

# HOW CAN INTUITION HELP TRAINERS?

BY ANNE D.  
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INTUITION . . . a lovely word. We used to attribute it primarily to the femmes.

"Men are logical, reasoning types," we non-men said loftily. "But women have *intuition!*" We considered it a magic, unbidden quality which gave us a certain edge in sorting out the world and moving successfully through it.

Current research in the brain/mind field has dulled that edge and forced us to share the goodies of the intuitive mode. Because (to the everlasting disappointment of us non-men) we are no longer the favored, and sole, custodians. Authorities now assure us that everyone — regardless of gender — has intuitive capacities, though some individuals use them more than others.

Itzhak Bentov (author and scientist whose fine mind was lost to our era in a recent plane crash) has defined intuition as ". . . a way of knowing without getting there in the linear, rational way we normally function. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

Those who have followed the brain-hemisphere research will leap to the conclusion that intuition is a right-brain contribution. That is true. Right hemisphere doesn't understand bits and pieces. It doesn't fool around with serving single dishes or even successive courses. It sometimes presents us with a steaming gestalt, a total concept . . . all heaped on one abundant platter.

## Getting the "Specialty of the Day"

So how do we handle the menu? What do we say to the waiter to get this "specialty of the day?"

We first recognize that the left-hemisphere output must be turned off. So we temporarily abort our logical, reasoning, practical, linear, verbal side. We use it only long enough to outline what we already know about a situation or a problem. We state the facts as we see them; we analyze the problem as it appears to us. We indicate what we've already tried or thought of. In short, we program our mental computer. We make all the efforts of which our *conscious* minds are capable.

Then we seek a quiet place. We sit comfortably, breathe deeply, go through our favorite relaxation exercise, and softly assign the project or problem or challenge to the subconscious. We make the instructions specific. "Here is *what* I need to know and *why* and, if possible, *when*."

Then we wait. We try to remain relaxed, receptive, and aware. If images or words or impressions arrive, we take note of them. We sit quietly. We do not attempt to force any issue or immediately interpret anything which comes to us. We simply remain open to our alternate source. For as someone once wisely said, "Don't tell the subconscious *how*. Just tell it *what*. It knows more 'hows' than the conscious ever dreamed of!"

After a time we reiterate our assignment to the subconscious; we then take a deep breath, a stretch, and return to our higher brain-wave frequency and our regular state of consciousness. We re-enter our logical, reasoning, coping world and go about our daily (or nightly) business.

We may have received hints or

help while we were in our relaxed state. If not, we may achieve answers or insights later, often at times when we least expect them. For one of the requirements of our unobtrusive helper is that we leave it alone for a time — that we turn our conscious attention elsewhere while our new-found ability touches bases throughout its far-flung universe, its timeless, spaceless abode.

What we have done, as you can see, is to deliberately activate the intuitive process. We have set it in motion to gain access to the immense, treasure-filled storehouse of the brain's right hemisphere: that portion of our mental mechanism which knows but knows not how it knows.

Here let me insert an emphatic statement. This formula has nothing to do with necromancy or magic arts. It is simply an accepted method of exploring the "reserves of the mind" . . . of intentionally invoking the assistance of a powerful supporter.

John K. Williams, in his book

*The Knack of Using Your Subconscious Mind*, likens the left-hemispheric statement of facts and former efforts to active cooking on a burner (the province of the conscious mind). Turning the matter over to the right brain (or subconscious), Williams says, is like moving the food into a fireless cooker.<sup>2</sup> You can go off and leave it indefinitely while it simmers away. When the process is finished, a little mental bell sounds in some way to tell you the cooking is done.

So it is with the intuitive process. You may have gone for a walk. You may be taking a shower. You may be reclining in your lounge, thinking happy thoughts. You may be playing golf or the piano. All of a sudden you "hear the little bell." You may get a visual or auditory image. You may simply have a pleasant, warm sensation of completion. You may feel a surge of inexplicable joy. But however it comes, you experience the "AHA!" moment. Somehow you are made aware that the mental cooking is over, and the

time has come to take the "project food" out of the pot.

### Increase Self-Awareness Through Intuition

So much for the process, itself. What does it have to do with trainers? How can it help in human resource development or OD interventions?

First of all, it can enable us to know ourselves better. We can follow the intuitive process to increase our self-awareness. Often we rationalize ourselves into false postures, fail to admit fears or professional inadequacies. Conversely, we sometimes sell ourselves short. We overlook or ignore latent talents or abilities. If so, we are evading our Master Plan. Certainly we don't want to be guilty of that.

Intuition can also guide us in our approaches to our clients or participants. Sometimes the verbal message we are getting from them isn't on target, but non-verbals are also failing to clue us in. Perhaps we need to spar for time and get an

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"Your own intuitive hunches, arrived at when you've fine-tuned your mind and found the right-hemisphere frequency, may be much more accurate — and much more productive."

intuitive reading on the puzzling situation.

One of the specific problems which I often encounter is the workshop participant who doesn't participate. In my neophyte training days I assumed that this type was abnormally shy or sulky (inasmuch as I had probably done everything but stand on my head or pull participant teeth). Consequently I usually left *shy* or *sulk* to his/her own devices. Then I learned that some non-participants were silently begging to be encouraged or pressured to respond. But how to differentiate? That was the knotty problem. After some unsatisfactory encounters and a few scathing evaluations, I learned to go the intuitive route. If I could find some time to myself, I actually followed the deep-breathing-relaxation-fact-listening-subconscious-

assignment syndrome. When I had an opportunity to enlist my silent right-brain partner, I found my reactions far more on target.

#### Intuition: The Hidden Ally

Intuitive explorations certainly pay off in OD interventions. Your organizational client can give you all the facts in the world, as he/she sees them. Other employees will gleefully clue you in on what's *really* going on. But your own intuitive hunches, arrived at when you've fine-tuned your mind and found the right-hemisphere frequency, may be much more accurate — and eventually much more productive.

Oddly enough, we can also get intuitive assistance with curriculum planning. One of my clients recently asked for help in learning, in covering and absorbing a lot of

information in a hurry. I worked several weeks on this request, assembling sources, organizing data, testing designs and approaches. Then I decided to dump the whole problem on my faithful subconscious and do a water-color painting. I'm a beginning water-colorist, and the results are often abysmal. But halfway through the painting, when I hadn't thought about the blankety-blank curriculum for nearly two hours, I had an intuitive flash. It came in the form of a mental image of a wagon train and a possible title . . . not at all what I was fashioning with my amateur brush on my cold-press pad. Suddenly I realized that the wagon-train was an emblem for my curriculum. More ideas came tumbling. I rushed to make notes. Now I've ordered visuals for an entire western approach to a course titled "Learning Frontiers: Points for the Pioneers" and subtitled "When You Encounter Unfamiliar Materials, Here's How to Head 'em Up and Move 'em In!" Obviously not a left-hemisphere solution to my problem.

I could go on indefinitely with examples, because the valuable information available to us through intuition is virtually endless. But the purpose of this short article is simply to make you aware that — whatever your gender — you have this limitless capacity at your service. As I've indicated, it is often a "hidden ally," waiting to be discovered. So bring it out of hiding. Take its wraps off and use it to bring you AHA! moments in every aspect of your training endeavors.

#### REFERENCES

1. Vaughan, Frances E., *Awakening Intuition*. Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y., 1979, p. 171.
2. Williams, John K., *The Knack of Using Your Subconscious Mind*. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1971.

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