



INTUITION IN PERSPECTIVE

INTUITION - A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Today, intuition is identified in many ways; 'hunch', 'gut feeling', 'burst of genius', 'luck', and 'flash of inspiration', to name a few. While all these experiences vary, they have in common an origin in the unconscious mind and an access to quick and ready insight without direct knowledge.

You may have been stuck on a particular problem for days, and then in a flash of inspiration the solution comes to you when you have laid aside the problem and are thinking of something else.

These experiences, often dismissed as simply 'lucky', are in fact skills that can be consciously developed, and are potentially available to everyone.

Bruce Henderson in 1977 called intuition the "subconscious integration of all the experiences, conditioning, and knowledge of a lifetime". Jung, however, describes it as "a perception of realities which are not known to the conscious, and which goes via the unconscious",¹ and states that it is a creative process with the ability to inspire.

Conscious access to this great wealth of information, insight and creativity allows us to give greater significance to our lives, uses more of our brain's potential, deepens our knowledge, and leads us into new experiences. It can even be used to change the course of future events.

Intuition can come to us spontaneously as a flash of thought in our everyday lives, or as new ideas, images and patterns which emerge when we clear our minds and become receptive. Intuition can be systematically developed through formative training, and this is one of the aims of yoga and meditation.

Because Western society places such great emphasis on rationality and the conscious mind, intuition has frequently been written off as 'mysticism' and 'make-believe', mainly because of its largely unconscious function. Due to this lack of acceptance, intuitive ability is repressed in many individuals, for fear of being viewed as different or abnormal.

However, intuition in fact complements logical thought rather than conflicting with it. The combination of data and intuition can be a powerful one. Many of the world's top business executives say they rely on intuition as much as, if not more than, rational analysis.

As adults, we often strive to regain the more unimpeded intuition of our childhood and develop it further. This intuition can then be applied to our personal and well as professional lives.

TYPES OF INTUITION

Many people have an innate or developed preference for a method of learning (visual, aural, etc.); likewise many people have a dominant form of intuition. The types of intuition may be roughly divided into the following four categories: Physical, Emotional, Mental and Spiritual.

Intuition on any one or more of these levels does not mean that one is receptive to all forms; someone with a well developed mental intuition can be oblivious to physical and emotional intuition.

A single event can be intuitively perceived in different ways. Following is a broad outline of varieties of intuition.

Physical

This type of intuition is the descendant of instinct (which is discussed further on) and relies on physical sensations.

Different situations can set off physical sensations in our bodies and bring something to our attention; if you feel uncomfortable or sick for 'no reason', there probably is a reason. You may have an underlying fear that hampers you, or it may indicate that a job or situation that is inappropriate for you.

Learn to trust your bodily responses.

Emotional

With emotional intuition, perception comes to an individual through emotions and feelings rather than physical sensations.

You may have sensitivity to other people's 'vibes', know what someone is thinking or feeling, or what they are about to say. You may feel unconsciously that something is good or bad, despite limited knowledge.

Women are often more advanced in this type of intuition as they are not expected to repress feelings as much as men, and are more likely to do what 'feels right' rather than painstakingly analyze a situation. However, this difference is not innate and can be redressed once someone realizes how cultural factors have hampered their intuition process.

Practice is essential here as in all types of intuition. The more you act on your feelings and check them out, the more reliable they become.

Mental

Mental intuition comes to us through images or 'inner vision' and is related to thinking.

It is the type of intuition that often gives rise to scientific and technological innovations. Often these flashes come after extensive research and enquiry, and can make sense of a pile of previously disordered or limited data.

Opposing the societal view of intuition belonging to the realm of mystics, many prominent scientists including Einstein have advocated intuition. The French mathematician Poincare stated that "It is through science that we prove, but through intuition that we discover". Even astronauts are extensively trained in intuition in order to respond instantaneously to any situations that may arise.

Rather than allowing your brain to block our 'irrational' feelings, you should instead examine and incorporate knowledge gained through intuitive means.

Spiritual

Spiritual intuition differs from the others in that it is detached from feelings, physical sensations and thoughts, but rather is associated with mystical experiences. It is called 'soul guidance' in yoga and is thought to emerge when the mind is still, and thus meditation is useful for the emergence of these types of experiences.

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF INTUITION

In the prehistoric time of our ancestors there was no time for thinking and drawn-out logic; to survive the often drastic and unbidden threats that rapidly appeared, individuals had to react instantly. If someone did not respond in time, they were quickly taken from the gene pool.

To respond to threats, these human ancestors used their instinct, unconsciously absorbing subtle information from their environment and responding instantly. These skills of instant response have gradually developed into what we now call intuition.

It is a rapidly accessible system separate from conscious thought which is unfettered by reservation and questioning. However while instinct always remains unconscious, through training we are able to become fully aware of intuition.

DEVELOPING YOUR INTUITION

Although you can read countless books and accounts of intuition, first-hand experience will always be more convincing.

To develop your intuition, the most important step is to suspend disbelief, allowing yourself to give intuition a chance without negative reservations. You can learn to control other unconscious functions of the body such as the autonomic nervous system, so why not intuition?

Trust and confidence is required to listen and respond to your intuition. The more you use and act on your intuition in daily life, the more accurate it becomes. The more you experience the positive outcomes, the greater trust and confidence you will have in your intuitive abilities.

Begin to pay close attention to your intuition and what it is telling you, it could lead to positive changes. Developing intuition is the same as any other skill; we did not simply get up and walk as children, we had to practice and take gradual steps, getting better each time.

Start a diary. Think back on and write down situations in your life where you have made decisions seemingly based on intuition (what 'felt right'). Were they good decisions? Were they really based on intuition?

Begin to use your intuition to help you make decisions in low risk situations and write down the outcomes. Always keep a record of what your intuition is telling you, and examine how accurate it is.

While being careful not to doubt your intuition, do not take the opposite route and believe too completely in undeveloped 'intuition'. This is often not intuition, but misguided assumption, tainted by fear or desire, and can result in costly mistakes. People with highly developed or trained intuitive skills usually do not have problems knowing the difference between intuition and other internal messages.

Keeping record of your 'hunches' and intuition, learn to distinguish real hunches from inaccurate ones. This can only be learnt by trial and error, and examining your thoughts and emotions, or quicker still, by guided training. Do not get discouraged by initial failures as often there is a reason behind them.

To reach the conscious mind, intuitive impulses have had to travel through the subconscious where they can easily be distorted.

Often someone says they have 'misjudged' a situation or person. Rather than being the fault of an untrained intuition, cultural or personal prejudices are often at play. Perceptions are easily distorted by emotional states.

Part of intuition is looking within yourself and learning to recognize what is pure intuition and what you are simply assuming – to gain awareness you must understand and analyse your thoughts. Look introspectively and discover why you think the way you do, examine your belief system (not just religious). This principle of 'the unexamined life is not worth living' has existed for thousands of years in multitudes of cultures.

When you become aware of your own thinking or inner perception terrain, you will start to become comfortable and practiced in your own intuition, and your other senses will stop interfering and making mistakes.

You may receive intuitive messages in many ways: dreams, hunches, visions, sounds, tastes, emotions, and overall awareness. Pay attention to your own body and the subtle clues it provides in different situations. Ask your body to respond yes or no to questions. Yes - could be indicated by comfortable release, physical or emotional. No - indicated by tightening, holding back or 'heaviness'. Keep trying; it takes a while to recognize a response.

Lastly, make sure you do not concentrate and try to 'force' intuition out of your body and mind, but instead still your mind. This seeking of intuition and inspiration can be compared to trying to remember something. Receptive thoughts are needed. Tarthang Tulku, a Tibetan lama, says: 'If we wish to regain some memory or insight that is 'there' but is temporarily elusive, it is often most effective to put aside any grasping or tight achievement-orientation and become passively receptive.'

Question gently and let intuition come to you.

Remember mastery comes with vision, dedication, perseverance, courage and practice. Most people in western society have intuitive abilities graded at pre-school or primary school standard. What is not understood is that intuition like creativity can be taught, developed and evolved to infinite levels, through formative training such as the INTuition Mastery Program™.

References:

1. C. G. Jung, Psychology Types, (1923).
2. E. Green, A. Green and D. Walters, "Voluntary Control of Internal States: Psychological and Physiological," Journal of Transpersonal Psychology (1970): pp. 1-27.

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