

# DISCOVER THE GENIUS IN THE MIRROR

YOU ARE AN EINSTEIN WAITING TO BE DISCOVERED

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DENVER, COLORADO

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Outskirts Press, Inc.  
<http://www.outskirtspress.com>

ISBN: 978-1-4327-8206-1

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## *Dedication*

*To the two beautiful women who make my life complete, a joy,  
and a celebration: my daughter, Lavanya, and my wife, Nalini*



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## Discovering your Gut Power

*Trust your hunches. They are usually based on facts filed away just below the conscious level.*

*Joyce Brothers*

### Discovering Your Gut Power

“My gut tells me to go for it.” “I have a hunch this will work.”

How many times have you heard these expressions in your daily life? Have you ever stopped to think what “gut” or a hunch is?

“Gut,” or a hunch, is the layman’s version of what has come to be known as instinct, or to be more technical, intuition. Some equate it to the sixth sense. It is that indefinable feeling in the bones that is telling you to go the opposite way when all logical facts as well as conventional wisdom point to going the normal way. It is your subconscious.

The power and strength of your gut is grossly underestimated, poorly understood, and greatly underutilized. It can lead to a vision and accomplishment that no other thought processes can deliver.

### What Is Intuition?

The dictionary definition of intuition is “quick and ready insight” and “the act or process of coming to direct knowledge without reasoning or inferring.” It is derived from the Latin word *intueri*, which means “to see within.” It is a way of



knowing, of sensing the truth without explanations.

In general human beings are driven more by logic and reasoning and factual basis rather than this feeling that goes by the name of intuition. *You have a sense of fear when all you have to go on is a "sense."*

But recent research into intuition has shown that it is more than just a mere feeling or a floating thought. It is an inner dialogue with self with far-reaching implications and benefits if trusted and listened to.

In philosophy intuition is the power of obtaining knowledge that cannot be acquired either by inference or observation, by reason or experience. As such, intuition is thought of as an original, independent source of knowledge, since it is designed to account for just those kinds of knowledge that other sources do not provide. Knowledge of necessary truths and of moral principles is sometimes explained in this way.

By following through on your everyday hunches, you are actually taking test drives, virtually *honing in on your listening skills*. These skills will serve you well. Everyone is apparently somewhat psychic, but many people just have flabby psychic muscles. Learning to listen to your inner dialog tones strengthens this muscle. The more you use your intuition, the better you get at it. When you choose to ignore your gut instincts, you are only hurting yourself.

Listening to your intuition is the essence of art, creativity, and spiritual living. Intuition is what you use to find the purpose of your life and your place in the world. Once you awaken your inner guide by unlocking the wisdom of your subconscious mind, you already know what to do.

You might well ask why intuition is so misunderstood and underutilized if it so important in gaining a higher level of understanding than can be gained through conventional wisdom.

It is simply because this intuition is based on an *inner*

*dialogue with self which can only happen with reflection and time.* You need to nurture this feeling, this hunch, and trust in it, and think about it before you can begin to feel its power and reap its rewards.

But in your current frenetic lifestyle, where there is no time for reflection and you are scampering from one place to another, intuition is virtually trampled upon, even if it keeps surfacing. The most important aspect of this is for you to *recognize that your inner self is telling you something*, many times out of the blue, and without facts to back that feeling. It is a trust issue.

Additionally, *people are generally accustomed to certainties in life and hence have no time for the "gut."* Possibly, wanting to be sure and not end up failing is another reason.

### **Cultivating Intuition**

Having learned that the power of intuition is indeed great, how then can you learn to recognize signs of it?

Intuition is cultivated by contemplating the interconnectedness of all things, that is to say, to recognize that everything in the universe, including us, is connected with everything else in the universe. The fully realized awareness of this ultimate truth has been called enlightenment or awakening. It is the felt reality of this interconnectedness. You don't just think it; you feel that it is true; *know it at a deep level.*

But you do not need to have achieved Buddha-like enlightenment for intuition to be a fact in your life. You can start right this minute by consciously looking at the world as an interconnected whole rather than a big chaotic assembly of unconnected parts and yourself separate from it all.

Look for the connections that surely exist behind the appearance of separateness. Start doing this now and practice it every day for the rest of your life, and you will be amazed at how it transforms your life for the better.

### **Interconnectedness of Things**

In what came to be described in his native Italian as *connessione* – the interconnectedness of things in the world – Leonardo Da Vinci frequently made observations on patterns and connections in the world around him. For example, he said, “Every part is disposed to unite with the whole that it may thereby escape from its own incompleteness.”

One of the greatest secrets of Leonardo’s incredible creativity was his lifelong practice of combining and connecting disparate elements to form new patterns. He was known to have said that the world is simply made up of lines, rectangles, and circles all linked to each other. This was the premise for many of his pathbreaking designs. In the true sense of the phrase, Leonardo thought outside the box.

Intuition can thus be looked at as understanding how seemingly disparate elements in the world are actually interconnected just as Leonardo describes in his writings and experiments. This is a powerful concept that will guide you in rising to heights of creativity and in your journey to discovering your genius.

Over the last twenty years, I have learned to listen to my inner voice and guidance system in a major way. I am a complete gut person and willing to trust it over conventional wisdom at all times.

Let me give you a very significant example of this gut feeling. In early June 2010, I had booked air tickets for my family (wife, daughter, and myself) to go to India in the first week of July as part of our annual vacation. Sometime toward the end of June 2010, quite suddenly (and close to the date of travel) and during one of my reflective moments (I do journaling on a regular basis and spend some quiet time to myself every day), “something” told me (it was just an idea that popped into my head) that I should be going to the United States and

not to India in July 2010. Since I had learned to listen to these subliminal messages in the past and had benefited significantly from these “moments of magic,” I immediately told my wife that I was canceling the trip and instead would go to the United States. I proceeded to cancel the tickets to India and booked myself to go to the United States.

As a background, for some time during the previous couple of years I had been considering the idea of leaving my employment and striking out on my own. Moreover, my wife and I had decided to relocate to the United States at an appropriate time to be close to our daughter who is currently doing her master’s program at New York University. However, I had not reached the point where I was ready to take that next action.

In that moment of the “gut feeling” that was asking me to go to the United States, I realized that my inner voice was creating a connection and providing an avenue to take concrete action in our plans to relocate to the United States. To cut the story short, I made the trip to the United States and through that, returned with the conviction that the time was ripe for me to strike out on my own. Subsequent actions taken to leave my employment, start a consulting practice, and obtain a green card were successful and I am now running my own thriving consultancy based in the United States.

This is just one example of how powerful one’s intuition can be if only we place trust in that rather abstract-looking feeling. It also conclusively proved the interconnectedness of things that you saw earlier in the chapter.

### **Voyage of Discovery: Intuition**

To begin with, get comfortable, sit down, relax, and take three to four deep cleansing breaths. Look at an object in the room, focus, concentrate, and block everything else out. Do this for at least three to five minutes.

Now, close your eyes (if you like) and write down or tape record everything that comes to mind about how you are feeling, what you are tasting, noises you are hearing, and memories or pictures you are visualizing. Write everything down, no matter how insignificant. Don't push yourself; let the impressions come to you. Write down or tape record your good qualities, strengths, talents, skills, abilities, whatever you enjoy doing, are good at, and so on. Try and be as detailed as possible.

For example, you could be a good writer, good listener, perceptive, creative, sensitive, empathic, a problem solver, a hard worker, smart, educated, a published writer, a go-getter with leadership skills, committed, and so on. Or maybe you can think outside the box, or you have computer skills, love children, home, and community, have the desire to help others, notice when other people are suffering, and can feel their pain. You might be gentle, kind, giving, knowledgeable, quiet, and friendly. Where in your life is harmony? Where is discord?

*When you listen to your intuition, it connects you with a greater knowledge.* That part of you has an overview of your life that has your best interest at heart. It can provide an oasis of peace in the midst of chaos, bring you harmony, help you release negativity, and give you confidence to take action and prepare for change in your life.

When you listen to your intuition, it connects you with a greater knowledge.

It also can be a *valuable guide as you take steps to create your dreams*. This is particularly so since a lot of our dreams start off as abstract thoughts and motivations and intuition can be triggering many of those.

## Ambiguity

The world abounds in ambiguity. Nothing is purely black or white. There are shades of grey in every element on this earth.

The more you exercise your curiosity and use multisensory learning, the more you will stride into ambiguity and the unknown.

Keeping your mind open to possibilities is key during this period of uncertainty if you are to unleash your creativity and genius. The Zen mind is a principle that postulates that your mind is a beginner's mind; you do not consider yourself to be an expert in anything. The foundation of that thought process is that since you do not consider yourself to be an expert in anything, your mind is open to everything.

*Being open to everything and comfortable with ambiguity is key to exercising your intuitive self.* However, it is easier said than done. We all fear the unknown. It makes you feel uncomfortable when something is not certain. It makes you feel vulnerable and exposed.

However, intuition demands complete trust in something that has no logical validation. It is paradoxical that the validation for the intuition is actually its reward. But it comes after trust is established and unconditionally at that.

Once you resolve to stride into the unknown, the possibilities are endless.

## Voyage of Discovery: Ambiguity

This exercise is to find out one's tolerance to ambiguity and how to train the mind to be comfortable about the unknown.

Find a quiet spot to yourself and think about times when you needed to take a decision on an important matter in your life.

How did you go about taking that decision?

Did you carry out research on the matter and gather all the facts before proceeding? Were you intent on making sure that

all facts were available and only then proceed? What if some parts of the decision were unknown or uncertain? How did you deal with that?

Although it may sound too simplistic, ask yourself this question. Would you go to a cinema to watch one of your all-time favorite movies without making a booking or reservation in advance?

Here it is simply an issue of whether you only deal in certainties or you are comfortable with some things in life not being so certain and known. Are you willing to take a risk? By exercising your risk-taking muscle in simple day-to-day events, you can train your mind to be comfortable with ambiguity and this will slowly develop intuition in you.

Remember it is not the actual result of the event or matter that you have exercised your intuition on that is important. In the simple example of going to the cinema without a reservation, whether you actually got a ticket and were able to watch the movie or not is not important but the fact that you were willing to take a risk *and be uncertain about something for a period of time*.

Intuition is just like brain and memory functions: the more you exercise, the better you get and the sharper your intuition will become. Use it or lose it.

### **Exercising Intuition**

Once you have understood what intuition is, what ambiguity and risk taking is, it is important to ask the question: how do you learn to recognize and then exercise intuition?

*Awareness of your senses is key to understanding and knowing how your intuitive mind will communicate.* You can experience imagery through all your senses. Imagery will help you discover how your intuitive mind speaks to you — “seeing” things, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching them in your mind.

When the mind is in a receptive alpha level of awareness

(an alpha level of awareness is a state of mind when it is relaxed and ready for a conversation with the subconscious), you can go beyond these representational systems to experience related states that reflect your inner emotions, such as feeling happy or sad, and the kinesthetic state or inner awareness of body movement, such as the sensation that you are floating on a cloud or falling through space.

Notice how you sense imagery.

### **Voyage of Discovery: How to Exercise Intuition**

Find a quiet spot to yourself and slowly relax your mind and become aware of all your senses.

Becoming aware of your senses is key to unlocking your intuitive mind's communications. Notice which senses are activated:

1. Visual: Saw the bright colored markers used to highlight the ideas.
2. Auditory: Heard all the chatter surrounding him.
3. Olfactory: Smelled the masala and curry.
4. Gustatory: Tasted the orange juice.
5. Kinesthetic: Touched the smooth shoes.
6. Kinesthetic: Felt annoyance and agitation initially and then excitement when the meeting began.
7. Kinesthetic: Moved by being knocked off balance.

Which of your senses were aroused as you read about this experience?

Now we'll focus on retrieving the imagery sent to you by your intuitive mind: how you can become attuned to the language of intuition through mental pictures, images, and symbols. *The intuitive mind communicates by showing what you are thinking and feeling.* Whenever the word "imagery" is used, we mean the "pictures inside your head."



Imagine, for example, that you have just won two round-trip tickets to anywhere in the world. Where would you go?

Personally, I would choose Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. When I think of Kota Kinabalu, I imagine an oasis of calm and of nature therapy. I can visualize the spectacular sunrises and sunsets (the skies are painted in more colors than I have ever seen in my life), the gentle lap of the waves hitting the rocks, the lone shriek of a seagull, the mirror reflection of the fishermen's boats in the water . . . the list just goes on and on. It is like entering a land where nature's abundance has forced you to slow down your pace of life and savor the surroundings. It is an unforgettable feeling. If you want to leave your frenetic pace of life behind and get to do some real nature therapy, Kota Kinabalu is the place to go. As I described these images, did you get a picture? Did you see, hear, feel, or sense any of the Kota Kinabalu images I just mentioned?

### **Try This**

Picture a getaway. Choose a destination that for you would serve as a welcome retreat. Write a paragraph or two describing the sensory images that come into your mind about this locale. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel? What do you smell? What do you taste?

### **Practicing Intuition**

Practice on a regular basis in your day-to-day life to take decisions based on what you feel and sense rather than on certainties and guarantees. The inner voice in you communicates with you all the time, but you seldom notice it since you are so engaged in the running around that modern life creates.

Begin noting down in a small notebook or on your mobile phone things around you that you like seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. Write in one sentence for

each sensation why you like those sensations. Keep revisiting them and over time you will be able to establish which of those sensations you like most and probably use most as well. Intuition does its work in the form of subliminal messages communicated to you through your inner voice (which includes imagery). However, your mind must act as a receiving station and be ready to receive that message.

Practice the habit of predicting things before they happen. This can be as simple as guessing at the beginning of the show who will win in a contest in a show on television. The idea is to flex your gut muscle and get it to become comfortable with ambiguity.

One of the simple techniques I use comes into play when I am waiting for an elevator. When more than one elevator could arrive at the elevator landing, try to guess which one will arrive first without looking up at the display panel. This is a fun exercise without any risk and will ease you into trusting your opinion without any basis to it. This is the beginning of the process of trusting your gut.

### **Drawing as an Aid to Intuition**

Drawing is a whole skill that is comprised of various component skills, namely, the skills of perception of 1) edges, 2) spaces, 3) relationships, 4) lights and shadows, and 5) the whole, or *gestalt*.

These perceptual skills become integrated into a whole skill that determines your ability to draw. Once you learn the principles of these skills, you can learn to draw relatively quickly.

When you engage in drawing, you create the chance for the right brain to gain dominance. If you do it regularly as a hobby, drawing is a powerful brain exercise that can increase your psychic intuition.



## Summary of Chapter 5

In this chapter, we peered into the largely unknown world of intuition, understood its psychic power and how to begin utilizing that in creative problem solving. This was reinforced through the following:

- ✓ Intuition is a way of knowing, of sensing the truth without explanations.
- ✓ Intuition is what you use to find the purpose of your life and your place in the world.
- ✓ It is based on an inner dialogue with self which can only happen with reflection and time.
- ✓ Intuition is cultivated by contemplating the interconnectedness of all things
- ✓ People are generally accustomed to certainties in life and hence have no time for the “gut.”
- ✓ The world abounds in ambiguity. Nothing is purely black or white.
- ✓ Being open to anything and comfortable with ambiguity is key to exercising the intuitive self.
- ✓ Intuition demands complete trust in something that has no logical validation.
- ✓ Practice on a regular basis in your day-to-day life to take decisions based on what you feel and sense rather than on certainties and guarantees.

## Did You Know?

Images of things you encounter during the day (that kitten you saw during your walk, the Hawaii cruise commercial you see on TV) are stored in your brain, often playing out in a massive collage while you sleep. It's during the REM stage of sleep that your brain connects that instant replay to other relevant ideas.

REM sleep is good for problem solving and decision

making because your brain is putting pieces together and trying out new alternatives. You gain insights that wouldn't occur to you when you're awake. REM also activates the emotional area of the brain, so things that are most important to you on a gut level are prioritized.

### **Try This**

Keep an intuition journal. A journal will help you keep a record of what has happened, evaluate your intuition, and learn what exercises work well for you. Experimentation is part of developing your intuition (as you saw in this chapter).

It is key in this journaling to write down specifically what you are sensing and feeling more than what you are doing.

### **Actions I Have Taken for Chapter 5**

Nothing worthwhile can be achieved without taking specific, goal-oriented action on what you learn. This page is proof of your commitment to such action as you discover the genius in the mirror.

List the specific actions you have taken for Chapter 5 here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

In the last three chapters, you assembled your toolkit for the journey to discovery of your genius: your phenomenal brain, your magical memory, and your psychic intuition. These are your internal weapon systems which you and only you have the power to harness and unleash. In the next chapter, you will understand the first of two sources of stimulation for your toolkit: humor, to embellish your creativity and problem solving. Your journey to the discovery of your genius now takes a “funny” turn.