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Meanings and Experiences of Parent Intuition and Competence

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THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES

MEANINGS AND EXPERIENCES OF
PARENT INTUITION AND COMPETENCE

By

STEFANIE JILL GREEN

A dissertation submitted to the
Department of Family and Child Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Let those who have mattered in your life know how much they matter still.

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ABSTRACT

This research study sought to understand parents' use of intuition in their parenting and how its use affects their sense of competence as a parent. Systems Theory and Phenomenology provided the foundation for this study. Metaphors were created for each participant to enhance the understanding of intuition. In-depth interviews were used to gather the data. Results indicated that parents use their intuition to help them make decisions in their parenting. The most common time for the parents to use their intuition involved the safety and well-being of their child(ren). Overall, the parents of this study agreed that intuition does help them in their parenting. Intuition as a process is discussed. As one acquires more experience and history, and becomes more adept at picking up subtle clues, one is able to build upon that foundation, which may lead to a spontaneous knowing. Intuition is also discussed as an internal safety system of the parent. Subsystems from this study included past experiences and/or history, subtle clues found in the environment, and emotional and mental thoughts. Subsystems from the literature included the physical level of intuition, and spiritual beliefs and thoughts. Suggestions for further research are made, including the idea for a study to create a concrete operationalized definition of intuition. A cross-cultural study might yield more information on how other cultures utilize their intuition. Suggestions for practice include the teaching of intuition at all levels of education.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

What does intuition mean? How do the experts define it? Can we cultivate it? What professions utilize it? Which systems encourage its use? Which systems discourage it? How could it impact parenting? Questions such as these, along with many others, currently abound in our society and answers to these questions are beginning to be explored.

Background on Intuition and Parenting

To date, there is an abundance of research on the topic of parenting, but little research on the topic of parenting and intuition. Previously, some research focused on “intuitive parenting” with infants (Lohaus, Keller, Volker, Cappenberg, & Chasiotis, 1997; Keller, Chasioitis, & Runde, 1992; Koester, 1992). According to this perspective, intuitive parenting consists of “nonconscious parental behaviors, highly adapted to the best interests of the infant” (Koester, 1992, p.362). These intuitive behaviors were thought to yield more positive outcomes.

Another study discussed the resources parents use for information on child development. Peet (1995) found that “almost half of the parents reported referring to their own intuitions, religious beliefs/teachings, and/or childhood experiences” for information related to child development (p.145). The results of this study indicated that parents believed the above to be most useful for information about social development and they tend to rely on it more frequently than other types of information.

These two parenting studies seem to represent a small step in the direction of research on intuition and parenting. Today, parents face a variety of challenges. Balancing work and family can create stress. Parents are also expected to have the latest child development information and child rearing techniques. They can also become overwhelmed by the amount of contradictory information telling them “how to” raise a happy and well-adjusted child. Often the information seems too general and may not work for all families. If the information does not help, an already trying situation might be exacerbated. The lack of information on intuition and its role in parenting, as well as the abundance of information on how to be a good parent, seems to indicate a need for research on the role of intuition in the child-rearing process. Understanding how intuition plays a role in parenting could potentially benefit the theories and practices of child rearing.

Western society tends to emphasize empirical data as useful and important, and usually de-emphasizes intuitive knowledge. The abstract notions that are used to describe intuition, such as an association with mysticism, have enabled scientists to denigrate its legitimacy (Rosanoff, 1999). Overall in Western society, there is a cultural preference for logical thinking and objectivity. Michaud (1998) agreed that many people are doubtful of the value of intuitive knowledge because of the cultural emphasis on empiricism. This belief can create confusion for parents in a variety of situations.

Chinen, Spielvogel, and Farrel's (1985) results showed, "Individuals considered intuition to be normal, useful and important to them personally, but slightly embarrassing, its use certainly not to be discussed" (p.192). Furthermore, they stated that psychological research supports this finding. People will use intuition when working or alone, but when held accountable for their work, people prefer rational methods. The authors concluded, "Intuition shuns public exposure" (Chinen et al., p.192). Although this study is a bit older, it is still useful to see how people are reticent to discuss their use of intuition in public. Again, this further explains the dilemma for parents when making intuitive decisions about their child.

Within its own realm, the enormous, ever-changing amount of objective information on parenting sometimes conflicts. So what are parents to do? Do parents listen to their intuition on a parenting issue or an objective, researched technique espoused by a book? Are parents able to combine both? Wouldn't it be ideal if parents could read a book and trust their intuition to decide if a technique would work with their child and their family situation?

A similar circumstance can take place with a sick child. Occasionally, an objective medical exam does not clarify a child's symptoms. How do parents respond when they know there is something wrong with their child? Not wanting to appear paranoid, some parents may ignore the intuition they are having about their child leading to a potentially unpleasant outcome.

Dossey (1999) explained that some SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) parents have "reported their premonition of their babies' impending death to a medical professional, spouse, or friend, (and) they were rarely taken seriously" (p.120). As a result of this experience, the parents "revealed that eventually they had come to trust their instincts in spite of having been rejected by their doctors, spouses, or friends" (Dossey, p.121). Intuition is not yet a skill that is

actively appreciated and acknowledged in all parts of our society; it can be difficult for parents to be supported when listening to their intuition and trusting themselves.

Gordon (2002) encourages parents to “trust their instincts” (p.161). He cited an example of parents who took their baby to four doctors because they thought the baby had a hearing problem. The fourth exam did not indicate a problem and the doctor offered to see the baby again in a month; however, the mother knew the baby could not hear and asked the doctor for a hearing evaluation referral. It turned out the baby was deaf. Gordon suggested parents can learn from this example to trust their instincts and not let their fear prevent them from taking appropriate actions that will yield more accurate information.

In a study about emergency nursing and intuition, one ER nurse stated, “I especially listen to a mother who says, ‘My child is not right; there’s something wrong with my baby’” (Nordberg, 1996, p.38). This nurse continued with, “A lot of lawsuits happen as a result of medical providers not listening to patients or their families when they’re saying something is wrong” (p.38). Nordberg also stated, “Parents are masters of intuition. They can tell when their child is fibbing by his tone or a certain look in his eyes” (p.33). It seems that a clearer understanding of intuition would be beneficial for parents in various aspects of their parenting, ranging from day to day situations to emergencies.

In the areas of medicine, counseling, business, and midwifery, intuition is gaining recognition as an essential mental process that plays a vital role in decision-making. Intuition is also thought to be inherent in wisdom, creativity, and a part of safety. It is gaining recognition as an important mental process; therefore, a more complete understanding of this concept could benefit parents in both their personal and professional relationships.

Definitions in the Literature

The concept of intuition dates back to philosophers such as Spinoza and Bergeson. Due to its seemingly ethereal nature, it has been difficult to define. Nordberg (1996) stated, “Intuition. We all have it, but can’t agree on how to describe it, so we use terms like ‘hunch,’ ‘gut feeling,’ ‘sixth sense,’ or ‘a little voice’” (p.34). Explanations of intuition vary from the spiritual realm to a function of the brain. Attempted definitions abound ranging from religious and genius intuition to psychological and mathematical intuition. The concept of medical intuition is currently being

acknowledged in certain areas of the medical profession. Day to day intuitions seem to be common for some, varying from perceptions of people to outcomes of sports competitions.

Both intuition and parent competence seem to incorporate a sensitivity to external and internal cues. Through her research on highly sensitive people, Aron (2002) found that “Sensitive people are generally highly intuitive” (p.9). Claxton (2000) agreed stating, “There is a related sense of intuition as *a heightened sensitivity to clues*” (p.37). He continued with, “To say of someone that they are ‘very intuitive’ can imply that they extract the maximum amount of significance from the available information: they see the meaning in the detail that others may have overlooked” (Claxton, p.38). For this reason, definitions of intuition as well as sensitivity will be reviewed with the intention to summarize common themes.

Definitions of Intuition

The concept of intuition is very old and the experience of knowing more than what is given to us by our five senses is not new. Historically, “this ‘gift’ was long considered to be the property of gods or spirits, not the heritage of ordinary men and women” (Deikman, 1998, p.177). Many philosophers viewed intuition as mystical. Among a variety of definitions for intuition, *The Oxford English Dictionary Online* (2003) defined the mystical aspect of it as, “the spiritual perception or immediate knowledge, ascribed to angelic and spiritual beings, with whom vision and knowledge are identical.”

Plato, Rousell, Bergeson, and Spinoza, as well as Eastern philosophers practicing Zen, all heralded intuition and its potential for the individual, for the benefit of community, and for the further evolution of the species (David-Floyd & Arvidson, 1997). According to Spinoza, there are three kinds of humans’ ideas or thoughts: “those gained by himself [sic], or unscientific observation, those gained from reasoning, those gained by intuition, or immediately from the object” (Wild, 1938, p.18). “Spinoza held that there is a road to truth other than reason...this other road is intuition, and it is the high road to ultimate truth” (Westcott, 1968, p.11).

Carl Jung described intuition within his theory of personality. He believed intuition is “a psychological function which transmits perceptions in an unconscious way” (De Laszlo, 1959, p.262). Furthermore, according to Jung, “Intuition perceives the relationship of entities” (Deikman, 1998, p.181). Jung’s work does not seem to suggest that intuition is superior to other ways of knowing (Westcott, 1968). He did believe intuition is a process that integrates the other

psychological functions of sensation, thinking, and feeling. Jung also described intuition as “essential for survival in hazardous natural surrounding and when a doctor gets a ‘hunch’ or when a stockbroker deals on the stock exchange” (Ross, 1992, p.86).

Parikh (1994) described “intuition as a multidimensional phenomenon” (p.26). In the first dimension, intuition is described as a skill to be developed. Similar to the viewpoint of Jung, the second dimension described intuition as an innate trait. Parikh described a third dimension of “intuition as being” which includes people who have largely impacted the world through their intuitive ideas (p.28).

Parikh (1994) continued in his endeavor to define intuition by referring to it as a “multicontextual phenomenon” (p.29). The first type is an instant response “when everything is going out of control, intuitive abilities come alive in reactions and decisions of those capable of crisis management” (p.29). Short term intuition refers to the process of separating from analytical reasoning and making judgments based on the feeling derived from the situation. “In the work of a physician, this talent can lead to an uncanny ability for diagnosis. In the business professional, it is called an uncanny feel for the market” (p.30). Ongoing intuition describes people who rely on their intuition constantly.

Based on a review of the published literature, Baylor (1997) conceptualized a model of intuition. The stated definition is “Intuition acts in the immediate future, senses relationships, and functions through reasoning without conscious intent” (p.187). Combined, the basic elements of immediacy, sensing relationships, and reasoning lead to intuition. Immediacy implies the aspect of intuition that is sudden and without planning. Through sensing relationships, connections are made and a larger picture is created. This model indicated that intuition is a type of reasoning that is complementary to analytical thought. “In analytical reasoning, the person moves from a postulate toward what can be derived from it; in contrast, with intuitive thinking, the person may return to the postulate itself and evaluate acceptance of it and consider alternatives” (p.188). Baylor concluded success in the analytic mode is an answer, a numerical result, a finished product, and success in an intuitive state is a picture, and an understanding.

Although there are similarities, Baylor (1997) differentiated intuition from insight: “Insight, as well as intuition, can be characterized as an all-or-nothing response; in other words, where one sees the relationship or not” (p.190). Both contain the elements of immediacy and

sensing relationships, yet according to Baylor's model, intuition contains an element of reasoning, and insight does not. In summary, this model indicated, "Intuition is characterized as insight plus (a particular kind of) reason" (p.190).

Other research highlighted the idea that intuition can be explained neurologically. Eisengart and Faiver (1996) stated, "Implicit learning provides a nonconscious cognitive framework for intuition, so individuals have an instant feeling or judgment, but an inability to specify exactly what they base that judgment on" (p.43). Lieberman (2000) suggested, "Intuition (may be) the subjective experience associated with the use of knowledge gained through implicit learning" (p.109).

More examples of the many definitions of intuition included:

- ◆ A preference for exploring abstract, symbolic, and theoretical relationships with a capacity to see future (often creative) possibilities, and a preference for complexity" (Mills, Moore, & Parker, 1996, p.19).
- ◆ Not...dependent on conscious, deliberate use of rational thinking and include(s) an affective component that indicates the correctness of the knowledge (Michaud, 1998, p.80; Miller, 1995).
- ◆ Result of complex interaction of ...experience, expertise, knowledge, along with personality, environment, acceptance of intuition as a valid 'behavior' (McCutcheon & Pincombe, 2001, p.345).
- ◆ A non-conscious, holistic processing mode in which judgments are made with no awareness of the rules or knowledge used for inference and can feel right despite one's inability to articulate the reason (Shapiro & Spence, 1997, p.64).
- ◆ Apprehension of knowledge without direct evidence from the senses or intellectual analysis (OED Online, 2003; Yewchuk, 1999, p.65).
- ◆ A feeling of knowing with certitude on the basis of inadequate information and without conscious awareness of rational thinking (Shirley & Langan-Fox, 1996, p.564).
- ◆ Intuition is the journey from A to Z without stopping at any other letter along the way. It is knowing without knowing why (De Becker, 1997, p.26).

In a Delphi Study, Schmidt (1995) defined intuition as “any immediate, direct perception independent of any known reasoning process” (p.14). During the process of the study, the spiritual dimension of intuition was the most frequently mentioned characteristic. Other themes included feeling that intuition originates internally, and is holistic.

Experiences of Intuition

Intuitions manifest in a variety of ways. Chinen et al’s (1985) results indicated that verbal insights, images, and feelings were the most common intuitive experiences. Physical experiences were mentioned least. Authors also used the term “subliminal cognition,” which meant “an initially surprising insight that can later be explained in terms of unconscious reasoning—for instance, using facts that were temporarily forgotten but unconsciously remembered, or subliminally detecting non-verbal cues to discern another’s mood” (p.190). Other experiences mentioned by the sample in this study ranged from telepathy, and synchronicity to parapsychological.

Holder (1992), Vaughan (1998), and Yewchuck (1999), described four different levels of intuitive awareness: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. An intuitive experience may include facets of more than one level, yet many times, the conscious experience occurs mainly on one level (Vaughan, 1998).

Physical level. At the physical level, intuition appears through bodily sensations. Physical tension may result as an indication that something is wrong. Vaughan (1998) stated, “The cues of intuition on a physical level are not, however, always easy to perceive” (p.186). Claxton (2000) described some examples of physical intuition as an urge to move in a certain direction, “a tingling of apprehension or an inexplicable inability to take your eyes off of someone who has just entered a crowded room” (p.47).

Michaud (1998) described physical intuitive feelings as both positive and/or negative. For example, positive feelings included but were not limited to feelings of tranquility, relaxation, and/or clarity, while negative feelings included nervousness, fear, tightness in stomach, and/or heart racing. Vaughan (1998) stated that different people and situations cause different responses; “At times you may feel open and responsive, and at other times, you may feel you want to close up and withdraw” (p.186).

Emotional level. Emotionally, intuition may appear as a feeling, and this level refers to what is commonly referred to as ‘women’s intuition’ (Vaughan, 1998). These feelings may be described this as, “sensitivity to other people’s ‘vibes’ or ‘vibration of energy,’ instances of immediate liking or disliking with no apparent justification, or a vague sense that one is inexplicably supposed to do something, can be instances of intuition at this level” (Vaughan, p.187). Vaughan further stated, “People in all kinds of occupations and lifestyles do act on the basis of intuitive feelings and feel that their decisions are better for it” (p.187).

Mental level. At the mental level, intuition is characterized by internal images or “intuitive flashes following exhaustive practice, effort and use of logic and reason (the “aha” or eureka experience), and often occurs spontaneously during times of preoccupation with something else, for instance, sleep or rest” (Yewchuck, 1999, p.67). Claxton (2000) stated, “Intuitions, if they come as thoughts at all, are often faint and fleeting; ambiguous glimmerings of understanding, not bright, well worked out solutions” (p.46).

Intuition is a function of the mind, but intuition at the mental level “refers particularly to those aspects of intuition related to thinking” (Vaughan, 1998, p.189). Here, intuition is active in the formulation of new theories and hypotheses based on limited information, as well problem solving, math, and scientific inquiry (Vaughan, 1998). Furthermore Vaughan stated, “In the West, the intuitive flashes which follow the exhaustive use of logic and reason tend to be more highly valued than other types of intuition, since they are associated with the kind of discovery and invention involved in technological progress” (p.189).

Spiritual level. The spiritual level of intuition is linked with mystical experiences; a direct transpersonal experience of the oneness of life (Yewchuck, 1999). Vaughan (1998) elaborated on this stating, “Spiritual intuition as a holistic perception of reality transcends rational, dualistic ways of knowing and gives the individual a direct transpersonal experience of the underlying oneness of life” (p.192). “In Spinoza’s terms spiritual intuition is knowledge of God” (Vaughan, p.192). This level contains within it a connection with the larger universe.

In addition to the above, Parikh (1994) described the possibility of a Neurosensory Level. This level is based on the hypothesis that “A predominance of alpha/theta waves when there are flashes of intuition and there may be a synchrony of these waves in both the left and right brain

hemispheres, implying that the amplitude of the waves in both the hemispheres is similar” (Parikh, p.42).

Although different definitions of intuition abound, they are linked through common themes. The primary themes are the unconscious process of intuition and its efficacy. Iseneman (1997) also noticed common themes: “The information content of intuition is originally outside of consciousness and beyond voluntary recall, yet has the potential to impact thought or action significantly” (p.397). Generally, intuition appears to be both independent of experience and dependent on experience (Michaud, 1998).

Definitions of Sensitivity

Parenting competence and intuition include an aspect of sensitivity. In this section, the definitions of sensitivity will be reviewed with the intent to summarize the common themes. Aron (2002) generally described, “highly sensitive individuals (as) those born with a tendency to notice more in their environment and deeply reflect on everything before acting, as compared to those who notice less and act quickly and impulsively. As a result, “sensitive people, both children and adults, tend to be empathic, smart, intuitive, creative, careful and conscientious” (p.7).

More specifically in terms of parenting, Posada, Carbonell, Alzate, and Bustamante (1999) defined sensitivity as being sensitive to a child’s signals. Pressman, Pipp-Siegel, Yoshinaga-Itano, and Dea (1999) defined sensitivity from one of their measures as a “parental ability to read child cues, and respond appropriately to resolve parent-child conflict, misunderstandings or affective mismatch and tolerate a wide range of affect while keeping interactions predominantly positive in tone” (p.297). Valenzuela (1997) clearly defined sensitivity as the ability to accurately perceive and promptly and appropriately respond to an infant’s signals.

Vereijken, Rikson-Walraven, and Kondo-Ikemura (1997), in a study about attachment, defined it as the “mother’s ability to attune her interactions to the needs, signals, and communications of the child” (p.41). Wallace, Roberts and Lodder (1998) defined sensitivity as “an awareness of the child’s verbal and non-verbal cues;who recognize and accurately interpret their children’s needs and wants” (p.900). In sum, it appears the common thread in these definitions is the ability to recognize and respond appropriately to the child’s cues.

Intuition

Intuition plays a role in many facets of life. “Intuition is increasingly recognized as a natural mental faculty, a key element in discovery, problem solving, and decision-making, a generator of creative ideas, a forecaster, a revealer of truth” (Goldberg, 1998, p.195). It is also recognized as important aspect of wisdom, safety, expertise, and creativity, which are all essential qualities in parenting. Many disciplines such as business, education, medicine, and counseling are also beginning to recognize its value. The current literature does not include much on parenting and intuition, yet it is helpful to look at the research in other fields to see the value of intuition as it could potentially relate to parenting.

Intuition and its Role in Wisdom

Intuition may be a part of wisdom and wisdom is an essential aspect of parenting. A sense of good judgment aids parents in child rearing. Takahasi and Bordia (2000) explored the concept of wisdom cross-culturally. The findings based on Western samples of undergraduate students (American and Australian) and Eastern undergraduate samples (Indian and Japanese) seemed to indicate that the contemporary conceptualization of wisdom in the West reflects the historic/cultural conceptualization that “stresses the analytical features such as a broad knowledge database accumulated through life experiences” (p.4). Eastern students conceptualized wisdom as “the effective integration of multiple aspects of human consciousness (e.g., cognition, affect, intuition)” (p.7).

According to this research, Eastern cultures already seem to recognize the potential usefulness and value of intuition. Trends toward alternative medicine in Western society seem to indicate the beginning steps necessary for the embracing of an ethereal concept such as intuition. As this occurs, it may become easier for parents to utilize and trust their own intuitive perceptions in making competent decisions.

Intuition and its Role in Safety

Safety and well-being concerns often arise in parenting. De Becker (1997) “prais(ed) intuition as the corner stone of safety” (p.27). Intuition even has its roots in ‘tuere’, which means ‘to guard, to protect’ (De Becker, p.27). He further stated, “Just as we look to government and experts, we also look to technology for solutions to our problems, but you will see that your personal solution to violence will not come from technology. It will come from an even grander

resource that was there all the while, within you. That resource is intuition” (p.12). He continued with, “Intuition connects us to our natural world and to our nature....‘Somehow I knew,’ we will say about the chance meeting we predicted, ...or about the violence we steered clear of, or, too often, the violence we elected not to steer clear of” (p.13). Joseph Campbell (as cited in De Becker, 1997) also believes, “Technology is not going to save us. Our computers, our tools, our machines are not enough. We have to rely on our intuition, our true being” (p.25).

De Becker (1997) stated, “Nature’s greatest accomplishment, the human brain, is never more efficient or invested than when its host is at risk. Then, intuition is catapulted to another level entirely, a height at which it can accurately be called graceful, even miraculous” (p.26). Furthermore, the author stated, “When it comes to danger, intuition is always right in at least two important ways: 1) It is always in response to something 2) It always has your best interest at heart” (p.70). To clarify this statement, the author indicated that intuition is right in the ways mentioned above, but our interpretation of intuition may be incorrect. It is suggested that people take the minute to identify the potential danger to see if it exists, rather than attempt to explain it away.

De Becker (1997) provided an example of a mother who was getting an intuition to cancel her young son’s ear surgery. The mother rationalized away the intuition and sadly, her son passed away during the surgery. Later, she discovered more information about that particular doctor and the concerns about him. Unfortunately, for this family, it was too late. Overall, De Becker believes “Intuition is always learning and though it may occasionally send a signal that turns out to be less than urgent, everything it communicates to you is meaningful” (p.70).

Parents are constantly assessing situations to ensure the safety and well-being of their children. These particular decisions are crucial in parenting. Intuition can be a useful tool in helping parents with these concerns.

Intuition and its Role in Expertise

Intuition appears to play a role in expertise. “The most widespread definition of intuition may be the expert’s ability to reach a conclusion, see a problem space and make decisions at lightning speed and below the level of consciousness” (Gilpin & Clibbon, 2000, p.126). Myers (2002) suggested that intuitive expertise provides evidence for the power of intuition. Claxton (2000) defined expertise as “the ability to function fluently and flexibly in complex domains

without being able to describe or theorize one's expertise" (p.50). He further explained that intuition is a part of this process when the expert's performance is not planned and/or self-conscious. "The expert teacher may go through a whole lesson, adjusting or even abandoning their actions and intentions as they go, without being conscious of much reasoning, and without being able to say why or how they made the 'decisions' they did, or to what clues they were responding" (Claxton, p.35). The example provided is about an expert teacher; however, this type of experience can be replicated in the medical profession, the business world, and family situations.

Intuition and its Role in Creativity

Intuition is thought to play a role in creativity (Garcia, 2001; Myers, 2002; Policastro, 1995). Myers (2002) suggested that, "creativity: the sometimes spontaneous appearance of novel and valuable ideas" is a part of intuition. Research using the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) suggested that those scoring as intuitive are also very creative (Policastro, 1995).

Parikh (1994) stated, "It is the innovative, largely intuitive, grasp on the evolving marketplace which has made modern giants from minor firms such as the pocket radio manufacturer Sony or the motorcycle builders of BMW and Honda" (p.13). Many of our culture's creative achievements emerged from dreams, visions, and intuition, yet our society often discounts these experiences (Heinberg, 1998). Heinberg provided examples of such achievements including Isaac Newton, Thomas Edison, and Albert Einstein. Each of these men created out of their intuition. Heinberg further stated, "Einstein often stressed the value of intuition and described his own theories as a 'free invention of the imagination'" (p.129).

Policastro (1995) discussed the experience of creative intuition, as "a vague anticipatory perception that orients creative work in a promising direction" (p.99). Based on a review of major creators such as Picasso, Darwin, and Freud, the author stated, "Early intuitions appear to require the support of other cognitive processes and long periods of persistent work before they can be successfully articulated into valuable final products" (p.104). Ultimately, Policastro defined creative intuition as "a tacit form of knowledge, which broadly constrains the creative search by setting its preliminary scope" (p.110). Overall, intuition certainly plays a role in the creative process. Parents may also find themselves in situations where creative ideas are useful.

Intuition and its Role in Business

Holder (1992) stated, “There is a growing recognition by business consultants and scholars that intuition is and has been a critical element in organizational success” (p.39). Gregory (2000) agreed, “Intuition is clearly a significant factor in achieving corporate success” (p.182). Chapman (2000) also agreed indicating that intuition is a “critical success factor” for entrepreneurs and senior managers (p.101). Furthermore, Holder described intuition as a vital facet of innovation. In a study on creative business innovators such as Bill Gates of Microsoft, Landrum (as cited in Gregory, 2000), found that “one of the characteristics they had in common was intuition” (p.182).

Intuition can aid managers in managing complex situations and conflict as well as creating visions and making decisions for their respective companies (Parikh, 1994). He further stated it is already acknowledged as a major part of good management in both smaller and larger companies. “Many successful business executives and professionals now openly admit that they have learned to trust their intuition, and, moreover, that this intuition has become more reliable through the very process of trusting” (Parikh, p.12). In addition, “References to the role of intuition in decision-making are turning up ever more frequently in the most reputable business journals” (p.13). Similar to the manager who handles complex situations and conflicts, a parent must also be ready to handle the same.

Intuition and its Role in Education

Maxwell (1999) asserted, “Intuitive knowledge is the ‘magic’ that has always made the difference between simply effective and the most effective teachers” (p.88). According to Mills’ (2003) results, the majority of exemplary teachers of gifted students showed a preference for Intuition on The Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Claxton (2000) described the expert teacher as one who flows through a lesson, adjusting it as necessary without the ability to specifically explain why those adjustments were made. John (2000) stated, “It can also be argued that pupils benefit accordingly from a teacher who has the ability to predict, perceive, and adapt to the subtle changes going on around him or her” (p.101). John also stated, “Sensitivity to the environment is thus an important aspect of effective practice and the exercise of appropriate professional judgment” (p.101). Parents also encompass the role of a teacher at times and can benefit from an awareness of subtleties.

Intuition and its Role in Medicine

There is a resurgence of interest in intuition in medicine, possibly due to the interest in holistic approaches to health, which integrate mind, body, and spirit. Webber, Davies, and Pietroni, and Mayou and Sharpe (as cited in Philipp, Philipp, & Thorne, 1999) stated, “Furthermore, many patients, as well as doctors, now tend to perceive illness as the result of a complex interaction of social, psychological, physical, and emotional factors (p.37). As a result, a growing number of medical professionals are seeking to help their patients with medication as well as alternative means. This holistic trend is showing its strength (Becvar, Loveland-Cook, & Pontious, 1998). The use of intuition is part of this healing perspective. The medical literature suggests that intuition is a necessary part of the decision making process. Similarly, intuition may play a vital role in parents’ decision-making processes.

Many research studies on intuition involve the nursing aspect of the medical profession (Cioffi, 1997; Hams, 2000; Hansten & Washburn, 2000; King & Appleton, 1997; Miller, 1995). Miller (1995) reviewed qualitative research on nurses who had “frequent, intense or meaningful intuitive experiences” (p.306). A synthesis of this research led to some characteristics of intuitive nurses’: “an acknowledged experience of intuition in practice, sense of self as skilled in practice/clinical mastery, an unconventional approach to problems, having a spiritual connection in practice, and an interest in the abstract” (Miller, p.308). Nurses with these characteristics trust and utilize their intuition in a variety of settings.

A common theme in medical literature is the debate over intuition versus rational thinking in clinical decision making. Cioffi (1997) explained, “In the early development of nursing science, intuition was renounced due to its association with gender; women were thought to be unscientific” (p.203). A sexist view of intuition exists: It is a feminine trait; therefore, “inferior to the rationality of the masculine approach” (King & Appleton, 1997, p.198). It was not until the early eighties that nursing research addressed intuition as a legitimate component of clinical practice. Again, the traditional emphasis in western society to regard scientific and rational thought as ‘real’ thinking yields a biased perspective that is inferior and unprofessional (Easen & Wilcockson, 1995). As a result, nurses sometimes feel uncomfortable discussing their use of intuition, and may use it covertly (Cioffi, 1997; Hams, 2000; Hansten & Wasburn, 2000; King & Appleton, 1997).

“Nurses rely on their intuitiveness most often in clinical judgment situations which are characteristically uncertain” (Cioffi, 1997, p.203). Thomson and Dowding (2001) also indicated that uncertainty leads to a reliance on intuition. Rew (2000) stated, “Decisions must be made correctly, and frequently with incomplete, conflicting, or ambiguous data. Such conditions demand that nurses not only develop rigorous analytical skills, but acknowledge the use of intuition is making clinical decisions as well” (p.94). According to Ruth-Sahd (1997), “Intuition is an undeniable part of the nursing judgment process” (p.24). Davis (1991) stated, “Intuition involves the art of medicine” and emphasized the necessary balance needed between the art and science of medicine (p.28).

Critical care nurses often deal with patients in life-threatening situations. Frequently, these nurses have an awareness of a patient’s change in condition prior to any actual physiological changes. In his review of eleven studies on critical care nursing and intuition, Hams (2000) noticed common themes. Although nurses of all levels use intuition, it seems to be more common among the experienced. A relationship with the patient, and awareness of subtle cues can influence nurses’ use of intuition. Experienced nurses also recognize the importance of considering the intuitions of their patients in regards to their own condition. Ultimately, Hams stated, “The information nurses intuit is a potential valuable source of nursing knowledge” (p.317).

Hall (2001) took a more holistic perspective and stated, “Intuition is an inescapable part of decision-making in medicine” (p.217). Spiro (as cited in Philipp, Philipp, & Thorne, 1999) stated, “Medicine is ‘both science and narrative, both reason and intuition’” (p.40). Philipp, Philipp, and Thorne (1999) believe that clinicians must cultivate “an emotional sixth sense for what is unspoken, alluded to, disguised, unrecognized or suppressed and be able to interpret all the cues and information obtained in ways that are supportive and meaningful for the patient” (p.40).

According to Nordberg (1996), “Health-care providers prove time and again that it pays to listen to a colleague who says, ‘This patient just doesn’t look right to me. Something’s about to happen’” (p.33). Additionally the author stated, “We joke back and forth among the nurses, doctors, and paramedics, but if anyone says, ‘Something’s going on with this guy; something isn’t quite right,’ we should listen up. It’s getting so that kind of information is actually

admissible in court, whereas 10 or 20 years ago, people wouldn't have paid much attention to it" (p.33). Nordberg also cited examples of intuition as useful, both professionally and personally.

Besides holding the belief that intuition is a vital part of emergency nursing, programs are striving to incorporate it. A crucial aspect of paramedic preceptor programs is "giving new paramedics the confidence to trust their intuition" (Nordberg, 1996, p.38). Also in paramedic preceptor programs, it is believed, "The best thing we can do is teach our students to be receptive to their little voice, especially if it leads to better patient care" (p.38). The newer EMT programs are also teaching intuition in an understated manner through the recognition of an initial impression of the patient and the surroundings as valuable for assessment purposes.

Dossey (1999) discussed the dawning of Era III in medicine, which incorporates the use of intuition. Era I was primarily based upon physical medicine. At the end of Era I and continuing throughout Era II, beliefs emerged that the mind plays a part in illness leading to the term "mind-body medicine." The emphasis of Era III is the nonlocal mind, which, Dossey explained as, "In Era III, we rediscover the ancient realization that consciousness can free itself from the body and that it has the potential to act not just locally on one's own body, but also nonlocally on distant things, events, and people, even though they may be unaware that they are being influenced" (p.8). A parenting example provided in the book when a mother knows her baby is sick, yet there is no objective sign. Then she takes the baby to the doctor, and he or she confirms the mother's intuition.

Era III knowing is not deductive, but holistic; "it is more like a revelation than reason" (Dossey, 1999, p.167). Similar to intuition, "nonlocal knowing is often a surprise; we feel clobbered by a conclusion we didn't see coming" (p.167). Intuition is a significant part of the nonlocal mind.

Dossey (1999) indicated that the term "diagnosis" stems from the Greek word meaning "through" or "between" and "know." He further stated, "These root words suggest intuitive knowing-opening our perceptions to answers that already exist, which are woven between the data and through the facts" (Dossey, p.167). Ultimately, Dossey believes that an effective doctor needs to use both logic and intuition.

Intuition appears to be a crucial part of the decision-making process in medicine. Parenting involves analytical thinking and the need to make decisions based on incomplete information. Intuition might be as significant in the realm of parenting as it is in medicine.

Intuition and its Role in Birth

Midwives espouse the use of intuition. Some view intuition as authoritative knowledge: the knowledge on which decisions are based and actions taken. Midwives also value reason and technology, but “they are becoming experts at balancing the protocols and demands of technologically obtained information with their intuitive acceptance of women’s uniqueness during labor and birth” (Davis-Floyd & Davis, 1996, p.260). Likewise, it might be helpful for parents to balance objective information with intuition in unique parenting situations.

Intuition and its Role in Counseling

Parenting incorporates various aspects of counseling. Children often need help or advice with various issues and often, parents listen, support, and provide ideas. Some believe intuition to be relevant in counseling. Given the similarities between parenting and counseling, intuition could be pertinent to parenting as well.

There is controversy over intuition’s role in counseling because intuition is frequently defined as “reaching a conclusion without being able to offer an explanation of how or why it occurred” (Williams & Irving, 1996, p.221). This makes counselors look incompetent and magical. “Intuitions are thought to be the product of a non-intellectual (non-cognitive) process at the level of feelings. Thus the end product (e.g., an intervention) appears to be delivered rather than worked for” (p.221). The lack of understanding of the intuitive process can create controversy over its validity.

Intuition seems to play a role alongside of theory in a therapy session. Garcia and Ford (2001) stated, “Most persons, and perhaps, especially counselors, also find themselves organizing and comprehending their immediate experience by way of another faculty: the lesser understood mechanism of data-intake and construal known as intuition” (p.80). Bohart (1999) described the ever-present degree of innovation in how a therapist uses a particular approach with a particular client. A smooth flowing therapy session does not require as much thought; therapists can respond “like good drivers or basketball players, intuitively, based on recognition of what is happening in the flow of the interaction and on what is needed next” (Bohart, p.301).

Rea (2001) stated, “Truly tailoring therapy to meet the individuality of the client requires placing clinical observation above theory, statistics, and expectation, where the value of intuition increases markedly” (p.102).

Eichler and Halseth (1992) suggested, “like writers, groups leaders and therapists are sometimes cognitive, and sometimes creative and intuitive, depending upon the need” (p.84). Ward (1999) agreed, “There will always be occasions when clinicians are required to make rapid decisions. They need to be capable of thinking efficiently and quickly (i.e., intuitively) in situations of irreducible uncertainty, as well as be competent to use more analytical methods if and when the situation demands” (p.8). Clearly, both mental processes are necessary and valid. In counseling as well as parenting, one needs to be aware of the basic information, ranging from theoretical perspectives to the current research and trends; however, this information may not be enough in a particular situation and individuals will need to rely on their intuition.

Common Themes Across Disciplines

A common theme that ties all of the above disciplines together is the agreement that intuition is a useful mental process that plays a vital role in decision-making. The uses of intuition also indicate the value for professional and personal relationships. As Tesolin (2000) concluded, “Learning to work with intuition isn’t only necessary but is valid to business and personal success” (p.76).

Studying intuition appears innovative, yet intuition as part of a decision-making process is commonplace for many people. Seeking to understand intuition at the present time is practical, given the current trends toward alternative medicine and spirituality in the medical and counseling professions as well as the rapidly changing technological advances and the increasingly complicated choices and options in life. As Tesolin (2000) indicated, “The 21st-century mind needs to operate on a multidimensional front” (p.76). Intuition causes individuals to focus inward, and trust themselves; a quality that can aid everyone, especially parents, in their decision-making processes.

At present, research on intuition can be found in fields such as psychology (Bohart, 1998; Eisengart & Faiver, 1996), business (Anderson, 2000; Allinson, Chell, & Hayes, 2000; Khatri & Ng, 2000; Parikh, 1994), law (Doucette, Kelleher, Murphy, & Young, 1998), and education

(Maxwell, 1999; Mills, 2003; Mills, Moore, & Parker 1996). Apparently, an interest in the topic is growing and should be examined in family studies as well.

Theoretical Perspective

Phenomenology

A study of intuition, with its impact on parenting competence, seems to fit the theoretical perspective of phenomenology. This view “describes the meanings of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept” (Creswell, 1998, p.51). Thus, the ethereal nature of the topic can be captured best through recurrent themes emerging from the meanings of individual experience.

Edmund Husserl is a philosopher commonly associated with phenomenology. He defined it as “the study of how people describe things and experience them through their senses” (Patton, 2002, p.105). This implies that “All of our understanding comes from sensory experience of phenomenon, but that experience must be described, explicated, and interpreted....yet... descriptions of experience and interpretations are so intertwined that they often become one” (Patton, p.106). Alfred Schutz was influential in bringing this method of inquiry into the social sciences.

As with all paradigms, phenomenology has its own set of assumptions. Phenomenologists believe that there are multiple realities, which are socially and psychologically constructed and “the knower and the known are interdependent” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p.12). Although phenomenologists believe that there are multiple realities, they search for common threads among the different views. A phenomenological inquiry will yield a tentative explanation for the time and place studied. Causality and generalizations are not the goal of a phenomenological inquiry; instead a thorough understanding of the experience is sought. Although phenomenology has taken on a variety of meanings and a number of forms; overall, this approach seeks to elucidate the essence of people’s experiences and describe them accurately. For the purposes of this study, the essence of parent’s experiences with intuition will be elucidated. Chapter II will describe the methodology of phenomenology,

Systems Theory

Systems theory is an appropriate foundation for this study. The core perspective of this theory is that there are interrelationships and interactions among all things. One of the

fundamental tenets of systems theory is “holism, that is, a system must be understood as a whole and cannot be comprehended by examining individual parts in isolation from each other” (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993, p.328). Qualitative research, the foundation for this study, also views “social phenomenon holistically” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p.3). Schmidt’s (1995) results from a Delphi Study on intuition indicated an association between intuition and system thinking. Whitchurch and Constantine indicated, “Systems thinking is a way of looking at the world in which objects are interrelated with one another” (p.325). Similar to the holistic approach of systems theory, qualitative research and intuition include an integrative approach.

According to this theoretical perspective, there are systems, which are larger than the family, as well as systems, which are smaller. Each smaller system, also known as a subsystem, plays a vital role in the larger system. People have a mind, body, and spirit. These subsystems of mind, body, and spirit, and the smaller subsystems within, affect the larger system of the person. Intuition for some belongs in the subsystem of mind, and to be more specific, in the right hemisphere of the brain, while others might classify it in the realm of spirituality.

The brain may also be considered a system made of many different subsystems. When discussing intuition, the relevant parts are the left and right hemispheres. Traditionally, the left hemisphere is associated with logic, and analysis, while the right hemisphere tends to be associated with intuition, holism, spontaneity, and creativity (Johnson & Daumer, 1993).

Parents and children are subsystems in the larger family system. “Because components in a system are interdependent, or held together in a system, behaviors of the components exhibit mutual influence, meaning that what happens with one component generally affects every other component” (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993, p.332). For a family, this indicates that each member’s behavior influences everyone else. Thus, if parents utilize their intuition frequently and realize its value, they may come to rely on it. This could lead to decisions that impact their children in a positive manner.

In general, this theoretical assumption is important to relationships as it indicates that people influence other people in any type of relationship. Schmidt’s (1995) panelists indicated that the development of intuition would impact interactions with others. Some examples mentioned were “having greater sensitivity to others, improved communication, and connecting with others more authentically and at a deeper more meaningful level” (Schmidt, p.175).

Although the emphasis of the above examples was not on parents and children directly, it is apparent that those characteristics would improve parenting as well.

Systems that are larger than families are called suprasystems (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). Families are part of these larger systems, including but not limited to their community, racial, and ethnic background, and geographic region. This larger system would also include the parent's place of employment, peers, and extended family along with their inherent influence. Each of may influence one's beliefs and use of intuition. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the implications of outside systems.

The ecosystem is the larger social context in which a family lives. Boss (as cited in McKenry & Price, 2000) stated, "This ecosystem consists of the historical, cultural, economic, genetic, and developmental influences" (p.5). As a result, a family is always influenced by the current historical and economic conditions, its cultural values, genetics, and stage in life.

According to Systems Theory, families strive to maintain homeostasis. They also have boundaries and "a variety of instrumental and expressive functions to perform to ensure growth and survival" (McKenry & Price, 2000, p.5). Another assumption of systems theory is that "Human systems behave according to their collective definitional process, or meaning a thing has for them" (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993, p.329). This idea is similar to the phenomenological idea that our perceptions create our reality.

Phenomenology and Systems Theory

Phenomenology and Systems Theory emphasize a broad perspective. Both account for the individual experience as well as the outside influences on that experience. These two theories were useful in guiding this study. They provided the basis for the questions asked and the interpretation of the results. In the professional search to aid families and children through research and dissemination of knowledge, it is important that we utilize Systems Theory, phenomenology, and their holistic approach.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand how parents believe they use their intuition in parenting and how it relates to their sense of competence. In other words, how do parents describe their usage of intuition and how does it affect their sense of competence as a parent?

Significance of the Study

Intuition is a part of us that can help in our decision-making processes when the choices are overwhelming and the decisions are important. “People trust their intuitive instincts and lean heavily upon them when they are feeling confused or unsure” (Diliberto, 2002, p.22). Often times, parents have intuitions about their children, which prove to be accurate (Dossey, 1999; Gordon, 2002; Nordberg, 1996). Learning about this topic can help parents sift through information about childrearing and focus on what is applicable to their situations quickly and confidently. It can help them trust themselves in the doctor’s office when the objective exam is not enough to discover the cause of their baby’s distress. It can also help them when they feel overwhelmed by the options available in any aspect of childrearing.

The growing interest in intuition may stem from the world in which we exist. “In all dimensions of life-techno-economic-and psycho-social as well as political, the pace of change has accelerated” (Parikh, 1994, p.1). This increasingly complex and rapidly changing world provides an overwhelming amount of conflicting information, uncertainty, and choices. Parikh believes “Intuition is useful generally, but when the road a head is foggy, it is essential” (p.3). Within this context, the importance of understanding this concept becomes clear, especially in the realm of childrearing.

Intuition is becoming an area of study in a variety of fields; however, the study of intuition in the field of family relations is minimal. This study will be one of the first of its kind. Understanding how parents use intuition may help the family relations field to further its knowledge of the subject, enabling professionals to help parents strengthen this aspect of themselves. This study may also call attention to the fact that parents do use their intuition in parenting, thus opening up the topic for research and review. In other fields of study, intuition is shown to play an effective part in decision-making. To identify how parents utilize it is important because it may be playing an important role in their parenting decisions. A clearer picture of the role of intuition in the context of parenting might lead to a better understanding of how to foster happy and successful children.

Study Definitions

For the current purpose of this paper, intuition will be viewed as a nonconscious holistic process, which is characteristic of the right hemisphere of the brain and used in making

decisions. Furthermore, intuition also consists of an internal feeling of knowing without a rationale for the knowledge (Michaud, 1998; Miller, 1995; Parikh, 1994; Schmidt, 1995; Shapiro & Spence, 1997; Shirley & Langan-Fox, 1996; Yewchuck, 1999). Although this internal feeling of knowing is a necessary part of intuition, it is not sufficient. Competence, in terms of this study, is assessed through the parent's perceptions of themselves and their role as a parent. Specifically, competence means the parents believe their parenting skills are adequate.

Limitations

All research studies have inherent limitations. This study cannot be generalized. The sample size was small, but this fostered in-depth information. Another limitation was that despite my work with children, I am not a parent yet and have not had the experience of parenting on a continuing basis. I do have experience using my intuition and I was aware of my biases and prior knowledge when asking and interpreting information. Given that our society tends to emphasize linear thinking, it is possible that our language is limited and did not have adequate terms to describe the true nature of intuition. The topic of intuition and parenting competence are not easily defined so the interpretations of this study will not likely be the only possibilities.

Delimitations

This study did not seek to evaluate the quality of the participant's parenting. No judgments were made on the quality of the parenting skills. Intuitive skills, whether highly developed or not, were not judged. The goal of this study was not to evaluate or generalize results, but to understand in depth the experiences of parents using their intuition.

Assumptions

Some of the assumptions on which this study is based are:

1. Everyone, including but not limited to parents, is intuitive.
2. Parents use their intuition in parenting and can describe aspects of it.
3. Intuition can be studied.
4. Intuition is a valid and important part of decision-making.
5. Intuition can increase the effectiveness of decisions.
6. Intuition may play a role in competence.
7. Our perceptions of our experiences determine our beliefs about reality. (Phenomenology)
8. Parents can objectively perceive a sense of their competence.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift. Albert Einstein

The purpose of this study was to understand parents' use of intuition and its implications for parent competence. In other words, how do parents describe their usage of intuition and how does it affect their sense of competence as a parent? This literature review summarizes the current research on intuition and parent competence. Although an interest in intuition is growing, currently the research base is meager compared to other fields. Therefore, a search of intuition and parenting and a search of parallel literature on the topic of parental competence and sensitivity will be utilized.

Overview of the Theoretical Orientations in the Literature

Carl Jung/Analytical Psychology

A survey of the literature on intuition did not yield a common theory. Some of the articles based their research on The Theory of Carl Jung; however, this was never directly stated. Carl Jung called his approach "Analytical Psychology."

Jung's most recognized contribution is his theory of personality. Within this theory, intuition is described as perceiving information. Overall, Jung described two individual orienting attitudes of introversion and extroversion, and four mental functions of thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuition. These functions are present in everyone; yet only one will dominate. Introverted people tend to be most comfortable with their internal world of thoughts, feelings and experiences. Extroverted people are the opposite, with an interest in the outer world. To make judgments, Jung theorized that people utilize thinking or feeling. Thinking involves cognitions about objective facts and logical deductions, while feeling involves subjective judgments of like and dislike, pleasant and unpleasant (Westcott, 1968). Perceiving information is accomplished through sensing or intuition. Sensing interprets data through the senses and accepts it as truth. Jung (as cited in Rockenstein, 1988) defined intuition as "the psychological function that

“explores the unknown and senses possibilities and indications which may not be readily apparent” and accepts it as truth (p.77)

Attachment Theory

The survey of the literature on parental sensitivity and competence yielded different results. Attachment Theory is most commonly used in the literature. This theory is often characterized as evolutionary as it is derived from literature about parent-offspring bonding in birds and primates (Boss, 1993). Bowlby, the primary theorist associated with Attachment Theory, believed that human infants are born with the ability to interact and to respond to a caregiver. Boss stated, “The evolutionary function of infant attachment behaviors like following, clinging, and crying is proximity to a caregiver and thereby protection from danger” (p.281). Most infants become attached to their caregiver, even in situations of abuse and/or neglect. Based on the interactions with the primary caregiver, infants create an internal working model of themselves and others in relationships. These models “function...to help forecast and interpret the partner’s behavior as well as to plan one’s own behavior in response to the partner” (p.281).

Extensive observations of infants and their mothers in the Strange Situation by Ainsworth and colleagues provided empirical testing for Bowlby’s theory (Page, 2001). From this research, three major styles of attachment were derived. A secure attachment is created through interactions with the primary caregiver that are consistent, responsive, sensitive, and accessible. This interaction helps the child to feel competent in his/her ability to explore the world. Another type is called “anxious-resistant” (Hill, 1992, p.117). This attachment style yields children who tend to exhibit anxiety and uncertainty about exploring their world. Caregivers in this situation are thought to be inconsistent in their sensitivity and caregiving role. “Anxious-ambivalent” children experienced their caregivers as “oscillating in their care-taking behaviors between overprotection and neglect” (Hill, p.117). The style of anxious-avoidant develops when based upon the caregiver’s behavior, the child believes that that he/she will not be responded to in a supportive manner and may in fact be rejected.

A secure attachment with a caregiver may positively affect developmental outcomes for a child. Sensitivity includes responding to a child’s verbal and non-verbal cues, and it is possible that intuition is playing a part in the response.

Intuition in the Literature

The purpose of this study was to understand how parents believe they use their intuition in parenting and how it relates to their sense of competence. A review of the current literature on intuition and competence and a parallel review on parent sensitivity and competence will now be discussed.

Intuition is sometimes referred to as the sixth sense. Given the usefulness of our other five senses, it would seem to follow that intuition would be important as well. Competence, in the following research indicates a higher than average level of proficiency. The following review of the literature helps to substantiate the link between intuition and competence.

Intuition and Competence

Intuition and business. The field of business validates the importance of intuition. In the area of financial planning, Diliberto (2002) believes “because of the superfluity of information available and the paralyzing effect of receiving excessive and seemingly contradictory input, the consumer has quietly crossed in to a realm and period that we would characterize as the Intuitive Age” (p.21). Furthermore, he believes that this feeling of information overload leads consumers to “defer to the feeling, sensory capacities in their brain and make important decisions at the intuitive level” (p.22). Ultimately, financial planners are encouraged to incorporate intuitive qualities into the relationship with consumers.

Parikh (1994) also substantiates the importance of intuition in business as he believes “with the development of one’s intuitive abilities, the creation of a wise outlook from intuitive insights ultimately serves managers far better than another management training programme or a faster computer” (p.24). In addition, he believes “Intuition helps to strengthen our common sense in action, keeps us unchanged in the midst of the change, and simple in the face of complexity, and helps us to provide clear criteria when surrounded by conflicting pressures and opportunities” (p.24). In sum, intuition can be a resource in a variety of business situations.

Lank and Lank (1995) stated, “There is overwhelming evidence that the nature of the challenges faced by modern corporations cannot be confronted successfully by pure left-brain approaches...synthesis becomes more important than analysis (p.19). Chapman (2000) indicated, “Intuitive thinking (is) a critical success factor in both entrepreneurial and executive performance” (p.100). Coman-Johnson (1985) viewed intuition as a significant part of

management consultants' successes and trust in one's intuitive abilities as an authentic occupational requirement for that profession.

Research in the business/management area indicated that intuition plays an important role. It was the dominant decision making function related to organizational effectiveness (Anderson, 2000). Wally and Baum's (1994) results showed executives who perform the intelligence, design, and choice activities that are a part of strategic decision making faster than other executives, use their intuition in the process. Allinson et al. (2000) results show that entrepreneurs were more intuitive than general managers and middle/junior managers.

Nowicki and Rosse (2002) studied managers and employee selection. Results from the study indicated, "When managers attributed successful hiring outcomes to their own actions, the most common explanations...(were) intuition, instinct, gut feelings, luck or chance" (Nowicki & Rosse, p.163).

Parikh (1994) completed an international study on intuition. This study involved 1312 managers from nine countries. The majority of participants believed intuition to be a "spontaneous insight based on prior experience/expertise and a flash from a subconscious level versus tuning into a higher level of consciousness" (p.59). In their professional life, half of the participants indicated a use of both intuition and logic/reasoning in equal measure. In business management, the participants recognized intuition as being especially valuable in the areas of corporate strategy and planning, marketing, public relations, human resources development, and research and development. In their personal lives, the managers showed a tendency to rely more upon their intuition. The application of intuition in their personal lives seemed most relevant to in the study of specific disciplines, including but not limited to psychology, and medicine, followed by education and teaching, and human/interpersonal relations (Parikh, 1994).

Overall, most managers agreed that "many managers use intuition, intuition contributes to success in business, intuition contributes to harmonious interpersonal relationships, and intuition has a role to play in almost every facet of life" (Parikh, 1994, p.66). More than half agreed with the idea of enhancing intuition through practice and training. Results further indicated that the participants believe intuition should be part of the educational curriculum and the number of participants supporting the inclusion rises with each grade with the highest being a

management institute. The research cited above shows that intuition plays a productive role in business and management as well as interpersonal affairs.

Intuition and education. In the field of education, a study was completed with academically talented students from grades three through six. These students were in the 99.5 percentile of their age for verbal and quantitative ability. Results indicated that academically talented students have a significantly higher preference for intuition than the normative sample (Mills et al. 1996).

Intuition and growth. Chinen et al. (1985) found in the results of their study that “Intuition flowered from middle age onward” (p.193). The sample attributed this to an improvement in accuracy, increased frequency, and/or a willingness to follow their intuition. The authors also stated that recent work on aging and cognition indicates that, “Adults do indeed evolve from abstract, rational and scientific thinking to more complex, integrative approaches, characteristic of intuition” (p.194).

Redford, McPherson, Frankewicz, and Gaa (1995) conducted research on intuition and moral development. According to the researchers, “A person with intuition as a dominant perceptive function may have a personality characteristic that would incline him or her to move, by experience and/or education to a higher level of moral reasoning” (p.94). Results indicated that intuition is positively correlated with moral development.

Schmidt (1995) conducted a Delphi study on intuition with a sample consisting of forty-three participants, who are interested in learning or actively involved in the writing and teaching of the topic. Some of the panelists believed there was a direct association between the development of intuition and spiritual growth. An impact on ethics was also mentioned. Some of ideas mentioned by the panelists about possible ethical implications were, “there was the ‘potential for greater justice,’ ‘for more equitable sharing of wealth,’ and ‘for understanding responsibility to the environment’” (p.172). Results from this study suggested that intuition and its potential impact on spiritual growth might ultimately influence an individual’s ethical decisions in a positive manner.

Higgs (2001) conducted research using 177 managers on the possible relationships between the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and Emotional Intelligence. Emotional Intelligence is thought to play an important role in success. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

categorizes individuals in terms of how they understand and make sense of the world. In this context, intuition means “perception beyond what is visible to the senses, future oriented, ...abstract thinking, (and) creative” (p.511). Results indicated that intuition on the MBTI was the “most heavily positively correlated with Emotional Intelligence, being significantly correlated with the overall Emotional Intelligence score, and the elements of interpersonal sensitivity, influence, and intuitive decision-making” (p.525).

Harrington and Loffredo (2001) investigated the relationship between psychological well-being, life satisfaction, self-consciousness, and the MBTI in ninety-seven college students. The results of this research suggested that college students who are intuitive according to the MBTI, reported higher psychological well-being scores than the sensing types, with significantly higher scores in the areas of autonomy, personal growth, and positive relations. These students also preferred to see possibilities and add new skills, and they enjoy change (Harrington & Loffredo, p.447). Intuitive types scored lower on self-consciousness than the sensing types.

Intuition and the helping professions. McCutcheon and Pincombe (2001) sought to determine whether nurses believe the use of intuition is valid, how they perceived using intuition, and to enhance the ability to articulate this aspect of nursing. Results that emerged from the data indicated that when acting on intuition is considered a positive behavior for nurses it could lead to competent outcomes for clients. Two examples provided from the study show how nurses’ using their intuition affected client outcomes positively: Averting a crisis in the client’s condition or by leading a nurse to take some course of action. In these examples, a followed intuition created a positive outcome.

Participants reported intuition results from the complex interaction of experience, expertise, and knowledge (McCutcheon & Pincombe, 2001). Experienced nurses did not consider novice nurses to be intuitive, but novice nurses disagreed, indicating they are hesitant to follow their intuition because of their inexperience. Female nurses also did not believe male nurses were intuitive, but male nurses disagreed. Participants indicated there is a feedback process through which intuitions are remembered in an individual’s repertoire regardless whether or not the intuition is followed. In this study, data did not emerge about intuition being wrong. McCutcheon and Pincombe suggested nurses are hesitant to discuss intuition when it is accurate and it might be even more difficult to discuss it when it’s wrong.

A study about expert social workers and their use of intuition indicated that 86% of them use their intuition half the time or more and 82% believe intuition is quite or very important to use (Michaud, 1998). Respondents did not hesitate when answering. Some common themes from the study were: difficulty in defining the term, positive results when using intuition, more success in practice, and better decision-making.

Responses also indicated that their intuition has been wrong. Although some could not recall, some of the respondents suggested that maybe their intuition was not wrong, but there was a failure to listen to it. Others believed a conclusion was drawn prematurely or the timing was poor.

Confidence, experience, and external support were the common themes that facilitate its use. Personal factors such as stress, illness, lack of sleep, physical discomfort, and/or a preoccupation with other issues may impede its use. Lack of time, workload issues and certain settings, such as work can also hinder its use. Fifty percent of the sample felt intuition is most helpful in the assessment phase (Michaud, 1998).

Respondents indicated that they are more successful in their practice because of their use of intuition (Michaud, 1998). Most believed intuition can be wrong, but many felt it was not the intuition that was wrong, but how they used the information was wrong. Results suggested that intuition develops over time and in practice settings. Workload issues seem to inhibit its use.

Parental Sensitivity in the Literature

A parallel review of the literature on parental sensitivity was reviewed. This choice was made because intuition and parent competence seem to incorporate sensitivity. A literature search revealed areas related to the topic of competence: attachment security and developmental outcomes which will be discussed in depth.

Parental Sensitivity and Competence

Parental sensitivity and attachment security. Posada et al. (1999) discussed two studies. Results from study one indicated that maternal sensitivity in ordinary circumstances is significantly associated with attachment security at home in a middle class Colombian sample. The more mothers were aware of their infant's signals and communications, the more they responded promptly, accurately, and consistently, the higher their child's attachment score. Study two results showed the more children's behavior at home resembled hypothetical secure

attachment, the more their mothers were aware of, interpreted correctly, and responded promptly, accurately, and consistently to a child's signals and communication. Mothers who were described as sensitive in emergency contexts had children who were described as secure at home. Results showed a significant association for sensitivity and attachment in both older and younger groups of children.

Vereijken et al. (1997) found that mother's sensitivity is significantly related to their child's attachment security at both fourteen and twenty-four months. Results from this study indicated that maternal sensitivity is significantly related to child attachment security at both fourteen and twenty-four months. Maternal sensitivity was also found to be stable across this time frame.

The goodness of fit indices indicated that the initial model did not fit the data. The adjusted model indicated that the correlation between maternal sensitivity and infant security at twenty-four months could not be fully explained by the correlation ten months earlier. Researchers claimed, "Maternal sensitivity at twenty-four months appears to make an additional contribution to the security of the infant-mother attachment at 24 months" (Vereijken et al., 1997). This seems to indicate that maternal sensitivity plays an important role in child security in the first two years of life.

Parental sensitivity and development. Results of Pressman et al. (1999) showed that when controlling for other variables, maternal sensitivity in hearing mothers is significantly correlated and positively predictive of expressive language gain in Deaf/Hard of Hearing children. Maternal sensitivity was correlated with the second Minnesota Child Development Inventory: Expressive Language (MCDI), but not the first. The authors pointed out that this replicated other studies, suggesting a "sleeper effect" of maternal sensitivity (Pressman et al., p.301). The authors note that this was a correlational study and therefore, they cannot draw conclusions. Mothers in this study utilized their sensitivity to understand their Deaf/ Hard of Hearing children, enabling them to develop language skills. It is probable that the mothers were also using their intuition to understand their children and their needs.

A study by Wallace et al. (1998) showed that infants of mothers rated as more sensitive, responsive, elaborative, and stimulating score higher on measures of infant development. Results also suggested that mothers need to be aware of their child's interest, signals, and developmental

level (sensitivity), as well as acknowledge those interests and cues (responsiveness) in order to effect positive outcomes. Sensitivity, responsiveness, stimulation, and elaborativeness were associated with receptive communication. Because the sample consisted of infants and they cannot speak, it seems likely that intuition played a part in maternal sensitivity.

Valenzuela (1997) found that maternal sensitivity is positively associated with infant positive developmental outcomes: nutritional status, competency, and secure attachments. Although education was associated with sensitivity, it was not directly associated with the child's nutritional status, which seems to indicate the importance of maternal sensitivity in protecting an infant physically, developmentally, and emotionally (Valenzuela, 1997). Results also indicated a relationship between parental sensitivity and specific developmental outcomes. Maternal sensitivity was highly correlated with the child's appropriate weight for age. Maternal sensitivity was also correlated with child's mastery, including motivation to approach and persist at a task and enthusiasm. Social behaviors, including a willingness to request and accept support from mother, cooperation, and affection, were also correlated with maternal sensitivity. A correlation was also found between the child's ability to regulate negative emotions in response to mild frustration and the sensitivity of their mothers. Again, it appears that this maternal ability to respond correctly to the child incorporates an intuitive response.

Kelley, Smith, Green, Berndt and Rogers (1998) found that paternal sensitivity positively predicted children's socialization skills and motor skills. Fathers of girls were more sensitive in the interactions than fathers of boys. Kelley et al. concluded that paternal sensitivity is related to toddler's self help/daily living skills and motor skills. Fathers who exhibited more sensitivity during free play had children who were more advanced developmentally. Although much of the research is centered on maternal sensitivity, this article suggests that fathers are sensitive as well. Therefore, it is possible that fathers are also using intuition in their parenting interactions.

Similar to sensitivity, it is possible that parent responsiveness includes an intuitive aspect. Denham, Mitchell-Copeland, Strandberg, Auerbach, and Blair (1997) studied parent contributions to preschool emotional and social competence. Results indicated that "parent's appropriate responsiveness to children's positive affect and distress appear to be important contributors to optimal child functioning." (Denham et al., p.82). Responsiveness included both

verbal and nonverbal cues. This study suggested that the ability to respond correctly to the child may have a large impact on the competence of the child, both emotionally and socially.

Parental Sensitivity and its Role in Parent Competence

Bogensvhnneider, Small, and Tsay (1997) conducted a study. The results suggested that children of parents who perceive themselves as competent obtained higher scores on most measures of academic and psychosocial competence. Parents who perceived themselves as competent had adolescent children who reported higher levels of parental monitoring and responsiveness. Mothers who reported higher levels of perceived parent competence also reported more sensitivity to their child's needs for psychological autonomy.

Summary of Literature Review Findings

The general themes of this review suggested that intuition plays a role in competence in business, education, social work, nursing, morality, and emotional intelligence. The parallel literature search also indicated that parental sensitivity was associated with more securely attached children, with a higher level of different developmental skills in children, and with adequate nutrition. Together, both bodies of literature indicated a consistency in theme.

Similar results from different researchers indicating relationships between intuition and competence and sensitivity and competence consistently over time, could lead one to think that more studies will yield similar relationships. From this position, there was a gap in the literature base. Intuition, which entails perception and sensitivity, seemed to play a role in competence. Parental sensitivity, which implies that the parent is perceptive, was also related to positive developmental outcomes with his or her child, indicating a sense of competency. It seemed to follow that there might be a relationship between parents who are intuitive (sensitive, and perceptive) and competence in parenting. To date, there is no literature on this topic, but, given the above relationships, this was an appropriate place to start.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study was to understand the experiences of parents using intuition and its effect on their perceived sense of parental competence. The research questions to be answered are: How do parents describe their experiences of intuition? How do parents describe their use of intuition and its impact on their sense of competence as a parent? This chapter presents the methodology that was used to explore these experiences.

Research Paradigm

Qualitative research seeks to understand how people construct the world around them. Often exploratory and descriptive in form, initial research ideas often evolve, expand, and change as information is acquired. This method of research does not involve large samples. Thus, the outcome of this type of study “is not the generalization of results, but a deeper understanding of the experience from the perspectives of the participants selected for the study” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p.44).

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) described some important features of qualitative research. Descriptive data, including pictures and words, are used and every facet considered. Data of this kind is analyzed through inductive reasoning. A theory based on the data is created. Qualitative research emphasizes the process, not the outcome as qualitative researchers seek to understand the meanings people create and experience (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

This style of research lends itself to the study of a concept like intuition. Given the lack of research on this topic in the field of parenting, an exploratory study is warranted. This method enabled common themes to emerge as well as provide a descriptive understanding of the topic.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology may be considered a methodology, and was used in this research. “Phenomenological data analysis proceeds through the methodology of reduction, the analysis of specific statements and themes, and a search for all possible meanings” (Creswell, 1998, p.52). It is thought that phenomenology begins with silence...an attempt by the researcher to grasp what is being studied (Bogden & Biklen, 1998).

Epoche, was the next step in the phenomenological analysis. This is a Greek word meaning “to refrain from judgment, to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things” (Moustakas, 1994, p.33). At this stage, the researcher looked within and became aware of her personal bias, in order to gain clarity as well as attempt to eliminate any preconceived notions regarding the subject. The researcher suspended judgments and created an open mind for the topic. Overall, Epoche was a “process of setting aside predilections, prejudices, predispositions, and allowing things, events, people, to enter anew into consciousness, and to look and see them again, as if for the first time” (Moustakas, p.85). This practice continued throughout the research process.

Bracketing was the method used to aid the researcher as she filtered out preconceived notions about the subject matter and sought to interpret the data in pure form, not influenced by standard, worldly, meanings. To accomplish this, the researcher located specific key phrases and statements that represent the phenomenon and attempted to view them through the participant’s interpretations of the phrases. The recurring features were formulated into a tentative statement or definition. Because Epoche is challenging to fully achieve, the process was vital. “The energy, attention and work involved in reflection and self-dialogue, the intention that underlies the process, and the attitude and frame of reference, significantly reduce the influence of preconceived thoughts, judgments, and biases” (Moustakas, 1994, p.90).

Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction took place next with its goal of uncovering the essence of the phenomenon based on the idea that “things become clearer as they are looked at again and again” (Moustakas, 1994, p.93). This process of reflection allowed illusions to fall away and new ideas to emerge. It is possible “some new dimension becomes thematic and thus alters the perception of what has previously appeared” (Moustakas, p.93).

During this time, the experiences were considered separately but equally as they were spread out for examination. This is known as being “horizontalized” (Patton, 2002, p.486). Moustakas (1994) further described, “horizontalizing the data (as) regarding every horizon or statement relevant to the topic and question as having equal value” (p.118). From here, the data was reorganized into common themes, and overlapping data was eliminated.

The next step was known as “Imaginative Variation” (Patton, 2002, p.486). The objective was to “seek possible meanings through the utilizations of imagination, varying the frames of

reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives” (Moustakas, 1994, p.97). The researcher used different viewpoints to understand emerging themes in order to expand upon them.

Synthesis was the last step in the phenomenological research process. “It is the intuitive integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole” (Moustakas, 1994, p.100). Ultimately, a “structural description” (was) formed, which contains the final assertions elucidated from the data (Patton, 2002, p.486). This type of research was evaluated in terms of accuracy rather than truth. The results were plausible assertions, given the data.

Sample

Qualitative researchers seek to “gain (a) deep understanding of some phenomenon experienced by a select group of people” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p.56). Therefore, it is acceptable to utilize “purposeful sampling” techniques. This technique enabled the researcher to choose participants who will provide “information rich cases” for in depth study (Patton, 2002, p.46).

A purposeful sample was created through selecting participants based on certain criteria relevant to the study. For this study, the following criteria was used in selecting the sample: a) he/she is currently involved in furthering his/her professional training through family practice residency b) his/her supervisor recognized him/her as using intuition in their work and c) he/she is a parent with children.

The sample consisted of four participants from Northern Florida. Family Practice Residents, from a local hospital participated. This sample was chosen for practical reasons. Professionals were chosen because the nature of the topic may require an ability to articulate the information clearly. Language skills are important to this end and those in higher education tend to have developed this ability further than others. This is not to say that other people do not have the appropriate language skills; however, for the purpose of this research it was important to have a sample where it is known that this is not a concern. The small number chosen allowed time to obtain in depth interviews and provided time to interpret and reinterpret the data.

Specifically, family physicians were chosen. As parents, they were current with many topics, including but not limited to new research. As physicians, they were taught to be critical

thinkers and to make decisions carefully. Being patient when making a diagnosis may help them to be patient with their children. This does not mean that other parents do not have these qualities, it only means for the purposes of this research family physicians were the sample of choice.

In Western society, doctors maintain a high status. In this time of Managed Care, it is the family practice doctor who is the general physician. This means people must go to the family practice doctor first before seeing a specialist if needed. Therefore, the family practice doctor has the potential to see more patients than other doctors and thus, have a greater influence on people's lives.

Much of the research on intuition stems from nursing research. It was helpful to gather data on another important group in the medical field and see how it compares to the nursing literature. Because doctors are often required to make decisions in times of uncertainty, they are professionals who can benefit from an understanding of intuition.

Role of the Researcher in Sample

In qualitative studies, the role of the researcher is included in the sample because of the close connection between the researcher's knowledge and his/her direct participation as participant and/or observer in the study. To eliminate some of the negative potential results from this subjective approach, it is important to be clear of any potential biases that may influence the study. Therefore, I attempted to describe some of my values and beliefs relevant to the topic of intuition and parenting.

My perspective was based on systems thinking, so I was alert for how different systems interact and influence each other in a holistic sense. Through personal and professional experiences, I also believe we create our own reality with our thoughts. These ideas could influence my interpretations and I needed to be aware of them.

My academic training consists of degrees in Liberal Arts, Psychology, and Counseling Psychology. Clinical training was acquired by working with families and children in internship settings. Currently, I am working on a Doctorate in Human Sciences with an emphasis in Family Relations and I am studying the literature on intuition and parenting. At times within the clinical training, the next step was not clear-cut and using my intuition proved useful. For example, a suicidal client with a previous serious attempt may or may not be suicidal now. The objective

assessment may not yield a clear answer and I as the therapist relied on a more holistic perspective when making the decision on how to proceed.

Between my Masters and Doctorate degrees, I was a live-in Caregiver for two young girls whose mother passed away. This situation put me in the role of one of their primary caregivers. Although I am not a parent yet, these professional experiences gave me first hand experiences with some of the joys and challenges of parenting. Without the true experience of being a parent, I do not have any preconceived notions about the experiences of the participants. This enabled me to listen to their stories without any bias.

I also experienced times when I was uncertain how to proceed and my intuition served me well. Although my intuition helped me to make choices in uncertain circumstances, I was aware that this may not be so for everyone and kept an open perspective during the interviews.

At various times, I attended workshops related to intuition and again, through personal and professional experience, believe that intuition is a sense that all people have access to, yet may not realize when it is being utilized. I also believe that developing this sense is useful in decision-making. I continued to be aware of these beliefs and their influences while partaking in this process.

Instrumentation

Interviewing is a useful and popular method of data collection among qualitative researchers. Because the purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of parents using intuition and its effect on their perceived sense of parental competence, in-depth interviews were the method of choice for the data collection. Interviewing enables us to enter into another's world and gain an understanding of his/her view. "Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspectives of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (Patton, 2002, p.341). Thus, the in-depth interviews in this research study enabled the participant experiences to be known and understood by the researcher. To foster answers with depth, follow-up questions and revisiting earlier questions for clarification were useful (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Details were also a necessary part of this process. "Details add solidity, clarity, evidence, and example; depth adds layers of meaning, different angles on the subject, and understanding" (Rubin & Rubin, p.80). Qualitative research, based on realistic descriptions and an awareness of nuances during the interview process, helped to provide "precision in

description” (Rubin & Rubin, p.83). Exploring signs of ambivalence or contradictions were some ways to elicit nuances.

For the subject of intuition, a standardized open-ended approach worked best. This type of interview included basic questions as well as permitted new questions based on the participant’s responses. Reasons for using this type of interview were: the exact questions were available for review, it helped the interviewer to stay focused, and it aided in analysis (Patton, 2002).

The creation of the interview questions was based on a review of the current literature. The interviews lasted approximately one hour. This enabled the participants to speak at length about their experiences with intuition and parenting. Interview questions are listed in Appendix B.

Data Collection

A preliminary test of the interview questions was conducted to assess clarity and quality. The volunteer for this part of the process was a thirty-year-old African American woman with a young child. She was chosen because she is also a student in higher education, and believes she uses her intuition. Immediately following the interview, we discussed the process, suggestions were made, and a question was added. This interview was taped, listened to, and destroyed. While listening to the tape, I further sought better ways to ask questions as well as conduct the interview. Necessary changes were be made.

A statement of permission from the Institutional Review Board was obtained. I am familiar with a supervisor in the area and met with him to obtain a list of potential participants. On the day we met we walked around the facility and he introduced me to potential participants. During this time, I briefly spoke with them individually and wrote down contact information for three people. Participants were selected based on their use of intuition in their work and their role as parents.

Once the fourth potential participant was chosen, an initial page was made to the participants. The pages were responded to quickly and our conversation included how his/her name was chosen, a brief description of the study, a request for their participation, and an interview time. At the meeting, small talk was made; the informed consent was read and signed,

and the interview started. At this time, the participants also chose their own code name for the analysis. The interviews started in February 2003.

Establishing rapport at the first contact with the potential participants is important. The dictionary defines rapport as “a relationship, especially one of mutual trust or affinity” (Costello, 1994, p.684). A good rapport is a “distance- reducing, anxiety-quieting, and trust-building mechanism” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.94). Rubin and Rubin (1995) stated, “People are more willing to talk in depth if they conclude that you are familiar with and sympathetic to their world” (p.76). Attention to verbal and non-verbal cues of the participants was essential to establish rapport and continued throughout the interview process.

It was also important to create an atmosphere of neutrality. This means “The person being interviewed can tell me anything without engendering either my favor or disfavor with regard to the content of his or her response” (Patton, 2002, p.365). One way to foster this type of atmosphere was to make statements prior to the question that create a sense of comfort. For example, “Parenting is not always easy. Inevitably, parents make mistakes or their intervention is unsuccessful. Please describe a time when this occurred and how intuition impacted this experience.” In this way, I tried to help the participant realize that he or she will not be judged for his or her answer.

An initial period of joining with the participant was fostered through conversations about work, the weather, and/or their children. Participants were verbally asked at the interview for their consent to have the interview tape recorded. They were also asked if they would be comfortable with me taking notes. Information about the purpose of the research was also given. Questions concerning the research process were addressed and the participants were assured that their responses are confidential within the limits of the law. Reassurance and support were maintained throughout the interview process (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Throughout the data collection process, “fieldnotes” were kept in the form of a journal (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Fieldnotes may be described as “what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data” (p.108). Some significant information recorded were objective descriptions of the participants and the setting of the interview. Reflections on the interview itself as well as reflections of my own behavior and

feelings during the process were also recorded. Fieldnotes were written as soon as possible following the interview.

The interviews lasted approximately forty-five minutes to one hour and were conducted in a mostly quiet place. I worked with the participants to set up a convenient time during the week in hopes of avoiding a busy time. Follow-up interviews were conducted as necessary. A follow up was considered necessary if clarification was required or new questions arose from other interviews or the review of the data. Both the interviews and transcripts were kept in a locked box to ensure confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) described analysis as “working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others” (p.157). The Constant Comparative Method of data analysis was used. This inductive method entailed constantly comparing information from one interview to the others for the purpose of identifying common themes.

A professional transcribed the tapes. Upon receiving the transcripts, I reviewed them to look for and highlight main ideas. This helped me gain a broad understanding of that interview. Next, I re-read the transcripts and compared them with the taped interviews to correct any errors and fill in the inaudible blanks wherever possible. Once this was complete, I took the interview questions and wrote each question on a blank page of paper. I took interview #1 and wrote down the response to each question on a different sheet of paper. This process of looking for main ideas, and writing out the answer to each question was completed for each of the four interviews. Next, I began the process of reading and re-reading the responses to begin looking for patterns and meanings. I also started marking passages, and making notes of common themes and key phrases. At this time, I generated metaphors for each participant. During this analysis, questions that were similar were combined, and any questions that did not yield additional information were thrown out.

I began the process of generating categories by collating general ideas from the interview questions and the respondent’s key phrases. These were written down. An example would be

“What is intuition?” Some key phrases might be “past history/experiences,” “unconscious process,” and “subtle hints from surroundings.”

In qualitative analysis, provisional categories based on core themes can be created to initially categorize the data, and as the process continues new categories may be added. Similarly, I created and added categories. After this, the categories were integrated into larger and larger themes where commonalities exist. Concurrently, a search for other plausible explanations occurred. Time was spent away from the data periodically to allow for new ideas to emerge. The analysis ended when the data ceased to yield more categories and themes and the essence of the experiences was obtained.

Validity and Credibility

All research has standards through which it is evaluated. Qualitative research is evaluated through its level of trustworthiness, member checks, and an awareness of personal bias and its impact. Seidman (1998) stated the goal of the interviewer process is to understand how our participants understand and make meaning of their experience. “If the interview structure works to allow them to make sense to themselves as well as to the interviewer than it has gone a long way toward validity” (p.17).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of the data attempts to answer the question: “To what extent can we place confidence in the outcomes of the study?” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p.145). An in-depth description of the research process was helpful toward this end. “By interviewing a number of participants, we can connect their experiences and check the comments of one participant against those of others” (Seidman, 1998, p.17). This can add to the trustworthiness. Other ways to improve the trustworthiness of the data included: using the participants’ words to support final assertions, and comparing and contrasting the assertions with the original theoretical perspectives of Phenomenology, Systems Theory and the previous literature. The ability to use the final results in practice also adds to the trustworthiness. An important idea to remember when assessing trustworthiness is that “Qualitative researchers strive to have their writing be consistent with the data they collect-not that they claim their assertions are ‘true,’ but that they are plausible given the data” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p.24).

Member Checks

A member check was also used to increase the trustworthiness of the data. This refers to the process of asking the participants if I have accurately described their experience. This type of check was carried out when there was not enough data from the first interview.

Personal Bias

My role consisted of “researcher as a learner” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.36). Due to my previous study of the topic and resulting knowledge, it was important for me to release any preconceived notions and maintain an open mind free of assumptions. I needed to be aware of my potential to assume that I understand what the participant is telling me and to seek a further explanation as needed. Glesne and Peshkin further stated that this idea of a researcher as learner role not only develops rapport with the participants, and casts them as teachers, it also indicates “When you are a learner, you get taught” (p.81). This statement in itself summarizes the value of maintaining the open mind of someone who is learning.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This section will begin with a description of each of the four participants and the major themes that emerged from each interview. The participants chose their own code names for the analysis. All identifying information has been changed to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. Metaphors were created for each participant and will be explained. Next, the themes that emerged from the data as a whole will be discussed. (See Table 1 on page 53 for a summary of the individual descriptions).

Individual Descriptions

Jane: Intuition as a River

Jane and the river of intuition. Jane, a family practice resident, is a forty-five year old female. She has been married for twenty-one years and has two teenage boys. Jane described herself as “shy, quiet, friendly, thoughtful, and patient.” She further explained that she likes people but does not like talking about herself. Metaphorically, Jane’s descriptions seemed to be like a river. There was a natural flow, and ease to all of it. She often stated, “What comes, comes” and she seemed to emphasize intuition as a part of who you are that cannot be separated from the rest of the person. In terms of intuition, she does not believe she is more intuitive than anybody else; although, if there were a choice about how to deal with something, she would go with what she feels is right.

Initially, when asked to define intuition, Jane stated, “Intuition is something that you kind of understand...that you just know.” Further into the interview, Jane elaborated on her definition of intuition. Similar to the flow of a river, Jane stated, “It’s kind of understanding where you are going and where you are coming from a little bit. It’s almost as though you’ve experienced something before.” She continued, “It’s a personality and the way you deal with things, but I think you do it without thinking. It’s subconscious.” Jane believes that intuition is valid. She stated, “It’s very difficult to explain what it is and what impact it has. It’s just there and I don’t think you can avoid it, but it’s very hard to say 20% is this and 30% is that. It’s clearly there and it’s involved, but I don’t think you ever set out intuitively. I think you do it naturally.” Jane’s description seems to portray intuition as an intrinsic part of who you are.

Although Jane was unable to think of an example at the time of the interview, she does believe that intuition can be wrong. She stated, “I guess it can be because it’s a personality, and we make mistakes. People make mistakes. Although in some ways it kind of shouldn’t be because you’re following what you think is true for yourself, but I can’t really think of an example. There are arguments both ways. I think there has got to be instances where it can be wrong.”

Jane and the flow of parenting. Like a river flowing together, Jane views successful parenting as a “cumulative thing.” Jane was unable to describe a particular incident, stating, “I don’t think you can say one little thing about a lifetime. You know, I think it’s a whole...general...everything.” In her description of successful parenting experiences, she includes “time together, loving them, accepting them, and talking with them, patience, and letting them be independent.” She also mentioned, “It’s hard to know how much of it is environmental and how much is genetic.”

In terms of using intuition in her parenting, Jane stated, “I follow my instincts and I just do things, but I don’t stop and think where it’s coming from. I think whatever you are and your being comes out in every relationship that you are in and I don’t think you can avoid it.” She further stated, “I think we deal with both of our kids in the same way that I do with everyone I meet, and sort of intuitively because I don’t think you can help it.”

Parenting is a difficult task and inevitably, interventions may be unsuccessful at times. An experience Jane described involved her youngest son. In this incident, she changed her mind about a decision. Feeling exhausted and totally worn down, she gave in to her son’s requests and did not follow through on her original decision. She stated, “I just had it and I’d take him and that was a mistake, not following through and not being consistent.” She further stated, “I think you always know it’s a bad choice as soon as you’ve done it, and once you’ve said something and then said something else, you’re kind of stuck because whichever way you go, it’s not right. Sometimes you try and do what’s the easiest thing.” Jane also stated this type of situation occurs infrequently.

“Authoritative and traditional” are the words Jane used to describe her parents. She described her father as the authority figure and not very affectionate. In contrast, her mother is more affectionate. She further explained that she replicates the things she liked and chooses not

to do the rest. For example, she decided not to use corporal punishment, but she spends time with her children and reads to them in the same manner as her mother.

Overall, Jane appears to believe that intuition is subconscious. She also believes it is an innate part of who we are and cannot be separated out. To summarize, Jane believes intuition influences and aids in her parenting, and like a river, it is natural and always flowing.

Lisa: Intuition as Data Processed in a Computer

Lisa and data gathering in intuition. The next participant to be discussed is Lisa. She is also a family practice resident and a twenty-nine year old female. She has been married for ten years with two boys, a four year old and a five month old. Lisa described herself as “outgoing, friendly, talkative, somewhat high strung, and Type A in a lot of ways.” Metaphorically, Lisa’s responses and thoughts seemed similar to the data processing of a computer. Based on this interview, she tends to think in ways that are concrete, rational, and logical. Lisa does not think of herself as intuitive. She stated, “I have a tendency to take things more at face value versus trying to intuit other things like ulterior motives.”

When asked to describe intuition, Lisa started her reply with key phrases, “more sensitive to...not as concrete. You are not supposed to define something by saying what it isn’t. More sensitive...not taking everything at face value and maybe looking a little deeper, not necessarily looking deeper, but having a sense maybe about what is going on that maybe isn’t on the surface of what is happening.” Also mentioned was Lisa’s belief that intuition is “not some cosmic thing.”

Further into the interview and similar to the processing of a computer, Lisa added, “I think that intuition is probably not so much intuition as it is taking subtle hints from your surroundings and taking little cues and putting them altogether in your mind to come up with the back story of something.” She also mentioned, “It’s not like I am doing it overtly, but that is really what you’re doing. You are taking a whole bunch of different variables and you’re putting them together, and you are using them to give you an idea about what could be going on.”

Lisa does not always view intuition as valid. She stated, “I think all the time people have a feeling about something that isn’t necessarily accurate. At the same time, if I had a feeling about something was going on with one of my children and I didn’t have any evidence to back it up...so I am going to qualify my statement by saying if that were the case, I would listen to that

feeling.” For clarity, Lisa further explained, “In certain instances, I’d say ‘I guess I would see that as valid,’ but I think that it’s more putting little clues together to establish an insight versus just getting a feeling out of nowhere and then going with it. No solid facts, but if I had a feeling, probably based on several little observations, then I would go with my feelings. Yes.”

Lisa specifically attempted to differentiate intuition from insight. She stated, “Let’s just say I think insight is valid, and I think intuition is where you just kind of get a sense about something, and you have no little facts to back it up and no clues and no nothing and you look at this building and you say ‘Bad things are going to fall down tomorrow.’ I don’t think that is valid at all.” She further stated, “Insight is more factual, and based on observation and concrete...solid things you can put together. Intuition is more just getting a feeling about something.”

Lisa and parenting synthesis. Much like a computer with new information added everyday, Lisa viewed successful parenting as “a day to day, work in progress.” She provided a recent successful parenting example with older son. She stated, “He was having trouble with some classmates where they would play together, and kind of leave him out, and one of them is mean to him. The other one is nice to him and is his friend and he wanted to play with the nice one, but the nice one was playing with the mean one. So, you know, you don’t want to tell them ‘Well, just play with them’ and you want to let him know that it’s okay not to play with someone who is mean to him. So, what we did was we sat down and we talked about ‘Well, tomorrow, if this happens...’ and what strategies he can use, what different things he can do other than just either play with them or get upset like he had done. His teacher told me he had gotten upset. So, we set out a realistic actual plan of action of what he could do to avoid that situation again.”

According to Lisa’s interview, it is important “talk to children and to understand that they understand things more than you think they do.” She also mentioned the importance of “keeping up to date with what is going on in my older son’s life and really talking things out with him” as well as being mindful and addressing issues as they arise.

Parenting can be a difficult task and interventions can go awry. When asked how her intuition played a part in an unsuccessful intervention, Lisa laughed as she described an experience she was having with her son stalling at bedtime. Lisa stated, “I don’t know if you would call that intuitive of me, realizing he is not hungry or realizing all those things like he

doesn't have to go to the bathroom or his little nick he got on his knee yesterday is now all of a sudden causing him severe pain. I guess somebody could call that intuition and just feeling that okay, what he is saying is not exactly the truth."

When asked if she thought intuition was wrong, Lisa commented on experiences with her infant son and opinions about others. She replied, "Maybe this is why he is crying, and you do whatever you are going to do, and it doesn't work, and then you kind of reassess the situation and, maybe that wasn't it, and you go to do something else, and that happens all the time with him." With others, she stated, "I had a bad feeling about somebody and then in the end, I think they are a really good person." She concluded with, "So, that is why, I'll trust it to some extent, but it's not like I have this intuition, so that's it. I'm never going to consider any other possibilities."

Lisa described her parents' home as "a very, very loving, very, very loving household, and very, very supportive. They were very good about building up and not tearing down. I think they may have overdone it in that regard in some ways." She further explained how they saw all the good, but not the bad in their children and they didn't address some things nor give a lot of direction. As a result, Lisa indicated, "I'm all about direction in parenting. I just think you have to be mindful of everything that is going on and you have to address things."

During the interview, Lisa also mentioned that she made a conscious decision to rely on her intuition in certain circumstances. She stated, "I made a conscious decision when I had kids that if I had a feeling based on a few things about something, then I would go with that versus telling myself 'Oh, everything's okay; everything's okay' and that I would really try to key into things that may be going wrong, or things that may be happening in my child's life and mind that. I wouldn't just say 'Oh, it's nothing' and I would try to really force myself to figure out what was going on and not, just kind of go about life as if nothing's wrong. And that is based on a conscious decision."

In summary, Lisa referred to an insight as based on a combination of subtle cues in the environment that are processed covertly. Her view resonates with the information processing of a computer; it contains a lot of data, yet one never sees the necessary internal process, only the final output. For her, intuition seemed to be a thought or feeling that just comes. Lisa's description here is indicative of the problems in the literature on intuition and the difficulty in

conceptualizing, and discussing the topic. She believes that intuition does help her in her parenting, especially when she is trying to be a more sensitive parent, but given the choice, she prefers research, prior experiences, and facts.

John: Intuition as a Detective

John and the detection of intuitive clues. The next discussion is about another family practice resident named John. He is a thirty-one year old male, has been married for seven years, and has an eight-month-old boy. He described himself as “hard-working, outgoing, and easy person to get along with.” Metaphorically, John’s responses resembled a detective. He spoke of the anticipation of future events and the picking up of subtle clues to aid in his analysis of situations. John does not think that he is “very intuitive.” He doesn’t use his intuition a lot for everyday things, but he does “try and use it a little bit here and there.” He believes he relies on “experience more than intuition” and described himself as a person who likes to read and educate himself. Similar to the detective obtaining clues, he further stated, “I don’t know if it’s necessarily intuitive, but I feel like people are doing stuff and I can read them a little bit better so I can anticipate problems before...especially in the hospital, I see people’s moods and stuff and I can maneuver around it and catch it before it gets out of hand.”

Although it felt difficult for John to define, he defined an intuitive person as “somebody who can anticipate things before they happen.” He discussed a relative who is in business to further explain his definition stating, “I don’t know if it’s intuitive or if it’s more of a good planner, but he can anticipate things before they happen. He knows two or three steps down the way what will happen. It’s somebody who already knows how it’s going to fall down. I don’t know it’s just intuitive or if that is strategy.”

Further into the interview, John described intuition as using subtle cues. John’s attempt to define intuition displays the difficulty of the task. Overall, he seemed to believe intuition has an element of accurately anticipating outcomes as well as picking up subtle cues.

John does believe that intuition is valid and that “some people are very good at using their intuition.” He stated, “A certain amount of people are more intuitive than they are intelligent. They don’t use their intelligence to figure things out or their experiences and they go by how they feel or how they think things are going to go.”

John and parent detective work. John's son is an infant and therefore, at the time of this interview, he had not acquired as much knowledge as some of the others in terms of what he believes contribute to a successful or unsuccessful parenting experience. Resembling a detective, John detects his son's clues and responds. When asked if he has experienced using his intuition in parenting, John replied, "I don't know if it would be exactly intuition, but we pretty much know what our son wants and when he wants it. We know his cues and he has certain things that he does, and we just kind of know it's going that way and we start to get ready ahead of time."

John then described an example of when his son is tired. He continued, "When you watch him, he'll either start to cry and you need to listen to the voice and there is a few different ways he cries. One of the ways is he starts a kind of whining and not really crying. Then he'll start rubbing his eyes and those are definitely features that he is ready to go to sleep, so we just anticipate that ahead. We have learned that we have to do that mainly because if we miss it by about 20 or 30 minutes, he'll be up the rest of the night crying."

To summarize, John, comparable to a detective, appears to use his intuition to scan his environment for subtle clues, which aids him in accurately analyzing situations. The young age of his son limited some of John's experiences, yet he was able to describe situations where his intuition aids him in his parenting.

Joe: Intuition as a Balanced Scale

Joe and the harmony of intuition. Joe, a twenty-nine year old male, also a family practice resident, participated in the study. He has been married for eight years and has two children. His daughter is four and a half years old and his son is two years old. Joe described himself as "very honest, friendly, and hardworking." Metaphorically, Joe's responses were similar to a scale. There was a continual sense of fairness and balance in each of his responses. His views on the topic also seemed to incorporate a sense of equality in terms of the use of logic and intuition.

When asked if intuition is one of his personality characteristics, Joe replied, "Yeah, I think so. I would say yes." When asked how intuitive he thinks he is compared to others, Joe took the balanced, middle ground and responded, "I think I'm probably middle of the road. I think I am fairly intuitive because I do pick up on cues maybe others don't, but then others like my wife, I think she is more intuitive than I am. She is around the kids more, so I am not as

intuitive as she is, but probably more so than others that I've seen who just act like they don't have a clue what is going on, so that is why I say probably middle of the road."

When asked to describe intuition, Joe paused and his original answer was as follows, "Intuition is knowing something without...I don't want to say without any cues. I don't know. It would kind of be close. I would say knowing...now that's tough...You just intuitively know. I think I would say knowing something without any cause and I think maybe that is the best definition I can give." As the interview continued, he added, "As I'm answering more questions, I changed my definition of intuition a little bit to be able to know what is about to happen based on small cues that don't tell you the whole picture. So in other words, not knowing what's going to happen based on nothing, but maybe little cues that can give you the whole picture." Ultimately, his definition became, "A little bit of both intuition and little bit of just spontaneously knowing something without a past history and a little bit of it from knowing past history and building on it."

Joe does agree that intuition is valid. He stated, "Like I said earlier, if you ignore those little things that you built on that is giving you that intuition...if you ignore it, then it's useless. So, you can build on things to help you be a better parent, friend, and child." He continued with, "So, if you don't know what those signs mean, there is nothing you can do about it, but if you use your intuition and kind of knowing that these signs mean this, then you can act appropriately and act accordingly to hopefully prevent...if it's going to be something negative or foster if it's going to be something positive."

When asked if he thought intuition could be wrong, Joe could not think of a specific example but he mentioned, "When you've met people and you've had that feeling, there's something about them you didn't like and then they ended up just being great people, and you just thought the world of (them). So, although I can't think of anything specific, I just know there's been times that that has happened." Lisa also mentioned this broad example of meeting people.

Joe and equilibrium in parenting. Joe believes "the most important thing in being a parent is your child knowing there is unconditional love." He continued with an example, "If I ever get onto my daughter about something I always tell her how much I love her and give her a

hug and a kiss, so I think she always knows that even when she messes up or makes a mistake, she knows I love her. I would say I am successful with that.”

Joe described his parents as unconditionally loving. He stated, “They did that same thing for me, so I always knew that no matter what I did or anything, that they loved me and I think that is important. If you asked (my parents) what was the most important thing of being a parent, and they would do that same thing as to the unconditional love, so that is the most important thing.”

Joe also described a successful parenting experience with his daughter and buying toys. Similar to the scale seeking balance, Joe seeks balance through compromise with his daughter. He explained, “Anytime my daughter wants something, we can always do give and take, so I am always compromising. So, maybe she wants to go to Walmart and buy a Barbie, and then I always tell her if I don’t want to go to Walmart and buy a Barbie I’ll say ‘Why don’t we go to blockbuster and get you a movie?’ She always replies, ‘Yes, that’s great’ and jumps all over that. This prevents an ugly scene of her pitching a fit because she wants her Barbie and instead she still gets something, a movie, and that is three bucks as compared to twenty every time you turn around. It is a successful way of getting around that. She feels she wins because she gets to get a movie and I win because I don’t have to drive all the way to Walmart and get her a twenty dollar Barbie.”

When asked about unsuccessful parenting interventions, Joe laughed and responded, “Well, that occurs all the time. Let me just think about yesterday and what happened last night.” He described an example where it was late afternoon and his daughter wanted to go to the playground. He told her, ‘If you calm down, we can go tomorrow. If you don’t calm down, we won’t go tomorrow.’ She calmed down, still pitched her fit, and was sent to her room.” He continued his response with, “So no, it didn’t work out real well. So that was a time I tried to compromise and say ‘We’ll go the next day’, but to her it was immediate or none, and so that didn’t go real well. She couldn’t understand me saying ‘Go calm down and we will go tomorrow and if you don’t, we’re not’ and that didn’t help any.”

He believes his intuition was helpful in this situation. He stated, “Helpful? Yes. It saved a lot of effort and time, because intuitively, my knowing she would get upset, reassured me that she is going to be upset and don’t worry about it, and just let her go to her room.

Otherwise, if I didn't know, I would have sat there and really bargained more and more and more and 'We'll go there tomorrow' and 'Why are you upset?' and talked and just gotten nowhere and she would have still been crying."

For Joe, intuition is a combination of knowing without knowing exactly how you know as well as knowledge from subtle cues in the environment. This balance in his description is also indicative of his balanced approach to parenting.

Table 1 Individual Descriptions

Individual Descriptions	John/Detective	Jane/River	Lisa/Data Processed in a Computer	Joe/Balanced Scale
Age	31	45	29	29
Length of Marriage	7 years	21 years	10 years	8 years
Number of Children, Ages	1 boy 8 months	2 boys 19 yrs, 15 yrs	2 boys 4 yrs and 5 months	1 girl, 1 boy 4.5 yrs, and 2 yrs

Summary of Descriptions

Each metaphor was different and attempted to describe the individual experiences of the participant. Despite the differences in experiences, all of them use their intuition in various ways. Each participant encountered some difficulty when defining intuition, but ultimately, completed the task. Overall, the definitions of intuition fell into two major categories, ranging from subtle clues in the environment to an inner feeling referred to as a "knowing." These descriptions of intuition range from the conscious to the unconscious processing of information or the known to the unknown/unknowable. Jane, the river believes intuition is an innate part of who are, while the others mentioned an awareness of subtle clues in the environment that may provide information.

Themes from the Data

Some of the participants' responses were similar. In this section, the themes that emerged from the combined data of the participants will be discussed. Themes relevant to personality, the discovery of intuition, and the evaluation of intuition will be explored along with the influences of intuition in various situations including decision-making and parenting.

Personality

When asked to describe their personality, three of the four described themselves as friendly, or easy to get along with. Three of the four participants did not think of themselves as

“very intuitive.” Two of the respondents saw a correlation between intuition and personality characteristics and two did not. Interestingly, one male and one female, Jane and John, did not believe that intuition is associated with specific personality traits, while one male and one female did. Jane believed that this question about intuition and personality traits was “very hard” and stated, “I don’t think you can really.” John’s reply was, “No.”

Lisa and Joe agreed that an intuitive person might have certain characteristics. Lisa stated, “If someone is intuitive, maybe they are more creative, and perhaps more artsy, more open-minded.” Joe believes, “Someone who is intuitive would probably be easier to get along with and maybe more friendly. You think they could read others better and so maybe they would do a better job of understanding others.” He further explained with an example, “If they feel someone is angry, they can back off and if they feel someone is nervous, they could do things to make that person feel more at ease.” He finished with, “If you can intuitively tell how someone feels, then you could act accordingly; whereas, maybe if you were not intuitive, then you would not understand if someone is getting angry and you just kept hounding and that would just be ugly and vice versa.”

“Friendly” seemed to be the most common characteristic of the participants. Interestingly, three of the four participants did not think of themselves as intuitive, yet they were able to describe various situations where they not only utilized their intuition, but also relied upon its use. Given the difficulty defining the word, this could indicate that the difficulty in defining intuition leads to a difficulty in recognizing and explaining when it is used in daily life. This difficulty could also be indicative of this sample. As doctors, their training tends to be more traditional with an emphasis on objectivity and concrete facts.

This study suggests the potential for a correlation between intuition and personality. Two participants believed there might be a relationship, with intuitive people as more creative and open-minded. Two participants did not agree. Further study into the topic will help clarify this difference.

Defining Intuition

The sample also showed some similarities in their definition of intuition. Each participant found defining intuition to be very difficult. Some felt comfortable enough to stop the taping while they thought about their response. Terms such as “subtle,” “subconscious,” and “looking a

little deeper” and “something you just know” were commonly used in the various definitions. (See Table 2).

Table 2 Intuition Defined

What is Intuition?	John	Jane	Lisa	Joe
A knowing		X		X
Subconscious/Covert Process		X	X	
Subtle Hints from Surroundings	X		X	X
Accurate Anticipation of Future Events	X			
Past History/Experience		X		X

When asked what an intuitive experience feels like, the women had similar responses, as did the men. Both Jane and Lisa described it as being in their mind. Jane had difficulty describing an intuitive experience. When asked to describe it, Jane replied, “No, I can’t. I mean, the problem is by definition of the word, it’s not something that you really know. I mean, you just know, so it’s not something you plan or that you can repeat so easily. Jane finished with, something “you just know.”

Lisa gave an example of a patient earlier that morning that wanted pain medication. Lisa stated, “I had a patient who came in with neck pain and basically wanted pain medicine and had a good story about why she needed the pain medicine, but my intuition was telling me that there maybe something else going on here, and that she may be pain-med-seeking, so I was less inclined to give her the medicine that she wanted-strong, strong pain medicines.” She credits this to an insight in her mind.

The men in the sample both used the word “feel” in their respective responses. John stated, “I don’t think there is really a feeling to it. You start to be able to read the person and you can feel which direction the conversation is going to go-maybe because of experience.” He further explained with an example about patients who come into the hospital sick. Initially, they want help. Eventually, according to John, “You have to anticipate the fact they are going to try and talk themselves out of the hospital.”

Joe also believes that that an intuitive experiences is a mix of just knowing and “just a feeling and you just feel like you know what is going to happen.” He gave the example of being on call stating, “There are times that you are just kind of sitting there and you feel like ‘Oh, I bet

the beeper is about to go off, and I'm about to get a page for a patient', and then it will go off. I guess that would be an intuition, although it's more chance than anything else, but if you kind of felt that it probably would, and then it happened, I guess that is intuition."

Given the cultural assumption of the value of women's intuition coupled with the idea that women are more empathetic, it was surprising to learn that in this sample the women associated an intuitive capacity with their mind, and the men described it as a feeling. Again, the difficulty of defining the word may have played a part in this finding. The participants had difficulty over all with describing an intuitive experience. At times, it seemed our language does not have the exact terms needed to capture the true experience of intuition.

Evaluating Intuition and its Accuracy

Three of the four participants agreed that intuition works most of the time. John stated, "I would say most of the time, and I would say more often than not. Maybe 75% of the time and maybe more than that." He gave an example of meeting someone and accurately assessing him or her. Joe stated, "I'm not sure if it really works all the time or not. I'm not sure how you determine if it really worked or not. I would say the majority of the time it is successful." He pointed out the subjectivity of the answer, "It's all a subjective kind of thing because if you think you are good at it, and you are, you are going to think the outcomes are better."

Lisa's response provided another example of her similarity to the data processing of a computer. She does not believe intuition works very often. Given the choice, Lisa prefers to "go with facts and prior decisions versus just going with intuition."

Two of the participants agreed that time and experience play a role in the improvement of intuition over time and two did not. When commenting on time, Joe stated, "I think time helps with your intuitions, and of course, the better you know someone, the better you intuitively know, although that is tricky. Boy that is tricky. I would say 'Yes.'"

He further explained, "It gets kind of tricky as far as knowing if it's completely intuitive, because then you would think you probably wouldn't need past experience to build on that. By my definition of saying that intuition is a little bit picking up little subtle clues and acting on it, then of course, as time goes by, and you've seen the same cues over and over, and then you saw what happened, you could build on those cues as far as predicting the future. So, that's why I say time would help with intuition if you were going by little cues. And then by the strictest sense of

intuition, you would think you wouldn't need cues, and you could just act and it wouldn't matter if you had seen it before or not, but my definition is seeing little cues, and I would say that time will tell." In terms of experience being useful, Joe stated, "Experience, experience at being a parent and with your children...you just build on it."

Jane used the example of relationships stating, "I think long term relationships are much easier than a new one. I don't know if it is a mixture of past experiences or the fact that you have already gone through this issue before, so you already know the best way to deal with the situation." Jane further stated, "Time and experience go together naturally."

Three of the four participants believe that they use the information from their intuition correctly. John stated, "I would think I do. If you think you are intuitive or if you are trying to use your intuitive nature than you are probably picking up on things and you are trying to assimilate that with other things. I don't see how you couldn't feel like you weren't using it correctly. Most of the time, I think they turn out the right way."

Joe replied with, "I'd like to think so." He continued with an example of deciding whether or not to admit a patient who is sick. If the patient is not admitted, one may never know the final outcome. He finished his response with, "So you don't really know, 'Did the patient go home and get really sick?' or 'Should I have admitted them?' but, from what I've seen intuition is beneficial."

Most of the participants, specifically Jane, John, and Joe, agreed that intuition works most of the time. They also believe they use the information from their intuition correctly. John pointed out that this is "subjective" and if one thinks he or she is good at using his or her intuition, he or she might believe the "outcomes are better."

Joe and Jane believe that time and experience can help to improve one's intuition. Joe made an interesting point; in a definition of intuition where subtle clues are relevant, time would be useful; however, "by the strictest sense of intuition, you wouldn't need clues, and you could just act and it wouldn't matter if you had seen it before or not." The responses to the questions evaluating intuition and its usefulness describe the personal experiences of the participants as well as the subjective nature of intuition. Once again, the complexity of the definition appeared.

Discovery of Intuition as a Resource

The participants were asked to describe when they first discovered using their intuition. John was the only participant who could identify a specific time in his life when he realized he was relying on his intuition. Jane and Joe found it hard to identify a specific incident, as they tend to use it consistently. Lisa was also unable to identify a specific incident, but she does not rely on it as much as the others. (See Table 3).

Table 3 Discovery Of Intuition as a Resource

Are there defining moments when intuition became a resource?	John	Jane	Lisa	Joe
Family/Marital Situations	X			X
Meeting New People			X	X
Always Used		X		X

Family/marriage. John responded to this question with the most detail of the group. He stated, “Probably after my parents got divorced, when I was in college.” He continued, “That is something where you probably do use a little bit more intuition in order to keep from being pulled from one side to the other. You can’t just rely on being smart, and you can’t rely on past experiences, and you have to be in the moment and feel. There are no guidelines for it.” Furthermore, he stated, “You have to know what’s all around and what’s going on and who is involved and try to make the right decision in order to stay ahead of the game. It’s more based off of feeling and related to emotions and trying to gauge the tension level around you.” He finished with, “You have to have your own feeling, and your senses and you just figure out what is going on and you can’t rely on people telling you ‘Oh, it’s this or it’s that.’ You take cues and you have to figure it out for yourself.”

He also mentioned during the interview, “When you have a lot of problems and there is not an easy answer to it, you have to use more intuition.” An example of this included a situation with his wife where they were deciding about how to finish medical school and grad school. John described, “You can’t really anticipate what is going to happen because you’re not going to do it the traditional way. If you take a different road, you go by your feelings and then you hope that it’s going to be the right way. I guess there is a little bit of intuition in that path.”

Always a resource. Jane, similar to the river, spoke of the fluidity of intuition in her life. She described her experience as, “I have always done it. I just feel it’s very closely tied to personality and it’s hard for me to separate these things. The definition I seem to be working on is it’s something innate that everyone has and that it comes from inside them and although it’s got to be formed by accumulated experiences, so I guess it’s sort of being shaped a bit.” She continued with, “Intuition and whether you are going to make a snap decision or whether you might just sit and think about it...I think it’s something you don’t decide. I think it’s decided for you because you can’t help it.” Overall, Jane believes, “I think you would probably have to decide to consciously go against your intuition rather than decide you are going to follow your intuition. I think you could choose not to follow it; whereas, I don’t think you could choose to follow it, because I think that is what you do.”

Joe was also unable to think of a specific instance and described feeling as if intuition is an internal aspect of himself. He responded, “I think you do it so much on a day to day basis in dealing with patients and friends and so I think you always use it. I don’t consider it very much, so I hate to say a time that I knew that I was aware of using it.” He used the example of meeting people. He stated, “I think I’ve always been a pretty good judge of other people intuitively...when you meet someone, knowing if you like them or not.”

Although, Joe was unable to describe a specific instance when he realized he started using his intuition, he provided an example of when he realized intuition was important. He stated, “Probably like a decision as far as getting married...I got married at a young age and you hear people say ‘It’s probably not a good idea.’ I didn’t hear it from my parents or anything, but hearing it from others, and I just intuitively felt like everything will be fine and then it was. Of course, the marriage has worked out great, and that’s probably some intuition.”

Meeting new people. Lisa was unable to speak of a specific instance, but described her experiences with meeting new people. She stated, “The closest thing I would call intuition is concerning meeting new people and I’ve always been that way.” She continued, “I don’t know if it’s taking subtle clues. Sometimes it probably isn’t, and especially when they are new people that I don’t know that much about, but I try to determine in my mind if this is a person I need to be closer to or a person that I need to try to stay away from. It probably is based on a gut feeling.” Lisa, similar to the computer in her reliance on logic, further stated; “Now I hate even

saying that because you know me by now about this particular subject. I do use my intuition when it comes to that and I don't know when I started doing that, but I know I've done it for a long time.

Summary on the discovery of intuition as a resource. Thus, it may be that intuition becomes more necessary when we are faced with new or different family or other social situations. Although there are times when we may rely on past experiences to provide answers, new or unusual challenges seem to compel us to think or feel in new ways. As John succinctly stated, intuition is useful when “you can't rely on past experiences” and “there are no guidelines.” These are the times when intuition not only seems to serve us well, but also guides us through whatever situation we may encounter.

Influences on Use of Intuition

Participants were asked how other aspects of their lives influence their use of intuition. Jane's initial response was, “I think everything you do influences who you are and whatever you decide, so it kind of all just gets...they mesh together.” John indicated that his wife plays a large role because “she wants me to try to pick up on things before they happen.” He continued, “When I come home, she expects me to anticipate things way far ahead with him before they even happen, and she is probably better at it than I am.”

Social situations. Socially, Lisa described using intuition when she first meets someone. She also utilizes it when she is talking to someone and she gets the sense “they're not liking what was said or they don't agree and then you switch topics just to keep the flow of conversation and not to offend anyone.” She also stated, “I think a lot of times I am wrong when I think like that and a lot of the times it wasn't anything that would bother the person. I think sometimes I'm overly cautious when it comes to that, so it's a hindrance in a way. Sometimes it makes it so that you don't have as deep of conversations with people as you would have other wise.”

Joe answered in a general sense initially, stating, “As I said before, in helping me read people better and act accordingly. I think all the time when you're coming into contact with your friends and boss or what have you, you're always using some of your intuition to guide you as far as ‘Is this a good time to approach this person about something or not?’ Again, you are picking up clues to tell if they're in a quote unquote good mood or not. I think you're always

kind of using somewhat of intuition on when to say or do certain things around others based on how you feel they're feeling."

Place of employment. Comments about work were also made. John stated at work intuition is helpful in "picking up on who gets along with who and how to bridge that." He also stated early in medical school that his intuition was helpful. As he became more experienced and learned more, he realized it is not as difficult as it seemed. Prior to this realization, he felt that "he had to use his intuition." John also mentioned that people at work emphasize the use of knowledge.

In her work at the hospital, Lisa stated she never approached a co-worker to discuss a patient and said, "I feel like this could be happening." She "tells them the facts and say these facts make me feel, make me decide that I want to do this versus that."

Lisa described an example of a doctor relying on his intuition in practice. She stated, "There was a boy yesterday who came into the clinic where I was working last night and I was following another doctor. This boy had certain symptoms that were to me, a little bit scary, he had numbness on one side and a weakness. The doctor had been practicing for 35 years and he said, 'Well, I just don't think there is anything wrong.'" Before he told me that he's always had a good gut feeling about one thing or another, and his gut always led him in the right direction. When he said that, I was thinking 'You're lucky that you haven't had any problem using your gut' because I think if you do that too much, you can really get into some hot water. In medicine you're not supposed to do that. You're really not."

Lisa continued with, "Probably the doctors who do that in the end are more loved. I don't know if that's necessarily true or not, but I think you'd better go with just solid facts as much as you can if you want to be a good doctor who doesn't miss anything bad. And so he didn't send the patient for a CAT-Scan of the brain. I would have. In the end it did seem a little bit like, maybe this isn't anything too bad. It doesn't matter. I would have sent him. I think it's best not to use your intuition too much when it comes to treating patients." Overall, Lisa stated that, "medically...legally, nowadays, you better have evidence to support what you are doing or you are just in trouble."

In contrast, Joe described feeling supported in his use of intuition at work. He explained, "A lot of times when you go see a patient, you have an intuition on 'Is this patient sick or not?"

and ‘Do they need to be in the hospital?’ and that goes a long way. You just tell someone, ‘Well, I just feel like this patient’s sick. I feel like they look bad, and they’re not going to do well.’ More often then not, when you tell an attendant or a coworker that, they say ‘Well, yeah, I trust that.’”

Jane’s response indicates that the attendants’ styles differ. She said, “Job wise, an attendant might say, ‘This is the way we’re going to do this and we’re going to do one, two, three, four, five and nobody has any option and we’re going to follow this through and that is that.’ In contrast, others might say, ‘You decide how you want to go and we’ll discuss it, and let’s try this and see how it works.’ And that certainly gets you more to follow your own intuition or whatever you want to call it.”

Summary of influences. The responses from this section varied. Both Joe and Lisa mentioned using their intuition in everyday interactions with others. John and Joe described how their intuition is useful at work. Joe feels supported using his intuition at work, while Lisa seemed more skeptical and mentioned the legal implications. Jane indicated that some attendants encourage the use of intuition, while others do not.

Intuition in Decision-Making

The participants were asked, “How do you integrate intuition with other techniques in decision-making?” The responses ranged from the actual role of intuition in a decision-making process to work examples.

General response. John’s response indicated that he relies on his intuition toward the end of a decision. He stated, “If you ever try to make decisions based on things, you kind of do it based off of your experiences before and place them in your head. Then you are in the middle to end and that’s when you start to feel whether things are going that way or not. If they’re not, intuition kind of plays a role in terms of ‘Do I start or need to change and do something else?’ or ‘How am I going to adapt to it?’”

Jane replied, “I think if you follow your own intuition then you tend to make...I don’t think snap decision is a good term, but I think somehow you already know the answer before...obviously, before the question comes up.” Joe stated, “I think it plays a big role...how you intuitively feel something is going to happen kind of shapes everything else.” He further

explained, “If you have a deep feeling somewhere that something is going to happen, and you feel like no matter what, this I going to happen, it kind of shapes everything else.”

Work examples. Joe elaborated on his above comment with an example from work. He stated, “In the hospital, you can intuitively think a patient does or does not need admitting and then you get the lab work back, the x-rays back, and the physical exam and then you have to incorporate all those things. If you intuitively feel like someone doesn’t look sick and doesn’t need to be in the hospital, and then you get the blood work back or the x-ray back, and it looks like big pneumonia or you could hear pneumonia. So, if their other lab work is abnormal, then you are going to admit them regardless of what your intuition thinks. So you’ve got to, you know, you bring everything together.” He further stated, “If you intuitively feel like someone doesn’t need to be in the hospital or does need to be in the hospital, your lab work backs it up.”

Jane also elaborated on her answer with a work example. She described the fast pace of work, “We see a lot of patients here unfortunately that we have never seen before, and I might see someone once and then someone else sees them.” With this in mind, she stated, “I think it’s harder to make these decisions and especially with patients. I shouldn’t always say life and death, because clearly, it’s not, but it’s something that can have a fairly big implication, so it’s not okay to make a kind of snap or intuitive decision really. I mean, you owe it to everyone to kind of sit down and say, ‘Well, I’m going to have to got through all of this chart or whatever, and get more of the medical history and more of everything else.’ So, I think you have to be more careful; whereas, I think when it’s your family and you know where they’re coming from and hopefully, where they are going to, then I think you can.”

Summary of intuition in decision-making. John described intuition is useful when he evaluates if a decision is working out as originally anticipated. Joe’s intuition helps him at work, especially when it can be validated by lab results and physical exams. Jane tends to rely more on her intuition in decisions for family decisions. At work, she doesn’t seem rely on it as much because of the risks involved, the large number of patients, and the pace, which often does not allow her to see a patient more than once.

Themes in Parenting

Parenting Examples of Intuition and Decisions

In contrast to her work example, Jane believes it is appropriate to use more of her intuition in family circumstances. For example, Jane stated, “With a kid, they can go to a friend’s house for the night or something like that, and I think you’ve kind of thought about it, and you know who the friend is, and you think ‘Is the parent going to be home?’ and ‘What are they going to be doing?’ and then you come to an answer. Sometimes you just know; whereas, if it’s something... ‘What should we do next summer?’ kind of thing, then clearly, it’s going to be a group decision.”

Lisa also provided an example from parenting. She stated that she uses her intuition in decision-making “mostly with caregivers and just looking at them and figuring out whether or not I want to leave my child with this person.” She further explained there are “other times when I ignore my intuition on purpose.”

Lisa explained this further stating, “I just disagree with having, particularly teenage boys watch your children, and even if I know that child and I think that child is a wonderful person, and I know his parents... I just think every superlative about this child, I would never go with my intuition on that, and I would just say ‘This is my rule. No teenage boys watching my children. Period.’ And stuff like that.”

Impact of Children’s Age

The participants were asked, “Are you more intuitive with one child?” John, who only has one child at this time, was unable to compare. Lisa “wouldn’t necessarily say that.” Joe believes he is more intuitive with his daughter. He attributes this to “probably more experience with her. She is older, so she is more verbal and gives more clues.”

Jane’s overall reply was both “yes and no.” She stated, “I think that I understand both of them and I think I know what they want. As they got to be teenagers, it’s a little bit harder because sometimes it’s hard to know when they want to talk and when they just want to be left alone and they do.”

The above responses seem to indicate that the ages of the children may impact the parent’s intuitive experiences. Although the use of intuition may change as the child ages, intuition continually plays a role in parenting. Joe pointed out that he is more intuitive with his

daughter than his son. He attributes it to more experience with her, her language skills, and clues. Earlier, John, who currently only has one child, mentioned that his son has different cries for different needs and that understanding those subtleties is the difference between putting his son to sleep easily or missing the cues and his son being up all night. Lisa and Joe also mentioned this process of figuring out what their babies' need. This suggests that verbal clues are not limited by age, but that prior to spoken language, parents may have a harder time understanding and use their intuition to interpret the babies' cues.

The issue of safety was a topic that contained some overlaps. Although Jane and Lisa's children vary greatly in age, it seems both women use their intuition to decide on safe places for their children. Lisa has young children and uses her intuition to determine who is a safe caregiver, while Jane, with older children, uses her intuition to decide where her children are safe spending the night. Despite the initial differences in age and intuitive experiences, when it comes to child safety, both mothers mentioned reliance upon their intuition.

Intuitive Decisions and Child's Illness

All of the participants agreed that his or her intuition influenced their decision-making when his or her child was ill. (See Table 4). John stated, "My intuition is mostly because I work in the health field and when he is sick, it is easier for me to tell. He doesn't look right, or something is feeling wrong, or it is kind of heading down the road to getting worse. We cue in on those." Similarly, Joe stated, "Yeah, I think so because that goes back to my experience as a physician as well as a father, but you can just see when your child is sick and maybe my wife is worried a little bit and I can reassure that I feel good that the children are not ill enough to require any intervention."

Table 4 Intuitive Decisions and Child's Illness

Has intuition influenced your decision-making when your child was ill?	John	Jane	Lisa	Joe
Yes	X	X	X	X
No				

Lisa responded with, "Yes. It is more of an insight where you look at the situation and you see how hard is he breathing, how high is his temperature. You look at all these factors and

you make a decision as to what action needs to be taken.” Jane replied, “I suspect that probably when they are ill or they have got a problem or they are very upset with something. I think intuition is more important at those times probably than at other times. And I think you have got to know if they are really sick or there is some test at school.” Jane further explained with an example of her son complaining of a sore throat or stomachache because of an assignment that was due, but not finished.

All of the participants felt their intuition helps with their child’s physical needs, such as illness. Lisa differentiated intuition from insight and mentioned the cues that are apparent when a child is sick. Jane emphasized, “intuition is more important at those times.” John and Joe mentioned that their work in the health field influences their intuition and helps with noticing the cues.

Parenting Experiences

Successful parenting. Most of the participants had a clear idea about what is necessary in successful parenting. Jane described successful parenting as cumulative. She believes that spending time together, talking, love, acceptance, patience, and allowing independence are important. Lisa also emphasized the day-to-day, “work in progress” aspect of parenting. She, too, emphasized the importance of talking with them and the importance of understanding that children comprehend more than we may realize. At the time of the interview, John’s son was only nine months old and his experiences were more limited. Joe’s main emphasis was on providing “unconditional love” for the children. (See Table 5).

Unsuccessful parenting interventions. Participants easily recognized an occasion when their intervention failed. Jane described an incident with one of her sons. She changed her mind about a prior decision concerning where to take her son. She attributed the change to “exhaustion.” Lisa described her son’s attempts at stalling at bedtime. Joe provided an example of his daughter and her request to go to the playground. He suggested they go tomorrow, but she did not want to wait until then. Compromise was ineffective with this particular incident.

Summary of Successful and Unsuccessful Parenting Experiences

As noted in Table 5 on page 67, most of the responses suggest that successful parenting cannot be described in one experience; it is cumulative. Love, acceptance, patience, and talking

all help to develop a relationship over time. Ultimately, this suggests that successful parenting is about developing and maintaining relationships.

The responses and examples given for unsuccessful parenting seem more circumstantial and intermittent. Whereas successful parenting is cumulative, unsuccessful parenting is intermittent. Mistakes can and will be made in parenting but the cumulative effects of the successful incidents are more important.

Table 5 Parenting Experiences

	John	Jane	Lisa	Joe
Successful	Limited Son is 9 months old	Cumulative Talking, Time together, Love, Acceptance, Patience, Independence for them	Work in progress, Talking, Realizing children understand a lot	Unconditional love, Compromise
Unsuccessful	Limited	Changed prior decision, Exhaustion	Son stalling at bedtime, needs drink, bathroom	Told daughter “no” and she became upset, Couldn’t compromise

Parent and Child Needs

Parental needs for guidance in parenting. The participants were asked to explain which resources they use to guide their parenting. To guide her parenting, Jane replied, “We’re a team, my husband and I work very close together.” Jane also comes from a “fairly big extended family” so she also relies a lot on the way she was “brought up.” Friends are also a source of guidance. (See Table 6 on page 68).

Lisa uses a variety of resources to guide her parenting: personal experience and the way she was raised, as well as books and advice from other parents who she thinks are successful. She also stated, “I’m going to say something that is out of character for me. I just feel like in a way I have a good sense about parenting and how to handle things in a lot of cases. She further elaborated on what “a good sense” means by stating an example. “If my son acts out, instead of just punishing him or just telling him he’s wrong in some way, I, instead want to talk about it and

figure out why did this happen and what can we do to change, what led up to this and all that stuff. So I guess that is a sense not to crush a spirit. I guess you could say a sense just to react in a certain way versus another way.” Lisa, like the logic of the computer, bases this sense on “conscious decisions, research, and looking at different people and what they have done and how they handled things and making decisions about how I would handle things and basing it on patterns.”

Furthermore, she stated, “Sometimes I think about how my parents would have handled so and so and I think ‘My gosh, what were they thinking?’ and I don’t know why I think what I did was better or even where it came from sometimes. It probably came from having thought about it before and I’m not talking about...I necessarily anticipated the particular situation, but I know what style of parent I want to be. So then if we have a situation, then I just fall back on this is the style of parent I want to be so that’s the way I handled it. That is probably why things tend to run smoothly.”

The men in the study had similar responses. Joe mostly relies on “how my parents raised me” to guide his parenting. He also relies on “what my gut and I feel is right.” Relatives and his personal experiences growing up are some of the resources John uses to guide his parenting. Besides this, his wife’s work involves children and she reads books and is knowledgeable in that area. John describes his mother as supportive and the type of person who makes sure everyone gets along and his father as “more rigid, more strict.” John seeks to “do things like his mom would have done them” at home and to be more like his father at work.

Table 6 Parenting Resources

What parenting resources do you use?	John	Jane	Lisa	Joe
Family	X	X	X	X
Personal Experience	X	X	X	X
Gut feeling/Good Sense			X	X
Advice from Successful Parents			X	
Research Articles			X	
Books	X		X	
Friends		X		
Significant Other	X	X		

In summary, family and personal experiences were the strongest resources for all the parents in this study. Although each participant had several others, they were individualized as indicated in Table 6.

Assessment of children's needs. When the participants were asked, "How do you assess what your children need?" their answers ranged from picking up on clues to verbal responses. John relies on "picking up on those little clues" with his infant son. He described the clues as, "He perseverates or just kind of sits there and whines, or he'll stop, but he will go looking for his mom. For instance, now he has this routine where if she's not in the room, he has to go hunting for her because he has to have her there, but if he wants to eat or he wants someone to be with, then usually he won't move and he'll sit right there and kind of shake his head and whine."

Jane stated, "from the way they respond to us." She gave an example: "When the boys were really tiny, and you had one that never wanted to be put down; it was pretty apparent, because every time he was put down, he started crying. He just wanted to be in a little snugly thing until he could let go. And the younger one as a baby was very, very easy and was happy to be put in a swing chair."

Lisa responded with a combination of listening to his verbal and nonverbal behavior. She stated, "I listen to him and not just listen to what he is telling me, but listen to what is his interaction with his teacher and what is his interaction with other kids he's playing with, what is his overall mood." Joe replied with, "They are pretty verbal, so usually they will tell me." He continued with, "My son, that gets more tricky, and it's almost a process of elimination. When he's upset, you're just going to have to guess a little bit sometimes, and sometimes you may never find the answer." Joe finished his response with, "So I think usually, it's verbal, and then if they want something, they let you know they want it until you satisfy that need." He gave an example with his son: "If he is upset and maybe it's his diaper. Well, you can try to feed all day, but he's going to keep being upset until you change his diaper."

Most of the responses above allude to the assessment of the emotional needs of the children. The parents in this study appear to be relying on both verbal and nonverbal cues to assess what their children need. The nonverbal aspect seems to require more of a synthesis of information for which intuition is most useful.

Using Intuition to Aid in Parenting

Each participant was asked, “Have you experienced using your intuition in parenting?” All agreed and explained further. (See Table 7). John described an understanding of his son’s cues. Lisa described an example of using her intuition when her second child was born. She stated, “When my four month old was born, my son started acting out. It wasn’t anything in particular. It would just be more difficult to get him to do a task, and he would be whining about it, but he never acted jealous toward his brother. He was always very loving toward his brother and seemed to really on the surface to adjust to the situation in a great way, but I guess I used my intuition or an insight when I decided he’s probably acting out because he has this new little brother here. He’s not getting as much attention and he needs more attention, so this is his way of doing that.”

With her four month old, Lisa stated, “You just have to kind of go with your feeling about what could be going on here, but you’re basing it on previous patterns and what you’re doing and what you’re looking at. Well, the last time you cried, ‘Why was it?’ So, you’re just going back to that and using that, but I guess it is kind of intuition, I guess.”

Table 7 Intuition in Parenting

Have you experienced using your intuition in your parenting? All participants agreed. Examples:	John	Jane	Lisa	Joe
Interpreting Child’s Cues/Responses	X	X	X	X
Assessing Safety		X	X	
Illness	X	X	X	X
Other people (caregivers, friends)		X	X	

Lisa further explained the difference between using her intuition with each child. She stated, “I can ask my older son ‘How is school going?’ and ‘Is there anybody being mean to you?’ and ‘Are you having trouble with anybody?’ and I can get his responses. I still need to in a way use my intuition by looking at the people surrounding him. I look at all the teachers and I think about things like ‘Could any of these teachers be a child abuser?’ and ‘Could any of these teachers be a pedophile?’ I think it’s important for parents to really make themselves go through

those hoops in their minds because if you don't do that, there is just so much pedophilia and stuff out there nowadays. So, I kind of use his input to help me make decisions when it comes to that."

She further stated, "With the newborn, I just kind of have to go with my feeling about who takes care of him. How does she act with me? What do I see when I go in there? How is she acting with some of the other kids that are around? So, with that, it is just kind of a gut feeling type of thing."

Joe, replied, "I'm sure all the time I do. You can always tell when, but then there's a sign, and you can always tell when my daughter is getting ill and then you try to do things to prevent that." He continued with a comment about his son. Similar to a comment made earlier by John, Joe stated, "My wife, of course, would be better at this than me, and she would really be able to tell stuff like when he's hungry or sleepy and things like that much better than I would. The reason for this was, "She's with him all day, and while I am at work, she is with him, so she sees him so much, and she would be better at the smaller cues than I am."

Jane responded with, "I think that whatever you are and your being comes out in every single relationship you are in, and I don't think you can avoid it. She further stated, "I think we deal with both of our kids in the same way I did with everyone I meet, and sort of intuitively, because I don't think you can help it." She mentioned that her older son is "much more like me" and he responds to situations in a similar manner. Her younger son, however, "frequently surprises her." She continued, "Although now that he has gotten older, it's easy and maybe because I know him better, and I can guess and I am usually right. It's not what I would do, and it's probably not what my husband or other son would do, but I can guess what he's going to do and frequently, I'm right, but not always."

Table 8 Intuition and Aid in Parenting

Do you feel intuition aids you in your parenting?	John	Jane	Lisa	Joe
Yes	X	X	X	X
No				

When asked if intuition aids in his or her parenting, each participant agreed as indicated in Table 8. Jane replied, "Yes, because I think it's just a part of your personality and I don't think you can separate it really. It's who you are. You would be like a robot, wouldn't you if you were

trying to follow certain things without feeling them? It's part of what makes you human." Lisa responded, "I've never thought about it before. I guess you could say 'yes.' Insight and just try and be aware of subtleties. Yes, I guess so. I guess just trying to be sensitive. It helps me when I am trying to be a sensitive parent." John stated, "Yes, I use it to anticipate what he is going to do." Joe's response to whether or not intuition aids him in his parenting was, "Yes. Just using intuition to help guide how you react to situations."

Summary of Intuition and Parenting

The participants discussed examples of how intuition aids them in a variety of parenting situations. For example, it helps in diagnosing illness and its severity, and being more sensitive to their children. It also aids in picking up subtle clues and influences their reactions to situations. Other examples ranged from assessing if someone is a safe caregiver and how to help a child adjust to the presence of a new sibling to everyday interactions.

Lisa's example of the potential pedophile shows how prior knowledge about reality coupled with intuition can add to the prevention of a negative outcome. Her knowledge of potential abuse leads her to use her intuition to assess the people around her children and decide if they are safe caregivers.

Conclusions

From intuition as a river and scale, to intuition as the data processing of a computer and a detective, the parents of this study all use their intuition in various aspects of their lives, including their parenting. Although there was difficulty in defining the word, the parents were still able to discuss and provide examples of its use and usefulness.

The results of this study indicate that the definition of intuition is vague at best. The participants encountered difficulty defining it. It seemed they did not have accurate words to describe it. On occasion, other terms such as insight clouded the issue further. As a result, it seemed difficult at times for them to provide examples clearly.

This study also seems to indicate that the stereotypical gender assumption of "women's intuition" being stronger than men's may not be totally accurate. In this study, the women mentioned their minds as the way they receive intuitive information, while the men mentioned feelings. Also, Lisa emphasized logic and facts as her preference for decisions, while the Joe

spoke more of a combination of both logic and intuition. From the study, it would seem that Joe uses his intuition more than Lisa. Thus, this stereotypical assumption may be inaccurate.

Parents of this study tend to rely on their family and personal experiences as major resources for their parenting. Although the sample indicated they had never verbalized their use of intuition in parenting prior to the study, they did believe it plays a role with varying degrees of importance depending upon the circumstances. Significant others, books, advice from successful parents, and gut feelings were mentioned also. Overall, this sample prefers to rely upon what they liked and /or did not like in their childhood as a guideline for their children.

This study suggests that there may be a relationship between intuition and personality. Two of the participants described characteristics that an intuitive person might possess. Further study into this is necessary.

A significant result from this study is that parents use their intuition throughout their parenting. As the children age, the manner in which they use their intuition may change, but it is still used. Jane, with her teenage sons, and Lisa, with her infant and preschooler, rely on their intuition to assess safety issues with their children. Despite the children's age differences, both find value in using their intuition to evaluate potential danger, whether it is a caregiver or a night at a friend's home.

Parenting can be an extremely complex task, involving both conscious and unconscious data. Often, a safe and successful outcome is important and the paths to that outcome are obscure. As stated by the participants throughout this study, intuition is very useful at such times, helping parents make better decisions. Intuition, a phenomenon that results from a combination of concrete learning, past experiences, the ability to detect subtle clues, and an indefinable "feeling" or subconscious sense, is an untapped resource for parents.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This section includes a summary of the major results found in this study. Next, the themes will be discussed relative to the theoretical perspective of Systems Theory and the current research. Implications and contributions to future research and practice will also be addressed.

Summary of Study

Origin of Study

This idea was identified when a review of the literature showed research on intuition in a variety of fields except family relations. Business, nursing, law, counseling, and education were among the areas where intuition literature was found. The studies suggested that intuition is a valid and important part of decision-making and competence. Thus, the topic of parenting and intuition for this study emerged. A phenomenological study was chosen as the appropriate methodology because it enabled the participants to fully explain their personal experiences.

Data Collection and Analysis

All of the participants volunteered upon learning of the topic for study. The researcher interviewed the participants individually with each interview lasting about an hour. Next, a professional transcriber transcribed the interviews. Upon completion of the transcriptions, each interview was read for an initial understanding and then re-read and compared to the taped interview. Corrections were made as necessary. Extraneous words were edited out and phrases were combined where useful. The text was read again looking for patterns, meanings, and a metaphor for each individual.

The purpose of this study was to learn more about parents' use of intuition in their parenting and how this affects their sense of competence in this area. Specifically, the research question was: How do parents describe their usage of intuition and how does it affect their sense of competence as a parent? Phenomenology was an appropriate means to this end as it seeks to capture the essence of the participant's experience.

Review of Significant Results

Intuition

Although they were ultimately able to describe it, each participant initially struggled to define the word "intuition." Some of them needed more time and pressed "stop" on the tape

recorder to think, while others asked me about my definition. In the end, words such as “subtle clues,” and “unconscious” were used, along with “insight” and a “knowing.”

Specifically, Jane described intuition as an innate part of one’s personality, an aspect that cannot be partitioned out. Similarly, Tesolin (2000) stated, “Intuition is deep listening, irrespective of reality or social and cultural conditioning. Through intuition we learn what is right by us, how to live and work with integrity, and how to express our truest selves” (p.76).

Lisa differentiated insight from intuition. She believed that intuition is a feeling, while insight is based more on facts, observations, and concrete, solid things you can put together. Gilpin and Clibbon (2000) also defined “intuition as a close sister of insight, insight perhaps being the knowledge side of the family and intuition the process side” (p.126).

According to Jane, intuition is “difficult to explain and (it’s difficult to explain) what impact it has.” It is possible that the challenge of defining the word had greater implications in this study. In effect, the sample was describing a phenomenon that was difficult to conceptualize, and therefore, difficult to recognize in daily life. Similarly, Michaud’s (1998) results also showed a quandary with the definition and concluded, “It is not then clear how it can be separated from such things as sloppy thinking, prejudice, conjecture, and just plain guessing” (p.22). The effort suggested by this study’s sample is indicative of the confusion in the literature. Michaud ultimately stated, there is a “certainty about it’s existence, yet it is difficult to define” (p.252).

Again, it is fascinating to note here that the women in the sample described an intuitive experience as in their mind, while the men described it primarily in terms of a feeling. Indicative of the cultural beliefs about women’s intuition, De Becker (1997) stated, “Husbands chide wives about ‘feminine intuition’ and don’t take it seriously” (p.12). He further stated, “If intuition is used by a woman to explain some choice she made or a concern she can’t let go of, men roll their eyes and write it off” (De Becker, p.12). A sexist view of intuition exists: It is a feminine trait; therefore, “inferior to the rationality of the masculine approach” (King & Appleton, 1997, p.198). Vaughan (1998) suggested, “There is no evidence that men and women are inherently different, (but) women in our society are not taught to repress feelings as much as men” (p.188).

De Becker (1997) continued to explain, “Men, of course, have their own version of intuition, not so light and inconsequential, they tell themselves, as the feminine stuff. Theirs is more viscerally named ‘gut feeling’...” (p.13). Vaughan (1998) agreed stating, “Boys, however,

are just as capable as girls when it comes to developing the intuitive functions of the right hemisphere of the brain” (p.188). This manner of thinking about women as more intuitive than men is prominent in our society, but did not hold true in this study sample.

This finding may be the result of the training of the participants. In their residency, the emphasis might be on thoughts rather than feeling causing the women to emphasize the use of their minds. Men, traditionally, are thought to do this and possibly do not believe they need to emphasize it. This result seems to veer away from the stereotypic belief that men tend to rely more on logic and rationality, while women tend to rely on empathy and feelings.

Interestingly, only one participant, Joe, described himself as “intuitive, but middle of the road.” Jane does not think she is more intuitive than anyone else, but given a choice, she will “go with what feels right.” Lisa does not describe herself as “intuitive,” nor does John describe himself as very intuitive; he uses “experience more than intuition.” This is an interesting point because one of the criteria for this purposeful sample was a supervisor recognized them as using their intuition in their work. Based on the subtleties in the definition, it could be that people do not realize when they are using their intuition. This would make it hard for them to recognize it as part of their personalities. It could also mean that there are other people, who may not realize their intuitive skills and knowledge, who are also using their intuition on a daily basis.

Two of the participants believed there might be a relationship between intuition and personality traits. Both Lisa and Joe described personality characteristics that someone who is intuitive might possess. Lisa described that person as “creative, artsy, and open minded.” Joe described him or her as, “more friendly, easier to get along with, more understanding, and this person could read others better; ultimately, increasing their ability to get along with others.” Tesolin (2000) would seem to agree with this, stating, “People who are more in touch with their intuitive skills are better listeners. They hear the whole story-the part you’re telling and the part you’re not telling” (p.77). This could increase one’s ability to get along with others. Furthermore, Tesolin recognized, “Intuitive people tend to have more energy and synchronicity because they are able to maintain a flow state that sustains the body and creative spirit” (p.77).

From Jane’s intuition flowing like a river and Lisa’s intuition, which processes data, to Joe’s detective type of intuition and John’s intuition as a balanced scale, everybody in this sample utilized their intuition to varying degrees. It would seem to follow that everybody has

some degree of intuition that can be accessed in a variety of circumstances. Furthermore, people who actively seek to use and develop their intuition might be more open minded, and as a result, better, more understanding listeners.

Parenting

Overall, the sample agreed that intuition is useful in their parenting in promoting the physical and emotional well being of the child. Illness was one of the situations that prompted the parents of this sample use their intuition. When their child is ill, there are clues that they seem to put together to diagnose the illness and what type of care the child does or does not need. The parents of this sample also seemed to rely on their intuition for safety concerns. Ranging from choosing a caregiver for an infant to decisions about whether a teenager can spend the night at a friend's house, intuition continually played a role. Generally, intuition appeared to be useful to this group of parents in helping them provide physical support to their children.

Intuition also helps in anticipating what a child will do in any given situation. John stated earlier that he uses his intuition to "anticipate what (his son) is going to do." This inevitably includes a wide range of circumstances, including physical and emotional needs. Emotional well-being seems equally important as it was also mentioned that intuition helps in decision-making when the child is upset. Joe provided an example of his daughter and her desire to go to the playground. His intuition helped him to realize that as long as his answer was "no," she would be upset. This helped him to allow her to express her sadness, rather than attempt to keep explaining the decision needlessly. Overall, the participants of this study mentioned using their intuition to try to avert negative outcomes.

Each participant briefly described his or her parents' parenting methods. Lisa described her parents as extremely loving and supportive, while Joe described his parents as unconditionally loving. Jane viewed her family as more "traditional and authoritarian," while John described his mother as supportive and the type of person who strives to make sure others get along. He described his father as "strict and rigid."

Despite the differences in parenting methods, each participant relied most heavily on their family for advice about their children. Currently, the sample said they replicate some of their parent's parenting methods with their own children. They use the methods that they felt were useful for them as children, and do not use those methods they disliked.

It is important to notice that none of the participants mentioned the use of intuition in their parents' parenting techniques. In this situation as well as countless others, it could be that due to its subtleties, nobody realized they were using it. In general, parents of our society are not taught that using their intuition can be useful and valid in parenting.

Systems Theory, Phenomenology, and Intuition

Parenting is a system, which consists of many different essential aspects. Parents assume responsibility for the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well being of their children. These responsibilities may be fulfilled in a variety of ways. The results of this study demonstrate that intuition is a useful tool for parents. It aids them in being more sensitive, anticipating events, evaluating safety, and understanding non-verbal cues.

The results of this study suggest a parallel between the experience of intuition and the experience of parenting. Both successful parenting and intuition seem to be cumulative experiences. According to this study, successful parenting includes love, acceptance, and patience. Each of these accumulates over time. The experience of intuition may be comparable because it requires experience and trust, which also build over time.

Unsuccessful parenting experiences mentioned in this study were circumstantial and intermittent. Intuition can also be wrong and lead to a negative outcome. These incidents may also be circumstantial and intermittent. Mistakes can be made in both situations. One's exhaustion, stress, illness, poor timing, and/or a misunderstanding can impact intuition as it can impact parenting.

Systems Theory and Phenomenology guided this study. They helped to create the basis for the interview questions as well as aided in the analysis. Both theoretical perspectives attempt to gain an understanding of the totality of the phenomenon under study. Similarly, this study sought to gain an understanding of the broad perspective of how parents are experiencing their intuition in their parenting and how using it might aid them in their competence.

Whitchurch and Constantine (1993) stated, "Human systems behave according to their collective definitional process, or meaning a thing has for them" (p.329). Culturally, intuition tends to be less acceptable than logic and research (De Becker, 1997; Easen & Wilcockson, 1995; Rosanoff, 1999; Takahasi & Bordia, 2000). Besides this, intuition has also been construed as a feminine trait, inferior to the rationality of a more masculine approach (King & Appleton,

1997). The lack of knowledge about intuition and negative connotations associated with it has caused society to view intuition and its usefulness as debatable.

The findings of this study seem to support the idea cited above that human systems behave according to a meaning something has for them. Currently in our society, intuition is not as valid as logic. This sample consisted of family practice physicians who are trained to study facts and be objective in their diagnosis. Their training as well as the power of our culture could create pressure that influences their opinions on intuition. The deep-seated cultural belief that intuition is something to be wary of could make it difficult for intuition to be accepted, explored, and ultimately, understood. While both analytical and intuitive information may be used to make decisions, most prefer to discuss the analytic reasoning because most organizations do not provide a supportive environment for discussing the use of intuition in decision-making (Schmidt, 1995). This factor could also be making it difficult for people, especially parents to feel comfortable, acknowledging their intuitions and discussing or following them. To do so, would mean going against the societal system and perhaps, suffering consequences as a result.

Thus far, this belief has hindered the use of intuition as a useful and natural resource. A good understanding of intuition seems to be lacking and maybe partially causing this association with mysticism and inferiority. Perhaps, some of the ideas originating from this study will help to clarify the concept.

Intuition as a Process

The results from this study show intuition as a process as shown in Figure 1 on page 80. Starting with a conscious foundation of past experiences and/or history and an awareness of subtle clues in the environment and continuing on to include an unconscious, innate, and seemingly spontaneous knowing, intuition seems to be part of a circular process on a continuum combining all these factors. Like Systems Theory, the process of intuition appears to be interrelated where each part of the progression is a necessary and influential in terms of the whole.



Figure 1. Intuition as a process on a continuum.

This process seems to build upon itself. As one acquires more experience and history, and becomes more adept at picking up subtle clues, one is able to build upon that foundation and see the holistic perspective which may lead to a seemingly spontaneous knowing.

Intuition as a System

The basis of a systems theoretical perspective is that there are interactions among all things (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). Schmidt's (1995) results from a Delphi Study indicated a relationship between intuition and systems thinking. Results from Schmidt's study results also suggest that the development of one's intuitive abilities will lead to a more integrative approach. Similar to the holistic approach of Systems Theory, "intuition is about seeing patterns, connecting with the wholeness..." (Schmidt, p.174).

Comparable to a family system with its subsystems of parents and children, intuition appears to be its own system. The physical systems in our body whether it is the brain utilizing the right or left hemisphere as a subsystem to further its aims, or the endocrine system using the subsystem of pancreas to help the body function, systems and subsystems are a part of our mind, body, and spirit. Likewise, it is possible that intuition may be part of a mental or spiritual system in the human body. Results from this study suggest that intuition plays a large role in assessing safety and health issues. Further support for this idea stems from the literature, which emphasizes intuition as necessary and useful, especially in times of uncertainty (Cioffi, 1997; Lank & Lank, 1995; Parikh, 1994; Ross, 1992; Thomson and Dowding, 2001; Ward, 1999). It would make sense that we are created with this internal intuitive system as way to help us survive.

Parents in this Study and Subsystems

From the viewpoint of intuition as a system, it would follow that it is made up of different subsystems. Based on this study, some examples of the subsystems are: an individual's past

experiences and/or history, and subtle clues found in the environment. Emotions, and/or mental thoughts, or any combination of the above might impact one's use of intuition as well as how he or she accesses it.

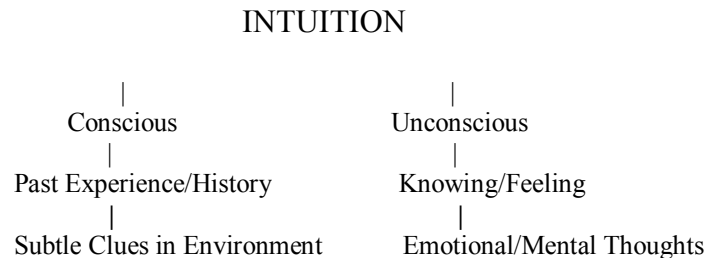


Figure 2. Intuition as a system with subsystems.

Individual past experiences and or history. This study found that past experiences and/or past history plays a part in an intuition. McCutcheon and Pincombe (2001) agree that experience, expertise, and knowledge are some of the pieces used in intuition. The nursing literature suggests that intuition is used among nurses of all levels, but especially among the experienced (Hams, 2000). Apparently, intuition has some basis in the past. It seems to create a foundation for an accurate anticipation of future events.

In the parenting and family system, prior experiences may help a parent intervene faster. For example, over time parents begin to understand more quickly when their infant is hungry, or tired. The past experiences help them to recognize and address the situation faster.

Subtle clues found in the environment. Most of the sample agreed that intuition consists of subtle clues in the environment that are put together in a holistic manner. The literature also supports this idea. De Laszlo (1959) explained Jung's definition of concrete intuition as a reaction directly based upon circumstances. In the parenting system, it could be that the infant has particular cries or expressions that mean specific needs are arising and need attention. Similarly, in an older child, different yet subtle non-verbal expressions may signify issues that need attention.

Emotions and mental thoughts. Participants of this study believed that intuition was a thought in their mind, such as a knowing. Parikh (1994) described the mental aspect of intuition; "It is frequently stated that a different kind or quality of clarity or certainty is experienced in the

mind during the intuitive process, which is also more intense” (p.42). Yewchuck (1999) likened this type of intuition to a flash following some kind of deliberation.

Another way of describing intuition was as an emotion. The literature supports this idea that an intuition “just feels right despite one’s inability to articulate the reason” (Shapiro & Spence, 1997, p.64). Michaud (1998) and Miller (1995) further support this idea that intuition has an emotional factor that indicates the accuracy of the information. Schmidt’s (1995) findings also indicate that intuition may surface through emotions.

De Becker (1997) ranked in order of urgency the ways intuition may surface. Many of these are feelings. The “intuitive signal of the highest order, the one with the greatest urgency is fear...” (De Becker, p.70). De Becker continued in descending order: apprehension, suspicion, hesitation, doubt, gut feelings, hunches, curiosity, nagging feelings, persistent thoughts, physical sensations, wonder, anxiety, and dark humor. Parents may experience this as a sense of fear or persistent thought cautioning them against any number of circumstances ranging from feelings about a new caregiver or teacher to feelings about an older child’s friend.

Subsystems in the Literature

The results from this study show potential subsystems; however, there are others mentioned in the literature. The physical level and spiritual beliefs and thoughts are two of these subsystems.

Physical level. At this level, intuition is felt through bodily sensations (Claxton, 2000; Holder, 1992; Yewchuck, 1999). These bodily sensations may be positive or negative. Parikh (1994) stated, “There seems to be a consensus that usually one experiences a kind of warmth, comfort, or vibration of positive energy during the intuitive process” (p.42). Schmidt (1995) agreed that many panelists believed that intuition is identified by a positive or negative physical response. Some of the positive responses were feelings of tranquility, relaxation, and clarity. A few of the negative ones were nervousness, fear, racing heart, and a tight stomach. At the physical level, parents may experience physical tension such as a stomachache or a feeling of discomfort in the presence of someone or a circumstance that seems precarious. Further research is necessary. A potential study might use a self-report assessment of physical sensations, decisions, and ensuing events.

Spiritual beliefs and thoughts. Although my sample did not suggest a spiritual dimension to intuition, and one member overtly stated that is not a “cosmic thing,” there is literature to support the idea. Schmidt’s (1995) Delphi results indicated, “The most frequently mentioned characteristic was the spiritual dimension of intuition” (p.159). Schmidt also indicated, in nonwestern philosophy and psychology, intuition has a spiritual component and is associated with altered states of consciousness. Research from the nursing literature suggests that nurses who often had intuitive experiences felt a “spiritual connection in (their) practice” (Miller, 1995, p.308).

Holder (1992) stated, “flashes of spiritual intuition can be called peak or mystical experiences” (p.44). Parikh (1994) described a sense of “heightened consciousness, luminosity, or ‘glow’” that accompanies true intuition (p.43). Yewchuck (1999) also described intuition with a spiritual aspect. Similar to Holder, Yewchuck agreed that this was also linked with mystical experiences, such as a direct transpersonal experience of the oneness of life.

Often parents experience a deep bond with their children. After giving birth, mothers frequently experience a sense of oneness with their children similar to a spiritual oneness. According to Davis-Floyd and Davis (1996), midwives are aware of this connection and value it as well as “a mother’s intuitive knowledge of herself and her baby, before, during, and after birth” (p.244).

The Ecosystem and Intuition as a System

Currently, the larger social context appears to have mixed feelings about intuition. “The basic problem for philosophers, psychologists, and everyone else is that they cannot be convinced of the reality of something they have not experienced” (Deikman, 1998, p.182). Research is accumulating in a variety of disciplines, which suggest that intuition is valid and necessary; however, the predominant cultural bias toward logic still exists. This may create a minor challenge for those who already recognize intuition’s value. The larger societal context may not be as supportive and this may create doubt or make it more difficult for people to express their intuitions and have them recognized and supported. Despite the current viewpoints, there is a growing amount of research devoted to the topic. Eventually, this could lead to a larger social context which recognizes the use of intuition.

Current Literature and This Study of Intuition

Support of the Literature

Definitions. This study supports and challenges the literature on intuition. This sample provided a definition of intuition. Some of the sample believed intuition is a knowing, and it is based on past history and experiences, while some mentioned picking up on subtle clues in the environment. Support for each of these exists in the literature. Cioffi's (1997) review of the nursing literature and McCutcheon and Pincombe's (2001) results suggested that experience does play a role in intuition. Eisengart and Faiver (1996) stated, "Intuition is in part a product of experience, because it relies on pattern recognition and association with data accumulated in memory over time" (p.44).

Some of the sample specifically stated it is part of an unconscious process. Eichler and Halseth (1992) suggested, "Although previous experience does not cause intuitive insights, there is a linkage between intuition and prior knowledge" (p.89). Jung suggested that intuitive perceptions arise unconsciously (De Laszlo, 1959). Recent literature also supports the idea that intuition occurs subconsciously (Baylor, 1997; Eisengart & Faiver, 1996; Iseneman, 1997; Lank & Lank, 1995; Michaud, 1998; Miller, 1995; Shapiro & Spence, 1997; Shirley & Langan-Fox, 1996).

As stated earlier, the difficulty in defining the word "intuition" is widespread (Nordberg, 1996; Michaud, 1998; Schmidt, 1995). Parikh (1994) stated, "It is not a concept without description, but neither is it a phenomenon that lends itself easily to detailed examination" (p.26). Baylor (1997) confirmed this difficulty, stating, "There is an element of mystery surrounding the concept of intuition" (p.185).

Some reasons for the difficulty with the definition were mentioned. Schmidt (1995) stated, "Our language is essentially linear...and it is not well suited to talk about intuition which is circular, systemic, and holographic" (p.16). Parikh (1994) explained, "One of the reasons that intuition continues to resist definition is that it seems so often to be completely idiosyncratic" (p.25).

Use in decision-making. This study also supports the existing research that says intuition is useful in decision making. The parents of this study reported using their intuition for decisions concerning health and safety issues. In the business literature, Parikh (1994) found that managers

also use their intuition in professional and personal decision making. De Becker (1997) supports intuition as an important part in decisions related to safety. Michaud's (1998) results also indicated that expert social workers believe that using their intuition aids in better decisions. Schmidt's (1995) sample of panelists also agreed that intuition is useful in decision-making. The nursing literature supports this as well (Cioffi, 1997; Thomas & Dowding, 2001).

Times of Uncertainty. The recent nursing literature suggests that intuition is especially useful in times of uncertainty (Cioffi, 1997; Thomas & Dowding, 2001). One member of the sample mentioned that intuition is helpful when there are "no guidelines" for a situation or when "there are a lot of problems and not an easy answer." Other members mentioned that their intuition is helpful when meeting new people. It can be inferred from these responses that intuition is beneficial to this sample when they face uncertainty.

Personality and relationships. Two members of this sample suggested that someone who is intuitive might have specific personality traits. These included more creativity/artsy, more open-minded, easier to get along with, and more friendly. These people might have an ability to read people better, and as a result, become a more understanding person. Parikh's (1994) results from a study with managers indicated that many agree with the statement, "Intuition contributes to harmonious interpersonal relationships" (p.66). Schmidt's (1995) study anticipated that developing intuition would enable people to be more sensitive to others, improve their communication, and connect in a more authentic and deeper manner.

Two studies using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) support this finding as well. Higgs (2001) study indicated that there is a correlation between those people who are intuitive on the MBTI and emotional intelligence. More specifically the results from this study suggest that "elements of interpersonal sensitivity" are more overt in those who are intuitive (Higgs, p.525). Harrington and Loffredo (2001) results suggested that intuitive types on the MBTI reported higher psychological well being with significantly higher scores on autonomy, personal growth, and positive relations.

Furthermore, Schmidt (1995) described the viewpoint of many panelists on the expansion of intuition and its influence on an individual and an organization. "They posited that highly intuitive individuals experience less doubt, fear, and uncertainty, have the ability to do gifted work, have sense of purpose and meaning in their lives, experience increased personal security in

their ability to have their needs met, and are able to relinquish the need to control outcomes which in turn eliminates the need to control others” (Schmidt, p.170). Schmidt continued with, “Within the organization, highly intuitive people are expected to be more visionary, more positive, less limiting, less fearful, more trusting, greater constructive risk takers, and to have a more hopeful attitude toward the future potential of the organization” (p.170). Overall, the findings of this study agree with many of the panelists of Schmidt’s study.

Safety. The mothers in this study specifically mentioned using their intuition to assess various situations for the safety and well being of their children. Although the children’s ages and circumstances were different, both provided examples of how their intuition is useful in determining potential safety risks to their children. De Becker (1997) supports this idea with the belief that intuition is the foundation of safety. Dossey (1999) mentioned a research survey that stated, “Twenty-one percent of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) parents and only two 2.1 percent of the control parents reported they’d indeed had a premonition that something was going to happen to their infant” (p.119). This is supportive of the idea that parents not only rely on their intuition in decisions regarding safety, but that they are also accurate.

When it is incorrect. The participants in this study believed intuition could be wrong; however, they found it challenging to provide an example. Other research supports the idea that it can be incorrect. Michaud’s (1998) results indicated that stress, illness, using the information incorrectly, and poor timing could lead to a poor outcome. McCutcheon and Pincombe’s (2001) results suggested that nurses are hesitant to discuss intuition when it is correct and may be more hesitant to discuss it when it is incorrect. De Becker (1997) explained it a little differently when he stated, “It is judgment and that is what gets in the way of your perception and intuition. With judgment comes the ability to disregard your intuition unless you can explain it logically, the eagerness to judge and convict your feelings rather than honor them” (p.30). It is still questionable whether intuition is right or wrong. It could be that various influences may override one’s ability to accurately interpret intuition’s messages.

Challenges to the Literature

Influences. This study challenges some of the literature. The sample of this study was asked to describe influences on their use of intuition. Three of the four members of the sample recognized that others, including significant others and coworkers, play a role. One member

believed that everything influences everything else and it is difficult to separate out the influences. Two members of the sample also suggested that time and experience improve intuition. These findings are both supported and challenged. Similarly, Michaud (1998) found that the support of others and experience do facilitate the use of intuition; however, self-confidence, and personal growth also played a part. Holder (1992) stated, “Self-trust is important to acting on one’s intuition and dealing with those times when one’s intuitive insights are inaccurate” (p.41). The findings from this study do not mention self-confidence, personal growth, or self-trust.

Creative solutions: There is literature to support the idea that intuition plays a part in the creative process (Garcia, 2001; Myers, 2002; Policastro, 1995). Throughout parenting, situations may arise that require unique solutions. This sample did not mention intuition as useful in creating solutions for those parenting dilemmas. Further research into this area could help clarify the role of intuition in solving unique parenting situations.

An abundance of information: Recent literature business suggested that intuition is especially useful when there is an overwhelming amount of information (Diliberto, 2002). This study challenges that belief. Although it seems logical for this to be true, nobody from this sample mentioned relying on intuition specifically in a situation where there is an overwhelming amount of information. Further research into this topic will clarify the role of intuition in situations where the amount of information is overwhelming.

Making diagnoses. Dossey (1999) stated, “All physicians have had the experience of ‘just knowing’ what a diagnosis is, with little or no information to go on. We attribute this to experience, but it’s more. It’s intuition, too...” (p.25). This statement implies that intuition is different from experience. The findings here challenge this statement because this sample attributed their diagnoses mostly to experience and subtle clues.

Limitations of the Study

This study contained limitations. For example, the sample had some challenges defining intuition. It would seem to follow that if it is hard to define, it is hard to discuss and pinpoint in-depth experiences where it played a role. At times, some of the participants shut off the tape recorder to think about their response. This topic is not easily defined, and the results may not be the only possibilities.

Some of the other limitations had to do with me. This topic is my choice for my dissertation and the participants were aware of this fact. The potential for this to influence their answers was present. Although it kept me free of bias, it could also be viewed as a limit that I am not a parent yet and have not had these experiences.

My training as a therapist and familiarity with the literature may have influenced the study in the sense that I had language and words for them when they were stuck. For example, after a period of time passed, I suggested the word “insight” when one of the participants was struggling for a particular word.

This sample was homogenous. All were family practice residents in a North Florida hospital. All of them were doctors and taught to use their objectivity, and logic, and to base their diagnoses on facts and research. This could influence their understanding of intuition and thus, impact their responses. Most of the sample was also close in age, with young, mostly male children. The similarities of the sample may impact the findings of the study.

Other limitations were present. Despite efforts to secure a very quiet setting, some of the interviews had a few interruptions. This may influence the concentration of the participants. Although nobody expressed it overtly, the tape recorder may have influenced the participant’s responses.

Implications

Research

This study raises questions for further research in various areas. It seems the next step from this study would be to establish a definition of intuition. A concrete operationalized definition would be helpful to ensure that all future research is studying the same phenomenon. The question of the differences and/or similarities between insight, instinct, and intuition need to be addressed. Are they different or the same? A qualitative study devoted specifically to developing a definition would be useful toward this end.

This study also raises questions about intuition in general. What is it that interferes with people listening to it? Can that be altered? Does intuition improve or not? One potential way to address this question is through a longitudinal study in which the sample keeps a diary of his or her intuitions and their accuracy. Some other questions for further study might be: Does it

improve with people who trust it or not? Is society more open to the idea of learning about intuition and using it as a resource?

The results from this study suggested that men use their intuition at least as often as women and experience it as a feeling. This challenges the stereotype that women are more intuitive than men and raises questions for future research. It could be that intuition is part of people's personality and not gender-based. A quantitative study assessing personality characteristics and use of intuition with a large sample of men and women will help clarify the relationship between intuition, gender, and personality.

Theoretically, this study also creates questions. In terms of Attachment Theory, what is the role of intuition in attachment? Is a secure attachment the result of parents who tend to be more intuitive? Is the level of attachment to the child associated with a parent's use of intuition? Does the intuition of a parent influence attachment style? What are the parenting practices of anxiously or ambivalently attached children?

In terms of Systems Theory, does parenting with a reliance on intuition impact the family dynamics? If so, how? Do those interactions flow more smoothly? Do the parents who utilize their intuition have improved relationships with their children? Do the children benefit from parents using their intuition in parenting?

This study also impacted the methodology of phenomenology. To yield more in-depth responses, it would be helpful to meet with the participants before the actual interview and briefly discuss the topic. It would also be helpful for the participants to keep a journal about their intuitive experiences over a period of time. An interview with the participant's significant others would also provide more insights. Ultimately, this would create a phenomenological study over a longer period of time with the potential for even deeper answers.

More exploration on this topic is certainly needed. Cross-cultural studies might yield more information on how other cultures utilize their intuition. More specifically, a study comparing Eastern and Western cultural beliefs about intuition might broaden our culture's limited trust in intuition. Studies on different cultures, their parenting practices, and use of intuition may further our knowledge on the variety of ways intuition can be beneficial in this realm.

Other questions that emerged from this study are in the area intuition development. Is intuition learned? Can it be taught or enhanced? How do you teach it? Pretest and posttest studies would be useful here to assess the change.

Another interesting aspect for future study would include studies in the realm of spirituality and intuition. Is there a relationship between faith and intuition? A phenomenological study exploring the nature of spiritual and intuitive experiences would also be useful. Studies, which examine the role of intuition in issues requiring long-term and those necessitating short-term faith, may help clarify the relationship between faith and intuition.

Parenting and intuition is another area that needs further study. A future study might use a sample of parents at a different educational level or different socioeconomic status. How is intuition in parenting different with children of various ages and stages? How does child gender impact parenting and intuition? Are parents more intuitive with one gender or one age group? Surveys instruments with scales could quantitatively assess how useful intuition is in parenting and what specific times is it most helpful. The scales would help to clarify these answers with a large sample.

Practice

This study on intuition and parent competence contributes to practice in a variety of ways. The results from this study also add to the existing literature in that it recognizes and validates intuition as important. Furthermore, the results from this study suggest that educating people about intuition could be beneficial

This sample indicated that intuition is used to help them in their parenting. From safety issues to calming an upset child, the parents interviewed believed that intuition is a useful piece of the parenting experience. It would seem to follow that creating programs to help parents further develop, utilize, and learn to trust this innate tendency would be beneficial. Paramedic preceptor programs and EMT programs are already beginning to teach their students about intuition (Nordberg, 1996). Although the interview for this study did not include questions about teaching intuition in a parenting program, it would seem to follow from the sample's overall responses that this could be helpful to them.

Including intuition in all levels of education could also be beneficial. More than half of Parikh's (1994) sample agreed that developing intuition would be a beneficial aspect of

education. Maxwell (1999) stated, “Not only in the schooling of our children must we address intuitive knowledge, but also in the preparation of our teachers” (p.96). Johnson and Daumer (1993) agreed, “In our role as developers of other’s minds, we have an obligation to encourage our students to use their right side as well as their left” (p.267). The authors further stated, “Fortunately, right-brain intuitive skills are as subject to learning and development as left-brain analytic skills” (p.264). Those in the helping professions such as family therapists, parent educators, child development specialists, social workers, and psychologists could use the information and skills they learned to help their clients. Training future researchers on the topic could help them to understand and conceptualize it more clearly.

The results also indicated that intuition is often used in to prevent or alleviate negative outcomes. Some questions for practice are: How can we utilize intuition to enhance positive situations and relationships? Then the question would become: How can we teach people to use their intuition to accomplish this? Answers to these questions may provide another avenue of fulfillment for people.

Contributions of this Study

Value of Intuition

This study makes a contribution to the existing literature on intuition as well as the literature on parent competence. The results from this study may initiate more discussions about intuition and its value. It can also help people to see intuition as more commonplace. Intuition is not something to be feared because it is not easily explained or validated. De Becker (1997) stated, “It may be hard to accept its importance, because intuition is usually looked upon by us thoughtful Western beings with contempt. It is often described as emotional, unreasonable, and inexplicable” (p.12). De Becker continued, “In fact, Americans worship logic, even when it’s wrong, and deny intuition, even when it’s right” (p.12). In general, the results from this research may cause people, and especially parents, to begin to see intuition as useful. This could lead to a desire to learn more and improve their intuition.

This study also addresses a gap in the research in the field of family relations. Dossey (1999), Gordon (2002), and Nordberg (1996) suggested that intuition is an important aspect of parenting. The results from this study also suggest that using intuition can help people be better parents. Miller (1995) created a scale to determine the characteristics of intuitive nurses. A

similar scale in field of family relations and parenting could be useful to assess characteristics of parents who are intuitive.

Rew (2000) created a scale for nurses specifically to recognize the use of intuition as a skill in clinical decision-making. The author suggests that this scale could be used for screening purposes “to identify individuals with expert potential” (p.104). One of the items on the scale reads, “Sometimes I act on a sudden knowledge about a patient to prevent a crisis from developing when I can’t explain it” (p.103). Similar to nurses, a parent could sense a crisis and avert it through listening to their intuition.

This nursing scale may lead the way for a similar one in family relations and parenting. This type of scale could be useful. It would provide more information on the topic and bring attention to the idea. Ultimately, it may help parents who did not realize they were using their intuition to recognize and clarify how their intuition plays a part in their parenting decisions.

Parenting Program Design

These results can also aid in designing programs for parents to start to develop and begin to utilize their own intuition. This type of program would provide research on intuition and how it can be useful in parenting. Given the results of this study and its indication that men also use their intuition in parenting, it is important to engage both men and women in this type of class.

In a smaller group, an assessment of their preference for left or right brain thinking could help to clarify each individual’s starting point. Holder (1992) suggested, “It is also important for the individual to understand how they experience intuition” (p.42). Describing the different types of intuition, mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical would help people to recognize their own method of obtaining intuitive information.

The development of intuition requires a supportive and relaxing environment. “The facilitator who creates a supportive, accepting environment enhances intuition among members” (Eichler & Halseth, 1992, p.87). Warm-up exercises could be helpful to foster a connection with the other group members (Eichler & Halseth).

The first skill to learn is how to quiet their mind and be in the present. Rea (2001) stated, “Above all it is one’s ability to silence the chatter of reflexive deliberation, analysis, and categorization that ultimately determines his or her sensitivity to intuitive information” (p.101).

One way to create this silence is through deep breathing, meditation, and/or centering exercises. This will enable the group to become more receptive to their intuition.

The group could do an exercise where they choose a parenting question and phrase it in the form of “yes” or “no” (Rosanoff, 1999). The next step is to take some deep breaths and let go of any tension, or concerns. Next, they imagine holding one word in each hand, noticing how they look and feel. It is helpful to repeat the question and focus on one word at a time to see how it feels. Does one feel heavier? Lighter? Using this information could help provide an answer to their question.

Rosanoff (1999) suggested another exercise to assess an opportunity or relationship. Both of these may relate to parenting. For example, this technique could be useful in assessing a caregiver, a child’s friend, and/or deciding whether or not to let a teenager go on a trip with friends. Rosanoff suggests thinking of the opportunity or relationship as something to wear. The next step is to try it on and see how it fits. The final step is to write down any impressions, thoughts, or feelings received.

In a workshop setting, it would be important to allow time for reflection and discussion of the exercises to help the group clarify their experiences. To further solidify the experiences, it might be useful to provide time to for the group to write down information.

There are many other ways to practice developing intuition. Guided imagery and visualizations can also help people who tend to use mental thoughts to develop this skill. Becoming proficient at a sport may help improve body awareness in those who tend toward physical intuition (Holder, 1992). Developing emotional intuition can be accomplished through therapy, and, personal growth workshops, and discussions with close friends. Each of these may foster the expression and awareness of feelings. Some ideas for developing spiritual intuition include: meditation, prayer, and/or attending a religious or spiritual group. Encouraging parents to keep track of their intuitive impressions in a journal over time could help them to develop the confidence and trust needed to follow their intuition.

Field of Medicine

In addition to adding knowledge to the field of family relations, this research also adds knowledge to the field of medicine. This study indicates that physicians do utilize their intuition at work. Davis (1991) stated, “Intuition is a form of thinking that allows us to take our

background body of scientific knowledge and adapt it to individual patients” (p.25). A physician who incorporates both intuition, which is a part of the nonlocal mind, and logic into a diagnosis will be more efficient than either method alone (Dossey, 1999). He clarified this statement; “I am not saying that doctors don’t need logic and reasoning, only that there are times when their conclusions cannot be predicted by the facts they have to work with” (Dossey, p.168). In reference to parents’ intuitions and medicine, Dossey stated, “The challenge for a physician is to develop the sensitivity to tell genuine premonitions from invalid ones” (p.120). Similar to the parent using their intuition to help their child, the physician can use his or her intuition to be sensitive and acknowledge the parent’s concern.

Conclusions

Although the sample in this study had some difficulty defining intuition, they were able to describe occasions where it was an important and practical aspect of their parenting. Each member of the sample had a different perspective on intuition, yet each one could define personal and/or professional incidents where they utilize it. Despite the challenges in defining the word, the basic essence of intuition is solid enough for people to recognize and acknowledge.

Overall, this research suggests that although intuition is valuable in parenting, it is not the only important piece. Rosanoff (1999) made a similar point when she stated, “Although it may still be seen as unconventional by a few, intuition is responsible for many business, scientific, and personal successes, and deserves to be used openly, though not solely, in all decision making environments” (p.162). Based on this research and within the confines of our cultural beliefs, it would seem beneficial for parents to integrate both knowledge and intuition in their parenting. Nordberg (1996) stated, “The best thing we can do is say, ‘The book says this, the facts say that, and my intuition tells me this. Now, how can I bring them all together?’” (p.38). This statement reiterates the idea that both intuition and facts are necessary components of any type of decision.

This study provides more information on the value of intuition. Despite the challenge in defining it, this study along with each piece of literature cited indicated that intuition is something we all use. “Intuition is more than a toy for the psychic or inspiration for the artist. It is a method for our mental and physical development for a new age of humane and responsive stewardship over the resources of our world” (Parikh, 1994, p.24). The more we can strive to understand intuition, the more of a resource it may become.

The metaphors described throughout this study can become resources that provide clues into intuition. The river shows that intuition is a natural process where ideas just flow into our minds. Sometimes it may seem as if the information is pouring in, and at other times, it may seem to trickle into our minds. Regardless of the variety in speed and depth, the river of intuition continuously flows.

Intuition, similar to the data processing of a computer, is a process that is not visible to the human eye. Like the data entered into a computer, data is also entered into our mind in the forms of information and experience, and like the computer output, an idea may appear in our mind and we will never see the process. Although many people do not understand exactly how to input data into a computer, they may still see its value. Similarly, we may not be able to understand the process of intuition, yet we can still recognize its value.

The detective aspect of intuition reminds us to be aware of the subtle clues in our environment when we are searching for answers. It also reminds us that intuition speaks to us in subtle forms and to be aware of those clues as well. It is in these seemingly minor details that intuition appears.

Intuition as a balanced scale demonstrates thinking in its highest form. The steadiness of thought balanced between the left hemisphere with its logic and facts, along with the right hemisphere with its intuition and creativity, can lead to more inclusive answers to the questions in parenting and in our lives.

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Stefanie Green, M.A., who is a doctoral student at Florida State University, has requested my participation in a research study entitled “Meanings and Experiences of Parent Intuition and Competence.” I understand the purpose of her research project is to better understand the role intuition may play in parent competence. I understand that if I participate in the project I will be asked questions about my use of intuition, and my parenting as well as general information about myself.

I understand that I will be asked to participate in one in-depth interview lasting approximately one to one and one half hours. I understand that I may be asked for another interview if clarification of my answers is needed or new questions arise. I understand that my participation is totally voluntary and that I may stop participation at any time. My interviews will be kept confidential to the extent required by law, and I will choose what name I wish to appear on any of the findings. I understand that my interviews will be tape-recorded for accuracy and the researcher will keep these tapes in a locked box. I understand only the researcher will have access to these tapes and they will be destroyed by December 2007.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts if I agree to participate in the study. Stefanie Green will be available to talk with me should any discomfort arise while participating in the study.

I understand there are benefits for participating in this research project. First, I may gain an awareness of how I use my intuition in parenting and in my life. Also, I will be helping to further along the helping professions in their attempts to understand intuition.

I understand that this consent may be withdrawn at any time without prejudice, penalty, or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I have been given the right to ask and have answered any inquiry concerning the study. Questions, if any, have been answered to my satisfaction. In the future, I understand that I may contact Stefanie Green at Florida State University College of Human Sciences at 850-644-5756; at home at 850-656-1796; e-mail Stefaniejg@cs.com or Marsha Rehm, Ph.D. at 850-644-7776 for answers to questions about this research, my rights, or to receive support.

I have read and understand this consent form.

Subject

Date

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW

1. Please describe some of your personality characteristics. Is intuition one of your personality traits? Do you see any correlation between personality characteristics and use of intuition?
2. Please explain to me how you portray intuition.
3. Please describe to me what an intuitive experience feels like.
4. Please describe all of your most successful parenting experience. What factors went into that success?
5. Have you experienced using intuition in parenting? Explain. How did it differ with each child? How did the child's age impact the experience?
6. Do you view intuition as valid? Explain.
7. In these experiences, what supported your ability to use your intuition?
8. Parenting is not always easy nor is it clear-cut on how to parent. Inevitably, parents can make mistakes or their intervention is unsuccessful. Please describe a time when this occurred and how intuition impacted this experience. Was it helpful or not? Generally, do you feel your intuition is wrong in some cases? Please explain.
9. In comparison to others, please describe how intuitive you are. Explain.
10. What other resources do you use to guide your parenting?
11. How do you assess what your children need?
12. Are you more intuitive with one child? Please explain.
13. Before becoming a parent, when did you first discover the use of intuition?
14. How often do you think it works? Please explain.
15. Has it improved? What helped it to improve? Does time play a role in its improvement?

16. How do other aspects of your life influence your use of intuition? (e.g., job, social life, peers, supervisors, spouse, volunteer activities) Are they supportive/a hindrance?
17. Please describe your parent's parenting techniques? Does that have an influence?
18. Has intuition influenced decision-making when your child is ill?
19. How do you integrate intuition with other techniques?
20. Do you feel you use the information from intuition correctly? Please explain.
21. Are there defining moments when intuition became a resource?

APPENDIX C
DEMOGRAPHIC SHEET

Male_____ Female_____

Age_____

Educational Level_____

Religion_____

Marital Status_____

Length of Marriage_____

Number of Children_____

Please list ages and sex of children:_____

APPENDIX D

HUMAN SUBJECTS APROVAL



Office of the Vice President
For Research
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2763
(850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Human Subjects Committee

Date: 12/5/2002

Stefanie Green
2626 East Park Ave Apt 10202
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Dept.: Family and Child Sciences

From: David Quadagno, Chair 

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research
Meanings and Experiences or Parent Intuition and Competence

The forms that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and two members of the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be exempt per 45 CFR § 46.101(b) 2 and has been approved by an accelerated review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If the project has not been completed by **12/4/2003** you must request renewed approval for continuation of the project.

You are advised that any change in protocol in this project must be approved by resubmission of the project to the Committee for approval. Also, the principal investigator must promptly report, in writing, any unexpected problems causing risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols of such investigations as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations. This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Protection from Research Risks. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: Dr. Marsha Rehm
HSC No. 2002.631



Office of the Vice President
For Research
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2763
(850) 644-5260 · FAX (850) 644-4392

REAPPROVAL MEMORANDUM
from the Human Subjects Committee

Date: 12/18/2003

Stephanie Green
2636 E. Park Avenue #10202
Tallahassee, FL 32301

From: David Quadagno, Chair *DQ*

Dept.: Family and Child Sciences

Re: Reapproval of Use of Human subjects in Research:
Meanings and Experiences of Parent Intuition and Competence

Your request to continue the research project listed above involving human subjects has been approved by the Human Subjects Committee. If your project has not been completed by 12/4/2004 please request renewed approval.

You are reminded that a change in protocol in this project must be approved by resubmission of the project to the Committee for approval. Also, the principal investigator must report to the Chair promptly, and in writing, any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chairman of your department and/or your major professor are reminded of their responsibility for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in their department. They are advised to review the protocols of such investigations as often as necessary to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

Cc: Marsha Rehm
HSC No. 2003.714-R

Meanings and Experiences of Parent Intuition and Competence
Informed Consent

Stefanie Green, M.A., who is a doctoral student at Florida State University, has requested my participation in a research study entitled "Meanings and Experiences of Parent Intuition and Competence." I understand the purpose of her research project is to better understand the role intuition may play in parent competence. I understand that if I participate in the project I will be asked questions about my use of intuition, and my parenting as well as general information about myself.

I understand that I will be asked to participate in one in-depth interview lasting approximately one to one and one half hours. I understand that I may be asked for another interview if clarification of my answers is needed or new questions arise. I understand that my participation is totally voluntary and that I may stop participation at any time. My interviews will be kept confidential to the extent required by law, and I will choose what name I wish to appear on any of the findings. I understand that my interviews will be tape-recorded for accuracy and the researcher will keep these tapes in a locked box. I understand only the researcher will have access to these tapes and they will be destroyed by December 2007.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts if I agree to participate in the study. Stefanie Green will be available to talk with me should any discomfort arise while participating in the study.

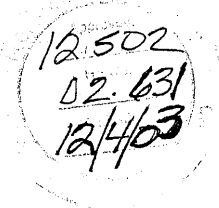
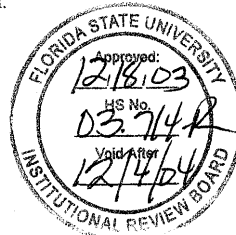
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I understand that this consent may be withdrawn at any time without prejudice, penalty, or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I have been given the right to ask and have answered any inquiry concerning the study. Questions, if any, have been answered to my satisfaction. In the future, I understand that I may contact Stefanie Green at Florida State University College of Human Sciences at 850-644-5756; at home at 850-656-1796; e-mail Stefaniejg@cs.com or Marsha Rehm, Ph.D. at 850-644-7776 for answers to questions about this research, my rights, or to receive support.

I have read and understand this consent form.

Subject

Date



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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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