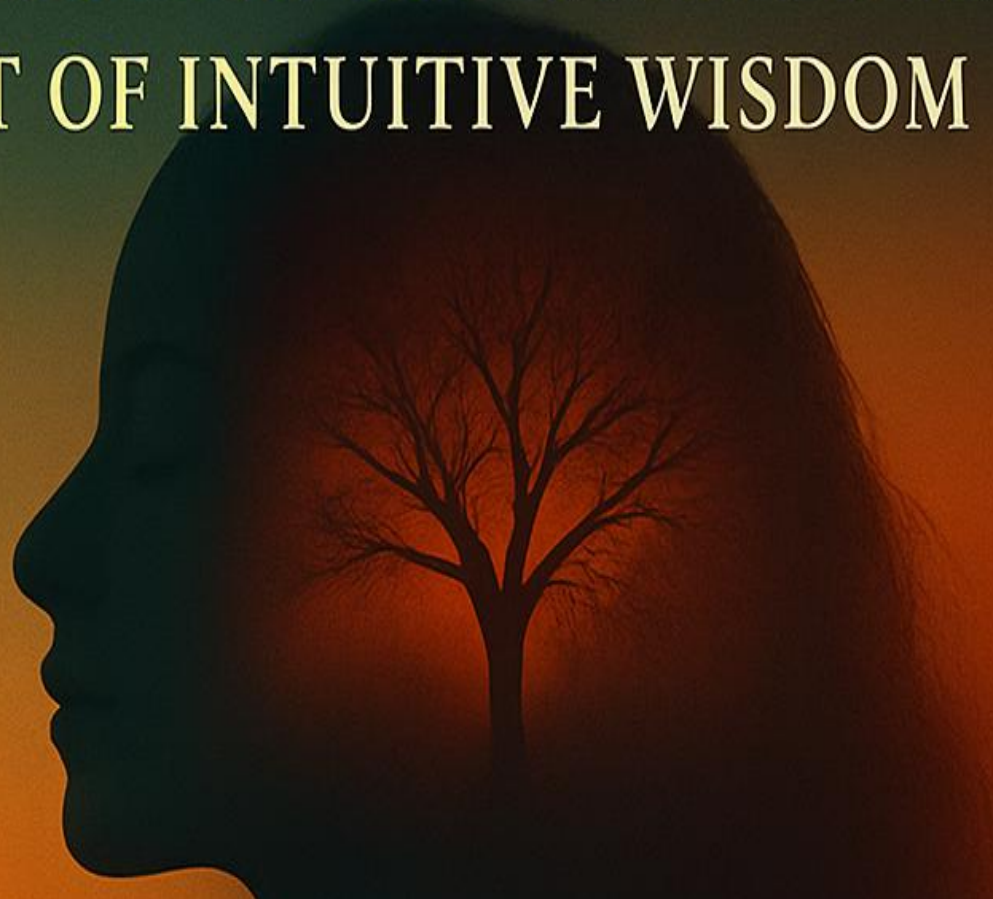


CONSCIOUS INSTINCT

DEVELOPING YOUR NATURAL
GIFT OF INTUITIVE WISDOM



JEANNE A. COLLIN-SMITH

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INTUITIVE WISDOM**

BY:

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JEANNE A. COLLIN-SMITH

Jeanne discovered her intuitive gifts as a young child. She is the daughter, niece and granddaughter of school teachers. She went on to become a school psychologist, psychotherapist, and family therapist. As a therapist and educator, she values growth, autonomy, and fulfilling relationships, all of which require choices and risks. Family elders who included mysticism with more conventional spiritual teachings encouraged and supported independent exploration of ideas.

Jeanne balanced her traditional education by studying with prominent psychics and astrologers, learning to distinguish objective from subjective methods and resources, and to value both. She is committed to helping others appreciate their own spiritual and personality resources and to promoting greater acceptance of each other's ways.

One useful tool is an objectively studied method for understanding innate differences of temperament. Longitudinal studies of universal human characteristics have identified strong tendencies evident early in life. Traits such as introversion versus extraversion, "larks" versus night owls, and easy, adaptable versus difficult, challenging behavior tendencies present clearly in infancy and toddlerhood.

Well-researched differences among individuals include the capacity to process conflicting information and the flexibility of each

person's view of rules. Reliance on sensory or intuitive input is also a matter of temperament. These differences affect the ability to trust one's own feelings, as well as the ability to trust—or decide whom to trust.

The intersection of modern science with knowledge derived by the ancients studying the stars remains fascinating and intuitively satisfying. Coming from a family that embraced our inner guidance system as well as logic and education, the author has felt the benefit of invisible help throughout many milestones in life.

It is with gratitude that she offers this book to those feeling the pull to learn more for and from themselves.

ABSTRACT

In a world that often demands instant decisions yet bombards us with overwhelming information, many of us find ourselves frozen at life's crossroads. We've been taught to trust only what's logical, measurable, and externally validated, yet we feel a persistent knowing that sometimes contradicts this rational analysis.

This book is about reconnecting with your intuitive intelligence—that quiet wisdom that resides within you, waiting to be acknowledged and developed. I'll guide you through understanding what genuine intuition actually is (and isn't), how it manifests uniquely in you, and practical ways to strengthen this natural ability until it becomes a reliable compass for navigating life's complex terrain.

Drawing from both neuroscience and time-tested practices, we'll explore how to distinguish authentic intuitive signals from fear, wishful thinking, or external pressure. Whether you're facing a career pivot, relationship decision, or simply wish to live with greater confidence and alignment, the pages ahead will help you reclaim your innate capacity for deeper insights and better decisions—one that has been yours all along.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i> -----	10
CHAPTER 1. The Science Behind the Sixth Sense	
<i>Understanding Intuitive Intelligence</i> -----	13
CHAPTER 2. Recognizing Your Intuitive Style	
<i>The Four Pathways of Inner Wisdom</i> -----	42
CHAPTER 3. Noise vs. Signal	
<i>Distinguishing Inner Guidance from Fear and Wishful Thinking</i> ----	67
CHAPTER 4. The Mindful Decision-Maker	
<i>Creating Space for Intuitive Insights</i> -----	95
CHAPTER 5. Intuition in Action	
<i>Navigating Life's Crossroads with Confidence</i> -----	121
CHAPTER 6. The Intuitive Relationship:	
<i>Boundaries, Empathy, and Knowing When to Trust Others</i> -----	149
CHAPTER 7. Everyday Intuition Practices	
<i>Building Your Inner Wisdom Through Daily Life</i> -----	176
CHAPTER 8. Designing Your Intuitive Life	
<i>Integrating Head and Heart for Authentic Choices</i> -----	201
<i>References</i> -----	227
<i>Thank you</i> -----	236

INTRODUCTION

I was ten years old when my uncle taught me my first lesson about intuition, though he never used that word. We were sitting in the back yard looking up at the stars, and he was explaining the basics of astrology—not the newspaper horoscope kind, but the ancient practice of recognizing patterns and connections. “The important thing,” he told me, “is to understand that everything is connected. You were born at a certain time, in a certain place, with a certain set of talents. Your job is to figure out how to make all of that work for you.” I didn’t fully grasp what he meant then, but I felt something shift inside me, like a door opening to a room I didn’t know existed.

Years later, sitting in a university calculus class, I discovered something peculiar about my mind. The correct answers to complex problems would arrive fully formed the moment I read the question—not through logical steps, but as complete knowing. Then I’d have to work backwards, reverse-engineering the mathematical steps to show how I’d arrived at the answer I already had. My professors found this frustrating. I found it fascinating. How did my brain know things before my conscious mind could explain them? When can a person know whether to trust the way their brain works, and how can each of us best work with the abilities we have?

Those questions have shaped my entire professional life. As a school psychologist, psychotherapist, and family therapist, I’ve spent decades exploring the intersection of cognitive science, emotional intelligence, and what we might call inner knowing.

I've studied with prominent psychics and astrologers, learning to distinguish objective methods from subjective ones, valuing both for what they offer. I've immersed myself in temperament research—the scientifically validated differences that appear in infancy and persist throughout life, like introversion versus extroversion, or the capacity to integrate conflicting information. And through it all, I've watched my own intuition guide me to the right place at the right time for important milestones in my life.

But here's what I've learned that might surprise you: intuition isn't a mystical gift bestowed on a chosen few. It's a natural cognitive function that every human possesses, though we've been systematically trained to ignore it. Your brain is constantly processing vast amounts of information beneath conscious awareness, recognizing patterns, integrating emotional data, and signaling important insights through physical sensations and sudden knowing. The question isn't whether you have intuition—you do. The question is whether you've learned to hear it, trust it, and distinguish it from the noise of fear and wishful thinking.

This book exists because I've watched too many intelligent, capable people stand paralyzed at life's crossroads, unable to move forward because they're waiting for certainty that will never come. They have access to all the logical analysis they need, yet something feels incomplete. They sense there's another source of wisdom available—one that integrates their lived experience, their values, and their deep knowing of what's true for them—but they don't know how to access it reliably.

You're holding this book because you're at one of those crossroads, or you sense one approaching. Maybe you're facing a

decision where the logical choice doesn't feel right. Maybe you're surrounded by conflicting advice and need to find your own truth. Maybe you've had intuitive experiences that proved accurate, but you don't trust them enough to act on them for important decisions. Or maybe you're simply tired of living according to other people's definitions of what your life should look like, and you're ready to discover what you actually want.

What follows isn't a mystical manual or a collection of supernatural techniques. It's a practical, evidence-based guide to developing a cognitive skill you already possess. We'll explore the neuroscience of intuitive knowing, identify your personal intuitive style, learn to distinguish genuine guidance from fear-based thinking, and build daily practices that strengthen your access to inner wisdom. Most importantly, we'll learn to integrate intuitive intelligence with analytical thinking—because the goal isn't to abandon logic, but to add another essential dimension to your decision-making process.

Your intuition has been waiting patiently for your attention. It's time to learn its language.

CHAPTER 01.

**THE SCIENCE
BEHIND THE SIXTH
SENSE**

UNDERSTANDING INTUITIVE INTELLIGENCE

Lila sat across from her career counselor, staring at two job offers that looked identical on paper—same salary, similar benefits, comparable growth potential. Yet every time she imagined accepting the position at the larger firm, her chest tightened and her mind went blank, while thinking about the smaller company made her lean forward with unexpected energy. What Lila was experiencing—and what you may have experienced in your own pivotal moments—wasn't mystical or supernatural. It was her brain doing exactly what evolution designed it to do: processing complex information faster than conscious thought could track it, and signaling the results through her body.

If you've picked up this book, you're probably standing at your own version of Lila's crossroads. Maybe you're facing a decision where logic points one direction but something inside you hesitates. Maybe you've had hunches that turned out to be right, but you're not sure whether to trust them when the stakes are high. Or perhaps you're simply curious about whether intuition is real—whether it's something you can actually develop, or just wishful thinking dressed up in spiritual language.

Here's what this chapter will explore:

intuition is neither magic nor nonsense. It's a legitimate form of intelligence, grounded in how your brain recognizes patterns, processes emotions, and integrates information you've absorbed but haven't consciously noticed. Neuroscience research over the past two decades has revealed that your brain is constantly working beneath your awareness, assembling observations into insights that emerge as gut feelings, physical sensations, or sudden clarity. The question isn't whether intuition exists—it's whether you've learned to recognize and trust it.

We'll examine what's actually happening in your brain when you have an intuitive hit, why some people seem naturally more intuitive than others (spoiler: it's largely about attention and practice, not supernatural gifts), and how emotions function as a sophisticated information-processing system rather than obstacles to clear thinking. You'll discover why your body often knows things before your conscious mind catches up, and how the patterns you've absorbed throughout your life create a database of implicit knowledge that informs your decisions in ways you might not recognize.

This chapter lays the scientific foundation for everything that follows. Because if you're going to trust your intuition with important life decisions—and I believe you can—you need to understand what you're actually trusting. Not a mystical sixth sense, but a powerful cognitive capacity that's been with you all along, waiting for you to learn its language.

To be clear, I am using the most common definitions for Mystical and Magic. In this frame these terms are used to describe what is disconnected from practical and tangible reality. In no way do I discount other frames, beliefs and experiences you or others may have. This book is about understanding and developing a key, often underestimated, human talent.

By the end of this chapter, you'll understand the neurological basis for intuitive knowing, recognize why your particular temperament and life experiences shape how intuition shows up for you, and begin to distinguish genuine intuitive signals from the anxiety and wishful thinking that often masquerade as inner guidance. You'll see that developing intuition isn't about

becoming more spiritual or magical—it's about becoming more aware of the sophisticated intelligence your brain already possesses.

Let's start by understanding what was really happening in Lila's body that day, and what it reveals about the remarkable cognitive gift you're about to develop.

What Intuition Actually Is:

Defining Intuitive Intelligence Beyond the Mystical

Let me tell you what intuition isn't: it's not a mystical hotline to the universe, it's not a supernatural power reserved for psychics and mediums, and it's definitely not something you either have or don't have, like brown eyes or perfect pitch. I spent years thinking my intuitive gifts were somehow special or unusual, until I began studying cognitive neuroscience and realized that what I'd been experiencing was simply my brain doing what every human brain does—processing vast amounts of information beneath conscious awareness and delivering the results as feelings, sensations, and sudden knowing.

Intuition is your brain's sophisticated pattern-recognition system at work. It's the result of millions of years of evolution creating a cognitive shortcut that allows you to make rapid decisions based on accumulated experience, implicit learning, and environmental cues you've absorbed but never consciously noticed. When you walk into a room and immediately sense tension, or meet someone new and feel an inexplicable wariness, or consider a job offer and experience a physical sensation of rightness or wrongness—that's not magic.

That's your brain rapidly comparing the current situation against thousands of similar experiences stored in your memory, identifying patterns, and signaling the results through your body before your conscious mind can articulate the reasons. Cognitive scientists describe this as System 1 thinking—the fast, automatic, associative mental processing that operates continuously below your awareness.^{2,3} It's distinct from System 2 thinking, which is slow, deliberate, and logical. Both systems are essential, and neither is superior to the other. The problems arise when we dismiss System 1 insights as irrational or, conversely, when we trust every gut feeling without engaging our analytical capabilities.

Here's what makes intuition particularly fascinating: it draws on information you've learned implicitly—knowledge you've absorbed through experience but may have never consciously processed or articulated. A physician with twenty years of experience walks into an exam room and immediately senses something is seriously wrong with a patient, even before running tests.² That's not psychic ability; it's the doctor's brain recognizing subtle patterns in the patient's appearance, breathing, and behavior that match thousands of previous cases stored in implicit memory. The doctor may not be able to explain exactly what triggered the alarm, but the pattern recognition is operating nonetheless.²

Intuitive intelligence is the ability to access and effectively use this fast, pattern-based processing system. It is a skill that can be learned and gets better with practice, feedback, and conscious attention. The more experience you gain in a specific area, the sharper your intuitive judgments become in that field. This explains why a master chess player can glance at a board and

instantly sense the best move, or why an experienced parent can tell the difference between their child's different cries without conscious thought.³

What distinguishes reliable intuition from wishful thinking or anxiety is something we'll explore throughout this book, but the main idea is this: authentic intuitive signals stem from your brain's real pattern-matching abilities, based on information you've genuinely absorbed. They usually carry a sense of calm certainty rather than urgent emotion. They are specific instead of vague. And they can be tested, refined, and improved through deliberate practice.

I discovered this difference myself during my training as a psychologist. I always had strong intuitive responses to clients, but I learned to distinguish between genuine clinical intuition—based on subtle behavioral cues, patterns in their stories, and my professional experience—and my own emotional reactions or projections. The most reliable intuitive insights had a particular quality: they felt grounded and clear, even when they went against what the client was explicitly saying. Those that could lead me astray were often tinged with my own anxiety or desire for a specific outcome.

Your intuition is already functioning. The question isn't whether you have it—you do—but whether you've learned to recognize its signals, distinguish them from mental noise, and trust them appropriately. That's the work we'll be doing together in this book: not developing some mystical new ability, but learning to access and refine the sophisticated cognitive intelligence you've possessed all along.

PRACTICE

Your Intuition Inventory

This week, become a curious observer of your own intuitive experiences. Carry a small notebook or use your phone to briefly record moments when you have a gut feeling, physical sensation, or sudden knowing about something. If you are focusing on one domain during this time, just mark whether this moment is relevant to that domain and move on. Don't judge whether it's "right" or act on it yet—just notice and record.

For each instance, note:

- What was the situation?
- How did the intuitive signal show up? (physical sensation, sudden thought, emotional knowing, image, etc.)
- What quality did it have? (calm, urgent, clear, vague, grounded, scattered)
- If you later discovered whether it was accurate, what happened?

Troubleshooting: If you're not noticing any intuitive moments, you're probably having them but dismissing them as random thoughts or physical sensations. Start even smaller: notice when you "just know" which checkout line will move fastest, when you sense someone's mood before they speak, or when you feel drawn to or repelled by something without logical reason. These everyday moments are intuition in action.

The goal isn't to prove your intuition is always right—it won't be, especially at first. The goal is simply to begin recognizing how



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