

INTUITION

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There are a variety of ways that human beings receive information, they can feel, taste, smell, see, hear, think and imagine. There are many ways of thinking about how we know that we know. These are all different ways of knowing specific qualities or aspects of one's own experience. Intuition is also a way of knowing. But it is different from those noted above which provide only specific aspects of the whole. Intuition is a direct, immediate knowing which already includes all the others mentioned.

The fact that human beings are sentient beings might be more significant to the experience of intuition than is the fact that human beings are cognitive, thinking beings. Intuition might seem more closely related to the "feeling" dimension than to the "thinking" dimension, although both are necessary and essential. Intuition and cognition are complementary dimensions of human consciousness. Intuition and thinking work together, however intuition is primary to thinking. This might be demonstrated by the most commonly described experience of intuition, of one's "having a feeling" that something was right, about to happen.

More than this, intuition is an envisioning, a seeing directly into what is, one can see the whole picture at once, fully knowing what is. Intuition is holistic. It cannot be broken down into parts or held in abeyance, it simply is. This is why the experience of intuition is so difficult to describe, because in order to describe it one must "break it down" into pieces in order to convey its meaning to others. The lived immediacy is then lost in that description as others cannot experience "my" experience. It is an immediate, direct, holistic apprehension of what is.

From what has already been said one might also describe intuition as a type of apprehension, a-pre-hension whereby one's own receptivity "goes out" to "meet" meaning which is approaching one. In this way it can also be understood as that space *Inbetween* the knower and the object known. It is an openness but not an emptiness. It is active and dynamic. This gives intuition the appearance of coming before, of the pre-sentient knowing of what is. In the experience of time (in which we all live), it is an experience that happens before cognition can fully grasp meaning and integrate meaning, that is, to take it apart, analyze it, identify and name its various aspects or parts, then integrate it into one's already existing field of knowledge, into consciousness as the known.

Intuition can be distinguished from insight in that in experiences of insight, cognition has already been working on something not fully understood or integrated into consciousness. Insight arises when the flash of

recognition of the solution to a problem or the fuller, deeper or richer meaning of an experience previously known in bits and pieces come together. It may arise when something totally unrelated brings it into an appropriately acceptable way of thinking about what something means/meant. Experiences of insight are like finding the right piece of a puzzle and placing it in the right spot, it enlarges one's vision of the larger picture and gives shape, form and color to a specific aspect of that image. It is the right relationship of various parts to the whole and culminates in greater understanding and enhanced knowledge.