

THE CRUCIBLE OF AWAKENING

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The Anatomy of Intuition

THE EVERYDAY TRANSMISSION OF NONCONCEPTUAL KNOWINGNESS

Intuition is something we all have, whether we listen to it or not. It is as natural to us as breathing — but we tend not to register it any more consciously than we do our breathing. As central as it is to us, it all-too-often assumes a peripheral position in our awareness.

So what exactly is intuition?

Some would call it instinctive knowing, but intuition is more than instinct, carrying instinct's imprint in much the same way that a symphony orchestra carries the imprint (or echo) of the first musical instruments. Instincts are drives, innate and automatic, taking over with compelling authority when necessity demands it, whereas intuitions, however instinctually informed, are readings, inviting not our submission but our attunement to and alignment with their message.

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So instead of being driven, we are guided.

Where instinct is reflexive, intuition is responsive. Intuition is the result of instinct learning to speak, to represent reality through fitting messages, verbally, pictorially, and otherwise. Instinct is a very fast takeover; intuition is a very fast download.

Like instinct, intuition is nonrational (employing no reasoning processes), but where instinct is prerational, intuition can be transrational to varying degrees (transcending rationality while retaining a functional intimacy with it). Intuition does not require any dumbing down of intellect, nor an end to abstraction, but rather only enough adequately-lit space in the midst of cognitive/emotional activity so that its messages can be registered with minimal interference.

Intuition is much quicker than thought, usually arising fully-formed while our thinking processes are still busy arranging themselves. This is highly practical, given that most of our thinking is just noise and clutter and repetitive self-talk, while our intuitions are mostly quite relevant, as well as being delivered without fluff, streamlined down to what's essential.

As five minutes or so of an unwavering witnessing of our mind shows, much of our thinking is no more than internal chitchat, featuring us talking to ourselves (and eavesdropping at the same time) and bouncing between various facets of ourselves (each of which tends to refer to itself as "I"), whereas our intuitiveness involves a much deeper sort of talking (whether verbal or not), conveyed from our depths to our surface.

Intuition is not a thought-out process, but rather a kind of visitation from within, as mysterious as it's fitting. Everyday revelation.

Intuition is direct nonconceptual knowingness, deeply rooted in near-instantaneous recognition of what's what and its relevance to us. An enormous amount of highly varied data and impressions may be before it, and it not only scans all of this extremely quickly, but also makes compelling sense of it almost as quickly, resulting in a noncognitive

recognition of what is actually happening or needs to happen.

This recognition is ordinarily registered first, then felt. All in the blink of an eye. As fast as instinct and with a much wider and deeper perspective. No wonder Einstein called it “a sacred gift.” A sense-transcending transmission that makes sense with palpable immediacy.

Intuition is more revelation than explanation or description, shining its light with dispassionate accuracy. So revelation arrives, presented in whatever way best works for us (visually for some, verbally for others), usually followed quite quickly by corresponding feelings/sensations — a so-called gut feeling being probably the best known.

Intuition itself is not desperate, even when it concerns extreme difficulty. The information it conveys, the directives it clarifies, the situations it sees through, are all transmitted in a neutral fashion, no matter how strong the accompanying emotions may be.

Intuition is our innate wholeness broadcasting live and unedited from its heartland, laying down fitting tracks for us, even if to do so it has to derail our train of thought or otherwise disrupt us. It is not the voice of our disparate selves or thoughts or feelings, but the voice of our essential uniqueness making itself clear, and not necessarily in words.

If we do not consciously hear it, it's not because it is not happening, but because we are not sufficiently present to be aware of such hearing. Intuition is always there, but we aren't.

At the level of pure survival, intuition is not much more than instinct, giving us immediate feedback on how to handle danger or heavy-duty challenge or any situation in which we are very quickly uncomfortable. For example, we are driving through an intersection, and a vehicle to our left is fast approaching us, seemingly oblivious of us; we take all this in, plus the fact that there's another car right behind us and a bicyclist 40 or 50 feet directly in front of us, and know precisely what to do, before

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any thought can arise. This is a level of intuition we all recognize, in which the optimal move makes itself obvious in a split second. Its mix of instinctual reflexivity and panoramic instant-scan allows us to navigate our situation as skillfully as possible (whether we succeed or not).

But even when our survival is clearly not at stake, and we feel relatively unthreatened, intuition still shows up very quickly, popping into being in a fraction of a second. This does not, however, mean that intuition is necessarily without gestation; like everything else, its arising depends on other conditions, which in turn depend on other conditions, all of which (in staggeringly complex ways) set the stage for the arising of a particular intuition. An extremely quick birth is still a birth. It's just that intuition usually makes its appearance already fully formed, like Athena (the Greek goddess of wisdom) springing forth fully adult from the head of Zeus.

We can ready ourselves for intuitive flashes, by (1) doing the ground work — gathering relevant material, quieting our mind, opening ourselves energetically, practicing listening deeply — and by (2) stepping back after we've done so. It's no accident that so many remarkable intuitions have arrived when it seems as if there is nothing else to be done — we lay back, relax, perhaps nap or drift for a bit, with no ulterior motive. And then... shazam! aha! — at least some of the time. No guarantees, but we increase the odds by doing our part as fully as possible.

For example, I may have an idea for an new book, and spend weeks writing whatever comes to mind regarding my topic, with no concern for structure — and then one day, seemingly out of the blue, I simply know the structure, know the thread that runs through the chaos of writings, know where to begin and where to go from there. All in a second.

And many intuitions don't depend on anything in particular for their arising. For example, we're meeting someone for the first time, and in an instant know plenty about them; we have “read” them, not from cover to cover, but enough so that they are no longer a stranger to us.

This is akin to a chess game in which we rapidly scan the entire board, sensing the possible moves and countermoves of all the pieces in a few seconds, and then make the most fitting move, our pattern recognition having been too quick for any analysis or reflection to take hold.

So what about when intuition doesn't work, messes things up, generates unneeded upset, does damage? I'd say that this is not our intuition's fault, but rather the fault of how it was translated into action. Intuition is a given; what really matters is what we do with it. Yes, listen to it, and listen closely, but also be as aware as possible of the filters it must pass through as it shifts from realization to action.

Thus far we've talked about intuition as a solo arising, but it is not limited to being only that. It can also be collaborative (just like creativity essentially is), as when the members of a group get so attuned that a shared intuitive knowing "possesses" them. An obvious example of this is a basketball team getting so in sync that whatever they do — for a time — works beautifully, almost magically, lit by an effortless grace and coordination between all the members. Pure flow, as naturally elegant as it is efficient.

I frequently see the same sort of thing in the groups and trainings that Diane and I do, especially right after someone has done a piece of very deep, emotionally riveting work — group members almost always enter such deep resonance with this person that a kind of group intuition, individually flavored, flows forth regarding that person. Other times someone will recount a dream they've recently had, and I'll ask the rest of the group for their intuitions regarding it. At first such intuitions feel like solo sharings, but fairly soon they overlap more and more, morphing in and out of each other, until a few key intuitively-derived insights cradle the dream.

Beyond solo and collaborative intuition is what could be called divine intuition, or the transconceptual, revelatory knowing of the ultimate dimensions of Life. Such intuition is anchored in the unqualified

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recognition of the All by the All; it is as mysterious as it is obvious, as subtle as it is lucid, as self-transcending as it is grounded. Here, we know without thinking, see without eyes, hear without ears, love without clinging, cultivating intimacy with all that is.

Divine intuition is what has just kicked in when we directly realize the answer to questions like: “Who am I?” or “What am I?” Such answers are not mind-made, photocopyable, or necessarily true after their moment; they are in fact not so much answers as raw “aha” responses that indicate a radically full understanding of the question, an undeniable “grokking” of it. Great joy can accompany such realization, and if it is allowed to coexist with a discerning eye, it becomes a sobering joy, a deeply grounded ecstasy.

It’s important to realize that intuition is not emotion, even though it may at times seem intimately connected with emotion, as if swept in on tides of feeling. Intuition is energetically and emotionally neutral, regardless of its content.

At the same time, however, emotional connection can significantly amplify intuition, not so much because of the intensity of feeling, but because such connection, with its multileveled richness of interplay, can provide more “meat” for intuition. The more that is happening between you and me, the more there is for us to be intuitive about; and the depth and significance of our bond, the tacit importance of it, not only makes mutual understanding and co-evolution more important, but also the intuition that goes along with them. But even though such intuition may carry an emotional wallop, it itself is no more an emotional construct than it is a cognitive one.

There are many levels of intuition, ranging from that of pure survival to that of the profoundest sort of spiritual illumination. We can intuit the best move in a basketball game, we can intuit where to sit most comfortably in an uncomfortable room, we can intuit the underlying motives of the person who is being overly helpful to us, and we can

intuit the presence of unspeakable dimensions of being. There is aesthetic intuition — sensing the essence of a work of art in less than a breath — and there is dream intuition — sensing the deeper meaning of a dream.

Consider the role of intuition in psychotherapy. Much of psychotherapy, especially of the cognocentric variety, at best only assigns intuition a peripheral role in the therapeutic process, as if it is far less important than rational thought and analysis. Some psychotherapy, especially of the New Age variety, tends to go to the other extreme, overvaluing intuition and overassociating it with various psychic capacities, while undervaluing rationality. Between these extremes are psychotherapeutic approaches that, to varying degrees, value both intuition and rationality. The most effective of these are those that are truly integral in nature, working in real depth with our mental, physical, emotional, energetic, social, and spiritual dimensions.

Intuition plays a role, however marginal, in all psychotherapy. It perhaps flows most freely in approaches that do not operate from behind preset methodologies, approaches in which structure is allowed to arise in accord with clients' needs and energies. When psychotherapists are not relying on a certain methodology, but are simply present with their clients, they are much more sensitive to subtle signals which may, if attuned to, redirect the session in more fruitful directions.

Intuition is revelatory nonconceptual understanding, lit by undeniable resonance with the deeper currents of what is happening. When it shows up, we know that we know without any need to prove that we know; intuition is that self-evident, conveying opinion-transcending savvy, needing only adequate reception from us to be downloadable.

Some call intuition our sixth sense, but it is more of a meta-sense, a sense-transcending sensing that encompasses and employs the other senses in its translation into meaningful messaging and corresponding action.

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Some overspiritualize intuition, treating it as something Divinely orchestrated, but it is simply part of our equipment, no more or less sacred than anything else that constitutes us. That said, intuition is a marvelous thing, a visitation for which we ought to be grateful, a multidimensional navigational aid, a clear steady voice in the wilderness of our being.

Intuition knows that it knows, with knowledge-transcending certainty. Let us listen to it very closely and with great respect, separating it from those thoughts and feelings that would usurp or masquerade as it. Intuitive knowingness flows through all that is, speaking whatever language is needed, creating a communicative network that touches one and all. Let us be grateful for it.

Let us give our intuitive capacity more than our ear, until it is not so much an it as our unveiled essentialness absorbed in pure communication, transmitting what serves our highest good, regardless of its reception.

LIFE IS A NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE

*We die as we lived.
The chains we adopted remain
Unless shed before our death
After our body's done its time
And we're still around wandering
Through what we have made of ourselves
We are but a thought away
From waking up from it all*

*But Death is not later
Death doesn't happen to Life
It's a shedding or release inviting us
Into the heartland of the Supreme
Beyond every possible dream*

*What happens after death
Is what is happening right now
Life is a near-death-experience
Life beyond the body
Frees us to embody the Beyond
Life beyond the mind
Frees us to know the Unknown
Life beyond Death
Frees us to die into the Undying*

*Dying to come alive are we
Reaching for what we never left
But only dreamt we did
The dream dies
Leaving nothing in its wake
But us*

MASTERS CENTER FOR TRANSFORMATION

<http://www.masterscenter.net>

FACEBOOK FAN PAGE

I now have a Facebook Fan page, on which I not only am posting most days, but am also responding to posts. To join, go to:

<http://bit.ly/alCf9v>

SPIRITUAL BYPASSING

This, my recently published book, is available in bookstores and on Amazon, where it still can be purchased at a 33% discount:

<http://tinyurl.com/24vaqfz>

“Every spiritual practitioner would do well to study *Spiritual Bypassing* again and again. So would every one of us who presume to teach any spirituality at all. Thankfully, it’s as much compassionate antidote as prophetic critique. May it be put to grateful use as long as the illness it treats continues to ravage human bodies, souls, and lives.”

— Saniel Bonder, founder, Waking Down in Mutuality, and author of *Healing the Spirit/Matter Split* and *Waking Down*

“Robert Masters has given us a great gift — a tremendously useful guide to examining our tendencies to spiritual bypassing, clearly the most comprehensive and accessible treatment available of this crucial topic. His work is a great contribution to the ongoing integration of psychotherapy and spiritual practice, and to our understanding of the meaning of spiritual maturity.”

— Donald Rothberg, Ph.D., author of *The Engaged Spiritual Life*

“This is a wonderfully significant and important book, and is highly recommended. Its contents are truly mandatory for this day and age.”

— Ken Wilber, author of *The Integral Vision*

PRIVATE SESSIONS/CONSULTATIONS

Individual and couple in-person sessions with us (Diane and I almost always work together as a team in every session) are opportunities to very efficiently and very effectively get to the heart of – and to work through – whatever issues or concerns you may have.

Sessions combine in-depth conversation with an intuitive blend of cutting-edge psychotherapy, Gestalt, bodywork, emotional release, spiritual deepening practices, and coaching, in an atmosphere of care and safety.

Depth is invited, but not forced. Breakthroughs, however common, are worked with in a manner that allows proper digestion and assimilation of whatever energies and insights have arisen. Also, post-session practices/homework are usually given, to help support and ground the work done.

What is needed usually becomes clear in the first session. The work that follows catalyzes and makes room for deep healing and integration. Though this is not always easy, it remains a powerfully illuminating and fulfilling process, making more than possible the living of a deeper life, a life of wholeness and integrity.

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