

Intellectual Intuition

By Mel Schwartz

The term, intellectual intuition might at first glance appear to be a contradiction in terms. For intellect and intuition are normally viewed as somewhat opposing values. In our modern, western culture intellect is valued as an expression of logical and rational inquiry. It is commonly believed that intelligence is a by-product of one's brain power, utilizing the skills of logic and analysis. Intellectual acuity is the pathway toward achievement and success, or at least we're led to believe. We even have measures of intelligence; standardized tests and IQ tests. There is a spirit of masculine energy in intelligence, whereas intuition is thought to be a feminine attribute. This divide becomes furthered even more with the fragmenting of the brain's functions into left and right hemispheres.

The phenomenon of intuition is thought not to reside in the brain's operation, but to come from a more ethereal, perhaps soulful place. It is often denigrated into something not appreciably more valid than a hunch. Whether the sixth sense is correct or not, it remains less valued than mental performance. Ordinarily, our culture leans heavily toward favoring the intellect over the intuition. This is likely due to our emphasis upon logic and our tendency toward analysis and reductive thinking; all components of the intellect.

Yet, an intellect that doesn't integrate intuition is one which is incomplete. As is intuition which denies intellect. Rather than seeing these qualities as competing, we might see them as complementary qualities, rather than oppositional. From my worldview, based upon emerging sciences, I have come to see intellect and intuition as differing aspects of the same process. When we incline heavily toward one at the cost of the other, we limit our field of vision.

Intuition is generally considered to be a weak sister to intelligence. This isn't surprising given that we live in a culture that still inclines toward the masculine. Intuitive ways of knowing are again seen either as feminine, immaterial or perhaps new age. Yet, intelligence without intuition is very incomplete. Intuitive ways of knowing are effortless and aren't subject to our mind acting as trickster. This doesn't suggest that we should denigrate intelligence, but that we might make it fuller and more purposeful when we integrate intuition into our process. There are many ways of knowing: mental, experiential, intuitive, and spiritual or transpersonal. Limiting ourselves to one mode is terribly restrictive.

At the cost of making a gender generalization, I find that men tend to root themselves in rational intellect and women are inclined more toward the intuitive process. This dynamic at times wreaks havoc with communication between couples, as they are operating on two differing systems of communication. And when this occurs, there is often a lack of coherence in their dialogue. It's as if the two individuals are speaking somewhat foreign languages. To that end, a balancing of masculine and feminine would be aided by integrating the alternative aspect.

I've begun to incorporate the term intellectual intuition into my work as a therapist. Indeed, I believe that is increasingly the manner in which I see, work and live. I can share with you that as a therapist, intellectual intuition covers all bases for me, whereas either on their own would have me missing the mark far too often. When we learn to honor the wisdom of our intuitive processes and blend them into our intellectual capacity, we move from a one sided perspective into a powerful integration of differing ways of knowing. Intelligence is more masterful when open to intuition and intuition that embraces intellect is indeed quite powerful.

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