

July 28, 2019

Hebrew 11:1-3, 29-31 (NRSV)

2 Corinthians 5:7 (NRSV, CEV, The Message)

Wholehearted Living: “Cultivation Intuition and Trusting Faith and Letting Go of the Need for Certainty”

The Rev. Lynn P. Lampman

I get a hunch we should talk about intuition today (that’s supposed to be a joke). And yet, intuition is no joke and it is nothing to joke about. So, let’s talk about intuition, which is often misunderstood.

Psychologists believe that intuition is a rapid-fire, unconscious associating process – like a mental puzzle. The brain makes an observation, scans its files, and matches the observation with existing memories, knowledge and experiences. One puts together a series of matches, in other words we get a “gut” on what we’ve observed.

So, then what silences our intuitive voice? Our intuitive voice is silenced because of our need for certainty.

Let’s face it, we’re not good at not knowing.

We like to be sure of things and we want guarantees so much that we don’t pay attention to the outcomes of our brain’s matching process. Do we have no idea what our gut would say, because we haven’t spoken in years?

When we are facing and making difficult decisions, and at the same time feel disconnected from our intuition, we have a tendency to survey everyone around us. We can be slowed down and even stopped when making decisions, if we have to obtain a lot of information before we feel certain. Complicate that with the massive amount of information that is available and the easy 24/7 access to people which is part of technology

loaded world and we might end of never moving forward, fearing we do not have enough information. Instead, we remain stuck – unsure, uncertain, and thus not fully listening to or responding to what our intuition tells us (which is based on our experiences, memories, and knowledge which is not something then that is neither willy-nilly or plucked from out of thin air).

Equally important is that we may want at times to rush and move things forward because we may not want to find out what fact finding and due diligence will yield. If we are afraid to run the numbers or put pencil to paper, maybe we shouldn't do it. Intuition isn't always tapping into our inner wisdom. It can be knowing we don't know enough to make a decision without more investigation.

We need both faith and reason to make meaning in an uncertain world. It is not always the scientists who struggle with faith and the religious who fully embrace uncertainty. Scientists have come up with “principles of uncertainty” and dark holes. They are willing to live inside imagined hypotheses and theories. But many religious folks insist on answers that are always true. We love closure, resolution, and clarity while thinking we are people of “faith”. How strange that the very word “faith” has come to mean its exact opposite. Many forms of fundamentalism and extremism are about choosing certainty over faith.

Our fear of the unknown and our fear of being wrong create most of our conflict and anxiety.

So, then what is faith? This word we talk so much about and hardly ever define. So, let me give that a go today.

Faith is a place of mystery, where we find the courage to believe in what we cannot see and the strength to let go of our fear of uncertainty.

Faith is essential when we decide to live and love with our whole hearts in a world where most of us want assurances before we risk being vulnerable and getting hurt. To say, "I'm going to engage "Wholeheartedly in my life" requires believing without seeing.

What do we say to ourselves, and what do we do when we become really scared or unsure? How do we calm our cravings for certainty? Maybe what we need to do at times like that is get very quiet and still, and with our busy lives that can mean hiding in the garage or driving around the block. Whatever it takes, find a way to be still so you can hear your "gut", and receive and respond to what your intuition is trying to say to you.

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible." (Hebrews 11:1-3)

Let us not worry about what some consider the enemy of faith – doubt. But rather, let us step out in faith, not certain where it will lead, trusting God as we move forward.

"By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled seven days. By faith Rahab the prostitute did not

perish with those were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.”

Let it be said of us that we “walk by faith, and not by sight, that we live by faith, not by what we see, and that our life is really a matter of faith, not of sight. For it’s what we trust in, but don’t yet see that keeps us going.