

**“S” vs. “N” on the Keirsey Temperament Sorter**  
**Facts vs. Intuition**  
**Are they so different?**

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On the Keirsey Temperament Sorter by David Keirsey, the second scoring category is: Sensing vs. Intuition. In essence, sensing is using “facts” to determine a decision and intuition is using a “gut reaction” to making a decision.

Often those who use facts (S) to make decisions believe that to use facts are the only basis for good decision making. Some people who use facts as a basis for decision making may look upon others who use intuition as “fuzzy headed” or illogical. However, based upon the following research, intuition may not be as far removed from facts as many people think. It may be that analyzing the facts and then combining the facts with intuition may provide a most powerful decision making tool. The following is an example of research being done on intuition (N).

John Gottman is a psychologist and a professor at the University of Washington and he has been researching and videotaping more than three thousand married couples over the past forty years. Gottman’s research is highlighted in Malcom Gladwell’s 2005 best seller, *Blink*.

His research includes asking couples to discuss “any topic that had become a point of contention” in their marriage (p.19). The videotaping was pretty extensive.

The couples sat about five feet apart on two office chairs mounted on raised platforms. They both had electrodes and sensors clipped to their fingers and ears, which measured things like their heart rate, how much they were sweating, and the temperature of their skin. Under their chairs, a “jiggle-o-meter” on the platform measured how much each of them moved around. Two video cameras, one aimed at each person, recorded everything they said and did (p.19).

With all of this video and supporting data Gottman has proven something interesting. He has discovered that when partners are getting along they have a “distinctive signature that arises naturally and automatically” (p. 19). This signature or pattern is identifiable and stable.

- If he analyzes one hour of a husband and wife talking he can not predict with 95% accuracy whether a couple will still be married fifteen years later.
- If he watches the video tape of a couple for fifteen minutes his success is 90%.

- If he and his researchers watch a video tape of a couple for three minutes they could still predict with impressive accuracy who was going to get divorced and who was going to make it.

This is an example of the concept of thin slicing, the power of thinking without thinking. Based upon Gottman's research intuition may be a recognition of a pattern (like from the balcony) that we are not necessarily aware of. When we "feel" that something is "bad" or "good" we may be subconsciously recognizing a pattern. Thus, intuition and sensing may not be as entirely different as we think.

Gladwell, M (2005) *Blink*. The power of thinking without thinking. Little Brown and Company, New York.

Keirsey, D. *The Keirsey Temperament Sorter II*. Prometheus Nemesis Book Company. Del Mar, CA.