



An Intuitive Self Publication



Management Wisdom in the New Millennium



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Contents

Introduction	4
Doing versus Being	4
Reassuring Rationality	5
The Noetic Perspective	6
Knowing Beyond Experience	8
Conscious Use of Intuition	8
The Intuitive Self	8
Complementary Ways of Knowing	9
Varieties of Intuition	10
Closing the Decision Gap	11
Intuition in the Small	12
Intuition in the Large	12
Quantum Paradoxes	14
Factors Shaping Intuition	16
Personal Style	16
Functional Experiences	17
Gender and Culture	18
Exploring Intuitive Awareness	20
Preparing Style Assessments	20
Keeping an Intuition Journal	20
Organizational Payoffs	22

Introduction

Can you step back from your mind
and thus understand all things?

This puzzling question suggests the deepest intuitive experience whether it occurs in a manager's private life or the affairs of today's global enterprise. Given the challenges facing organizations in the 21st century, the rational mind alone does not provide the comprehension needed for decision-making. More than ever, managers must respond decisively with knowing that reaches beyond experience as their organizations cope with radical shifts in the ways of doing business.

With the explosive growth of e-commerce, the past half decade has ushered in the most rapid and concentrated change in the history of human enterprise. Other economic developments pale in comparison to the upheaval caused by the birth of the internet. And changes brought on by the world wide web in the last five years seem modest compared to what the pundits foresee in the first decade of the new millennium. Without intuitive knowing, rationality and knowledge fail to bridge the gap between what is known and what is needed to make decisions in the face of these landmark transformations.

Charlie Rose's PBS interviews with CEOs from all sectors of the high tech industry capture the spirit of these changes. The subtext of each interview has been that we are experiencing perhaps the most extraordinary change since humans discovered fire or first conceived the wheel. In this maelstrom around the globe, the internet has emerged as an unwitting handmaiden to a world community as people and organizations interconnect without regard to national boundaries or ethnic differences. For many surfing the web, borders separating state from state and tribal memories pitting people against people suddenly appear to be anachronisms inherited from our dark past. The irony of electronic globalization in the face of ever more heightened ethnic clashes in every corner of the planet has not been lost on the thoughtful executive.

All of one's training and experience does not prepare them for such far reaching changes in the way clients and competitors are globally interconnected. To cope with this reality, executives, managers, and employees alike must access intuitive knowing that reaches into the wisdom of being beyond habitual patterns of doing.

Access to our wisdom depends on how easily we complement, but not disregard, our rational mind with intuitive knowing. Resolving the paradox of the opening quote from Steven Mitchell's translation of the *Tao Te Ching* holds a key to unlocking the "doing not-doing" quality of personal wisdom. Nothing less will meet the management challenges of the revolutionary transformation in world enterprise propelling business into the 21st century.

Doing versus Being

The Tao expresses this ability as *wei wu wei*. Although alien to Western thinking, managers express doing not-doing or "being" unconsciously. One executive described his way of being as "organizational aikido" while another talked about her "spontaneous movement." Their unconscious way of being opens the door for wisdom in their decisions. Stepping back from doing, managers make choices that are less distorted by distractions such as stress, personal fears and desires, and general mental

clutter. Athletes speak of this attitude as “being in the zone.” When they are in the zone, they anticipate the actions of other players and respond appropriately as each moment of action unfolds.

This doing not-doing experience has been described as a “state of flow” and in another context, expressed as “live in the present . . . the future will unfold.” When the zone, flow or living in the present characterize management action, the correspondence between decision making and the implicit needs of a situation is ideal. Sailors recognize this feeling when their hand on the helm harmonizes with the wind and currents to achieve optimal boat performance.

Trying to describe the experience, athletes and sailors as well as managers speak fleetingly about acting in harmony with or being connected to everything. Harmonizing with the fabric of wholeness, managers align their decisions with the spontaneous movement implicit in their organization’s organic unfolding. In contemporary physics, this web of connection which has been recognized in the perennial traditions for millennia is described as a “fifth field” which subtly interconnects our mind with the universe. Technically it is referred to as the “vacuum-based zero-point holofield” or “psi field” for short. Later we explore quantum physics as a rationale for the psi field. [Follow the link Display Episode 16 on Doing Not-Doing for an excerpt from the *Tao of Managing* about this quality in the workplace.¹]

Our appreciation for the interconnected way of acting came from a career exploring the sources of knowing on which decisions are based. Beginning in systems analysis, *information* from manual and computer based data systems seemed to be the essential basis for decision. Working with middle managers in operations research, designing and implementing decision models, the role of *knowledge* gained through experience became important.

Finally as a manager, the factors that expert systems could not represent suggested a *wisdom* knowing that reached beyond information and knowledge to close the gap between what was known and what was needed for decision making. As sources of intuition, both doing knowledge and being wisdom complement rational information. We use “intuition in the small” to characterize knowledge and “intuition in the large” to recognize the wisdom source of knowing that a manager can call on when information and knowledge are incomplete. Wisdom surfaces when managers align with the natural integrity of their organization’s inherent dynamic.

Reassuring Rationality

Since management wisdom is clouded by the doing not-doing paradox, managers respond with disbelief when they consider the idea of wisdom guiding decisions. Fortunately, there is a deep sense within all individuals that already recognizes the spirit of wisdom knowing. But connecting with that sense requires holding rationality at bay to make room for wisdom. Without reassurance, the rational self becomes defensive and dismisses ideas that challenge it’s authority. Since this conservative stance represents one of the more valuable roles that rationality plays for managers, we honor the rational self. This protective reaction guards an individual from being taken in by unwarranted claims.

¹ All link references are to sections of the www.theintuitiveself.org website.

When rationality responds with a knee jerk rejection of challenging ideas, significant management opportunities are missed. This fatal flaw can be avoided by suspending but not abandoning judgment until new ideas have been tried on for size. We must reassure the rational mind that there is nothing to lose and something to gain from management wisdom.

Paradoxically, suspending the rational mind makes it possible to understand what it means to step back from the mind. By spending a couple of hours a week exploring wisdom with an intuition journal, disbelief gradually turns into appreciation. After trying it out for several months, if not acceptance, most managers admit the possibility of a wisdom way of knowing. Some go further to embrace intuition in the large, "I wish I had discovered and learned to trust this part of me long ago."

The Noetic Perspective

Given its paradoxical quality, wisdom knowing cannot be understood through conventional research. Contemporary "separateness" science is not robust enough to study intuition given a world view that only admits physical sense data while dismissing the authority of inner knowing. Our explorations required a view that extends science beyond external facts to include internal experience. In place of repeatable rational experiments, our research shifted to one of a kind intuitions verified through subjective consensus rather than objective analysis.

Noetic "wholeness" science which accepts subjective reports of experience as valid data honors the interconnectedness of all things and recognizes the interdependence of the observer and observed. Our research drew as much on intuitive insight as it did on rational analysis to study intuition. We used intuitive knowing to study intuitive knowing. This method is championed by the Institute of Noetic Sciences founded by astronaut Edgar Mitchell. The organization supports research initiatives that embrace the full spectrum of human experience in a holistic approach to scientific study.

Using the noetic view, we encourage managers to become inner explorers of their experience by keeping an intuition journal. This approach follows in the footsteps of the indigenous science of *intrapersonal* discovery which focuses on the ordinary experiences of daily life. Down through the millennia, indigenous science as practiced in the various forms of yoga and the varieties of shamanism have set the pace for the exploration of intuitive knowing.

Taking a lead from these practices by attending to their "still, small voice," managers find that intuitive experiences are frequent and deal with routine situations as well as strategic issues. The variety of intuitions that occur at all levels of responsibility is suggested by the experiences described in Table 1. They are summarized from journal entries prepared by clerical, staff, and line personnel about decision issues.

To characterize an experience, each journal entry includes an assessment of the relative degree of the rational/intuitive and internal/external dimensions of the issue measured on a seven point scale. The larger the value, the more significant were intuition and intuition in the large respectively. For all levels of responsibility, the second column shows these decisions included a mix of rational and intuitive sources as well as intuition in the small (internal) and intuition in the large (external).

Routine decisions typically depend more on rational factors and intuition in the

small while strategic choices more often involve intuition in the large. Sometimes routine decisions include intuition that reaches beyond personal knowledge to draw on wisdom. The clerical decision to hold off releasing the reports beyond the deadline measured 6 on intuition and the degree of intuition in the large as the source of that intuition was 5. [Follow the links in the second column of the Table to display the complete entry for anyone of these examples.]

Table – Examples of Intuition in Decision Issues

Position	Decision Issue	Source of the Intuition
Line Manager in Computer Technology	Reprimanding an employee for lack of responsibility Rational/Intuitive 7 Internal/External 4	The phone rang two hours after the time scheduled for the conference call. I receive many calls during the day. There was no rational reason why I would have thought it was John. When the phone rang, something beyond me said who it was, and something within told me what to do.
Line Manager in Biomedical Technology	Discovering a new statistic for product differentiation Rational/Intuitive 6 Internal/External 6	I had never questioned testing practices before. When the idea came out of nowhere, I knew it was exactly what was needed. It felt like I was passed a note with an answer to a question I was asking. When the answer came, I knew it was what we needed to resolve the concerns we were experiencing.
Staff Specialist in Health Care	Not presenting negative audit results to a committee Rational/Intuitive 3 Internal/External 2	This experience was more on the rational end of the spectrum. Certain rational factors came into play, but I tried to draw on intuitive sources as well to arrive at a correct decision. Facing a conflict, I had to make a decision based on past experience. I tried to clear my mind and let a decision come to me.
Staff Specialist in Consumer Goods	Reviewing a project in anticipation of a request Rational/Intuitive 5 Internal/External 2	I knew my boss had his eye on this project and that eventually he would ask about the progress. But the premonition that it would be that day was intuitive. I knew he would ask for the information because that's the process. I get assignments to work on, and my boss follows up.
Clerk in Financial Services	Holding off releasing reports beyond the deadline Rational/Intuitive 6 Internal/External 5	My rational mind would have released the reports, but my intuitive sense said something was going on and to hold off. It was internal because I was wondering if I had made a mistake. However it was external because something told me a mistake had been made even though I was not responsible.

Knowing Beyond Experience

With an appreciation of these examples of intuition across the decision spectrum, we consider the wisdom source of knowing in more detail. Business academics recognize information and knowledge as decision inputs, but typically ignore wisdom. The same can be said for some managers. For both groups, remaining firmly rooted in conventional Western science is an easier course of action when faced with the mystery of knowing beyond experience.

Conscious Use of Intuition

Given the rational attitude fostered in business schools and promoted in traditional corporations, the relevance of intuition in the large has been viewed with skepticism. The intensifying complexity of the global challenge highlights the limitations of rational decision making that only relies on information and knowledge in preparing for the future. Fortunately, the wisdom of managers has always been at least an unconscious ingredient in decision making.

For the 21st century, managers must seek an integrated, flexible personal style where the wisdom of intuition in the large as well as the knowledge of intuition in the small complement rationality. Given business acceptance of rational analysis, we advocate the conscious use of intuition in the large to reach beyond personal experience to access wisdom as a source of knowing.

In a striking example of intuition in the large, the chief executive officer of a successful billion dollar corporation said:

After endless hours of consultation with analysts and advisors, we could not decide if the decision to merge with another player in our industry would benefit the company in the long run. In the end, I supported and advocated the move because it felt right . . . and *something deep in my soul* told me that this was the time.²

The executive went on to clarify that although he could not rationally articulate a reason for pursuing the merger, his interaction with the management team and employees of the potential partner convinced him the companies were compatible on levels that transcended known decision factors. "It was a feeling . . . of their values, commitment, and energy." Drawing on wisdom, he evaluated the merger in a way that went beyond his personal experience.

The Intuitive Self

This example demonstrates that managers, like artists, have the wisdom of their soul to call on for decision guidance. We refer to this still, small voice of knowing available to everyone as "the intuitive self." Since the soul speaks from the eternal present, becoming aware of this voice requires a manager to attend to the moment rather than ruminate about the past or fantasize about the future.

Preoccupation with the past or obsession with the future short circuits our connection with the intuitive self. This does not mean that we ignore the past or neglect the future. Through the being of not-doing, the intuitive self responds to the past and moves into the future from its focused presence in the moment.

When managers do not attend to their intuitive selves, the soul expresses itself in metaphor through unconscious recurring themes. We noticed how one client, a software sales manager, frequently wore pins depicting elephants. She was not consciously aware of this habit until we mentioned it. When we pointed out the pattern, she recalled the many elephant nick knacks in her home and office.

But she did not know why so many elephant images were in her life. The intuitive self was trying to say something about her professional situation. But through inattention to the present moment, she was missing an insight about handling her responsibilities. She needed a period of self reflection to discover the wisdom implicit in the ever present elephant image metaphor.

The paradoxical character of the still, small voice of the soul inhibits a manager's acceptance of wisdom. Guidance from the intuitive self is not expressed in terms of right and wrong since wisdom may suggest "undesirable" actions. The input managers receive when they look to their soul for guidance is "appropriate" to a situation rather than necessarily "best" in economic terms. Decisions championed by the intuitive self may result in near term losses rather than profits since intuition does not guarantee "positive" outcomes.

This may include choices leading to business reversals that the soul knows are best in the long run. But the fact that using wisdom can lead to "undesirable" outcomes does not mean the intuitions are incorrect. For the intuitive self, there are no mistakes, only lessons to be learned. At a subtle level when a manager cooperates with the ebb and flow shaping their organization's direction in the web of connection, their decisions transcend rational objectives.

Complementary Ways of Knowing

In an attempt to comprehend these paradoxical qualities, intuition has been described as the polar yet complementary opposite of rationality. The rational self is linear, sequential, and analytic while the intuitive self is simultaneous, relational, and holistic. The idea of integrating the rational and intuitive selves transcends temporal, cultural, and academic boundaries.

Recognition of the complementary nature of intuition and rationality is found in the ancient traditions of East and West as well as contemporary scientific study in subject areas as diverse as physics, education, psychology, and philosophy. In Eastern philosophy, Taoism honors the receptive, intuitive yin and the active, rational yang ways of knowing. In Western thought, the Greek deities of Apollo and Dionysus, one symbolizing habitual restraint and the other spontaneous openness, also express these complementary ways of doing and being.

The importance of Apollonian, yang rationality for decision making is unquestioned. The systematic analysis implied in the use of information and knowledge helps to clearly identify decision issues and alternatives for addressing them. Originating in the techniques of scientific management, rationality has led to unprecedented economic progress and productivity.

In contrast to rationality, relatively little is known about Dionysian, yin intuition in general and even less about the subtle sense of intuition that transcends personal experience. Data systems and expert systems have become essential aids for acquiring and using information and knowledge. However as powerful as they are, these

aids are not enough when knowing beyond experience is required to bridge the decision gap. Bridging the gap requires access to several forms and kinds of intuition.

Varieties of Intuition

Intuition is easier to characterize than define. Our work with managers has shown that intuitive experiences range over a variety of forms and kinds. Consequently, we prefer to leave the concept open ended to avoid excluding subtle, yet crucial, dimensions of an individual's unique intuitive style. With regard to *form*, at the physical level, the intuition can come as a body movement, a physical sensation, or as an emotional sense to pull away from or draw near something.

Mentally it can occur as a thought that states or as a visual image that represents a distinct knowing. Finally the insight can have a quality that transcends the other forms. With regard to *kind*, the intuition can come as a specific course of action to take, a general solution to a perplexing problem, a suggestion to follow up on a situation, an impulse to do something for reasons not yet comprehended, a sixth-sense perception that something is going to happen, or an understanding of a deeper meaning hidden in a situation.

As managers explore their intuitive experiences, they extend their range in terms of form and kind. To place both in context, the dictionary defines intuition as, (a) the process of coming to or the faculty of attaining direct knowledge without reasoning or inferring, (b) an immediate cognizance or conviction without rational thought, (c) a revelation by insight or innate knowledge, and (d) an immediate apprehension or cognition. Intuition in the business context was first defined as a non-reasoning process by Chester Barnard, the former President of New Jersey Bell Telephone, over six decades ago:

. . . not capable of being expressed in words or as reasoning. . . . The sources of these non-logical processes lie in . . . *the physical and social environment*, mostly impressed on us . . . without conscious effort on our part. They also consist of the mass of facts . . . and generally *what we call formal knowledge* . . . impressed upon our minds more or less by conscious effort and study.

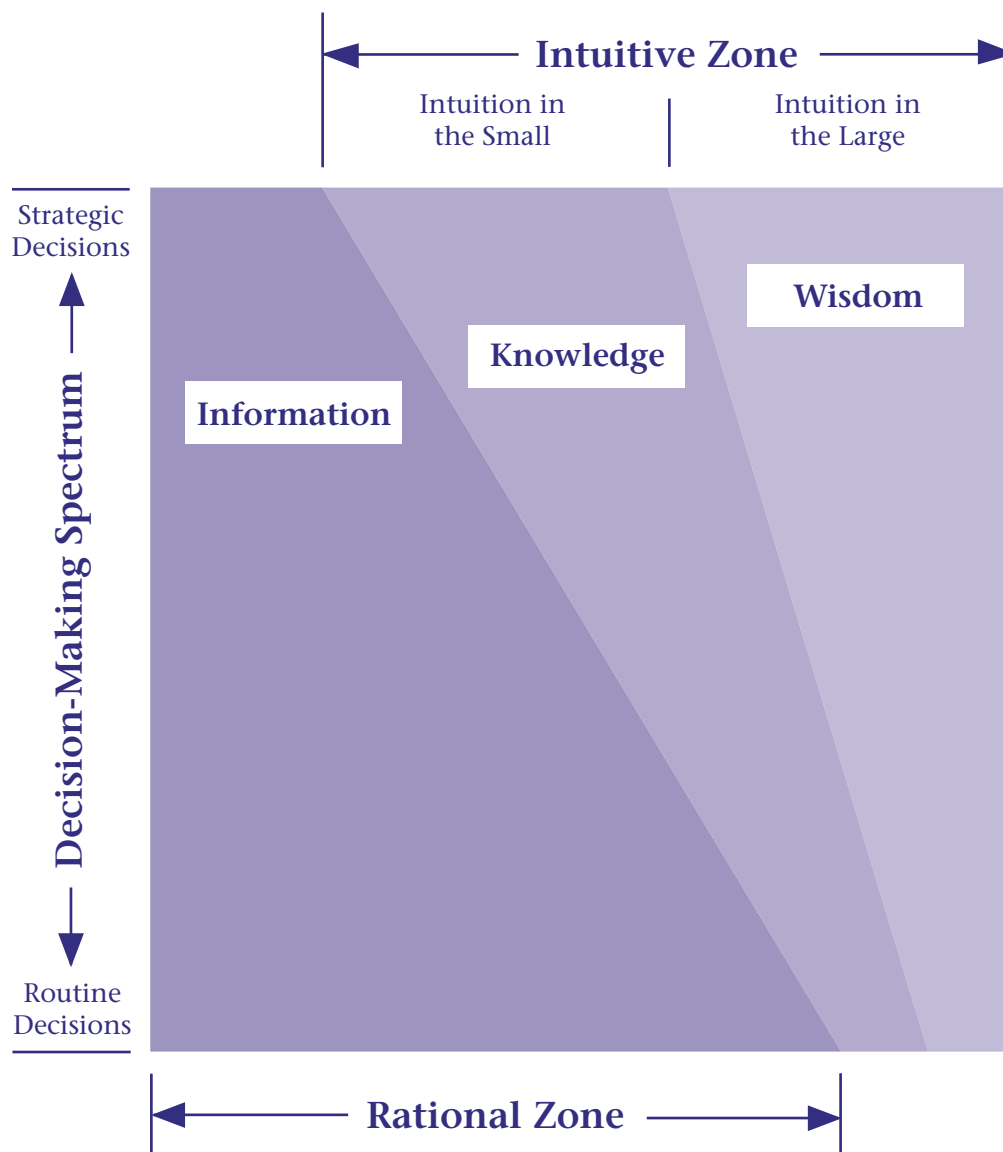
The spirit of these definitions, studies of intuition in business, as well as vigorous interest in the popular press underscore the significance of intuition across the decision-making spectrum. Helping managers bring their intuitive experience to conscious awareness and our interviews with executives reveal that all forms and kinds of intuition are important in closing the gap between what is known and needed for decisions. [Follow the link “Discovering and Understanding Intuition” for a PDF of the article published in *Exceptional Human Experience* to learn how a broad range of intuition definitions provides a rationale for a comprehensive journaling protocol.]

Closing the Decision Gap

Since management decisions range from routine to strategic, information, knowledge, and wisdom must support the full spectrum. At the routine end of Figure 1, decisions are supported by computer systems and control procedures. Here managers are protected in part from external uncertainty through the availability of information such as production volumes and customer preferences.

At this routine end of the spectrum, decision making remains primarily in the rational zone where analytical tools and techniques meet the need. As a result, the decision gap between what is needed and what is available is narrow. In these relatively well defined situations, the complementary intuitive zone plays a less significant role. But as we approach the strategic end of the spectrum, decision needs shift dramatically.

Figure 1 – Rational and Intuitive Zones in Decision Making



An international survey documented the significance of intuition for strategic decisions. Using a self-rating scale in a nine country study of intuition, the Institute of Management Development (IMD) found that 66 percent of managers considered themselves above average on intuition. At the executive level, this proportion increased to 73 percent.

For these executives, rational responses based only on information do not suffice for dealing with external factors that are fraught with uncertainty. To arrive at effective decisions in ambiguous situations, the intuitive zone is indispensable. As decisions become strategic, the gap between what is required and what is available increases rapidly forcing the executive into the intuitive zone. Here the wisdom of intuition in the large complements traditional reliance on knowledge from intuition in the small.

Intuition in the Small

Intuition in the small is implicit in the conventional approach to the role of intuition in decision making. Herbert Simon described intuition as “analyses frozen into habit and into the capacity for rapid response through recognition.” He illustrated this concept with the example of chess masters who make decisions about moves with astonishing speed.

These intuitive moves reflect the retrieval of “tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands” of pieces of information stored in long-term memory. In a similar manner, he argued that intuition in management manifests in split-second decisions that draw on years of experience. His ideas clearly articulate the nature of intuition in the small.

To clarify the distinction, intuition in the small represents the unconscious retrieval of complex combinations of data. Although the result is a solution based on knowledge based on experience, its appearance is intuitive. The manager senses a new avenue for action and feels that it is right. In an example of intuition in the small, an experienced strategic consultant remarked:

When I don't have the answer to a particular question, I leave my brain to think about it. When I am driving down the highway or brushing my teeth, when I least expect it, *the answer comes to me*, and I know it is right.

He then pointed out that, in time, he was able to justify his gut feeling with the appropriate rational reasons. Yet, when he initially approached the issue from a rational perspective, the solutions he conceived were incomplete.

Intuition in the Large

The 1997 battle between chess grand master Gary Kasparov and IBM's Deep Blue computer suggests intuition in the small will eventually be replaced by sophisticated expert systems and ever increasing computing power. Though some were dismayed, we were delighted the computer won to focus attention on the differences between mind-based human and program-based computer decision making. We believe mind is infinitely more profound than what is represented by playing chess even at the grand master level. Conscious managers accessing intuition in the large cannot be replicated by non-conscious computers.

The final frontier between humans and computers exists in areas of uncertainty where personal experience alone will not bridge the decision gap. In situations beyond the scope of the most sophisticated machine intelligence, managers call on wisdom to envision the future and imagine the unknown. As expert systems increasingly replace intuition in the small, reliance on intuition in the large emerges as a significant management competency. We believe economic survival in the 21st century will rest less on the efficiency of retrieving analyses frozen into habit and more on the effectiveness of accessing wisdom on the fly.

Eastern philosophy offers a deeper understanding of wisdom than expert systems playing chess. Yogananda's ideas are representative: "*Intuition is soul guidance*, appearing naturally in man during those instants when his mind is calm. . . . that without distortion it may hear the infallible counsel of the Inner Voice." Carl Jung was explicit about accessing a source of knowing beyond personal experience: ". . . fusing body and mind together so that they form a unity. . . . this unity creates a psychological disposition which makes possible *intuitions that transcend consciousness*." In addition to Eastern ideas about intuitive knowing, we turn to disciplines where scientists are forging a dramatic shift in our understanding of the universe.

Box Feature – Where Can I Learn More?

Public fascination with intuition is evident in numerous books that explore the use of intuition in both personal and professional settings. Many libraries have their catalogs on the internet to search with your browser at home or the office. Check your local library or nearest public college or university for references. Use the term "intuition" in a subject search of the catalog. At our local library, we found 30 hits most of which were useful for personal exploration, and at our nearest public university, we obtained 50 hits of which half could be used for individual work. References in the psychology and social science subject areas are most likely to help you learn more about intuition.

These titles suggest the scope of material you will find on the subject:

Weston Agor's	<i>The Logic of Intuitive Decision Making,</i>
Daniel Cappon's	<i>Intuition and Management,</i>
Marcia Emery's	<i>Intuition Workbook,</i>
Philip Goldberg's	<i>The Intuitive Edge,</i>
Belleruth Naparstek's	<i>Your Sixth Sense,</i> and
Jagdish Parikh's	<i>Intuition: New Frontier of Management.</i>

Each author describes practical tools and techniques to help managers discover and understand their intuitive potential. There is some overlap in coverage among the books but many differences as well reflecting the diversity in approaches to developing intuitive knowing. From among these references or others that you find at your library, select an approach that suits your personal style. [Follow the links for each publication to obtain detailed information on the books listed here.]

Quantum Paradoxes

Physicists have written compellingly about the similarities between the tenets of mystical traditions and the implications of the quantum view of reality. Whether an object assumes the character of a particle or a wave depends on the method of observation. A visual example of the wave-particle alternation in perception can be seen observing a flock of birds. When they are in their wave way of behaving, they have a radically different pattern of movement compared to their particle way of acting.

When we observe several pigeons while they are feeding on the ground, they behave as “separate particles.” But when they take flight, they become a “wave of connectedness.” We can shift our attention back and forth between flight and feeding to see the contrasting behavior as they alternate between wave and particle patterns of expression. This visual metaphor captures the dramatically different styles in each way of behaving.

When we focus on matter as our primary reality, we behave as particles. And when we focus on mind as our essential nature, we behave as waves. But rather than particle *or* wave, we can view the birds and ourselves as “wavicles” that express our overt particle reality *and* our subtle wave behavior. Since our particle “doing” reality is compatible with everyday perception, it is easy to appreciate.

But on the complementary side, our wave “being” is harder to sense because it is not honored in business. We have a particle-matter nature when seen through the eyes of traditional science and a wave-mind quality when viewed from the mystical perspective. Behavior depends on the moment to moment choices we make about whether to access our wave or particle nature.

As particles, managers are rationally doing, as waves, they are intuitively being. As wavicles, managers are both. Doing not-doing transcends duality through the integration of rational doing and intuitive being. When managers express their wave way of being, the quantum paradoxes suggest startling possibilities. Through the web of connection in the psi field

- 1) a manager’s mind can be in more than one place at a time,
- 2) a manager’s mind can be somewhere else instantaneously without having gone from here to there,
- 3) a manager can communicate with another mind instantaneously no matter how far apart they are in time and space, and
- 4) things exist because managers’ observations bring them into existence.

From the wave consciousness perspective, behavior that seemed inexplicable or impossible is commonplace.

For example, the president of a large, multinational insurance company in Puerto Rico acted in accord with the wave consciousness of mind in a strategic decision made within days of his transfer to Puerto Rico from Singapore:

When I started to evaluate the assets of the company, I noticed that we had a disproportionately large base of land and buildings and that made me uncomfortable. I asked around, and was told that in these parts that was a sound investment. *I could not dispel my discomfort* and made a widely unpopular deci-

sion to divest a large number of the building policies. Less than a year later, we were hit by a terrible hurricane . . . the company would have been in serious trouble if the buildings were still insured by us.

Assuming the wavicle dual reality, this executive's knowing beyond experience is an ordinary event in a radically revised world view. This example and interviews with executives reveal that intuition in the large as well as in the small are the twin companions of rationality. Since intuition complements rather than replaces the rational zone, understanding and using the full intuitive zone rounds out a manager's decision skills. These skills are shaped by factors that determine an individual's reliance on intuition small and large.

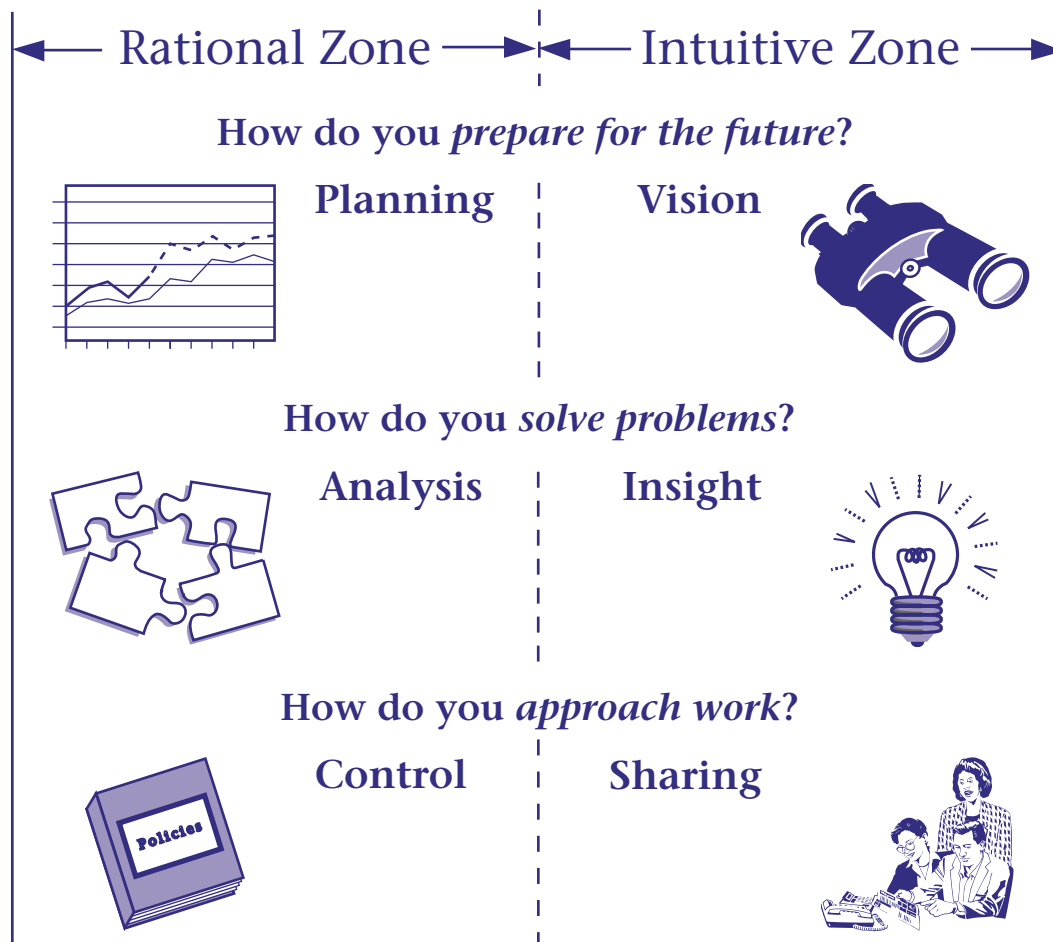
Factors Shaping Intuition

Managers approach decision making with attitudes influenced by their education, training, and experience. Personal style preferences for the rational versus the intuitive influence choices among alternatives. Intuitive decisions are more natural to some individuals and more acceptable in some functional units than others. The decision-making climate is also a result of the interplay between situational factors like gender and culture which shape world views as well as individual factors such as style preference and functional experience.

Personal Style

Manager style can be characterized in terms of complementary rational and intuitive preferences for planning and vision ways of *preparing for the future*, analysis and insight ways of *solving problems*, and control and sharing ways of *approaching work*. The Personal Style Inventory (PSI) survey profiles preferences for the rational zone of planning, analysis, and control on the left side of Figure 2 and the intuitive zone of vision, insight, and sharing on the right. Participants in our training programs stereotype the complementary ends of the rational-intuitive spectrum in terms of “straights” versus “flakes.”

Figure 2 – Complementary Ways of Knowing



The inflexibility of both stereotypes results from carrying either style to an extreme. Straights are perceived as habitual in their approach to situations which they interpret literally by following formal policies and procedures. In contrast, flakes are thought to allow details to fall through the cracks since they lack a firm grasp of specifics. An integrated personal style avoids the inflexibility of either stereotype. [Follow the link [Complete the Online PSI Strategy Profile](#) to assess your preferences for the rational and intuitive ways of doing things.]

We found that managers who prepare for the future and solve problems from an intuitive orientation are comfortable with uncertain decision situations where the use of vision and insight thrives. They approach work with a sharing emphasis. Dyed in the wool flakes abhor habitual rationality. On the other hand, we found that rationally oriented managers prefer to prepare for the future and solve problems with a planning and analysis outlook.

They emphasize control procedures in their approach to work. In the extreme, straights dismiss the relevance of what they regard as irrational thinking. Whether straight or flake, style preferences reflect the relative degree of reliance on information, knowledge, and wisdom in bridging the decision gap. Rationally oriented managers tend to use the proportions associated with the lower routine end of the decision-making spectrum while intuitive managers are comfortable with a mix that includes both sources of intuition at the strategic end.

In an example of the latter, a silicon valley executive observed: "I started this business because I did not want to be just another cog in the wheel. Here, I make the decisions. I am guided by my beliefs and my instinct. I know my product, and I try and learn more about my market." In describing an intuitive experience, he went on to say:

Often in conversations with my customers *something strikes a chord*, and in a flash, I know what the next version of my product should look like. It is not necessarily what they said, but in that instant, disparate pieces of information seem *to suddenly fit together* like the pieces in a puzzle, and the picture is startlingly clear. I can't explain it. It even takes me by surprise, and I can't wait to discuss the ideas with the members of my team.

The influence of the marketing perspective on this executive's use of intuition was clear in our conversation with him.

Functional Experiences

As this example illustrates, functional experiences also influence the use of intuition. Managers who come up through the ranks in boundary spanning units like marketing are more likely to use intuition than their counterparts whose functional areas, such as production, are focused internally. In the IMD study, more than three out of four managers in corporate planning, human resource development, marketing, and research and development units stated that the use of intuition was important in their decisions. In contrast, less than one in three managers in the areas of finance, production, and materials management considered intuition to be relevant.

Managers whose experiences center around production are protected from external uncertainty by policies and procedures. Consequently, internal functions such as

finance and production rely on analytical tools supported by computer systems for decisions concentrated in the rational zone. Managers with these functional experiences will often dismiss strong intuitive impressions by insisting on the rational perspective.

In contrast, managers whose responsibilities are focused externally handle input from sources whose implications are often unclear. They become comfortable using intuition to discover patterns among seemingly unrelated observations. Through making successful decisions, they develop confidence in recognizing and drawing on intuition in the small. This paves the way for allowing intuition in the large into their decisions.

The strength of the functional bias appeared in one of our interviews. When asked to discuss the importance of intuition in his decisions, the chief financial officer of a large American bank responded that he preferred “tangible facts” to “intangible feelings.” Later he acknowledged that when financial statements “did not feel right,” despite their apparent compliance with regulatory requirements, he continued to systematically study them until he could explain or dispel his discomfort with the data. Given his financial orientation, this executive felt more comfortable with the rational zone even though he relied on intuitive knowing to encourage him to review the rational facts in more depth.

Recognizing how intuitive wisdom complements intuitive knowledge sheds light on the importance of functional and industry specific experience in executive leadership. In settings where the decision gap can be bridged with information and knowledge, the significance of industry experience and functional background is paramount.

But when closing the decision gap depends more on using intuition in the large, functional and industry expertise becomes less important. In these situations, executive wisdom takes center stage. Regardless of their industry experience, wise executives can lead any organization that must rely primarily on intuition in the large to bridge the decision gap.

Gender and Culture

In addition to functional background, a manager’s use of intuition depends on their experience in terms of gender and culture. Social expectations play a role since women in Western cultures are allowed to express intuitive knowing more than men. However when they follow organizational careers, pressures for rationality inhibit women’s affinity for intuitive knowing. One study concluded that women are more likely to use intuition than their male counterparts.

However, another survey found that they were less likely. The latter suggested that women may be socialized to believe they must be more rational than men for success in management careers. Although the studies on gender differences are not clear, our experience suggests female managers more quickly acknowledge their reliance on and more often attribute their success to using intuition than their male colleagues.

For example, the marketing trained chief executive of a large multinational readily acknowledged that she is guided by an “inner voice” in selecting her top management team. She commented:

A strong track record for success and demonstrated experience in the field are the basic criteria for membership, but all other things being equal, I look for *the intangible element* that somehow communicates that a person is more energetic, committed or is willing to give more . . . that is something you pick up on during a meeting, it cannot be faked, and it is not part of the resume.

In her career, this executive avoided or overcame the cultural and gender bias that might have swayed her from the unequivocal use of intuition.

Although managers experience gender prejudice in Eastern cultures, they may be less subject to cultural bias. Countries such as India and Japan have less clearly drawn lines between the secular and mystical aspects of life. Hinduism and Buddhism unambiguously recognize intuition in the large by accepting knowing that transcends personal experience. Since management practice in these cultures is influenced by spirituality, we expect individuals in these countries to be more open to intuition than in the West. The IMD study found that Japanese managers were among the highest in the use of intuition while their Indian counterparts were somewhat below the average for nine countries. The legacy of a rationally dominated colonial educational system may diminish what would otherwise be a higher reliance on intuition in Indian decision making.

Exploring Intuitive Awareness

Regardless of the factors that have shaped a manager's use of intuition, many avenues are open for developing an intuitive orientation. Preparing style assessments and keeping an intuition journal lead to significant organizational payoffs as intuition in general and the wisdom of intuition in the large are accepted and encouraged in managerial decision making.

Preparing Style Assessments

Through the use of a personal style assessment tool such as the PSI, the rational-intuitive preferences of a management team are profiled to discover individual and group decision patterns. For each individual, the strategy profile summarizes preferences for the three orientations each in the rational zone and the intuitive zone. Using the profile, individual strengths in both zones are matched to tasks and responsibilities that require those orientations.

The strategy profile also highlights opportunities for an integration that makes full use of all orientations and for a flexibility that feels at ease shifting from one orientation to another. In an organization profile, managers are arrayed in a "U" shape from the most rational to the most intuitive around the center of balance for their organization. This rainbow of styles stresses the impact of manager differences on the ways an organization prepares for the future, solves problems, and approaches work. [Follow the link [Display Rainbow of Styles Example](#) to view an organizational profile and the paired opposite, similar, and dissimilar teams based on that profile.]

In its simplest form, style assessment in a team setting encourages integration and flexibility by encouraging appreciation for less preferred styles. Management exercises emphasize the relative contributions of different styles to organizational outcomes and the importance of freely moving among style orientations. Using paired opposite, similar, and dissimilar teams to explore these organizational issues brings these perspectives to the forefront. Learning about the contrasting preferences of colleagues acquaints managers with styles they avoid.

Extremes that reflect lack of flexibility or integration are identified, and those individuals are encouraged to explore the complementary orientations. In an advanced form, personal action plans are prepared to develop flexibility and integration by reducing reliance on overused preferences and increasing reliance on overlooked orientations. These team initiatives offer powerful techniques for underscoring the value of style integration and flexibility.

Keeping an Intuition Journal

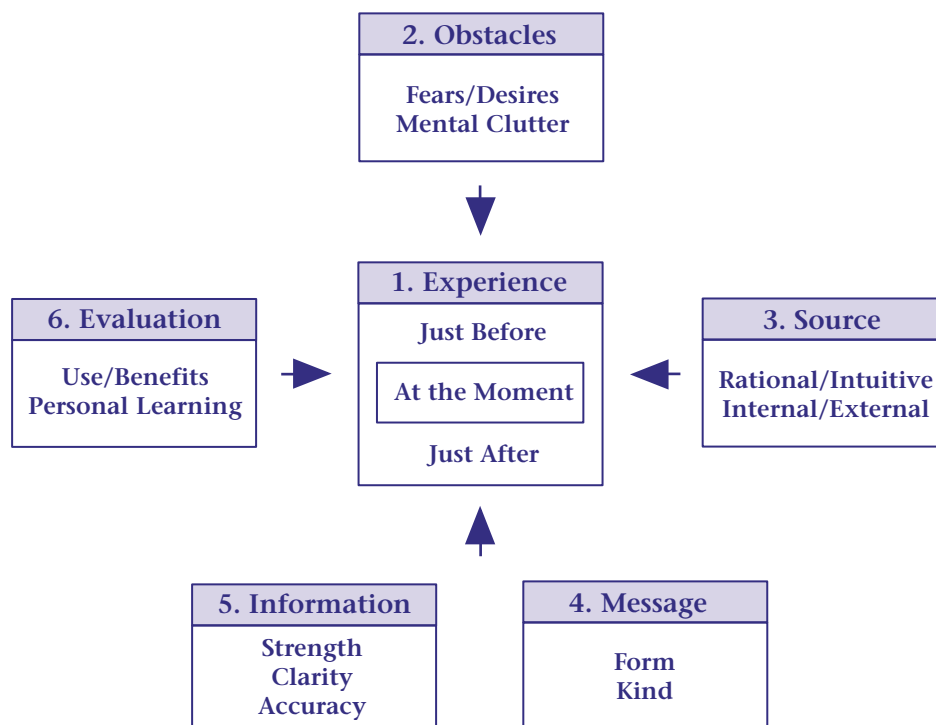
Given an appreciation for style preferences, managers are encouraged to develop their intuitive sense using a journal. Although many ways to strengthen intuition are recommended by the experts, our experience suggests that an intuition journal is the most practical way to develop a manager's awareness of and reliance on intuition.

Maintaining a journal encourages reflection on the dimensions of intuitive experience and sensitizes managers to habitual patterns in their ways of relating to decisions. Preparing an intuitive self profile based on several entries, individuals discover opportunities for expanding their intuitive decision horizons. Connecting with intu-

ition in the large flows naturally from this deep self-exploration of the intuitive zone of experience.

Figure 3 identifies steps in exploring the elusive qualities of intuitive experience. A brief entry is written to capture the theme indicated for each step in order to tease out the subtle dimensions of intuitive experience. The process begins by describing the intuition along with what was happening just before and just after. The latter themes are valuable in helping managers learn what triggers an intuition and how they react when one occurs. Step two attunes managers to the ways their fears, desires, and mental clutter distort their intuitive experience. Attention is given in step three to the rational-intuitive mix and the degree to which the intuitive aspect of the mix draws on intuition in the small (internal) and intuition in the large (external).

Figure 3 – Steps in Intuition Journaling



By reflecting on these subtleties, step four focuses attention on the variety of forms and kinds intuitive messages assume. In step five, the intuitive content of the message is reviewed in terms of its strength, clarity, and accuracy. Finally in step six, the use and benefits of the intuition are evaluated, and the person states what they learned about intuition. By opening to the full spectrum of the intuitive zone through the journaling process, managers acquire an appreciation for intuition in the large as they first experience and then journal the role of wisdom in their decisions.

The journal process produces an experiential record of what happens when an intuition occurs. The reflective process emphasizes the self exploration needed to discover the subtleties of intuitive experience. This reflection includes unsuccessful intuitions as well as those that hit the bull's eye. Managers often learn more from

intuitions that miss the mark than those that are on the money. When intuitions are noticed, managers find them to be numerous and to deal with routine occurrences as well as strategic decisions. When it is encouraged, intuition thrives in a manager's decision making. [Follow the link [Display Abbreviated Journaling Guidelines](#) to download blank journal forms, instructions, and examples to explore your intuitive experiences.]

Organizational Payoffs

Working toward flexible, integrated rational-intuitive decision making generates a self-sustaining critical momentum for intuitive awareness. Using style assessment, team exercises, and journaling to explore the role of intuition in decision making stimulates subtle shifts in an organization's climate. Foremost among these, intuition in the large plays a greater role in routine as well as strategic decisions. As managers discover their colleagues rely on intuition, members of the group become more open to their own experiences.

Together they discover and support different forms and kinds of intuition to deal with decisions. This appreciation for diversity generates a sense of acceptance for knowledge and wisdom. When managers reach beyond themselves into intuitive wisdom, they access the fabric of wholeness shaping organizational change. From the wisdom source in the web of connection, the management team discovers the direction of their organization's destiny.

When the wisdom of being complements the information and knowledge of doing in decision making, a sense of spirit permeates an organization. This shift encourages the yearnings of the soul to find expression in the workplace. Then managers' innate creativity readily flows into their daily responsibilities. As the creative spark is kindled, work takes on new meaning. Robert Frost eloquently captured the qualities of this transformation:

But yield who will to their separation,
My object in living is to
Unite my avocation and vocation
As my two eyes make one insight.

Only where love and need are one
And work is play for mortal stakes
Is the deed ever really done
For heaven and the future's sake.

When individuals are comfortable expressing their intuitive as well as rational selves at work, the complementary habitual rational and spontaneous intuitive styles are recognized and used. In this setting, integrated, flexible managers nurture a dynamic, robust climate for their organizations as they confront the challenges of electronic globalization in the 21st century.