

The Development of Intuition

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Graduate Project

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I would like to express love and deep gratitude to all of my teachers, especially:

Ann Jauregui

Bear McKay

Byron Katie

Janet Parker

Laura Koniver

Maria Nemeth

Martha Boston

Mary Ann Somerville

Nancy Hawley

Robert Razz

S.N. Goenka

Sonia Choquette

and all of my clients

Energy healing requires intuition, which I, like you and all humans, have. But I—and maybe you, too—have a skeptical, doubting intellect, which is used to being in charge. This led me to several years of questioning and struggle while learning to be a healer. Even while battling my skepticism, I have always known that there is more going on than what we perceive with our five senses: intuition is valid, magic happens, and healing is possible. I invite you to witness my ongoing journey. Along the way, I hope you find inspiration and ideas to assist you in creating *your* magical life.

Broadly, I will cover three topics: the struggle of the intellect vs. intuition, lessons I'm learning, and what you and I can do moving forward to live more creative, fulfilling lives.

I was always among the smartest kids in the class. In senior year of high school, I was voted “Miss Know-It-All,” a designation which still stings. (After all, I *knew* who *should have been* voted Miss Know-It-All, and she was really annoying, with her hand in the air all the time. Were they saying *I* was like that?!) In any case, like Hermione from Harry Potter, I was used to knowing the answers and I received accolades, attention, and self-esteem for being smart. Fast forward 33 years and I find myself at the The McKay Method® School of Energy Healing. Of course, like in any school, there were some books to read. But mostly, learning energy work requires a different skill set, one which often seemed (and sometimes still does) elusive. My teacher, Bear McKay, would be demonstrating a technique and ask, “So, can you see how I...?” No, I did not see it (or hear/feel/smell/taste/know or otherwise perceive it). I found myself frequently feeling lost, confused, and flat out incompetent. Still I would not say, “I see it” just to be a part of the group that did—to be one of the smart kids, one of the ones who “get it.” I either couldn't “see” or, on occasions when I did get some information, I often would doubt its veracity.

“You are getting information; you have to trust what you are getting,” Bear would say. My skeptical, doubting mind countered with something along the lines of, “I will not blindly trust. How do I know that what I'm getting is real or even useful? What if it's wrong? What if I'm just making stuff up? What if I don't get anything? OK, so I saw the color, blue, so what?” Ad infinitum.

This pattern continued for the first three years of my studies with Bear. One day she said to me, “I think I get it: you believe in energy healing; you just don't think *you* can do it.” That summed it up. But, despite the struggles and skepticism, I did not want to quit. I knew, on a level deeper than my fear and insecurity, that I was meant to be in this School and that the learning would be valuable to me whether or not I ever were to hang out my shingle as a healer. In June of 2014, I reached a tipping point. My therapist, Ann Jauregui, gave me the

assignment to track my intuition and anything remotely like intuition, so that I could see what information I was receiving, notice whether or not I was following the guidance, and track any results I could perceive.

Within a few weeks of starting that assignment, I was sitting on my friends' deck, overlooking the Giudecca Canal in Venice, when I reached up and touched my right earlobe. No earring. I immediately felt my left earlobe and found the other one of the lovely blue glass earrings I had bought as a souvenir in Bandon, Oregon, 15 years earlier. A search of the house for the missing earring yielded nothing. Sadly, I resigned myself to the loss. But the next morning, as I was getting ready to go on a Venetian adventure, I took the remaining earring out of my purse and put it on the desk, saying, "Wouldn't it be cool if when I got back to the room, the other earring was here with its mate?" I'd like to tell you that's what happened, because that really would be magical, but what did happen also qualifies as magic, in my book. As I wound my way through the streets of Venice, I reached into my purse for a tissue and pulled out an earring. How did it get in there? I don't know, but of the available explanations, I like "intervention of my guides" the best. While this isn't strictly an example of intuition per se, it is an example of what happens when you are living in flow of positive energy (and openness to miracles).

The "tracking" assignment has turned out to be invaluable because the dichotomy of intellect vs. intuition behaves like a spiral. If you want intuitive information, but aren't actually open to it or trusting of it, you won't perceive it, even if you do get it. So that reinforces the belief that you can't/don't receive information. Which causes performance anxiety, aversion, or inaction, or all three (in my case). And that leads to less and less information coming in (or at least, being recognized and acknowledged). Happily, you can reverse the spiral. If you want intuitive information, and are open to it, you will perceive it. And that will start to build a belief—based on evidence—that you do receive useful information. That, as you might imagine, gives way to hopefulness, action, and delight. And that leads to more and more information coming in.

The critical step that reverses the downward spiral is trust. Bear had told me many times that I needed to trust what I was receiving, but that message didn't begin to really sink in until I started reading about the development of intuition. I discovered that all of the healers, psychics, and intuitives echo what Bear had been telling me all along.

Being open to your psychic ability is the first step on the psychic pathway. It is the beginning of what will make your experience different from that of the closed-minded person.

Sonia Choquette, *The Psychic Pathway*

Trusting in your impressions is just as important as practicing with your abilities. Instead of letting doubt filter into your mind, see the situation clearly, and then trust that you've seen what you were supposed to see about the event. The more you trust in your abilities, the more accurate they will become.

Melissa Alvarez, *Your Psychic Self*

What does it mean to walk the clairvoyant path? For me, it meant being willing to set aside my fears and doubts about psychic abilities (which I didn't think I had) while at the same time being willing to be adventurous and brave even in the face of uncertainty.

Michelle DesPres, *The Clairvoyant Path*

Developing your intuition is both like and unlike, for example, learning to knit. It is likely, that if you want to knit, you will engage in the process confident that if you follow directions, get expert advice, and practice, you will learn. But to develop intuition, you must not only take those steps, but you must trust or have confidence in whatever information you receive. The difference—and for me it is daunting—is that with knitting, you can clearly see with your physical eyes both the process, and the outcome of your process. It is immediate and tangible. In the realm of intuition, energetic dynamics and forms are, by their nature, less dense than physical forms. For me, that made any information I did get, difficult to trust. How do you trust in that which you cannot see and cannot prove? How do you trust a thing, which, by its very nature is fluid and subtle? Here was my dilemma: I did not trust, and yet, in order to progress, I must. And, if you don't trust the information enough to take action, then you will miss the very tangible results that often come when you follow your intuition. The tracking of my "noticings" allowed me to open up to possibility.

When I checked in at the Venice airport for my flight to Prague, through Vienna, the agent said my flight was 20 minutes late. By the time I got to the gate, it was an hour late, and I realized I'd miss my connection in Vienna. My mind started: "Maybe another airline has a flight? Should I go out to the check-in area? What if I can't get back in easily or have to wait in long lines? There are so many people out there. Maybe I should let the client know?" Etcetera. And then, I heard a voice that said, "Read your novel." Really? Read my novel? "Yes, and don't call the client." OK! I read my book, and when the gate agent showed up, she assured me I would be protected on the next flight out of Vienna. So, OK, I'll be four or five hours late, and probably miss the client's cocktail party, but I'll get there. As the flight into Vienna was landing, the pilot came on to tell those of us going to Prague that we had missed our flight and we should go inside and get re-booked. As I stood in the aisle, waiting to deplane, I thought I heard the gate agent say to the flight attendant, "Ana...business class..." Was she talking about me? I asked the flight attendant if there was anything I should know, and she pointed to the gate agent, who was now at the bottom of the stairs on the tarmac, and said, "Talk to her." When I told the gate agent my name and destination, she said, "Your plane is over there; I'm driving you to it." Wait, what?! Had I not listened to the instruction to "read (my) novel", and also followed all the subsequent cues, who knows what chaos might have ensued? Because I did listen, I had an easy, fun, and dare I say, magical, flight delay. And, I arrived in Prague only a few minutes later than planned, went out sightseeing, had hors d'oeuvres with my client, and avoided lots of drama.

In researching for this project, I have read books and taken several on-line courses, putting the teachings into practice as I go. I have read and studied with people who call themselves "intuitives," "psychics," or "healers," and who work with guides from other realms. For myself, I am perfectly open to the idea that I am being guided by specific non-corporeal beings, but I cannot say for sure that this is the case. The questions are open: what is the difference between intuition and guidance, and if there is a distinction, does it matter? Is "psychic" the same as or different than "intuitive"? For the purposes of this project, for the most part, I have collapsed these categories. It is immaterial to me whether I am getting information from intuition, guides, imagination, the brain, or any other source. What matters is that the information I receive is helpful, and that I am able to continually hone and refine the receiver, that is, myself. So, what is intuition?

The dictionary defines it as:

- The ability to understand something immediately, without the need for conscious reasoning (The New Oxford American Dictionary)
- A natural ability or power that makes it possible to know something without any proof or evidence (Merriam-Webster.com)
- A feeling that guides a person to act a certain way without fully understanding why (Merriam-Webster.com)

Sometimes I experience that information comes in and is quite clear—I just *know*. I have had many of these experiences throughout my life: the time I was mopping the kitchen floor and suddenly knew I would run into an old boyfriend later that day (I did); the second time someone mentioned the name of a training company, I knew I should pursue a job there (I got one); the time last year when I just knew I'd be upgraded to business class, despite the fact that boarding was almost complete and I was sitting in my economy class seat (I was). Other times, especially when I am *trying* to get information, it seems to be less clear. I have learned to look upon the former as gifts and the latter, as opportunities to relax, let go, and just be. Since my ego still wants to be in charge, this is uncomfortable. Laura Koniver, an MD who calls herself the Intuition Physician, and who is one of my teachers, says, "Intuition is likely to speak only once, softly. It knows it's right, so it isn't going to try to convince you." Since my mind loves to go on and on (and whose doesn't?), this distinction is very useful. Most of what I hear in my head is the mind doing its chatter thing. The challenge is being quiet enough to hear the intuitive messages (how much am I missing due to incessant chatter?).

In the course of experimenting with my intuition, while dealing with my intellect and skepticism, another of Laura Koniver's ideas has been very helpful. Since I value my intellect and believe that my skepticism is on board for good reason, it makes sense to me that I don't want to give them up. But they were in the way of progress. Laura told me *not* to "trust" my intuition because that implies "blindness," as in "blind trust," which she thinks creates an issue, especially for skeptics like me. She prefers the language "to build confidence." This works. I can run experiments and see what happens, building confidence as I continue to practice. However, I do think an open mind is prerequisite. Without that, whatever beliefs you have that "this will never work" or "I don't get information" will block you from noticing the intuitive information that is already coming in. Laura echoed what Bear had been telling me for years, but that shift of language from "trust" to "build confidence" made a difference. (It also didn't hurt that every book on intuition says some version of "you must trust/have

confidence/ be willing/follow the guidance...” I had heard this from Bear, but the reinforcement was instrumental in my opening up further.)

All of the intuition that just comes in, when I’m not even asking for it, feels easy and often is obvious. I don’t seem to need to develop any capacity to receive that—I apparently have a certain level of openness. But, as I am training to be a healer, I need to be able to drop into a state where I am consciously and immediately available to receive information, as in a client session. Meditation is the training ground for this quieting of the mind.

Over the years, I have had an off-again/on-again relationship with meditation. It wasn’t that I didn’t like it, rather that I couldn’t perceive any change in myself or any practical value. Then, a few years ago, after having practiced over a period of months, I finally experienced a shift. And while I still go through phases where I don’t meditate regularly, I am now thoroughly convinced of its value, and I love the experience of sitting quietly.

In addition to all of the known medical benefits of meditation, a regular practice will open the mind to receive information when you are looking for it. That means you can pose a question and receive an answer during or after the meditation session, or for healers, when in session with clients. It also means that your mind will be open and clear enough to receive information whenever it is coming in.

Driving to my client’s office, I got a message to take the next exit instead of remaining on the slow-moving highway. I did, and found myself on a clear street, with a straight shot to where I needed to be.

I had the thought that I should call to confirm with the car service I use when going to the airport. I don’t normally call to confirm, but the feeling was strong. It was a good thing I called; they did not have my reservation on the books.

I woke up thinking about a couple of friends of mine who live in Europe. When I checked Facebook, they had both been let go from their jobs.

I was in the process of ordering a \$94 theatre seat—and not a great one—when I had the thought to wait and see if I could get a “rush” ticket instead on the day of the performance. I did—and the ticket was \$45 and 6th row, center.

I had a hunch that the email from USPS wasn’t really from them. Unfortunately, I ignored that hunch and clicked on the link. I spent the next several days clearing a nasty virus off of my computer. (Even when I don’t follow my intuition, I still get the experience to learn, “Oh! That *was* my intuition—it works!”)

I sometimes receive information I didn’t even know I was looking for, like this recipe (my guides have a sense of humor!). Turns out, it’s really good, so here it is:

Sliced strawberries
Sliced cucumber (skin removed)
Fresh mint—chopped
Olive oil
Balsamic vinegar (white, if you have it)
Salt to taste
Mix and enjoy!

One of the most fascinating and distinguishing aspects of intuitive information is that it often comes in whole—completely known and understood in an instant. Unlike the way I just gave the recipe to you, word by word, in a linear fashion, when it was given to me, it came in all at once. If you have never had this experience, it is worth creating a meditation practice just to experience it. It’s very cool and unlike day-to-day life.

I work as a communications skills trainer and coach. As I meditated one morning on Day 2 of a presentation skills workshop I was leading, I received instructions for an eye contact exercise for a participant who was struggling with that skill. I had not asked for an eye contact exercise nor was I even particularly focused on the participant. When I arrived at class, I asked her if she would like to try the exercise, and she did. She was successful in improving her eye contact, much to

her delight. And I now have an exercise I can use with other clients. I can't take credit for it though!

As with the recipe, when the exercise just came in, it came in whole, not in parts and not linearly. I saw the entire picture at once. If I had tried to design that exercise, I would have worked through each step, one by one, assuming I could even have thought of it. That's hard work! It's so much easier when it just comes in, and I am so grateful for those moments. I have had several very practical ideas for my workshops arrive in this fashion.

Despite the successes I have had with my intuition over the last several years—and the last year in particular, I still have to work hard to silence the voice that says, “You aren't getting anything.” In fact, I have *not* been able to silence that voice, but sometimes I can entice it to go for a coffee break.

In a graduate healing class, where about eight healers were working on one client, a fellow student, my job was to look at the skeletal system and practice any relevant healing techniques. Worried that I wouldn't “see” or “get” any information, that critical voice was loud and insistent. “You don't...you can't...what if...this is all BS...” I looked at the left arm. Nothing. The left leg. Nothing. Right leg. Again, nothing—except the voice—loud and critical. I said to it, “Stop! I am doing this exercise. We are going to be open and see what we see as I look at her right elbow.” As soon as I looked, the elbow exploded. When I reported my findings, the owner of the elbow said, “Yes! I was in a car accident where that elbow got shattered.” One of my classmates said, “Gee, it's really too bad that Stacy doesn't get any intuitive information!”

Noticing and tracking moments like these are critical to successful development of intuition. Since apparently, the skeptical voice isn't going away (and truthfully, I don't really want it to leave), it is important to acknowledge intuition and the results of following it. It is also critical to learn to distinguish among the voices and other messages you receive. The more attention you pay, the more information you will receive.

So far, I have given examples of the use of intuition in leading a better daily life. You may be wondering whether or not you have intuition, and how developed it is or isn't. Be assured, intuition is innate. All humans have it, although it is suppressed and mistrusted in mechanistic, highly scientific cultures such as the United

States. Gavin de Becker, an expert on violence prevention, in his various lectures and books, explains that humans—and all animals— use intuition to signal potential danger. He also says that humans are the only animals who *ignore* intuitive information of potential danger. He gives the example of a woman waiting for an elevator. When the elevator arrives, she gets a bad feeling about the man who is already on it. Because she doesn't want to seem impolite or paranoid (even to herself), she gets on the elevator anyway, to her peril. So, the most basic function of intuition is to keep us safe. (See link to de Becker's lecture in the bibliography.)

Intuition not only keeps us safe, it also is helpful in navigating day-to-day life (which road do I take? should I accept this job? should I say yes to this date?). Finally it helps us live a magical life. By magical, I mean a life where things flow, where you receive unexpected surprises, where you just know what to do and when to do it. Life is fun and interesting and always changing. Miracles (defined by author and coach, Maria Nemeth, as those things outside our sphere of knowing) lie around every corner. A magical life is an inspired one, where your life itself is a work of art. I aspire to live this sort of life and believe that with continued practice, I will be able to do just that. You can, too.

As you have no doubt noticed, practice is the key to developing our intuition. I suggest the following:

- Meditate for 20 minutes daily (more if you can).
- When you have a choice to make, get quiet and ask for an answer. Then follow the instruction you get.
- When dealing with a major question, get quiet, take a few deep breaths, ask your question and then meditate for 5 or so minutes. Immediately after, as if someone else were giving you dictation, write down what comes to you.
- Write down every hunch, intuition, guess, coincidence, miracle that occurs for you. Notice what happens when you do or don't follow your hunches.
- Read books that inspire you. (See the bibliography.)
- Take classes to help develop your skills. (See the bibliography.)
- Take classes at The McKay Method® School of Healing.
- Above all, keep an open mind and an attitude of "I can and do receive intuitive information."

Wishing you a magical journey.

Epilogue for Healers

I decided to study energy healing, in part, because I had had good experiences with energy healers. I had positive results, but the process was a mystery to me. I entered school thinking that I would finally understand what energy healing is, know how to do it, and (bonus!) never need health insurance again. I expected that the process would become as clear to me as the keyboard I am typing on. Four years later, I can say, unequivocally, that is not the case. Energy healing and the intuition which is essential to it, remain mysterious, nebulous, and subtle. I feel as though I have just begun, which in a way, is true, since it was only about a year ago that I finally saw that my skepticism was doing more harm than good. But although I think that the realm of intuition is likely to remain subtle, I also fully believe that I will continue to grow in my ability to receive information and discern what it means.

Over the last year, as I have been more successful at quieting the critical voice, I have received more and more information as I do client sessions. I am still learning to put all the pieces together. Some of the information I receive is symbolic (a color, or an image of a Roman bust, or a nervous system made of wire), and I don't always know how to interpret it. Another thing that Laura Koniver said to me that was helpful is, "They (clients) are equally powerful; they will take what they need, leave what they don't need." She told me not to be so concerned with "knowing the answer" or "getting it right." She said, once again, to have confidence in the information I receive. It's possible that I might receive information that apparently means nothing, and then get a message from someone two years later saying they found out what it means. Clients may also feel as though their session is passive, but Bear would say that it is very active on the energetic level. We are there to support the client's best possible health, so we meet the client where they are, and they will decide (subconsciously, more than likely) what their physiology can accept.

I still have greater confidence in the intuitive information I receive for myself and my own life than I do in the information I receive on behalf of my clients. But, as Bear often reminds me, I am getting quite a bit of information. And it comes in a variety of ways. Most often, I see it. I see the size and shape of the chakras. I see the color of the adrenals. I get random images (like the Roman bust) that may or may not be relevant. Sometimes I feel it—a block, or the quickness or amount of energy flow. One time as I was working on the throat chakra, I suddenly felt as if I were stirring fudge. I interpret this as a block, and more practically, as something the client needs to say, but isn't.

The only way to develop is to keep practicing, as Bear has always said. Onward.

Annotated Bibliography

BOOKS

One of the ways I use books is for inspiration and support. Even when I don't do all (or sometimes any!) of the exercises, the books still help to move me along my path. All of these books are both inspirational and practical.

Alvarez, Melissa: *Your Psychic Self*

This book has a LOT of information and exercises. She has useful information on the different types of intuitive abilities and subtle signs of intuition.

Choquette, Sonia: *Trust Your Vibes*

This book is broken into 33 "secrets" for trusting your vibes. They aren't really secrets; they are practices. Sonia has a very readable style, and this book feels very supportive.

Choquette, Sonia: *Tune In: Let Your Intuition Guide You to Fulfillment and Flow*

This is also a "how to" book, arranged in four steps. She includes many examples from her own life and practice.

Choquette, Sonia: *The Psychic Pathway*

This was one of the first books I read when I started thinking about the development of intuition as my graduate project. It's a 12-week program, designed like *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron. It was the first of the courses I took as part of my grad project. If you are looking for a good place to start, this is it.

DesPres, Michelle: *The Clairvoyant Path*

Healers in particular will like this one. She gives many exercises, some of which involve the auric field and chakra work. She also talks about the soul and soul groups.

Jauregui, Ann: *Epiphanies: A Psychotherapist's Tales of Spontaneous Emotional Healing*

This beautifully written book, by my therapist, is full of wonderful stories of healing and will touch your heart.

Orloff, Judith: *Second Sight*

This is less of a how-to book, and more of a memoir. Amazing stories.

Rankin, Lissa: *Mind Over Medicine*

The subtitle is *Scientific Proof That You Can Heal Yourself*. Just in case you have any doubts!

VIDEO

Lecture by Gavin de Becker

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNtXjliJOPU>

He has also written several books, including the best-seller, *The Gift of Fear*.

COURSES

Choquette, Sonia: "Ask Your Guides"

This is a four-week program with daily activities, including meditations, exercises to work with your guides to assist you in a variety of ways, inspired writing, and more. The inspired writing exercises were particularly interesting and fruitful. I didn't expect to receive so much information. Also, although I was already in the habit of talking to my guides, I now speak to more of them and for different things. Asking for guidance has become much more of a habit than before. I will take this program again in a few months.

Koniver, Laura: "Expanding Intuition"

This four-week course is packed with information and exercises. Although I took it as part of my project, there is so much to do I want to take it again to go deeper. Laura brings her MD background, but also her highly developed intuition to the class. She is very supportive, and her information complements everything I've learned from Bear.

Koniver, Laura: "Chakra Healing Class"

I think Laura developed this class because she didn't have enough time to cover all of the chakra information in the intuition class. As of this writing, we are in Week 5, Throat Chakra. Like her other classes (she also has a course called "Health Flow Unleash"), it is full of great information and exercises.

McKay, Bear: "Energy Awareness Online"

This is an introduction to energy awareness and healing techniques. This is a wonderful class even if you don't want to be a healer; you can use the techniques on yourself and your loved ones. You will begin to develop energy awareness and intuitive sensing, which will serve you in all aspects of your life.