

Our deeper voice

Our deeper voice wisdom – intuition – continually informs us. The question is: do we hear it? The answer depends on how consciously aware we are.

At work, at home, at play and in relationship, few folks are consciously “tuned in” to their wisdom self. Why? They’re usually caught up in living life at ninety miles an hour and ping-ponging from 20-second sound or visual bite to 20-second sound or visual bite – robotically – i.e., “unconsciously. Since many (most?) folks are caught up in their stress-filled lives, they live a lifestyle of programmed habit and pattern -do-ing, be-ing and thinking and solely engaged in “mental” activity.

How To Gain Insight

Insight is basically allowing our soul — our deeper, or higher, self — to “see” and “inform”. Folks who are interested in personal and professional growth, creativity, meditation or spirituality often seek insight or inner guidance so that their goals and aspirations can be fulfilled. But the reality is many people don’t know how to gain insight. For example, many folks go into a meditative state where they may have been taught to receive insight, but without doing any preparatory work to receive insights, they don’t know how to “see”, “listen” or “hear” from a deeper place. A major fallacy, too, is that “deep thinking” (whatever that is) leads to insight. It doesn't.

Insight is an experience that occurs in one’s deeper, inner self or soul that manifests in one’s personality. In order for this to happen, one has to create the space or environment that allows insight and wisdom to arise.

Here are four steps one can take to gain insight and touch into one’s inner, deeper wisdom and guidance. (Creativity, too, arises from this place – not from using one’s “logical” mind):

1. The process of experiencing or gaining insight begins with focus, intensity of purpose and intentionality. You must be clear on what it is you are seeking – a solution, a new way of do-ing or be-ing, a purpose of some kind, an answer to a question. You must have a sense of passion and intensity (not a nervous, anxious or agitated “hurry-up-I-have-to-know-this-now” type of intensity, but a deeper, quiet, relaxed type of intensity that reflects deep seeking or longing). That is, you must really care about the issue from a deeper heart-felt place, not from an ego-absorbed mental place. In this place of intentionality, it’s important that your attention is focused on what it is you are seeking and not distracted by thoughts, email, cell phones, “noise”, etc. In terms of developing this deeper or higher level of consciousness, you must have a deep, sincere desire to make this process a priority in your life. Seeking wisdom and insight is not a “one-off” event in which one engages from a “by the way, I have a few seconds so let me go inside and see what insights I can come up with” microwave, fast-food approach. Seeking inner guidance and wisdom is a life-long approach and process that needs to be cultivated and then practiced with consistency. No practice, no consistency - no insight.
2. If any particular skills (e.g., emotional, mental, leading, managing, interpersonal, etc.) are required to understand, appreciate or express the insight, then you need to develop and master those skills. If there are materials required, then you must gather and assemble those materials. If any specific knowledge or experience is required, then you must gain that knowledge and pursue that experience – else the insight remains an insight - perhaps “unclear” and/or unimplemented.
3. Once we have acquired sufficient knowledge, skills and materials, and still sense our deep desire to work with the insight or wisdom we have gained, we'll feel a palpable, inner, energetic sense or capacity that is accompanied by the required inner qualities (e.g., strength, courage, trust, will, steadfastness, self-discipline, understanding, sincerity, etc.) that can support us to pursue next steps. It’s important to allow this felt-sense of energy and direction and, in a way, “let it run the show”, i.e, trust it. After all, this is

what we have been seeking so now it's time to trust the process and not allow our "logical" mind to derail the process (as it will often want to do). In this place we allow our inner guidance and wisdom to "drive" and we place our "mind" or "brain" on hold. This is where steadfastness, trust, courage and strength come in. Remember, thinking does not create insight — ever. Intellect and intelligence do not create insight — ever.

At this point in the process, it's important to be "present" to our immediate experience, be focused, "in the now" so we don't become sidetracked and distracted by our "thinking mind". In this place, while insights unfold and eventually come through the brain and the mind, the energy of an insight is much more neutral, softer and lighter than the energy accompanying "thinking about something". Here we are not — repeat, not — thinking, or being mentally active, in order to create, in order to be "insightful." Rather, we are "resting" in this place, in a passive, allowing and observant way, to permit what arises to arise. To actually, "see what's up", what's being revealed, in a sense, as a watcher and witness of our experience.

Here, we let go of thoughts and connect directly with our experience. We tune in to the silence and the sensations in our body, and our breath. We allow a "being in space"-type of awareness where we are solely in the present moment. An insight contains much wisdom and most often arises when we "suspend" thinking and it appears suddenly. There's no forcing. "Thinking" comes into play when we want to unbundled or unravel the insight in order to apply it — the fourth step.

4. The final step is actualizing or operationalizing the insight into some practical or concrete application. This is where specific knowledge, skills and tools come into play so we can move the insight from the 50,000-foot level to ground level and express it in our life at work, at home, at play or in relationship.

Finally, insight must lead to change and allow for its expression in reality. When insights do not lead to change, we'll most often find ourselves blocked when we seek future insights and inner wisdom.

So, some questions for self-reflection are:

- What is so important in my life right now for which I am wanting insight?
- Am I willing to give a lot of energy to this?
- What skills or knowledge do I need in order to manifest the insights I am seeking?
- Am I willing to manifest the insights I receive for the benefit of others?
- Do I seek messages in my experiences?
- Do I look for "gifts" in specific situations?
- Do I ever ask, "What can I learn from this?"
- What's the most important thing for me to focus on now?
- What would I do if I knew I could not fail?
- What would I do if there were nothing to fear?
- Am I usually open to new information or experiences?
- Am I able to make associations with different pieces of knowledge?
- What lessons can I learn from past mistakes?
- Do I ever reject insights that come to me? If so, why?

"Insight occurs when, and to the degree that, one knows oneself." — Andrew Schneider

"...we need to abandon the idea that wisdom is knowing everything the whys, the wherefores, the how-tos. Wisdom is often more subtle, both far simpler and exceedingly more complex. For wisdom requires the discerning, the listening to, the acknowledgement of nudges and notions, of senses and sensations, of the minute and what we often mistakenly assume is the mundane. Wisdom means listening to the still, small voice, the whisper that can be easily lost in the whirlwind of busyness, expectations, and

conventions of the world....” — Jean M. Blomquist

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