married... but I went after him anyway!' Miranda Lambert reveals how she set her sights on husband Blake Shelton**



▶ **Hug-a-Harry: Prince gives a beautiful blonde a warm embrace as he parties the night away in Hvar Royal left a club with two women**



▶ **Minka Kelly puts on a brave face as she's seen for the first time since split from Derek Jeter Sources have hinted at a reconciliation**



▶ **Shamed football star Tiki Barber 'proposes to 24-year-old mistress' The ex-Giants star left his pregnant wife for intern Traci Lynn Johnson**



Places: [Canada](#)

Print this article

Read later

Email to a friend

Share this article:

Facebook
 Twitter
 Digg it
 Newsvine
 Delicious
 MySpace
 Nowpublic
 Reddit

Ads by Google:

Create an Offshore Trust
 Protect yourself from litigation with a confidential offshore Trust.
www.OffshoreCompany.com/Trusts

Like

You like **Why we're right to trust our gut instincts: Scientists**

Comments (41)

Add your comments

Here's what readers have had to say so far. Why not add your thoughts below, or [debate this issue live on our message boards](#).

The comments below have not been moderated.

Newest Oldest Best rated Worst rated View all

My gut reaction is not to believe this study. According to the study I should follow my gut. Which means I shouldn't believe this story, which means I shouldn't follow my gut, which means I should believe the study, which means i should not believe the study and on and on :) yeh

- jonathan, surrey, 31/8/2011 15:08

[Report abuse](#)

Click to rate Rating (0)

My gut reaction is not to believe this study. According to the study I should follow my gut. Which means I shouldn't believe this story, which means I shouldn't follow my gut, which means I should believe the study, which means i should not believe the study and on and on :))

- Noname, Usa, 31/8/2011 14:13

[Report abuse](#)

Click to rate Rating 4

So water fountains and Coke look better to us when we are thirsty, how much did it cost to come to that conclusion?

- Ian, New Orleans, USA, 31/8/2011 13:57

[Report abuse](#)

Click to rate Rating 2

well i had a gut feeling the other day to nick a tele in the riots -- look where its got me -- in jail.

- jonathan, surrey, 31/8/2011 13:44

[Report abuse](#)

Click to rate Rating 1

When asked what his gut feeling was about the existance of extra-terrestrial life, the late Carl Sagan replied "I try not to think with my gut".

- Nigel, London, 31/8/2011 13:23

[Report abuse](#)

Click to rate Rating 3

The Enteric brain (second brain) is an independent brain that is not controlled by the CNS brain (Central Nervous System) in our head. The Enteric brain sends information to the CNS brain. The enteric brain is the first and primal sensory organ of the human body since it can sense information before it reaches the physical body. You may have a gut feeling about a person, event, or possibility, for example. You may trust your instincts, which means trusting your gut. The enteric brain processes or digests information about your world communicated to it through the quantum field. It can respond to that information by sending impulses to the physical body independent of and prior to any response from the cranial brain.

- John Wolf, La Jolla & United States of America, 31/8/2011 12:22

▶ A dream in double denim: Bar Refaeli keeps her look casual as she shops up a storm in Italy Lingerie model was effortlessly stylish



▶ Elizabeth I and the men she loved: How the Queen gave an Essex toyboy her heart, then lopped off his head



▶ Rolling in the heat: Adele wraps up in a huge coat and hat as she leaves LA Prepared for London's chilly temperatures



▶ Near disaster in the America's Got Talent semi-finals as Gymkana performer is set on fire Judges and audience gasped in horror



▶ Ahoy there sailor! George Clooney and Cindy Crawford decamp from actor's Lake Como pad and arrive in Venice by boat



▶ I'm ready to cha cha! Chaz Bono rolls up for his first Dancing With The Stars rehearsal The 42-year-old is excited to dance 'the way I always should have'



▶ Three's company! Ed O'Neill's TV wives Sofia Vergara and Katey Sagal join his spouse Catherine at Walk of Fame ceremony



▶ I've tried everything to induce labour... running, spicy food and sex! Mel B reveals her efforts to speed up baby's arrival



Royal Wedding
 All the latest news

DON'T MISS

▶ Meet my new (much yonger)