

## Intuition

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### ABSTRACT

We are most often pleasantly surprised to observe our intuition leading us to a correct solution when confronted with a situation needing an instantaneous answer for a complex problem. There have been instances that proved that intuition is sometimes more powerful than intellect. Albert Einstein rightly said “The intellect has little to do on the road to discovery. There comes a leap in consciousness, call it Intuition or what you will, the solution comes to you and you don’t know how or why.” Intuition is an intriguing topic and it does baffle us how the right answer pops up without analysis, logic, or reasoning through an inner voice coming from the inner self or soul. This paper takes up this topic and we shall try to unravel different facets connected to this word, starting with its definition and meaning as posited by thinkers and philosophers, we shall explore what brain activities happen while we are intuiting, and we shall also peep into the history of intuition and we shall explore the importance of intuition in humans, we shall also see how intuition proved vital in many fields, we shall look at advantages and disadvantages of intuition, we shall also be examining whether intuition is always correct and, if not, is there a way to find pure intuition. We shall also learn how to develop ourselves to reach true intuition and finally can we measure intuition as we could measure intelligence via IQ?

**Keywords:** *Intuition, sixth sense, the voice of the soul, gut feeling, inner self, conscience*

Henri Poincare said, “*It is through science that we prove, but through intuition that we discover.*”

Indeed, some time or the other we all experience a discovery without the normal means of perception. There is no apparent logic to how we discovered, yet the facts are revealed that turn out to be true. As per a quote from Joy Bell C, “Our bodies have five senses: touch, smell, taste, sight, hearing. But not to be overlooked are the senses of our souls: intuition, peace, foresight, trust, empathy.”

The differences between people lie in their use of these senses; most people don't know anything about the inner senses while a few people rely on them just as they rely on their physical senses, and probably even more.

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The inner senses are also viewed as gut feelings. Gut feelings relate to a premonition or manifest as reaching a correct option without analytical reasoning.

In my long career as GM (Operations), the gut feeling or *Intuition* has helped me immensely when I was confronted with situations where I had to choose an option instantly and many times crucial decisions were reached solely on intuition. I have found that successful entrepreneurs who do not have management degrees succeed mostly due to their intuitive capabilities. In my career, many a time my senior assistants placed before me intricate complex project reports for evaluation, and on most occasions, just a cursory glance prompted me to speak aloud my feeling that something is not right in it. The voice emanated solely due to intuition which did not take the help of analytical reasoning. Later when I studied the project report and evaluated it on management principles, I could come out with several management shortcomings in the reports.

In most competitive exams, we are asked to take up objective-type tests where a question with 4 options is given and we have to choose the correct option. We choose the correct option when we know the answer but, in a situation when we do not have any clue about the answer, we do not choose an option randomly but pick up the option intuitively. In my case, I found that most of my intuitive answers were correct in the entrance exam conducted by Indian Statistical Institute enabling my entry into the prestigious institute. The exam was conducted all over India and at my time (53 years ago) only 30 students were selected and I was one of the successful entrants. I knew answers to many questions but to many other questions, I could choose the correct option through intuition and my intuition stood me in good stead and my intuition made me one of the 30 successful candidates.

Joy Bell C had made a correct observation that we, the humans, perceive the world through the known five senses viz., seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. Awareness about the world comes only through these senses. Our behaviour in a situation emanates from perception achieved through the five senses. Our brain gets the sensory inputs from our five sense organs-eyes, nose, ears, tongue, and skin and we become aware of what is happening around us. The perception gets stored in our memory and as we build our vocabulary, the memories build our thoughts and we express them suitably in a situation. We learn complex subjects in our school and colleges using the sensory inputs and go on building knowledge through the memory which stores the knowledge. The knowledge prompts us to find answers to problems that come our way.

However, there are occasions when a problem evades a solution and our knowledge is unable to provide a solution. The five senses fail but there is a proverbial sixth sense, *the intuition*, which then surfaces and provides a solution that on most occasions is the correct solution. The sixth sense exists, how else, could we observe Telepathy, Precognition, and Clairvoyance which manifest without using the known five senses. The sixth sense could be any of the above or could be intuition which prompts us to guess accurately without reasoning.

In one of the above paragraphs, I talked about Joy Bell C who posits that *apart from the known five senses people have the senses of our souls: intuition, peace, foresight, trust, and empathy. The differences between people lie in their use of these senses; most people don't know anything about the inner senses while a few people rely on them just as they rely on their physical senses, and in fact probably even more.* I view the senses of the soul as the voice of the inner self-the voice of the soul. We all have a sense of soul that guides us all the time. Feeble voices are coming from our inner self guiding us all the time, these are our conscience

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and our intuition. We sometimes hear them and act on them but most often we hear but ignore them. In fact, within us resides another person who is continuously chattering and advising us. In crucial moments when we face a complex situation that may have several options as a solution, this person from within us guides us to an option that invariably turns out to be the correct option. The option pops up instantaneously without logical or analytical reasoning and can be tested later using analytical tools. I talked about my attempting objective-type questions in the entrance exam, wherein I knew answers to most of the questions but the ones I did not know were answered using intuition and they turned out to be correct. The correct options sprang out from the voices of the inner self. You may say that it was a coincidence or matter of chance that the answers chosen came out to be correct. Could be!! Or it could be the intuition at work!! Whether the chance cause was at work or it was intuition at work could only be tested statistically but I would not like to go into that. I leave it open-ended and say that there is a chance that intuition was at work!!

### ***What is intuition?***

In this paper we shall try to answer this question through deep research and will unravel different facets connected to this word, starting with its definition and meaning as posited by thinkers and philosophers, we shall explore what brain activities happen while we are intuiting, we shall explore the importance of intuition in humans, we shall also see how intuition was vital in many fields, we shall also be examining whether intuition is always correct and if not, is there a way to find out pure intuition? We shall also learn how to develop ourselves to reach true intuition and finally can we measure intuition as we could measure intelligence via IQ?

Let us start with understanding its meaning.

### ***Definition and Meaning of Intuition***

Intuition as defined in Oxford Dictionary-

- *the ability to understand something instinctively, without the need for conscious reasoning.*
- *a thing that one knows or considers likely from instinctive feeling rather than conscious reasoning.*

Merriam Webster gives the following definition

***1a:*** *the power or faculty of attaining direct knowledge or cognition without evident rational thought and inference*

***1b:*** *immediate apprehension or cognition*

***1c:*** *knowledge or conviction gained by intuition*

***2:*** *quick and ready insight*

As per Cambridge Dictionary *Intuition is an ability to understand or know something immediately based on your feelings rather than facts*

Collins dictionary defines Intuition as follows:

*Your intuition or your intuitions are unexplained feelings you have that something is true even when you have no evidence or proof of it.*

If we assimilate the above dictionary meanings we arrive at an accurate meaning:

***Intuition is the ability to understand something instinctively, without the need for conscious reasoning. It is a thing that one knows or considers likely from instinctive feeling rather than***

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*conscious reasoning which manifests as an immediate quick and accurate insight. It is an unexplained feeling that something is true even when there is no evidence or proof of it.*

Intuition just manifests as a lightning flash without conscious thought, it just happens instinctively!! Intuition is a spiritual faculty and does not explain, but simply points the way (Florence Scovel Shinn). Intuition just leads the way without ever making us evaluate the correctness which invariably is.

### ***Meaning of Intuition as per some thinkers***

Carl Jung defined intuition as "perception via the unconscious": using sense-perception only as a starting point, to bring forth ideas, images, possibilities, and ways out of a blocked situation, by a process that is mostly unconscious.

The word *intuition* comes from the Latin verb *intueri* translated as "consider" or from the late middle English word *intuit*, "to contemplate".

***Intuition*** is the ability to acquire knowledge without recourse to conscious reasoning. Different fields use the word "intuition" in very different ways, including but not limited to: direct access to unconscious knowledge; unconscious cognition; inner sensing; inner insight to unconscious pattern-recognition; and the ability to understand something instinctively, without any need for conscious reasoning. (Wikipedia<sup>1</sup>)

Jeremy Sutton<sup>2</sup> posits her views on intuition as follows:

*Intuition is that feeling in your gut when you instinctively know that something you are doing is right or wrong. Or it's that moment when you sense kindness, or fear, in another's face. You don't know why you feel that way; it's just a hunch. Intuition is not logical. It is not the result of a set of considered steps that can be shared or explained. Instead, while based on deep-seated knowledge, the process feels natural, almost instinctual. The subconscious brain attempts to recognize, process, and use patterns of thinking based on prior experience and the best guess.*

*Paradoxically, intuition feels unknowable. After all, you cannot explain the thinking behind a snap decision that appears out of nowhere.*

*It just happens.*

Hogarth<sup>3</sup> suggests "the essence of intuition or intuitive responses is that they are reached with little apparent effort, and typically without conscious awareness. They involve little or no conscious deliberation."

Seymour Epstein<sup>4</sup> offers a further, complementary insight: "Intuition involves a sense of knowing without knowing how one knows" based on the unconscious processing of information.

Intuitions also appear to be holistic – combining insights from multiple sources and often requiring a leap in thinking based on limited information.

Thinkers have diverse thoughts on Intuition but all agree that Intuition is instantaneous and occurs without any conscious or logical effort.

### ***Philosophers on Intuition***

Both Eastern and Western philosophers have studied the concept in great detail.

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### ***Eastern Philosophy on Intuition***

Eastern Philosopher Aurbindo posits that intuition comes under the realms of knowledge by identity; he describes the psychological plane in humans (often referred to as *mana* in Sanskrit) as having two arbitrary natures, the first being imprinting of psychological experiences which is constructed through sensory information (mind seeking to become aware of the external world). The second nature is the action when it seeks to be aware of itself, resulting in humans being aware of their existence or aware of being angry & aware of other emotions. He terms this second nature as knowledge by identity. Knowledge by identity, which gives the awareness of human beings' existence, can be extended further to the outside of ourselves resulting in intuitive knowledge. (Aurbindo<sup>5</sup>)

Advaita Vedanta (a school of thought) takes intuition to be an experience through which one can come in contact with an experience -Brahman. (M Indich William<sup>6</sup>)

Buddhism finds intuition to be a faculty in the mind of immediate knowledge and puts the term intuition beyond the mental process of conscious thinking, as the conscious thought cannot necessarily access subconscious information, or render such information into a communicable form. (Ajahn Sumedho<sup>7</sup>)

In Zen Buddhism, various techniques have been developed to help develop one's intuitive capability, such as *koans* – the resolving of which leads to states of minor enlightenment (*satori*). In parts of Zen Buddhism intuition is deemed a mental state between the Universal mind and one's individual discriminating mind (*Humphreys, Christmas<sup>8</sup>; Connors, Shawn<sup>9</sup>*)

### ***Western Philosophy on Intuition***

In his book *Republic*, Plato tries to define intuition as a fundamental capacity of human reason to comprehend the true nature of reality. (Kamerlingh Garth<sup>10</sup>)

In his works *Meno* and *Phaedo* describes intuition as a pre-existing knowledge residing in the "soul of eternity", and a phenomenon by which one becomes conscious of pre-existing knowledge. He provides an example of mathematical truths and posits that they are not arrived at by reason. He argues that these truths are accessed using knowledge already present in a dormant form and accessible to our intuitive capacity. (Klein Jacob<sup>11</sup>)

Descartes refers to an "intuition" (from the Latin verb *intueor*, which means "to see") as a pre-existing knowledge gained through rational reasoning or discovering truth through contemplation. This definition states that "whatever I clearly and distinctly perceive to be true is true". (C&D Rule<sup>12</sup>, Descartes truth Rule<sup>13</sup>) and it is commonly referred to as rational intuition (*L. Mursell, James<sup>14</sup>*)

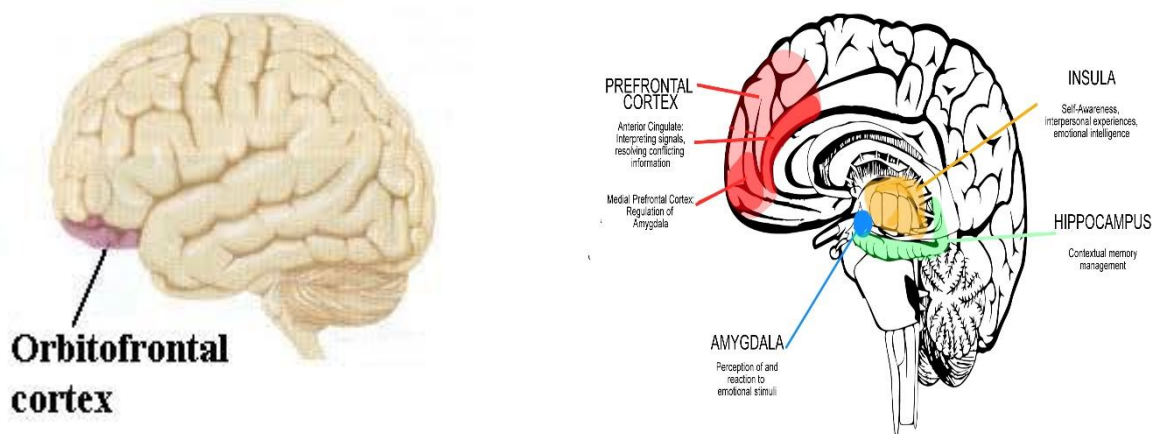
Immanuel Kant's notion of "intuition" consists of the basic sensory information provided by the cognitive faculty of sensibility (equivalent to what might loosely be called perception). Kant held that our mind casts all of our external intuitions in the form of space, and all of our internal intuitions (memory, thought) in the form of time.(Kant Immanuel<sup>15</sup>)

Having defined and understood the meaning from the standpoint of various thinkers and philosophers, let us expand our understanding of intuition by peeping into the brain and understanding what goes on in the brain when intuition is manifesting.

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### **Brain activities during Intuition**

Kirsten G Volz, D Yves von Cramon<sup>16</sup> conducted brain imaging of people during intuitive and non-intuitive states by performing functional magnetic resonance imaging on the participants in the experiment. They posit the findings as follows—“ *Starting from our conceptualization that intuition involves an informed judgment in the context of discovery, we expected activation within the median orbito-frontal cortex (OFC), as this area receives input from all sensory modalities and has been shown to be crucially involved in emotionally-driven decisions. Results from a direct contrast between intuitive and nonintuitive judgments, as well as from a parametric analysis, revealed the median OFC, the lateral portion of the amygdala, anterior insula, and ventral occipito-temporal regions got activated.*”



**Figure 1-Brain areas Orbitofrontal cortex, amygdala and insula, and hippocampus that get activated during intuition as per the study by Kirsten G Volz, D Yves von Cramon, and by Dr. Orloff**

Orbitofrontal cortex is the smallest part of the frontal lobe of the brain. Intuition creates activities in the Orbitofrontal cortex, amygdala, anterior insula, and ventral occipito-temporal regions of the brain.

Based on a general observation that women possess more intuitive power than men, researcher Alexandra Mysoor<sup>17</sup> posits that according to Dr. Orloff, scientists believe intuition operates through the entire right side of our brain, the brain's **hippocampus** (see above picture), and through our **gut** (digestive system has neurons as well). And this is where it gets interesting for us ladies. Women's **corpus collosum, the connective white matter that connects our left and right brain hemispheres together**, is thicker than men's. This more substantial brain super highway gives us women better and faster abilities to access each hemisphere, further integrating our emotions and gut feelings with the more logical left hemisphere into our decision-making process. Basically, women's brains have superpowers and are actually optimized for rapid intuitive decision-making. "Women are also psychologically more in touch with their emotions (perhaps because they've been given more cultural permission to be this way) and are more likely to integrate hunches, emotional 'hits' about people, and logic. Because men have a thinner corpus collosum they are more compartmentalized in their thinking and less about to move back and forth from intuition to logic.

Dr. Orloff adds more brain areas for intuition to what Kirsten G Volz, D Yves von Cramon had derived. Thus, the brain areas involved during intuition are *Orbitofrontal cortex, amygdala and insula, and hippocampus and major activities happen here during the manifestation of Intuition.*

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We have so far understood the meaning of Intuition and also had a peep into the brain area which gets activated during Intuition. We shall now explore how Intuition has helped people across the world since time immemorial. On August 11 Oprah magazine<sup>18</sup> published an article that gives us a peep into instances in history when Intuition manifestation baffled mankind. Following are the excerpts from the article

***History of Intuition*** – Chronologically we start from the time of Aristotle and look at intuition in the timeline of history  
**350 B.C.E.**



**Figure2- Photo: Getty Images**

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* defines wisdom as "intuitive reason combined with scientific knowledge." (We'll ignore his *unwise* theory that only men are capable of both.)-Caesar  
Thus, we see that philosophers have been pondering Intuition since 350 B.C.

**44 B.C.E.**

Calpurnia, wife of Julius Caesar, foresees her husband's assassination and begs him not to go to the senate. Caesar doesn't listen. Several stab wounds and a few famous last words later, he is dead.-Julia Grant



**Figure 3-Photo-Getty Image**

Isn't it astonishing that Calpurnia had an intuition of her husband's coming assassination! Intuition manifested as long back as 44B.C

**1865**

When Ulysses S. Grant is invited to join Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theatre, Grant's wife, Julia, urges him not to go ("I do not know what possessed me to take such a freak," she later writes).

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Unlike Caesar, Grant heeds his wife's advice. It soon emerges that he, too, may have been an assassination target that night.

Even Abraham Lincoln, also, had an intuitive dream wherein he foresaw his death-

*Just days before Lincoln was shot, he told his wife of a dream that he had:*

*“He was woken up by the sound of crying and went into the East Room of the White House, where a casket was laid open. There was a throng of mourners as well as several men guarding the casket. When he asked who was in the casket, one of the soldiers told him that it was the President, who had been killed by an assassin.”*

*Three days after telling his wife this dream, Lincoln was shot and killed by John Wilkes Booth. (<https://biography.yourdictionary.com/abraham.lincoln>)*

### 1936

Knobby-kneed and underweight, the racehorse Seabiscuit is a frequent loser—but Buick salesman Charles S. Howard is sure he's buying a future champ. Howard pairs him with a new trainer and jockey—and the Biscuit retires in 1940 as racing's all-time prizewinner. Indeed, Intuition led Howard to bet on a prize-winning horse!

### 1940

Winston Churchill is dining at 10 Downing Street when a German bomb hits nearby. He orders his staff to leave the kitchen. Moments later another bomb falls, obliterating—you guessed it—the kitchen.

Intuition saves many lives!!

### 1943

Avid people-watchers Katharine Cook Briggs and daughter Isabel Briggs Myers developed a questionnaire to measure personality preferences, initially aimed at women entering the wartime workforce. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, which counts intuition among the most important facets of a person's nature, becomes one of the most widely used personality tests of all time.

### 1961



Figure 4-Photo-Getty Image

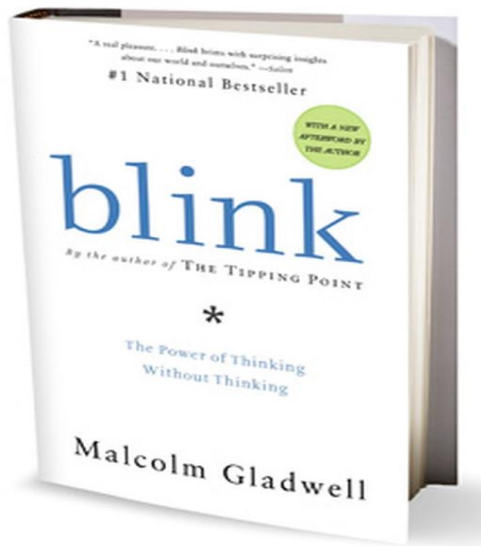


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Ray Kroc's "funny-bone instinct" becomes the stuff of business legend when he ignores his lawyers' advice and borrows \$2.7 million to buy out the modest fast-food franchise he helped build. Now more than 47 million people a day sit down—or drive up—for one of his McMeals. McDonald's success story rested on an intuition!!

**2005**

Seeming to intuit readers' fascination with intuition, Malcolm Gladwell publishes *Blink*, an examination of the mental processes and social factors that inform our snap decisions. The book goes on to sell more than two million copies and inspire a steady stream of similarly intuition-obsessed titles.



**Figure 5: Photo: Courtesy of Back Bay Books**

Intuition sells!!

**2010**



**Figure 6: Photo- Courtesy of The Pillsbury Bake-Off**

While clipping coupons, Sue Compton sees a Pillsbury Bake-Off ad and senses fate. Inventing by instinct ("I just let my mind relax, not knowing what was next"), she makes a single batch of Mini Ice Cream Cookie Cups, submits her recipe—and the Doughboy forks over \$1 million. Sweet!

Intuition-based business success story!!

The above are intuition jewels in the history of intuition. Intuition had been with us since the ancient times and it is here to stay

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Almost all of us have got benefitted from the inner voice-the intuition sometime or the other in our lives.

In our work areas also, there are specific situations or fields where intuition has proved vitally important. We shall take up those aspects where intuition provided the most suited and vital actions.

### ***Examples of areas where intuition provided vital help***

Jeremy Sutton<sup>2</sup> highlights the areas of work where intuition came in handy and produced the desired results.

She posits that intuition is unknowable. After all, you cannot explain the thinking behind a snap decision that appears out of nowhere.

It just happens.

While intuition occurs in our day-to-day life, it is sometimes most apparent in the decisions of experts. The specialist draws on years of experience, held in unconscious frameworks, to make fast, high-quality decisions (Nalliah<sup>19</sup>).

Below are examples of work areas where intuition did serve a vital purpose

- ***Dentistry***-Healthcare researchers found that experienced dentists often rely on intuition to make complex, time-bound decisions. Based on many years of deeply stored knowledge, choices are made quickly and are often superior to those that rely on clear evidence and rational thought (Nalliah<sup>19</sup>).
- ***Business***-Perhaps surprisingly, many of the world's most influential business people admit to making decisions based on intuition rather than logical, deliberate thinking. Out of a sample of 36 CEOs, 85% confirmed that intuition – in the form of rules of thumb (ROTs) – was central to their decision-making process (Maidique<sup>20</sup>).
  - ***Stockbrokers***-Human intuition is massively important. In an annual competition by *The Wall Street Journal*, teams competed on how their stocks performed. But while one side was a group of highly skilled expert brokers, the other was a group of journalists choosing their shares by the throw of a dart. Intuitively, expertise should win. And yet, it appears, that wasn't true in this case. The contest ceased without explanation, most likely to avoid the stockbrokers' embarrassment (Arkes & Kajdasz<sup>21</sup>).
  - ***Art***-In 1983, Gianfranco Becchina had a rare sixth-century sculpture for sale with a staggering \$10 million price tag. The Getty Museum, having reviewed X-rays, expert testimony, and historical documentation, agreed to its purchase amid considerable media hype. However, when Evelyn Harrison, a renowned expert on Greek sculptures, and Thomas Hoving, former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, arrived to admire the statue, they knew, intuitively, something was wrong. According to Hoving, it seemed "fresh," which was unexpected as the 2,000-year-old statue had been taken out of the ground. And they were right. While the sculpture was from a workshop in Rome, it originated from a forger in 1980, rather than a master sculptor from antiquity (Gladwell<sup>22</sup>).

Intuition could reveal the truth about the fake rare sculpture, shares could be successfully handled through intuition, and eminent businessmen and dentists have been using intuition for split-second decision making. These are not the only fields where intuition came and helped, in fact, you name a field and there are examples where decisions based on intuition proved

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correct. Even on the battlefield, many a time when faced with a situation where a vital decision is to be taken instantaneously without having time to ponder, intuition comes to the rescue. In our day-to-day life also intuition frequently manifests. Intuition has become an important part of life.

In the coming paragraphs, we explore the importance of intuition in our lives.

### *Is Intuition Important?*

In a word, yes.

Anastasia Belyh<sup>23</sup> throws some light on this. We know that intuition relies on the subconscious, which has access to everything we have learned from our experiences since birth but does this translate to our ability to make decisions? Does intuition actually help us to make better decisions?

People often assume that humans are logical beings who make rational decisions after considering and analyzing the various facts and details surrounding a situation. The truth is that people don't exclusively use the rational decision-making model. More often than not, our decisions are more subjective, influenced by a combination of tacit knowledge, judgments, heuristics, and intuition. This is a good thing because various studies have found that intuition helps us make better decisions.

According to this research, intuition is a powerful and scientifically backed skill that helps us make better decisions and gives us more confidence in the decisions we make. Using your intuition to make your decisions can give you a competitive edge both in your personal and professional life. This other survey conducted on top executives found that majority of top leaders turn to their experiences and feelings when making important decisions. Another study found that 81% of CEOs who exhibited high levels of intuition doubled their business within five years.

Intuition is especially important in situations where a decision needs to be made instantly, without time to consider the different aspects of the situation. Think about first responders responding to an emergency, or a soldier in the heat of battle. In both situations, there is no luxury of time. Taking a few seconds to think things through is literally a matter of life and death.

You might be wondering how intuition can sometimes be superior to rational decision-making, which is based on the analysis of data. The thing is, the human mind is naturally wired to recognize patterns. Your subconscious mind processes everything you experience and stores all the insights gained from these experiences. This means that your intuition started developing from the day you were born and keeps developing and expanding each day.

When you make decisions by intuition, your subconscious mind draws from all these experiences and insights, trying to identify patterns or anomalies. Therefore, you can also say that intuition depends on data, only that you don't analyze the data consciously. Since your subconscious is faster and has a wider pool of information to draw from, it is sometimes more reliable than rational decisional making.

Scientists and researchers have realized the importance of intuition, which is why data scientists and machine learning experts have started combining data science and intuition. The scientists are not alone. Even the military has realized the importance of intuition, which is why the U.S. Navy invested \$3.85 million to help Marines and sailors hone their intuition.

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Even going back in history, we find that intuition has always been an important skill. Most of the world's greatest inventions and discoveries, from the discovery of penicillin by Alexander Fleming to the detection of X-rays by Wilhelm Rontgen all, happened due to intuition. More recently, successful entrepreneurs like Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Richard Branson, and Elon Musk have credited part of their success to their intuition.

Jeremy Sutton<sup>2</sup> also adds to the above submission on the importance of Intuition-Intuition offers a reduction in overall cognitive load and the ability to respond instantly while providing confidence in our knowledge and decision making – even though it may defy analysis (Hogarth<sup>24</sup>).

Such automatic thinking may benefit from, or be hampered by, experience.

When we receive a check at the end of a meal, we usually have an intuitive feel for its costs, based on experience. However, this may fail when we are in a new country or did not realize we had mistakenly chosen the most expensive wine in the cellar.

Intuition helps us survive by providing fast responses that, usually, offer an appropriate, immediate action to address a situation. Such responses rely heavily on “cultural capital,” learnings specific to the environment in which we find ourselves.

While this usually helps us, it can lead to bias and prejudice in our decision-making – based on religion, culture, social, moral, and even political environments – and may need to be countered by rational thinking.

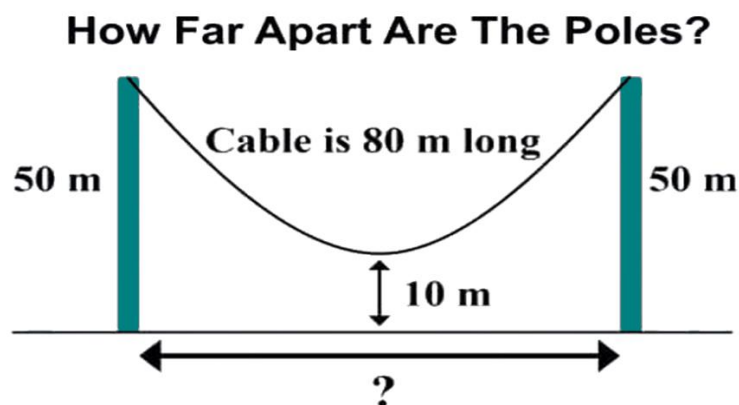
Indeed, “*intuition can be explicitly educated,*” says Hogarth<sup>24</sup>. By changing the content and environment surrounding our learning, we can lean toward more accurate and less biased, intuitive judgments.

There are occasions when intuition fails us and we are led astray. The following paragraph dwells on this point.

### *Does intuition always prove correct?*

It is indeed intriguing when we observe intuition leading us to the correct solution and it happens frequently but not always.

Look at the intriguing puzzle below that I came across which appeared very complex to me-



While my brain was trying to figure out a solution, an intuitive solution flashed to my mind which said it should be 40 meters (probably mentally I stretched the rope horizontally and it

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looked to me that the center of the pole will rest on the second pole and rest 40 meters would keep extended beyond the second pole).

The answer was wrong!!

Logically the answer was found using the following logic-I found that if the rope is folded in half, it would be 40 meters long, and if it hangs vertically in a straight line from the top of the first pole, the rope will hang exactly 10 meters above the root of the pole as given in the diagram. This means that if the two poles coincided, i.e., if the horizontal distance was zero then the gap between the lower end of the rope and the bottom of the pole will be 10 meters. If the second pole is moved outward, the rope will sag and the distance between the lower point of the rope and the floor will rise up above 10 meters. So, the correct answer would be that the horizontal distance between the ropes will be zero.

Intuition did fail me this time but my experience tells that it led me to correct options if the problem had only some given choices and we had to pick the correct one as was confirmed by my success at the ISI entrance exam which had objective type questions and I did pick up correct options intuitively to most of the questions for which I did not know the answer!! Intuition is mostly correct but occasionally it fails us.

Earl E. Bakken Center<sup>25</sup> has more to say about whether intuition is always right- *the answer is yes and no. Your purest intuitions are always right but those tinged by your own thoughts and emotions may only be partially correct or even completely wrong.*

It is indeed true that intuition is not always right. The basic reason behind it is that it is very unpredictable.

### ***Why does intuition seem so unpredictable?***

The answer is brought down in the article by Earl E. Bakken Center<sup>25</sup> in their following narration.

*Patanjali, an Indian physician turned sage, suggested one possible answer when he wrote the Yoga Sutras in approximately 200 B.C. Among other things, the book, which was designed to help people develop their mental, physical, and spiritual health and wellbeing, addressed the question: How do people know anything?*

*Patanjali described four ways you know something: by (a) its physical appearance, (b) the associations you have with it, (c) the meaning it has for you, and (d) its spirit or essence. The way you know also determines how you experience intuition.*

*When your primary modes of knowing are based on (a) the physical or material world and (b) your associations with it, intuition is an occasional guest in your life. Intuition does function at this level, but it is more like a tool that you pick up, or something that is suddenly there or not. If you are working with intuition on these levels, it will seem unpredictable.*

*The modes c and d integrate intuition in your thinking and intuition, then, is predictable.*

The authors go on to say that *with practice, you can learn to assess your intuitive experiences and identify when they are more likely to be right. On an interesting note, we don't yet fully understand the mechanism by which true intuition allows us to obtain information. But in the last five years, researchers have discovered chemical reactions that occur in your body during commonly-reported intuitive experiences. Someday scientists may even discover biological distinctions between pure intuition and other phenomena, such as wishful thinking, projection, and imagination.*

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*One of the most challenging things for us to do is to separate true intuition from wishful thinking (what we hope will happen) or projections (interpreting images through the lens of our own history or ideas.)*

### ***How to arrive at true intuitions***

The following two methods are helpful for identifying true intuitions:

- Tuning in to your body
- Focusing or meditation techniques

### ***Tuning in to your body***

Your body is amazing. Tune into its response when you have an intuition.

People describe feeling the following with true intuition: openness; relaxation; joy; a sense of connection or belonging; lack of doubt; clarity; surprise; awe; excitement; fulfillment; inspiration; or brightness. Naturally, their curiosity is heightened.

In *pure intuitions*, you will have a profound sense of knowing. In fact, entire scientific directions and musical pieces have been built upon a pure, split-second, intuitive image, for example, the DNA double helix and some Mozart's symphonies.

But if the feelings associated are fear, anxiety, or worry; you may not be having intuition but some *projections* which may turn out to be wrong.

Furthermore, you may feel joy and righteousness as felt during intuition but if accompanied by neediness, it may only be *wishful thinking* which may or may not come out to be true.

The judgment of feelings is subtle and it is difficult to arrive at true intuition; but as the saying goes practice makes a man perfect, and we may develop this skill with practice.

In the mathematical example, worry and neediness had surfaced prominently and I did not reach pure intuition and reached a wrong solution; whereas, in the objective type entrance test, the feeling was of calmness when I picked up an option out of the 4 options for each question!

### ***Identifying true intuition through deep Focusing or meditation techniques***

It is a well-known fact that when you are relaxed and in the right frame of mind your power to taking correct decision-making enhances. When you are relaxed you are in a way centered and can focus on the issues at hand.

Being centered refers to a state where you are relaxed and calm, yet quite alert. This state is less likely to produce intuition clouded by projections or wishful thinking and thus facilitates pure intuition.

This relaxed centered state is achieved by some people without striving to achieve it. For example, some people find that nature calms them. Other people listen to music or talk with a good friend in order to restore their sense of inner peace and balance. There are many ways for people to separate themselves from their emotional responses, projections, or wishful thinking and reach pure intuition which invariably reaches a correct solution.

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One of the ways to induce a centered state is to focus or meditate. This allows you to observe self-a self that acknowledges your thoughts and emotions without believing that they are you. This usher in inner calmness. Inner calm fosters true intuition and allows it to be easily identified. It is instantaneously relevant to you and beyond you. Pure intuition is non-emotional, although it may fill you with a sense of joy and connection.

Lissa Rankin<sup>26</sup> provides some useful tips which can strengthen our intuitive capability. We are all equipped with an intuition that is potent, trustworthy, and impeccably attuned to our true path. Whether you use it or not is up to you. Here are a few ways to turn up the volume on that trustworthy inner voice:

- **Meditate**—As pointed out by the above author, Lissa also advocates that Meditation helps strengthen intuition. Messages from your intuition tend to be quiet, so spending time in silence will help you hear and interpret these messages.
- **Attention to five senses**-Start noticing all that you can with your five conventional senses. Doing so can raise your sensitivity to your sixth sense.
- **Pay attention to your dreams**-When the cognitive mind is busy, it can override the intuitive right brain and the subconscious mind, the wellspring of intuition. But when you're sleeping, your cognitive mind rests and opens space for the subconscious mind to signal you in dreams.
- **Get creative**-Engaging in creative activities, such as drawing, scrapbooking, or free-flow journaling quiets the cognitive mind and allows your intuition to speak up.
- **Consult your body compass**-Your intuition speaks to you through your body, and the more you cultivate somatic awareness, the more sensitive you become. If you get an uncomfortable physical feeling when you're trying to make a decision, pay attention. Do you feel light or heavy? Got a sick feeling in your gut? Saddled with a headache or diarrhea? It could just be the result of stress responses activated by false fear, but it could also be your intuition ringing loud and clear.
- **Learn from the past**-Recall a negative experience from your past, ideally something fairly recent. Before this thing happened, think back to whether you got any feelings that urged you to steer clear. Maybe you got a gut feeling something wasn't right. Maybe you had a foreshadowing dream or a vision. If so, did you pay attention to that feeling, dream, or vision, or did you talk yourself out of it? Try to remember exactly how you felt. Recall as many details as possible. The more you can get in touch with the part of you that tried to warn you, the more you'll trust it next time.
- **Feel more, think less**-The mind thinks, always chattering away, arguing with itself like a crazy person. Intuition, on the other hand, feels. If you're not sure whether you're listening to your fearful mind or your trustworthy intuition, see if you can differentiate whether you're thinking or feeling.
- **Align with your values**-Your mind may steer you away from your integrity, but your intuition never will. Become comfortable with how you feel when you're betraying your values, and you'll learn what intuition doesn't feel like. Learn what it feels like to behave in alignment with your values, and you'll start to sense your intuition more clearly.
- **Practice sensing into people before you know them**-See what kind of information you can get from observing people and feeling their energetic signature before you talk to them or learn anything about them from other people. The more you pay attention, the more you'll realize you already know things you couldn't possibly know with the cognitive mind.

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- **Release your resistance**-Don't call yourself crazy when you get an intuitive hunch. Often, the cognitive mind argues with intuition rather than trusting it. By doing this, you may rationalize yourself out of intuitive knowing that could change your life for the better.

We have explored many aspects of Intuition and have also looked into the ways and means how we can have pure intuitions which can lead us to correct solutions. We shall conclude the paper after examining whether we can evaluate and measure intuition capability in a person. We know that intelligence can be measured and IQ (Intelligence Quotient) is being used in evaluating the intelligence of candidates who come for job interviews. Maybe there are ways by which Intuitive capability can be measured.

Before we examine this, let us quickly have a look at the pros and cons of Intuition. Anastasia Belyh<sup>23</sup> brings out the advantages and disadvantages of relying on Intuition as presented in the paragraph below:

### *Advantages and Disadvantages of Relying on Intuition*

*Relying on your intuition has several advantages, including:*

- *One of the greatest advantages of intuition is that it allows you to make decisions in complex and unfamiliar situations quickly and effectively.*
- *Your intuition helps you identify your purpose in life. Since your intuition is attuned to your subconscious, it can point you in the right direction and help you identify dreams that are aligned with your core values and your true sense of purpose.*
- *People who rely on their intuition are more open to new ideas. The rational mind relies on logical patterns which can sometimes be limiting. Intuition, on the other hand, sees things that your rational mind is oblivious to, allowing you to recognize new opportunities.*
- *Intuition helps you read people. For instance, you might be talking to a client who says that he will hire your company, while his body suggests that he has no plans of working with you. Intuition can help you sense such signs, allowing you to tweak your approach in order to retain the client. Sometimes, this can be the difference between success and failure.*
- *Intuition also acts as a cautionary voice. Sometimes, you might overlook some risks even after carefully analyzing a situation rationally. Intuition can tell you when something feels off, allowing you to steer clear of situations that would have otherwise turned out badly.*
- *Intuition gives you access to deeper intelligence and wisdom.*

*Despite the importance of using your intuition to help you make better decisions, it's good to note that intuition is not always right. It also has its disadvantages, which include:*

- *Since it depends on your experiences, intuition can sometimes be subject to bias and prejudices. Your emotions and prejudices can sometimes result in poor intuitive decisions.*
- *Intuition is not sequential; therefore, most people cannot explain the thinking behind their intuitive decisions. This can pose a challenge when one is working within the context of a team.*
- *Sometimes, people who have extensive experience and a high sense of intuition within one field might become over-reliant on their intuition and apply it even in situations they have little experience in, resulting in poor intuitive decisions.*



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*From this, it is clear that one needs to learn the limits of their intuition. The best option is to use your intuition to complement your rational decision-making process. This way, you can take advantage of both instinct and strategic thinking.*

The above discussions reveal that intuition has advantages as well as disadvantages. While intuition is present to some extent in all the persons and quite often the intuitive decisions prove right but there are occasions when it is wrong. We discussed the situations which normally lead to wrong intuition and if we are careful, we can also evaluate and learn whether the intuitive response has arisen from pure intuition or has arisen as wishful thinking. But one thing is certain we all intuit and so have the capability of intuition. For some, it manifests frequently while for others it surfaces rarely. An immediate natural question comes to mind-when intuition capability varies among people, is there a way to measure it as we can measure *Intelligence* (IQ-Intelligence Quotient).

We examine this aspect now and shall conclude the paper:

### **Measuring Intuition**

Along the lines of tests developed for measuring IQ, can we design tests for Intuition?

Angela Artemis<sup>27</sup> develops Intuition Quotient (IntQ)-

Take this short test and find out how intuitive you are.

After answering these twenty questions you will know what your intuition quotient is.

You are probably much more intuitive than you give yourself credit for:

1. Do you ever know who is on the phone before you answer it?
2. Do you sometimes get a “knowing” sense about things before they happen?
3. Have you heard talking, or your name being called, just before you fall asleep or wake up?
4. Do you find that you know what people are going to say and can finish their sentences?
5. Have you ever had butterflies in your stomach for no reason and then heard about something happening and they subsided?
6. Are you kind of lucky? Do things have a way of working out for you in your life?
7. During sleep have you experienced being “jarred” or a feeling of falling and landing on the bed?
8. While in the shower or walking in nature, do answers to problems come to you?
9. Do you have dreams that give you information or solve problems?
10. Have you ever had a dream or premonition of a future event that later occurred?
11. Have you ever “heard” the answer to a problem?
12. Do you prefer to skip the directions when putting something together and it always turns out fine?
13. Are you aware of a buzzing, tingling, or itchy feeling on your forehead or the top of your head?
14. Are you constantly generating ideas for projects and creative pursuits?
15. Do you prefer to take the path less traveled and do things your way rather than the conventional way?
16. Have you ever seen something in your mind’s eye, like a vision of an event, before it happened?
17. Do you get vibes about people that turn out to be true?
18. Do you have an uncanny knack for finding your way without maps or a GPS?
19. Are you aware of a certain faith and trust that you will always be okay no matter what?
20. Do you pick up on the emotions of the people around you?

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Give yourself five points for each affirmative answer and add up the scores to get your Int Q (Intuition Quotient)

If you scored:

0–25: you may be living in your head too much. Time to start paying attention to the intuitive signals you receive.

26–50: Your intuition is active, but a bit of practice could kick you to the next level.

51–70: You are probably aware that you are quite intuitive and have already been working on developing your abilities.

71 and above: You are very sensitive and could become quite psychic with a little practice.

Intuition like intelligence is a psychical ability and can be measured as outlined above. Various psychological researchers are working on developing a measure of intuition in people and they have done remarkable work in developing intuition scales, now it is possible to identify people who are good at exhibiting pure intuitions most of the time.

With this revelation that psychology is now in apposition to measure intuition, we come to the end of this paper.

It goes without saying that Intuition is the ability to know something without using analytical thinking, and it bridges the gap between our conscious and unconscious minds. Through this paper, we have tried to create more awareness about different aspects of intuition. We conclude with a famous quote from J Krishnamurthy - *Intuition is the whisper of the soul*.

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