

## Why do people trust ‘gut instinct’ even when it’s not the smart choice?

When faced with a decision, people may know which choice gives them the best chance of success, but still take the other option, a new study suggests.

People may choose based on a “gut feeling,” a habit, or what worked for them last time, rather than on what they have learned will work most often, said Ian Krajbich, co-author of the study and associate professor of psychology and economics at The Ohio State University.

The results run counter to the belief that people make the less optimal choice because they just don’t know any better.

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Krajbich gave an example of how the study’s findings may work in real life. Say Main Street is usually the fastest way home from work for you. But yesterday there was an event that was going to slow traffic on Main Street, so you took Spruce Street instead and it got you home a few minutes faster than normal.

Today, do you take Main Street — which you know is usually the better route — or take Spruce Street because it worked so well yesterday?

Krajbich said the results of this study suggest that many times we will take the route that worked yesterday and ignore the evidence of what normally works best.

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