



# Way of Knowing: Intuition

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# What is Intuition?

- “The judgements, solutions, and ideas that pop into consciousness without our being aware of the mental processes that led to them. When you suddenly know the answer to the problem you’ve been mulling, or when you know you like someone but can’t tell why, your knowledge is intuitive.” - Jonathan Haidt & Craig Joseph
- Matter of feeling rather than thinking → connected with the heart (or gut - gut instincts) rather than the head
- Composed of **Heuristics** which are mental shortcuts or general ‘rules of thumb’ that we use to make our intuitive decisions; however, these quick judgements come at the expense of accuracy

# Two Types of Thinking:

## Automatic (Intuition):

Fast, Unconscious, Intuitive,  
Inflexible; Governs many of our  
judgements and decisions

## Reflective (Reason):

Slow, Conscious, Deliberative,  
and Flexible; Can correct errors  
in the automatic system

# Types of Intuition

- Folk Intuitions: Natural, uneducated intuitions about the way the world works, which often turn out to be false
- Naive Academic Intuitions: Education should be used to unlearn folk intuitions and be the basis of intuitions
- Social Intuitions: First impressions formed within seconds of meeting someone; has an evolutionary reason and is based on subliminal perception; affected by appearance and stereotypes
- Expert Intuitions: Insights from raw talent and vast background knowledge/experience in a field; the greater the expertise, the more reliable the intuition; however, has a specific domain
- Moral and Aesthetic Intuitions: Conflicting intuitions about morals and what looks good; feelings of approval or disapproval pop into awareness as we see or hear about something someone did

# Decision Making

- Judgements based on intuition are usually formed from personal preferences
- Rational thinking is bad at accessing emotional outcome, which causes intuition to be favoured in some situations

# Unconscious Skills

- The amount of conscious thinking used while performing a skill decreases as one becomes more familiar with the skill
- Based upon a memory rather than intuition - however, drawing upon a memory is subconscious, making it an intuition

# Cognitive biases

(systematic errors in thinking that affect intuition)

## Confirmation bias

Tendency to notice and agree with something that is similar to your current beliefs

## Inattentional bias

Tendency to disagree with or not notice something that is not part of your current beliefs

## Hindsight bias

Tendency to notice and agree with something historical that aligns with present knowledge.

## Availability bias

Tendency to place readily available ideas or memories over others

## Affect heuristic

Tendency to oversimplify a decision based on the emotions associated with it

## Halo effect

Tendency to carry over one quality to another unrelated aspect

## Sunk cost fallacy

Tendency to stick to a decision or thought you already put time or money in

## Just-world fallacy

Tendency to believe that an outcome is just

## Attribution bias

Tendency to better justify your action than those of other people



## Bias blind spot

Tendency to better notice the effects of cognitive bias on others than yourself



# Intuition: In School and Academics

- Learning and practicing skills: Expert Intuition → Math problems, Science Lab experience
- Knowledge in Subjects: Expert Intuition → Picking that multiple choice answer because it looks right
- “This speaks to me” → English class (poetry), Visual Arts, Performing Arts

# Intuition: Personal Experiences and Non-Academic Knowledge

- Meeting new people: Social Intuition → Conversation, First Impressions, recognizing social cues, whether you like someone or not
- Fight or Flight Response
- Walking home alone and it's dark → Feeling something is out of place or sketchy
- Playing instruments → Remembering where notes are on an instrument, deciding whether or not something is in pitch



# Analysis and Evaluation of Intuition as a Way of Knowing

- Intuition is often either a hit or miss, but is almost always placed over rational reasoning
- Intuition can't completely be trusted; but also the basis of all knowledge
- Intuition can be trained

# Discussion Questions

- Do you trust your own intuitions? Why or why not?
- Is additional experience, reflection, and critical thinking likely to affect the nature or quality of your intuitions?



The End!!  
Thank you!!