

CHAPTER NINE

Intuition: My Other Sense

I never came upon any of my discoveries through the process of rational thinking.

—*Albert Einstein (1879-1955)*
Mathematician and physicist

A brief recap is in order. To this point I have expressed my thoughts about perception, demonstrated how my perception is influenced by my beliefs and assumptions, described the Effective Listening Pyramid along with my views about the relationship of listening and memory.

However, there is still one additional important sense I wish to discuss. Some people refer to it as our “sixth sense.” Others refer to this sense as intuition. And many discount the notion of its existence at all.

“What?” I can almost see you looking at me with a skeptical smile. “Are you talking about clairvoyance? About mental telepathy? About psychics?”

No, not at all.

Actually I’m referring to a source of a sensory process as real and as legitimate as perception and listening. A sense many people have not trained themselves to use. Unfortunately, people tend to discount the very notion of intuition, mainly because it is usually looked upon as unscientific and speculative.

In reality, the concept of intuition is much older than our current views of psychics. Intuition is as old as the Pythagorean theorem. The Greek philosopher Pythagoras and his followers made much use of it to establish their rules of mathematics. Intuition also was important to religious thinkers down through the ages, as a way of knowing God.

Over the centuries, ethical philosophers talked about intuition as a way of “knowing moral values.” Spinoza regarded intuition as the “highest form of knowledge” that permits our mind “to be a part of the Infinite Being.” Kant saw intuition as “the portion of perception that is supplied by the mind itself” to help us understand the sensations we experience from external objects. Bergson regarded intuition as “the purest form of instinct.”

Today, science rules. We have improved our material lives and have expanded our understanding of our world—our universe—through the application of scientific methods. Our belief systems today are embedded in scientific thinking. Intuition is consigned to the worlds of religion, philosophy, and mysticism.

Yet every one of us has had experiences in our lives we call intuitive. I’ve often said to myself when disappointed in something someone does, “I had a gut feeling not to trust that guy!”

Or how about the time I answered a telephone, and I knew who was calling—without caller ID—before the person ever spoke?

Then there’s the time I said to myself, “I just knew that was going to happen!”

My conjecture is any one of you reading this book could come up with many examples of intuitive sensing.

Another problem is these experiences seem to be random and unanticipated. Many people write them off to chance. Some, in fact, may be due to chance. But are all of them due to chance? I don’t think so.

Maybe what happens in those “intuitive” instances is I utilize a sense I haven’t formally trained myself to use. Perhaps I should look at intuition as a personal skill I can develop if I just choose to. It would be worthwhile if I could make it a conscious part of my daily living!

