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**Intuitive Inquiry: An Epistemology of the Heart
for Scientific Inquiry**

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The heart has its reasons that reason cannot know.

—Blaise Pascal, philosopher

ABSTRACT: Intuitive inquiry is a hermeneutical research method that joins intuition to intellectual precision. Intuitive researchers explore topics that claim their enthusiasm and invite the inquiry to transform both their understanding of the topic and their lives. As a method, intuitive inquiry seeks to both describe what is and envision new possibilities for the future through an in-depth, reflection process of interpretation. Five types of intuition are identified, namely (a) unconscious or symbolic processes, (b) psychic or parapsychological experiences, (c) sensory modes, (d) empathetic identification, and (e) the illuminating presence of wounds in the personality. Five iterative cycles of interpretation are explicated: Cycle 1, Clarifying the Research Topic; Cycle 2, Identifying Preliminary Lenses; Cycle 3, Collecting Original Data and Preparing Summary Reports; Cycle 4, Transforming and Refining Lenses; and Cycle 5, Integration of Findings and Literature Review. Each cycle is illustrated with examples from current research. As a new research method, there are many challenges to doing intuitive inquiry well, including (a) being rigorously aware of one's internal processes or perspective, (b) avoiding circularity, (c) telling the truth, (d) auspicious bewilderment, (e) writing in one's own voice, (f) imagining the possible, and (g) risking personal transformation. In conclusion, Resonance and Ef-

ficacy Validity are introduced as new ways to evaluate the validity of postmodern research.

Intuitive inquiry is an epistemology of the heart that joins intuition to intellectual precision in a hermeneutical process of interpretation. From the start, intuitive researchers explore topics that claim their enthusiasm, honor their own life experiences as sources of inspiration, and invite the research process to transform not only their understanding of the topic but their lives. Long claimed as essential to wisdom in indigenous and spiritual traditions worldwide, the subtle ways of the heart nourish and balance analytic ways of knowing. In a series of iterative cycles of interpretation, the researcher refines and challenges their initial understandings through personal and in-depth reflection on the stories and accounts of others, always seeking new and renewed understanding.

In pursuing matters of the heart, intuitive inquiry is also a creative process that seeks to bridge the gap between art and science. I encourage my doctoral students to find research topics that seem to be chasing them, pursuing them. Often, what a researcher feels "called" to study may be a call from the culture at large for change. A universal need is often disclosed by the particular and the personal (Anderson, 1998, 2000). For both the artist and the intuitive researcher, expression of art and science is found in the "in between"—not me, or it, but between my inspiration and the data and research participants in what Ken Wilber (2000) refers to as the intersubjective in his integral vision of human consciousness. Here in the depths of between me and other is what spiritual traditions usually refer to as Spirit—that unfathomable mystery that forms the mix of creativity. In so doing, intuitive inquiry focuses not only on the present but also on the future, seeking to inspire, invite change, and reveal what the present reveals of future possibilities. Put more pointedly, intuitive inquiry is a search of new understandings through the focused attention of one re-

searcher's passion and compassion for themselves, others, and the world.

Clearly, intuitive inquiry is *not* for every researcher or every topic. Not every researcher is willing or able to explore the spontaneous and startling nature of the psyche, as so often happens in the course of an intuitive inquiry. Many topics in psychology, and the human sciences generally, do not even require such an in-depth, reflective process. Therefore, while certain aspects of intuitive inquiry can be used in any scientific inquiry and blended with other methods; as a hermeneutical process of interpretation, intuitive inquiry is intended for the study of complex human topics. I developed intuitive inquiry pragmatically to support my doctoral students' research on complex topics often characteristic of psycho-spiritual development, such as "right" body size for women (Coleman, 2000), the healing presence of a psychotherapist (Phelon, 2001), grief and other deep emotions in response to nature (Dufrechou, 2002), true joy in union with God in mystical Christianity (Carlock, 2003), storytelling and compassionate connection (Hoffman, 2003), and the dialectics of embodiment among contemporary female mystics (Esbjörn, 2003) among others. Such topics are more likely to be found in the fields of humanistic, transpersonal, and positive psychology, and their complementary forms in other human sciences.

Initially, I developed intuitive inquiry as a general qualitative approach that incorporated intuitive and compassionate ways of knowings in selection of a research topic, data analysis, and presentation of findings (Anderson, 1998). Later, I developed a hermeneutical structure of iterative cycles of interpretation to give more form and clarity to the intuitive process (Anderson, 2000). In its initial development, intuitive inquiry was informed by feminist theory and research (e.g., Nielsen, 1990; Reinharz, 1992), heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990), and Focusing (Gendlin, 1978) and liberation social movements (e.g., Boff, 1993; Gutierrez, 1990) and later by hermeneutics (e.g., Bruns, 1992; Husserl, 1989; Packer & Addison, 1989; Romanyshyn, 1991). More recently, the phenomenology of the

lived body (e.g., Abram, 1996; Levin, 1985; Merleau-Ponty, 1962, 1968; and Gendlin's (1991, 1992, 1997) "thinking beyond patterns" have influenced my understanding of intuitive inquiry. This overview updates the hermeneutical structure of intuitive inquiry with what I have learned from my doctoral students who have used the method in their dissertations¹ and is intended as a primer for researchers wanting to use intuitive inquiry.

What is intuition?

Carl Jung (1933) thought intuition irrational because it often eludes our attempts to rationally understand its character. We may witness our intuitions and discern their triggers. We can describe how intuitive insights assist or confound life decisions. But, the nature of intuition seems more akin to how we play a musical instrument or touch a lover. Spanish poet, Federico Garcia Lorca (1992) describes music, dance, and spoken poetry as arts particularly mysterious and grand "because they require a living body for interpretation and because they are forms that perpetually live and die, their contours are raised upon an exact presence" (p. 165). In one moment, intuition seems vibrant and breathtaking to behold—and then it disappears.

Five types of intuition

Roberto Assagioli (1990), Arthur Diekman (1982), Peter Goldberg (1983), Carl Jung (1933), Arthur Koestler (1990), and Frances Vaughan (1979) have explored the dynamic nature of intuition. The typology of intuition presented below is practical in nature, describing how intuition manifests in the creative process based on my own observations in research, research supervision, and life. Of course, behaviors typical to one type often blend with other types in everyday experience².

1) Unconscious and Symbolic Processes.

Unconscious and symbolic processes have been explored in psychoanalytic theory and archetypal psychology and even a summary is beyond the scope of this article.

2) Psychic or Parapsychological Experiences.

Conventionally, psychic and parapsychological phenomena are unacknowledged in furthering the insights of scientific research, despite their common occurrence. Such direct and unmediated experiences would include telepathy, clairvoyance, or precognitive experiences that take place at a distance. Recently, Braud (2003) detailed a full range of such experiences that have been the subject of experimental research. Since such experiences are typically encouraged by our heart-felt feelings of connection with others, a researcher's personal connection to a topic and to their research participants is likely to encourage such experiences.

3) Sensory Modes of Intuition

In addition to the five special senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch; proprioception (inner body senses) and kinesthesia (sense of movement) serve as intuitive channels, conveying subtle forms of information typically unavailable to the thinking mind. Typically, information from preceptors in joints, ligaments, muscles, and viscera are subliminal to awareness (Olsen, 2002). Yet brought to awareness, the same body senses that signal danger, beauty, and novelty in everyday life can be finely tuned to serve intuition and imagination. Awareness of proprioceptive and kinesthetic signals can be enhanced through attention and specialized training, such as techniques such as Focusing developed by psychologist Eugene Gendlin (1978, 1991, 1992, 1997), Authentic Movement developed by practitioners Mary Whitehouse, Janet Adler, and Joan Chodorow (Adler, 2002; Pallaro, 1999). In my own work, I have sought to cultivate enhanced body awareness

through Embodied Writing, a research technique that records the finely textured nuances of lived experience, awakening the senses in the writer and inviting a kindred resonance in readers (Anderson, 2001, 2002a, 2002b).

4) *Empathetic Identification.*

Through empathetic identification or compassionate knowing (Anderson, 1998, 2000), writers, actors, psychotherapists, or scientists inhabit the lived world of another person or object of study. Via a seamless display of gesture and temper of voice, an actor convinces an audience that Macbeth is present. Psychotherapists attend to the life world of their clients, seeing the world through the clients' eyes, helping them see possibilities they cannot see for themselves alone. Similarly, biochemist Jonas Salk (1983) trained himself with what he called an "inverted perspective." He would imagine himself as a virus or cancer cell and ask how he would act if he were a virus or cancer cell³.

Intrinsically, empathetic identification intrinsically invites a full spectrum of sensory awareness, especially the more unconscious processes of proprioception and kinesthesia. It seems that we need only to remind ourselves of what we did naturally as children. During the initial stages of identifying a research topic, Cycle 1, I often lead meditations designed to facilitate the researcher's empathic identification with an object strongly associated with the research focus. In one such meditation, a student who is studying the effects of long-distance hiking chose to identify with her own well-used hiking boots and discovered physical and emotional properties of long-distance hiking that she had not consciously identified before.

5) *Through Our Wounds.*

Having conducted and supervised research for many years, I am poignantly aware that an individual's intuitive style tends to settle along the fault lines or wounds in the personality in a

manner akin to the concept of the wounded healer described by Catholic priest and contemplative Henri Nouwen (1979). For Nouwen, our human wounds are sites both of suffering and hospitality to the divine.

From a spiritual perspective, wounds are also openings to the world. Explorations along the fault lines of the personality invite change and transformation. The topics my students choose to explore in research are often the aspects of their personalities that seek healing either within themselves or with the culture at large, or both. The topics often seem to mark places in their psyches where they burn brightly. In turn, the findings tend to illuminate this realm of human struggle for us all. Indeed, the ways of intuition can also be so personal that it is darn right embarrassing. Some researchers are distressed to find that the very aspect of their personal history that they have been avoiding for years is a prime source of insight and discovery. Others regress to childhood behaviors, bringing them slowly into the light of awareness in a manner not unlike the course of psychotherapy. Sometimes these processes and insights are strictly personal and sometimes they shed light directly on the topic of inquiry, or both. As a research supervisor, I help new researchers to distinguish the difference between personal and research insights and sometimes suggest that they seek outside professional assistance.

Five cycles of hermeneutical interpretation

Intuitive inquiry is a hermeneutical research process requiring at least five successive cycles of interpretation. In Cycle 1, the researcher clarifies the research topic via a creative process described below. In Cycle 2, intuitive researchers reflect upon their own understanding of the topic in light of a set of texts found in extant literature about the topic and prepares a list of preliminary interpretative lenses. These Cycle 2 lenses describe the researcher's understanding of the research topic *prior* to collecting original data. In Cycle 3, the researcher collects original data and prepares summaries, content analyses, or portraits of research participants. In Cycle 4, the researcher pre-

sents a final set of interpretative lenses that have been transformed in light of personal engagement with the original data gathered in Cycle 3. In Cycle 5, the researcher integrates Cycle 4 lenses with empirical and theoretical literature reviewed at the start of the study, as is customary in the Discussion section of any research report.

By convention in hermeneutics, the hermeneutical circle of interpretation involves a forward and return arc (e.g., Packer & Addison, 1989). Cycles 1 and 2 of intuitive inquiry represent the forward arc in a process of identifying the topic and clarifying pre-understandings. Cycles 3, 4, and 5 represent the return arc in a process of transforming pre-understanding via the understandings of others. The number of interpretative cycles may increase if the researcher wishes to supplement the research endeavor with resonance panels, as described later in this article. Each iterative cycle changes, refines, and amplifies the researcher's interpretation of the experience studied. Both internal data known only to the researcher and externally verifiable data accompanies each cycle.

For readers familiar with my first presentation of intuitive inquiry as a hermeneutical process of inquiry (Anderson, 2000), I have made three significant changes to the sequence and contents of the iterative cycles. First, I have discovered that many researchers need to prepare a summary of the data prior to preparing their final set of interpretative lenses in order to (a) help to organize the huge amount of data before them and (b) honor the individual voices of the research participants prior to interpretation. This presentation tries to remain as descriptive and non-interpretative as is possible and reasonable. The second major change moves the presentation of the researcher's final interpretative lenses from what was formerly called Cycle 3 to Cycle 4, as a logical consequence of adding a conventional presentation of data. The third change adds an additional cycle, Cycle 5, a formal presentation that integrates the Cycle 4 lenses in light of the Literature Review, as suggested by my colleague William Braud some years ago. I have added it to emphasize the importance of integrating research

findings and prior research and theory, even though doing so is conventional for the Discussion section.

Given the spiraling acts of interpretation in intuitive inquiry, it is not always clear where to present the iterative cycles of intuitive inquiry in a conventional research report. My students and I have made different choices over the years. Generally speaking, though, the clearest presentation is to place Cycle 1 and a clear statement of the research topic at the end of the Methods section and relay Cycles 2 and Cycle 3 as two separate Results sections. The best placement of the results of Cycle 4 and 5 is in the Discussion section, thereby honoring the clearly interpretative nature of Cycles 4 and 5. The articles illustrating the use of intuitive inquiry in this issue of *The Humanistic Psychologist* by Cortney Phelon (2004), Jay Dufrechou (2004), Sharon Hoffman (2004), and Vipassana Esbjörn-Hagens (2004) offer a simplified report-writing style for intuitive inquiry. Wherever the cycles are placed in the research report, researchers should label each cycle with headers naming the interpretative cycles so they can be clearly identified by readers unfamiliar with the requirements of intuitive inquiry. Research proposals should include a presentation of Cycle 1 and a clear statement of the research topic in the Methods section. Some researcher may wish to include Cycle 2 in research proposals as well.

Examples from the dissertation research of Becky Coleman (2000) and Susan Carlock (2003) illustrate the five interpretative cycles described below. The nomenclature used in these articles for identifying the iterative cycles has been revised in light of the changes to cycles noted above.

Cycle 1: Clarifying the Research Topic

In conventional research, a researcher typically chooses a research topic based on current research in our areas of academic specialization and scholarly interest. In intuitive inquiry, however, the researcher begins by selecting a text or image that repeatedly attracts or claims the intuitive researcher's attention

and relates to his area of interest in a general and often obscure and unconscious way.

When teaching intuitive inquiry, I begin the first class by leading a meditation that helps doctoral students to find a text or image that invites their attention around their research interests. Students are often surprised by what appears during these meditations. For example, in a study of the true joy among Christian mystics, Susan Carlock (2003) was surprised to find a visual image of the Pieta by Michelangelo appearing in her imagination for Cycle 1. Later in her study, she discovered the element of suffering was essential to understanding true joy among Christian mystics. In intuitive inquiry, text and images are broadly defined. Cycle 1 texts and images have included a photograph, paintings, symbol, sculpture, songs, recordings, poem, sacred text or scripture, interview transcript, recorded dreams, or record of a meaningful transformative experience directly related to the topic of study.

Once the text or image is identified, the intuitive researcher enters Cycle 1 interpretation by engaging with the text or image daily and recording both data that can be externally verified and data based on the researcher's internal processes and perception. Researchers spend at least half an hour a day (or approximately an hour every other day) reading, listening, or viewing the identified text. Thoughts, ideas, daydreams, conversations, impressions, visions, and intuitions occurring during sessions, immediately after sessions, and at other times as pertinent are recorded in a noninvasive manner, so to least disrupt the stream of consciousness typically accompanying intuitive insight. Notebooks, hand-held tape recorders, and art supplies should be readily available to support recording of thoughts, images, and impressions. This process of engagement with the text or image should be continued until the creative tension between the intuitive researcher and the text or image feels resolved and complete.

By repeatedly engaging with a potential text in a process of observation, inward reflection, dialogue, and perhaps medi-

tation, impressions and insights converge into a focused research topic. A suitable topic for intuitive inquiry is:

- 1) Compelling. For a research topic to sustain the researcher's interest and energy, it should inspire the motivations and intellectual passions of the researcher.
- 2) Manageable. If the researcher is a dissertation student, the topic should be potentially "do-able" in one or two years for fulltime doctoral students, including time for rest and relaxation, once the research proposal is complete. Of course, personal life events and research logistics can complicate and delay any research endeavor as most researchers know only too well.
- 3) Clear. Good research topics can be expressed easily in one sentence. The more a researcher understands a research topic the simpler the basic statement of intent becomes.
- 4) Focused. A simple and focused topic with significant implications for human experience is preferable to large, ambiguously defined topics.
- 5) Concrete. The research topic should be directly related to specific behaviors, experiences, or phenomena.
- 6) Researchable. Some topics are too grand or do not (yet) lend themselves to scientific inquiry.
- 7) Promising. A topic is promising when it signifies an experience of something that is still unknown or appears to beg understanding. Since the topics pursued in intuitive inquiry tend to be at the growing tip of cultural understanding, it is often the case the only intuitive researcher can evaluate the potential importance of a given topic at the start of the inquiry.

Cycle 2: Developing the Preliminary Lenses

Cycle 2 requires the researcher to lay bare personal values and assumptions about the research topic as preliminary lenses *prior* to collecting original data. In identifying preliminary lenses, the researcher and eventually the reader of the final research report can evaluate the course of change and transformation that follows in Cycles 3, 4, and 5. Time after time, researchers who personally contact me about intuitive inquiry (presumably because they like it) exclaim with a note of incredulity that "It's so honest!"

In order to disclose and identify the researcher's values and assumptions about the topic, the researcher re-engages the research topic through a set of theoretical, research, literary, or historical texts describing the topic. By engaging in a dialectic and reflective process with the selected texts, the researcher clarifies her values and assumptions about the topic and articulates them as stated preliminary lenses. Lenses are *both* a way of viewing a topic and what is seen. We all "wear" lenses all the time, albeit usually unconsciously so, interpreting our lives through our personality histories and habits. The articulation of lenses is not intended to identify and bracket assumptions from influencing the research process, so as to set them aside. Rather, intuitive inquiry is boldly hermeneutical and personal in nature. In articulating preliminary lenses, the intuitive researcher consciously places preliminary lenses in full scrutiny and invites their transformation, revision, removal, amplification, and refinement as cycles of interpretation proceed. Cycle 2 usually takes place at the same time as the researcher is writing a review of the theoretical and research literature on the topic.

After a period of intense engagement with the selected texts, the initial phase of developing the interpretative lenses is usually easy and fast, more analogous to brainstorming than a formal process. At a certain point, the researcher has read and pondered enough and prepares a list of possible lenses quickly. The initial list is often long because it tends to include every-

thing the researcher feels and thinks about the topic without any attempt to prioritize. After brainstorming the initial list, the researcher re-engages with the selected texts on a daily basis in order to note consistent patterns or clusters of ideas in her understanding of the topic. Through a process of combining, reorganizing, and identifying emerging patterns, the list typically shortens to less than a dozen.

An example will help to clarify the process of Cycle 2. In Susan Carlock's (2003) study of true joy among Christian mystics, Carlock reviewed the writings and lives of four Christian mystics to study in depth in order to identify her Cycle 2 lenses. She chose to study texts written by Christian mystics whose lives overflowed with joy and who wrote about their experience of joy. The four mystics chosen for Cycle 2 were Francis of Assisi, Clare of Assisi, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and Brother Lawrence. After a period of reflection and contemplation on the texts, Carlock brainstormed 33 initial lenses. After a period of resting and withdrawal from focused attention on the writings, Carlock synthesized the list of 33 lenses to 6 for her final Cycle 2 lenses: (a) inward poverty in the giving up of pleasures of the world, (b) imitation of the life and character of Christ, (c) willing surrender of the self to God, (d) the love of God for sake of God alone, (e) desire for the direct presence of God, and (f) openness to God's love even amid God's apparent absence.

Cycle 3: Collecting Data and Preparing Summary Reports

In this phase, the researcher collects textual data bearing on the topic and prepares summary reports in as descriptive a manner as possible. This data may be collected via interviews from research participants or extant texts that meet specific criteria. First, the researcher identifies the target population or texts, and creates procedures for recruiting a sample of participants from that defined population or texts from a defined body of literature. Second, the researcher defines criteria for selecting participants or texts that speak directly and articulately to the research topic and dismisses participants or texts that detract

from a clear understanding of the topic. After data collection, the researcher organizes or summarizes research data using conventional thematic content analysis, descriptive summaries, or portraits (Moustakas, 1990). These summary reports allow the researcher to review and organize the data prior to interpretation in Cycle 4 and allow readers to review the data in a descriptive form.

Often, interviews generate stories. Sometimes stories must remain as a unit and not be subjected to analysis because analysis breaks up the integrity of the story. If a researcher wishes to use intuitive inquiry, the written portraits or stories in outline form should be presented intact in Cycle 3 *without* analyses. Cycles 4 and 5 follow as described below. For example, Susan Carlock (2003) chose another group of mystical texts for Cycle 3 in the study described above. Cycle 3 summaries included a portrait of the mystics' understanding of true joy set in historical context.

In a study of "right" body size for women, Becky Coleman (2000) chose to study the process of healing obesity in 6 large women, including herself as both researcher and participant. All the women viewed their issues with food and weight as walking "the fine line between sustaining unconditional positive regard for themselves and honoring their own healthy need for change" (p. 2). Her criteria for selecting the women in her study included women who: (a) had been obese at least one time in their life if not at the time of the study, (b) reported taking care of her body as essential to psycho-spiritual growth, and (c) had reached out to friends, family members, associates, and therapists for emotional support in their process of healing. Instead of studying women's weight as a problem to be stigmatized as abnormal or fixed by weight-control regimens or special diets, Coleman asked the women to share their experiences and insights about body size, food, eating, and personal growth during an 8-day retreat and day-long 1-year follow-up. Coleman's feminist and collaborative style invited the women to be the experts on an issue that was both extremely important to them and about which they had insider's knowledge. Cycle-3

data summaries included summary findings of videotapes, each woman's story, a report of brainstorming sessions, photographs, and creative expressions.

Cycle 4: Transforming and Refining Lenses

Utilizing the hermeneutical lenses developed in Cycle 2, the researcher then interprets data in order to modify, refute, remove, reorganize, and expand his understanding of the research topic. This cycle invites researchers to expand and refine their pre-understandings by incorporating the experiences of others and represent the researchers' summary of findings based on his interpretation of Cycle 3 data. By comparing Cycle 2 and Cycle 4 lenses, the reader of an intuitive inquiry can evaluate the changes and refinements in the researcher's understanding of the research topic.

Throughout intuitive inquiry, the most important feature of interpreting data is intuitive breakthroughs, those illuminating moments when the data begin to shape themselves before the researcher. Patterns seem to reveal themselves with each fresh set of information. I usually work with a paper and pencil, drawing small and large circles—representing themes or stray ideas—and shifting the patterns and modifying the relationships and size of the circles, rather like a mobile Venn diagram. I know other researchers who work more verbally—bringing together ideas in an array of interrelated themes, narratives, sequences, or irreducible features of the experience studied. This interpretative process may go on for several days or weeks with rest or incubation periods between work sessions.

Coleman's final interpretation of the women's stories and discussions revealed 6 lenses that characterized the women's relationship to weight and embodiment. A quote from one of the participants or a description by Coleman accompanies each lens:

- 1) Motivation to change. "I'm taking the time that it takes to take care of myself The idea is not to lose weight, it's

to get my body healthy and let it find its own particular weight in its own time (p. 155)"

- 2) Wisdom of space. "Tara's story included [symbols and images] about using her big 'taking up space' energy to keep herself safe in some very threatening situation as a child." (p. 189).
- 3) Learning and knowing. In discovering a "right" body size for themselves, the women in this study incorporated their own unique ways of knowing, including owning their obesity expertise, a sympathy with the culture's "mind-body split in girls and women", acknowledgment of "right body size" congruent with each women's knowledge of her own needs, and collaborative knowing (p. 195, 221-228).
- 4) Love as power. "What's real important to me ... is that [a commercial diet plan] comes from the masculine rules, and it's external, outside of me. When I have the limit setting from inside myself, it's the heart thing" (p. 233).
- 5) Call to differentiate and accept the tensions of personal growth. "I went through my own process of being judgmental about [other women's weight loss methods] ... before ... I understood that we all have our own ways. (p. 257)
- 6) Meaning Making. "[Marion Woodman] was one of the first writers that I read who didn't see weight as a matter of calories, counting calories kind of stuff..." (p. 277).

Because it is so important to clearly identify the degree of change in the researcher's perspective between the lenses of Cycle 2 and Cycle 4, Esbjörn (2003; Esbjörn-Hargens, 2004) developed three categories for the presentation of her Cycle 4 lenses: new, change, and seed lenses. New lenses signify breakthroughs in understanding that were entirely new and unexpected, change lenses signify a significant progression of

change from lenses presented in Cycle 2, and seed lenses signify lenses that were nascent in the lenses of Cycle 2 but greatly nuanced and developed in the course of the intuitive inquiry. I would recommend that future intuitive researcher use this tri-part formulation for the presentation of Cycle 4 lenses to spare readers the time and effort necessary to make the in-depth comparisons between the lenses in Cycle 2 and Cycle 4 themselves. An overview of intuitive inquiry with Esbjörn's (2003) study used as a case example can be found in Esbjörn-Hargens and Anderson (in press).

Cycle 5: Integration of Findings and Literature Review

In Cycle 5, the intuitive researcher stands back from the entire research process to date and takes into consideration all aspects of the study anew, as though drawing a larger hermeneutical circle around the hermeneutical circle prescribed by the forward and return arcs of the study. In a conventional empirical study, the researcher always returns to the literature review conducted prior to data collection and reevaluates that theoretical and empirical literature in light of the results. The final integrative arc of intuitive inquiry is more demanding still. Not only must the researcher reevaluate the literature in light of the results of the study, but review the elements of the forward and return arc in order to evaluate both the efficacy of the hermeneutical process used and the topic of inquiry in light of that determined efficacy. In other words, the researcher must determine what is valuable about the study and what is not, sorting through the assets and liability of the forward and return arcs and their own understanding of the research topic. In Cycle 5, intuitive researchers must honestly evaluate and tell what they have learned and what they feel is still undisclosed about the topic. In intuitive inquiry, the researcher's final opinion matters.

Challenges and Characteristics of Intuitive Inquiry

Intuitive inquiry is not easy to do well. Aside from demands of its in-depth scrutiny, intuitive inquiry requires a process-oriented perspective not easily achieved in the context of the positivistic sensibilities still widespread in the human sciences. Intuitive researchers must think independently and creatively. The hermeneutic basis and procedures of intuitive inquiry aver a world reality in flux and mutable and, therefore, challenge conventional notions of a static worldview that is separate and distinguishable from the knower. Intuitive inquiry encourages new visions of the future and makes them possible. Rather than merely describing what is apparent in the present, as virtually all research does, intuitive inquiry attempts to grasp what is implicit in the present of the future as well.

I am sometimes asked, "Is what you do really science?" I answer yes knowing full well that the responsibility of demonstrating the value and efficacy of an intuitive inquiry belongs to the intuitive researcher herself.

The challenges and characteristics of intuitive inquiry are one in the same, as follows:

1) Being Rigorously Subjective. Scrupulous documentation marks the difference between everyday problem solving and scientific inquiry. Everyday, we conjecture about relationships between one thing and another and watch the workings of the world to surmise whether we are right or wrong. In science, though, we keep records of what happens and the surrounding conditions and, if we are not sure whether something is relevant, we record it anyway. Since intuitive inquiry uses intuitions as data and insight for interpretation, intuitions also need to be recorded along with specifics of the context and manner of expression.

Often, the inchoate nature of intuition tends resists record keeping, requiring patience, skill, and sometimes sheer force of will to keep records of intuitive impressions and their context. It is not easy to blend the left-brained

skills of documentation with the more right-brained skills typical of intuition. My first formal attempt to encourage such documentation was to propose that researchers use a Process Grid (Anderson, 2000). The Process Grid has not been popular among my students. Therefore, my best suggestion is based on the insights of Sharon Hoffman (2003, 2004). She was unable to use the Process Grid for documentation, finding that it disrupted her intuitive process. Instead, she set an intention for witnessing and remembering the intuitive process after it had taken place and recorded the insights, the context, expression, and process *after* the event. I suspect that documentation is somewhat inimical to the intuition process generally and every intuitive researcher is going to have to find a distinctive solution that both allows for documentation and cultivation of intuition.

2) Telling the Truth No Matter What. An important aspect of rigorous documentation in intuitive inquiry is telling the entire truth about the course of the research endeavor, including (a) mistakes made, (b) procedures and plans that did not work, (c) the researcher's apprehensions and puzzles, (d) the process and content of intuitive interpretation, and (e) what remains unresolved or problematic about the topic or the method. Given the degree of unconscious processing of information there is no way to know ahead of time what will be relevant to interpretation. There are many famous "accidents" in science and so-called mistakes can be venue for important discoveries. Record and report them.

An intuitive inquiry is also not considered successful unless the reader of the research report understands the researcher's style of intuitive processing and the matter in which intuitions manifested in the course of the interpretative cycles, including the twists, slow downs, and dead ends, and flow of the unconscious journey. See the validity section below for more pointers about writing style in

intuitive inquiry. The most straightforward way to reveal the intuitive process is to give an extended example, as Vipassana Esbjörn-Hargens (2004) has done in this issue of *The Humanistic Psychologist*.

- 3) Avoiding Circularity. The intuitive process itself tends to carry an unfortunate air of certainty. Believing that intuition is more accurate or cogent than other sources of information is seductive and inopportune. Therefore, intuitive researchers must be particularly alert to seeking data likely to contradict their values and assumptions and openly welcome anomalies in the data. Feelings of confusion and bewilderment are usually good signs that intuitive researchers are encountering what they do not know and yet seek to understand.

There is no point in doing research if researchers are merely circling around their initial ideology. In intuitive inquiry, the articulation of the interpretative lenses in Cycle 2 and again in Cycle 4 exposes the presence, absence, or degree of circularity in the findings to any careful reader. The degree of change between Cycle 2 and Cycle 4 lenses is at least some measure of the intuitive researcher's willingness to change. Some changes are likely to be major, others minor. The new, change, and seed lenses proposed by Esbjörn (2003) provides a reader-friendly way to make substantive and subtle changes obvious to the reader in Cycle 4.

- 4) Trickstering and Auspicious Bewilderment. In indigenous cultures worldwide, tricksters open gateways of awareness and insight. Tricksters are playful, mischievous, and sometimes outrageous. Particular to culture, coyotes, ravens, fairies, leprechauns, and pookas (a Irish goblin) gift humans with insight, usually in the context of making us feel rather foolish. Coyotes play tricks. Ravens steal and turn the stolen goods into something else. Fairies appear as lovers. Leprechauns give us gold that vanishes on

touch. Pookas gleefully take us for a rowdy ride—an auspicious bewilderment!

Auspicious bewilderment often signals renewed understanding. Contradictory stories and examples move us deeper into the intricacies of any topic of inquiry. Nuances that do not fit generate new insights. Confusion takes us in an unanticipated direction. Paradox challenges our assumptions and so on. Methodologically, the nature of intuitive inquiry sets the stage for new ideas to happen. They often do. The research project will take longer, require more work, and probably cost more money, and it will also be more complete and useful in the end. Weeks, even months, of feeling auspiciously bewildered—a very different experience than depression, by the way—is not unusual for an intuitive researcher. While bewildered, keep records and stay with the process as it is. If it gets to be too much, rest, sleep, take a break, or gently put the research project on the "back burner" for a while. Return to the project again when refreshed.

More dangerous to intuitive inquiry is thinking we know what we are doing, being confident that we are on top of it, or having fixed ideas about the findings before we have finished collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the full complement of data. The nature of transformative experience often demands periods of confusion to be more fully understood. If we go for long time periods of not being surprised, beware. Something might be wrong. Is the topic so well understood that there is nothing new to say? What is happening to contradictory information? Is the researcher bored? Exhausted? Otherwise preoccupied? In denial? Avoiding the inevitable move to the heart of the topic? If so, do not panic. Rest and come back when feeling refreshed and unwilling to spend energy going in the wrong direction.

- 5) Maintaining a Process-Oriented and Inclusive Perspective. Intuitive inquiry is a process-oriented and culturally inclu-

sive method. Conventional reality is not objectively present but rather constructed by the ever-changing biological, cognitive, and cultural structures and habits we inhabit (e.g., Johnson, 1987; Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991). Reality does not exist apart from the embodied participation of being a specific human being with a particular physiology, history, personality, and culture but is interpretative and inter-subjective in the way Ken Wilber (2000) is defining intersubjective in his four-quadrant model of human knowing. Acknowledging what is fully present in the moment, human subjectivity is a source of knowing not just solipsistic expression or opinion.

Western researchers are often so intent on separating the personal from scientific inquiry that they often fail to render candid opinions even at the conclusion of research reports. In intuitive inquiry, however, researchers are required to interpret data, basing their interpretations on what they feel are important and inspiring about their findings and speculating about the possibilities and visions of the future to which their findings point. Student researchers often need lots of support from supervisors to maintain the interpretive perspective required by intuitive inquiry because a postmodern perspective counters the culture of conventional science (and some dissertation committee members).

6) Writing in Your Own Voice. Scientific reports are easier to read, more interesting and persuasive, and findings interpretable when researchers write in their own distinctive writerly voice. I was trained as an experimental social psychologist in the 1970s. Scientific reports were not only expected to be exact but emotionally flat in style, resulting in an excruciating sameness from report to report at least for me. These days are gone especially in qualitative research reports.

In intuitive inquiry researchers are also expected to write compassionately and well. Research reports should

convey the distinctive feelings and experiences that the researcher brought to the topic and to present findings in a matter that allows for sympathetic resonance (Anderson, 1998, 2000) in the reader as they read. The nature and process of intuitive inquiry begs authenticity. If the authentic voice of the mind, body, and spirit of the inquiry is not revealed in the report, the study is not interpretable and, therefore, not valid as an intuitive inquiry. See the validity section below for more information about the relationship of sympathetic resonance to validity.

7) Favoring the Particular and the Personal. As has already been said, intuitive inquiry values the researcher's unique experience and interpretations over common patterns that might be observed externally in the experiences of others. Knowledge is always personal be it individually or culturally wrought. In 1890, William James (1950) put the matter like so:

Why, from Plato and Aristotle downwards, philosophers should have vied with each other in scorn of the knowledge of the particular, and in adoration of that of the general, is hard to understand, seeing that the more adorable knowledge ought to be that of the more adorable things, and that the "things" of worth are all concretes and singulars. The only value of universal characters is that they help us, by reasoning, to know new truths about individual things. The restriction of one's meanings, moreover, to an individual thing, probably requires even more complicated brain-processes than its extension to all the instances of a kind; and the mere mystery, as such, of the knowledge, is equally great, whether generals or singulars of the things known. In sum, therefore the traditional Universal-worship can only be called a bit of perverse sentimentalism, a philosophic 'idol of the cave.' (pp. 479-480)

8) Imagining the Possible. Intuitive inquiry seeks to find trajectories for new ways of being human in the world. Like all qualitative methods, it provides thick descriptions that carefully detail the time, place, context, and culture of findings. However, intuitive inquiry also seeks to speculate about the possibilities implicit in the data, especially of subtle and complex human phenomena. Implicit in intuitive inquiry is a sense of hope that researchers are called to explore topics that require attention by the culture at large and that the intuitive researcher's personal exploration of the topic will see, imagine, or fashion human experience freshly. In this sense, intuitive inquiry is both practical and visionary, allowing that research findings can provide new options for the world that is changing and manifesting anew in every moment.

9) Risking Personal Change and Transformation. Doing intuitive inquiry can be a whirlwind and overwhelming experience for some. Hermeneutics, generally, and intuitive inquiry, specifically, is rather like chasing a moving target. If you are doing intuitive inquiry well, you are likely to wonder if you are changing or if data are changing before your eyes. From a hermeneutical perspective, both are changing because insight changes what can be seen. Intuitive researchers are often changed through each cycle, thereby bringing a fresh perspective to the next cycle of interpretation.

Validity in Intuitive Inquiry

In recent years, a number of researchers (e.g., Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Mertens, 1998) have proposed different types of validity relevant to qualitative research. All of their concerns have directly influenced the manner in which I have discussed the challenges and characteristics of intuitive inquiry above, particularly in the sections headed (a) Being Rigorously Subjective, (b) Telling the Truth No Matter What, (c) Avoiding Cir-

cularity, and (d) Writing in Your Own Voice. Intuitive inquiry requires researchers to report high levels of detail. Such detail allows readers to evaluate for themselves whether or not the researcher has made reasonable conclusions based on the data collected and if the procedures are adequate to support the conclusions reported, considerations appropriate to internal validity.

In intuitive inquiry and other methods aspiring to a post-modern perspective, external validity concerns the *value* of the reported findings to the receiving audiences, over and above whether findings demonstrate generalizability to other situations in the conventional sense. Intended and unexpected audiences or readers may include (a) other researchers, (b) client populations, (c) the general public, (d) unique ethnic or minority groups, or (e) professional groups aligned with the human sciences, such as nurses, physicians, therapists, and social workers. Traditionally, findings are considered most valuable if they contribute to understanding a topic and related theory. However, the value of an intuitive inquiry—and perhaps any study—may rest more in its capacity to help readers ask good questions of their own lives or of experiences they wish to understand. Therefore, I propose two new bases to determine external validity for qualitative research, namely Resonance and Efficacy Validity.

Resonance Validity

Resonance Validity refers to the capacity of a study and its findings to produce sympathetic resonance in its readers. As a principle, sympathetic resonance is best introduced with an analogy. If I pluck a string on a cello on one side a room, a string of a cello on the opposite side will begin to vibrate, too. Striking a tuning fork will vibrate another tuning fork some distance away. Resonance communicates and connects directly and immediately without intermediaries, except for the conduits of air and space. The principle of sympathetic resonance suggests that research can function more like poetry in its ca-

capacity for immediate apprehension and recognition of an experience spoken by another and yet be true for oneself, as well.

Using the principle of sympathetic resonance, research procedures can evaluate the generalizability or transferability of findings by noting consonance, dissonance, or neutrality in response to Cycle 4 lenses across groups and subgroups. Using resonance panels composed of representatives from different groups or subgroups, a kind of mapping of the generalizability or transferability of a research finding is created. A modified sociogram, constructed with concentric circles of resonance, designates subgroups wherein the research findings are immediately apprehended and recognized or reacted to with dissonance or neutrality. Resonance panels can be progressive, each resonance panel increasing the number of iterative cycles by one. Regardless of the number of iterative cycles in an intuitive inquiry, the final cycle integrates the final set of interpretive lenses with prior theory and empirical research relevant to the topic of inquiry.

Several researchers have used resonance panels to evaluate findings in this way, employing group interview procedures like those used in Focus Group research (e.g., Krueger, 1988; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). In a study on betrayal by a spiritual teacher in the Zen Buddhist tradition, Caryl Gopfert (1999) asked a resonance panel of Zen Buddhist teachers and students who had not experienced betrayal from teachers to respond to the unique features she had identified in the stories told by her research participants. Her results then allowed for clarity in portraying the resonant and non-resonant features of betrayal by a spiritual teacher across two independent selected groups. Similarly, in a study on the healing presence of a psychotherapist, Cortney Phelon (2001, 2004) presented her findings to mature psychotherapists in small groups and in individual interviews. In so doing, she was able to evaluate the generalizability of her penultimate lenses, refine them further, and create a theoretical model for future investigation.

Efficacy Validity

Efficacy Validity refers to the capacity of a study and its report as a whole to give more value to one's own life. Conventionally, a study is considered important to understanding and theory if it can be replicated in other situations, especially similar situations. However, in the human sciences, I believe that most researchers value a study if they resonate with the reported findings and the findings give their own lives more meaning, value, and understanding. Specifically, when I read a study, I am both researcher and ordinary person trying to make sense of my life. Sometimes, a terrific study merely gets me thinking in new ways, asking questions of life that I never asked before. Much of good research, especially ground-breaking research, is more about the creative jumps and insights than about constructing theory upon another theory one building block upon another. Therefore, research that inspires, delights, and prods us to insight and action is at least as valuable to the scientific enterprise as more technical reports that will inevitably follow.

Efficacy Validity supports the notion that a reader of a research report will change as a result of encountering the findings. The same could be equally said of the researcher and research participants, as I have said above. Therefore, a study is high in Efficacy Validity if it answers affirmatively to such questions as:

- 1) Was the researcher transformed in the course of conducting the study? Is the reader, as he reads?
- 2) Did the researcher gain more compassion and depth of understanding in the course of the study?
- 3) In reading the report, do readers gain compassion and depth of understanding about themselves, the topic, or the world?

- 4) Is the research report written with such clarity and authenticity that readers feel that they know the researcher personally?
- 5) Does the study provide a new vision for the future?
- 6) Are readers inspired by the findings and the vision provided by the study?
- 7) Are readers moved toward action and service in the world?

Future Directions for Intuitive Inquiry

I created intuitive inquiry in order to "carve" new space or capacity within the scientific enterprise to employ intuitive processes. The formative stage of developing intuitive inquiry is complete and I feel rather like a parent watching a child graduate from high school. It is time for me to let go, watch how the method is used and shaped by others, and listen to the voices of researchers new to intuitive inquiry. While intuitive inquiry is only eight years in development, the seeds for intuitive inquiry were sown over 50 years ago when I was gymnast and learned that a net and a spotter helped me to risk. I was a better gymnast for the help of the net and spotters that caught me. In like manner, the five interpretative cycles of intuitive inquiry represent the supportive structure that guide and hold the creative research process of intuitive inquiry. The cycles invite researchers and research participants—and eventually users of the research findings—to confidently inhabit their intuitive ways of knowing and to interpret for themselves the visionary perspectives suggested by the data. Within a positivistic paradigm of current science, doing so is risky business and researchers need support and encouragement. I developed intuitive inquiry to help fill that need. Each interpretative cycle has a unique purpose and I hope that future intuitive researchers do not skip any of the cycles in interests of time and expedience. That said, I trust that intuitive researchers will adapt the

method and procedures idiosyncratically to optimize their own intuitive styles, blend the procedures with both qualitative and quantitative methods, expand procedures to new applications, and evolve it farther than I have taken intuitive inquiry so far.

In many ways, the development of intuitive inquiry has been an intuitive inquiry in its own right, cycling in and out of my own research entanglements and those of my supervisees—and it is been great, good fun. It has been full of spontaneity, serendipity, and auspicious bewilderment. I never quite knew what would come next—and, frankly, I did not care. Similarly, the spaciousness and permission given by intuitive inquiry invites a discourse in science that positions researchers, together with others, at the leading edge of that which is visionary, inspiring, and new in the realms of ideas and theory.

Specifically, a promising aspect of intuitive inquiry is its capacity to synthesize prior theory and research on a topic and render theoretical integrations in Cycles 4 and 5. It is not possible to do intuitive inquiry well without maintaining a big-picture perspective throughout the research process. Therefore, intuitive inquiry encourages theory building because the method does not allow for a reductive perspective. The insistence of the interpretative cycles to stay close to intuitive promptings is not an easy path to travel, as Euro-American culture tend to suppress intuitive processes and body-based knowings such as proprioception and kinesthesia. Nonetheless, be brave! This deep listening and witnessing to intuition in research has the capacity to unfold into new ways of theorizing and envisioning that are closer to lived experience than do the rationalistic styles that dominate much of world culture and scientific discourse. The iterative cycles of deep listening and witnessing expand into theoretical formulations over time in a manner akin to Eugene Gendlin's (1991, 1992, 1997) descriptions of "thinking beyond patterns."

In the late 1960s, Abraham Maslow (1968, 1971) recommended that we explore the farther reaches of human experience by studying those individuals who had self-actualized their potential the most. Similarly, intuitive inquiry encourages

the actualization of the researchers' capacity to envision creative possibilities that are nascent in what they are gleaned from their research participants and their own impressions. The intuitive researcher is both a scientist and an artist.

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² My colleague William Braud and I have often discussed the nature of intuition in research and I wish to acknowledge and thank him for his contribution to my understanding of the nature of intuition.

³ An extensive discussion of empathizing as used by great artists and scientists can be found in Root-Bernstein and Root-Bernstein (1999).

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