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The Inner Voice

Let's Begin

Think about some instance in your life when intuition or an unknown sense guided you towards or warned you against something, and it turned out to be true. Narrate the incident to your partner sitting next to you.

In what manner did you sense this feeling? Did you have a dream or a vision? Or was it a strange coincidence? Or just an unexplained 'knowing'.

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

- *Albert Einstein*

Knowing Beyond Knowledge

Let us read the following real-life stories of people who listened to their 'gut feeling', and how it changed their life or saved it.

Fifty-four-year-old Claire Deanman narrates an incident when her daughter was to travel to New York. She helped her daughter pack her luggage and together they waited for the airport pickup cab. Minutes before the cab was to arrive, Claire had an uneasy feeling in the pit of her stomach, and she felt as if her daughter was in danger. She expressed her anxiety to her

daughter, who laughed and said, “You are just worried that you’ll miss me.” But Claire could sense that this sense of foreboding was something more than a mother’s attachment. She insisted that her daughter postpone her trip for her mother’s sake. They cancelled her flight. Within three hours they saw on TV that the same flight had crashed.

The famous German scientist Friedrich August Kekulé discovered the atomic structure of benzene in an interesting manner. He and many other scientists had been trying unsuccessfully for long to find out the manner in which the atoms were arranged in the molecules of this very useful substance. But all calculations and theories failed to solve this riddle. And then one day, during a thoughtful day dream, Kekulé had a vision of atoms arranging themselves like a snake, and the snake seized its own tail. It was this strange dream that led to the discovery that the benzene molecule was a ring-shaped molecule. Great progress in the field of organic chemistry followed this discovery, which was the result of the intuitive insight of a scientist.

The world renowned Indian mathematician, Ramanujam’s genius stemmed from his exceptional intuition, allowing him to discover intricate formulas and patterns with limited formal training. He was able to perceive hidden structures and relationships in numbers that eluded others, often arriving at correct solutions through intuitive leaps rather than rigorous proof. While his methods sometimes lacked formal justification, his results were consistently accurate, demonstrating a deep, almost instinctual, understanding of mathematical principles. Ramanujan’s famous infinitely nested radicals continues to keep the math genius in awe even today.

There are indeed countless stories, which you would have heard, about people sensing things through visions and dreams or just feeling them. The human mind seems to have the innate ability

to receive knowledge beyond the five senses. Many believe in the power of intuition, while some may consider it simply superstition. Could today's superstition be tomorrow's science?

The Gift of Various Types of Knowledge

From simple micro-organisms to complex creatures, life continuously evolves and thrives on our beautiful planet Earth. The power that created everything gave each particle of creation all the knowledge required for its functioning.

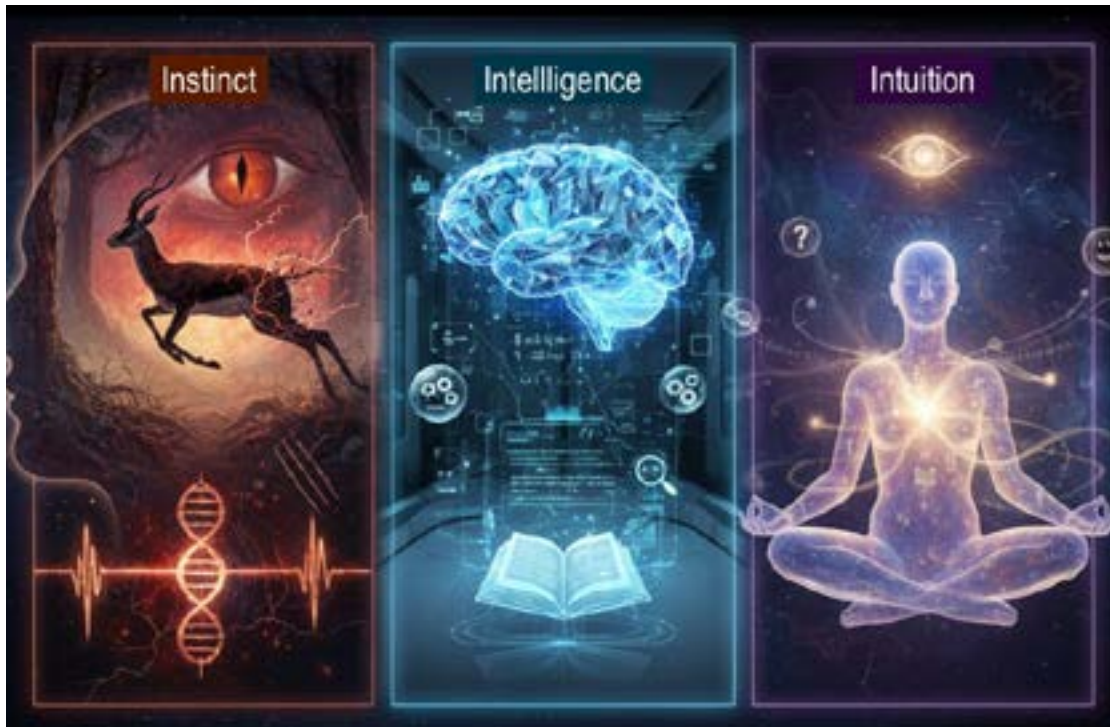
Planets revolve around their suns, plants perform photosynthesis, animals grow, their organs function, and many such complex processes occur within all creatures without their conscious participation and even without their understanding. Isn't this a miracle in itself?

Whatever theory of creation one believes in—God or Big Bang, religion or science—the design of existence is so grand and complex that it commands the respect of both. The great creative power gifted each creature with a 'set of intelligences' for its survival. Let us see what these types or levels of knowledge are.

Autonomic Response: This is the most basic form of automatic intelligence given to a living being, even to a single-celled organism. This is the knowledge that involuntarily conducts all automatic processes in our body such as respiration, circulation and digestion.

Instinct: The next level of intelligence is called instinct. Each species has this inborn knowledge that exists without learning. This is what tells birds where to migrate, spiders how to spin webs, and deer to fear lions.

Intelligence: The larger animal species have a conscious ability to think and solve problems. This is the rational or logical mind.

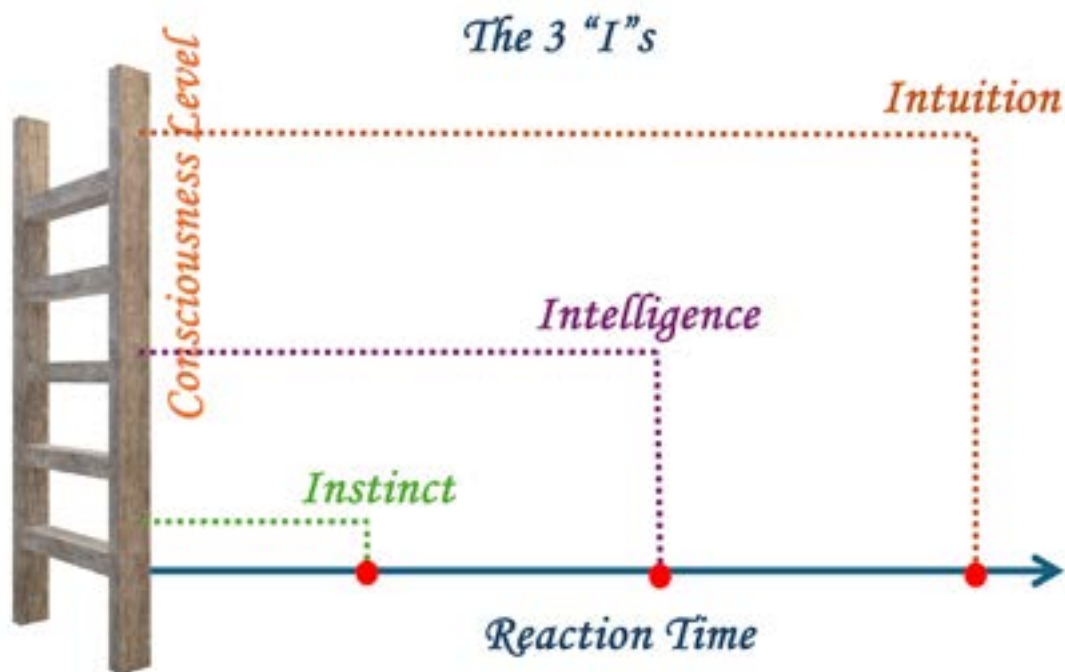


It is less developed in animals and more developed in human beings. It calculates, deduces, understands and creates. We use it for activities like designing buildings and aeroplanes, while animals use it to hunt prey or escape predators.

Intuition: Intuition can be called the highest level of knowledge. It is so mysterious that it is almost beyond our present level of understanding. This is that ‘gut feeling’ which tells us when something feels ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, even when there is no other way of knowing. It also guides us towards certain decisions without our knowledge of how or why. Intuition needs to be developed and nurtured, if we are to live to our full human potential.

What is intuition?

Intuition is defined as knowledge or guidance acquired through means other than logical reasoning or conscious thought. Many people have described it as ‘flash of inspiration’, or ‘sixth sense’. Though there is no scientific proof or measure of its existence till date, almost everyone has had a brush with it. Renowned personalities in the fields of science and mathematics like Albert Einstein, Nikola Tesla and S. Ramanujam highly valued their intuition and they even attributed much of their scientific genius to this particular gift.



My brain is only a receiver; in the universe there is a core from which we obtain knowledge, strength and inspiration. I have not penetrated into the secrets of this core, but I know that it exists.

- Nikola Tesla

The Rational and the Intuitive Mind

The **rational mind** is a tool to analyse and work with problems using only the forms of information that the human senses are able to perceive as of today. For example, the rational mind can only use the sensory inputs of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch to work on a problem and to arrive at a solution. Similarly, it can only use verifiable information such as equations, texts and calculations to work with, and so the rational mind is easy to understand and to prove.

The **intuitive mind**, on the other hand, uses information inputs that are beyond the grasp of human knowledge and understanding yet. Unfamiliar sounding topics like energy patterns, genetic memory, connected consciousness, and spiritual insight are fields of study that are still being explored to understand how the intuitive mind works. The answers that come from the intuitive part of the brain seem to be mysterious, but perhaps it is only a matter of time before science explains the phenomenon of intuition. And soon the sixth sense will become as easy to work with as the other five senses.

Both the rational and the intuitive minds are required for balanced decision making. A good decision is arrived at after listening to the intuitive voice and weighing it against rational judgement. If both are in conflict, it is wise to put the decision on hold.

Let us take a quiz to determine our decision-making type, and then we shall see how to balance the process.

Activity A: Decision-Making Quiz

Intuition test: Are you more intuitive or rational?

You can go to the website below and take the quiz to find out.

<https://www.psychmechanics.com/intuition-test/>

The Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI) measures the degree to which people are rational and intuitive (experiential).

This rationality and intuition test is based on the theory that there are two ways we process information when solving problems or making decisions.

The first type of thinking is fast and intuitive, called System 1 thinking. The other type is slow, deliberative, analytical, and rational i.e. System 2 thinking. We use both types of thinking depending on the situation but some of us have a greater propensity to be rational while others are more likely to use intuition.

This test makes use of four sub-scales:

1. **Rational Ability:** The degree to which being rational is part of your personality.
2. **Rational Engagement:** The degree to which you prefer making decisions using rational thinking.
3. **Experiential Ability:** Measures to what extent being intuitive is a part of your personality.

4. **Experiential Engagement:** The extent to which you use intuition to solve problems.

Taking the test

The test consists of 40 items, each having five choices ranging from Definitely false to Definitely true. Choose the option that most applies to you.

Your results will only be displayed to you and won't be stored in the database.

Reference

Pacini, R., & Epstein, S. (1999). The relation of rational and experiential information processing styles to personality, basic beliefs, and the ratio-bias phenomenon. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 76(6), 972.

Try the intuition quiz below

Doing this quiz can relieve stress also as it distracts from the burdens that may be draining you.

It's a fun exercise to become more self aware.

Intuition is a powerful tool that we all possess. It is the ability to understand something immediately without the need for conscious reasoning. It can be a useful asset in decision-making, problem-solving and even in predicting outcomes.

To test your intuition, try the following quiz

<https://heartofsubstance.com/test-my-intuition/>

Key takeaway: Signs your intuition is strong

When you...

- Find things just seem to happen easily, like they're meant to be
- Have an immediate and accurate sense of when you're being misled
- Experience meaningful coincidences (people or things show up in the right place at the right time)
- Can finish someone's sentence in your head before they speak it
- Feel connected to a 'Higher Self' – Know who's calling or messaging you before you look
- Have hunches that lead you onto the right path
- Wake up at the time you tell yourself the night before (without the help of an alarm)

(from heartofsubstance.com)

Key Differences

1. Information Processing:

- **Rational decision-making** involves a deliberate and systematic analysis of available information, often using quantitative methods and logical frameworks.
- **Intuitive decision-making** relies on rapid pattern recognition and subconscious processing, bypassing conscious deliberation and analysis.

2. Time and Effort:

- **Rational decision-making** typically requires more time and effort due to the meticulous analysis of data and consideration of multiple alternatives.

- **Intuitive decision-making** tends to be quicker and requires less conscious effort, as decisions are made based on immediate insights or gut feelings.

3. Certainty vs Uncertainty:

- **Rational decision-making** seeks to minimize uncertainty by carefully assessing risks, probabilities, and potential outcomes.
- **Intuitive decision-making** embraces uncertainty, often thriving in situations where information is incomplete or ambiguous, as it relies on implicit knowledge and intuition to fill in the gaps.

4. Emotional Involvement:

- Rational decision-making aims to minimize the influence of emotions, prioritizing logical reasoning and objective analysis.
- Intuitive decision-making acknowledges the role of emotions, recognizing that gut feelings and intuition are often influenced by subconscious emotional cues.

5. Context and Experience:

- **Rational decision-making** is highly dependent on explicit information and structured methodologies, making it well-suited for complex problems with clear data.
- **Intuitive decision-making** draws heavily on tacit knowledge and past experiences, making it particularly effective in situations where explicit data is scarce or ambiguous.

Both **strategic analysis** and **intuitive thinking** are valuable tools in decision-making processes, offering unique benefits and insights.

- **Strategic analysis** provides a structured framework for understanding complex situations, backed by evidence and data.
- **Intuitive thinking** allows for the exploration of innovative ideas and the ability to rapidly adapt to changing circumstances.

By combining these approaches, decision-makers can harness the strengths of each method, leading to more balanced and well-rounded decisions. This includes understanding and considering both the hard data and evidence, as well as trusting instincts and intuition. In turn, this can lead to improved performance and successful outcomes for both individuals and organizations.

Work on your mind, Not work by your mind
~ Swami Anubhavaananda

Activity B: The Intuition Game

Now let us play an interesting game to flex our intuitive muscles. Choose a partner for the game. You also need to choose four small-sized objects like eraser, sharpener, chalk and rubber band which will easily fit into the palm of your hand. Each partner will take turns at concealing one of the four objects in their closed fist, while hiding the other three objects. The other partner has to concentrate and try to tell which of the four objects are in the closed fist.

Remember, this is more than just a guessing game. Try not to throw wild guesses, but instead reach within and ask your inner guiding voice to tell you what is there in the hand. You may not get the right answer, but you will learn how to ask and how to feel for the right answer. Your intuition is like a dormant super power, the more you train it and learn to use it, the better it will work for you.

Training Intuition

As our modern society has mostly lost connection with its intuitive side, perhaps some of you may be wondering what it is or how to find it.

Here are some ways to help you reconnect with this ‘highest form of intelligence’.

1. **Meditate:** Meditation does more than just calm your mind, it allows you to ‘listen’, ‘feel’ and ‘connect’ with your higher intelligence. If you have never tried it before, just follow these simple instructions.

Sit quietly in a peaceful place with your eyes closed. Now breathe calmly. Silently observe the thoughts that emerge in you. Do not follow these thoughts, see them as birds flying in front of you. Let them fly away, do not chase them. Soon you will find that your mental chatter has reduced and the thoughts will be far and few. Once you achieve mental silence, mediation begins. In this state, your mind is receptive to deep insights coming from your subconscious or higher self. With regular practice of meditation, you will notice that, over time, you will become a more intuitive person and will receive inner guidance more readily when required.

Note

- Don't be disheartened if you are continuously bothered by thoughts when you sit down to meditate. It takes practice, and you will certainly be able to quieten your mental chatter in a few trials
 - There may not be any intuitive visions or voices during your meditation itself. You may experience nothing but blank stillness. But know that through regular practice of meditation, you are tuning your mind to receive information when it is necessary
2. **Observe:** Make an effort to be more aware of your surroundings, thoughts and feelings. The voice of intuition is soft and you may miss it. One must be calm and centred to be able to see and feel any hidden signs around. Practise noticing small things, like subtle changes in someone's voice

or expressions, timings of certain events, behaviour of animals and your own unexplained anxiety or apprehension regarding something. Just observing these things will make you more receptive to the world around and within you.

- 3. Read:** You will learn a lot about the research and experience of many people on the topic of intuition by reading about it. It will clear many of your doubts and strengthen your belief in the scientific basis of the so-called sixth sense, and you will be able to turn to it with much more confidence. Suggested reading includes the life story of the genius Indian mathematician, Srinivasa Ramanujam and the movie based on his life, *The Man Who Knew Infinity*.

Does intuition exist?

As of today, we cannot conclude with hard facts that intuition exists or that this is how it works. Yet as a collective human species, we have too much experience of this mysterious power to dismiss it completely. This knowledge, seemingly from something great beyond or from somewhere deep within, has given us much valuable insight into science, psychology, mathematics and even our day-to-day lives. Do you think we should listen to it? What does your intuition say?

In our lives, there are sometimes situations where deciding right and wrong, good and bad, appropriate and inappropriate becomes very difficult due to complex reasons. When we look within for answers, several voices speak up, all giving very different solutions. Which voice do we listen to in such a scenario?

The following story will give us a better idea.

Mirror, Mirror of My Soul

The Wise King and His Court



Once upon a time there was a wise and just king who ruled over a great empire. The king had a court full of ministers who helped him make decisions on how to be a good king and how to run his kingdom. Once the king needed advice on an important matter. He summoned his court and asked the ministers what they thought of the matter. Now they were all eager to put their point across to the king. They spoke in loud voices all at once, each trying to convince the king of his view. Let us see what they had to say:

Vanity: Oh, but you are the best king ever! Won't the people be ever so pleased with your decision? They will surely applaud and worship you. You must make sure to win their approval.

Fear: No! No! It all seems too risky to me. There is so much that could go wrong. What will you do then? I say don't risk anything and don't take any action.

Jealousy: So what?! The neighbouring king has done the same, we must outshine him and tell the people who is a better king. I never could stand that pompous king anyway. Let's show him, I say.

Love: Let us not hurry, a lot of people and their lives are at stake here. We must think of their welfare. It is your duty to look after the people. A good king is a kind king.

Justice: Do not be emotional, O King. What is right must be rewarded and what is wrong must be punished. Kings cannot afford kindness. Justice is their virtue.

Amidst this great noise, the king was confused. He did not know whom to listen to. They all seemed to be right in some way. Yet they were all showing him different paths. What to do?

During this hour of confusion, the king remembered the advice his father had given him:

“Always listen to the calm voice of your soul. Your soul is your wise Inner-Guide. To hear him speak, you must silence all others. For only in silence, he speaks.”

“Silence now! Let the wise Inner-Guide speak!” the king commanded. The courtroom fell silent. And, in a gentle voice, the wise Inner-Guide spoke.

Soul: O wise king! Know you must, who it is who speaks the truth. Listen not to Vanity, he is a selfish fool. Listen not to Fear, but take his warning to secure your castle. Listen never to Jealousy, he will only lead you astray. Love is the voice of God, His word you must always keep with you. Justice is your cross, as a king you must bear. But never follow Justice without Love's guidance in your heart. Now do you see what you must do? Do you see what is true?

The king was delighted at the wise Inner-Guide's words. He decided that from then on, he would forever listen to this wise old man of his court for every decision and every advice. And that is how he became the greatest king the land had ever known.

The Voice of Truth

Much like the king's courtroom, our minds are full of many voices. Whenever we seek answers from within, one or more of them speak. Some speak of love and kindness, others of fear and anger. Among all these 'ministers' in our heads, the one that should be our guiding voice is the voice of our soul, which speaks not just the truth but the highest truth. It speaks not just of what is good but also what is the greatest good of the greatest many. The voice of the soul is what we can rightfully call as the 'Voice of Truth'.

All these different voices, including the voice of our soul, are present in each one of us. The difference is who speaks the loudest and whom do we listen to? For most of us, it is a different minister who answers our questions at different times. Also, many of us are not able to identify who it is who speaks when we ask a question to ourselves.

It is important that we learn to identify the voice that speaks in our head. It is also important that we learn to silence all unwanted voices and listen to the voice of truth.

The 'Bad' Voice' and the 'Good' Voice

At first glance it may appear that it is easy to differentiate between the 'bad' and the 'good' voices. Good voices are kind and loving, while bad voices are mean and angry, right? Well, it is not always so. Bad voices often disguise themselves as good voices; this is their trick to get you to do what they want. Take

Vanity, for example. It almost always talks in a sweet way and makes you feel happy. But it is only false flattery. Jealousy or Anger may try to sound like Justice, so that they can make you punish someone you don't like.

You must be very careful. Remember, the king can be fooled, but your own wise Inner-Guide cannot be fooled. Let him have the last word.

The 'Good' Voice and the 'True' Voice

You may ask, isn't the voice of Love and the voice of Kindness and Forgiveness the same as the voice of the Soul? Should we not listen to them without question? Yes, of course, any voice coming out of a place of pure love is always the voice of the soul. Then why do we talk of them as separate voices?

The difference is only between the immediate good and the larger good. Or between limited good and highest good. The voice of Truth will be able to tell you when something that may seem to be the loving thing to do in the present circumstances may not be the best thing to do in the long run. Or vice versa.

As a simple example, a parent's voice of Love may tell them to pamper their child with treats or to forgive their mischief, but their voice of Truth will tell them that, in their child's best interest, they must discipline the child even if it means dispensing some tough love.

Distinguishing the Good Voice from the True Voice is often harder than differentiating between the Bad Voice and the Good or True Voice. Though most of the time, the Good and the True are the same.

The Art of Self-Analysis



Self-analysis, or introspection, as we call it, is defined as ‘the examination or observation of one’s own mental and emotional processes.’ It means to be aware of our own motives and drives. So, why do we need to introspect?

Judging one’s own self is perhaps the most difficult thing to do. We can more easily see through others than through ourselves. Self-analysis is therefore a skill that comes with practice. It is one of the most valuable life skills required for us to become good human beings. We can correct our thoughts and feelings only if we are able to see them for what they actually are. As long as we have filters on our soul mirrors, we will never know ourselves truly.

Hence, it is important that we keep an unbiased and honest view when we look inside. Let us now look at some points to remember about self-analysis.

- Whenever you are faced with a moral dilemma, try not to go with your first impulse. Give yourself time to think about the issue.
- Even after you have taken an action, it is helpful to introspect and analyse your decision. It will give you valuable insight for future use.
- When the voice of love or truth speaks from within you, it brings forth a blissful joy within you. It intuitively ‘feels’ like the right thing to do.
- Any voice that tells you to hurt another person is a bad voice and you must not listen to it. Remember that even if truth requires you to take an action that may hurt someone else, it must be done so.
- Truth is actually the highest and purest form of love. It is completely free of any selfish interest. It will guide you to what is the greatest good for the longest time.
- In order to quieten unwanted voices and to hear your soul speak, you must practise mindfulness and meditation. A chattering mind seldom lets the truth speak.
- Notice which voice is the loudest in your head on most occasions. Is it Fear? Then you could pray and work on developing moral courage. If it is Vanity, you could work on self-esteem issues. In this way, you will be able to remove your own psychological flaws and shine as a pleasant and loving human being.

- Do not use this tool to judge others. The only person we have a right to judge is ourselves. Let each one do their own self-analysis.
- Keep a journal of your self-analysis journey. Over the years you will see yourself bloom into a peaceful person with harmonious relationships, and one day you will be thankful to yourself for developing this life skill.

Activity C: Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

Divide yourselves into groups of six (or more). Allot the following roles to the group members.

- One member will play the role of 'Self'
- Two members will take the role of 'Good Voices', like 'Love', 'Kindness', 'Gratitude' and 'Forgiveness'
- Two other members will take the roles of 'Bad Voices', like 'Anger', 'Vanity', 'Envy' and 'Fear'
- The last member will take the role of Soul or the 'Voice of Truth'

Except the role of the 'self', other roles will be decided by handing out folded paper notes. And the identities will be kept a secret. Each group shall enact a situation where the 'Self' stands in front of a mirror (you can use an empty frame as a mirror) and asks a question to themselves. Examples of questions are given below. And then each of the 'voices' must appear one by one and give their advice or

opinion. These voices will not identify themselves. The 'Self' must correctly identify the voice and declare which of them is the voice of truth.

Examples of questions are as follows. The first one is done for you.

1. Mirror, Mirror on the wall, my friend is trying to copy from me in the examination hall. Should I let him do it?

Ans: Love: He is my friend and I should help him. But I will help him later.

Jealousy: Let him fail. That will show everyone that I am better than him.

Anger: Why didn't he study? Now he is disturbing me in the exam.

Honesty: It is wrong to cheat. I should not help him.

Soul: It won't do him any good to cheat and pass the test, but I must help my friend. I will not show him the answers now, but after the test I will explain to him why he needs to study by himself, and I'll even offer to help him study for the next exam.

Act out what the different voices would say for the following situations.

2. Mirror, Mirror on the wall, did I do the right thing by telling my best friend the bad things their other friend said about them behind their back?

3. Mirror, Mirror on the wall, my exams are nearing. Should I continue tutoring the child from the refugee community or should I focus on my own studies instead?

4. Mirror, Mirror on the wall, I fought with my younger sister because she lied about going to a movie with her friends. Was I wrong to reproach her?

Just like in the game, you must make it a part of your life to always identify which 'minister' or 'voice' is guiding you in your daily matters.

The Two Wolves

The following parable contains the gist of what we have learnt so far in the lesson.

One evening, a wise old man told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people.

He said, "My child, the battle is between two 'wolves' inside us all. One is evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego. The other one is good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."



The grandson thought for a minute and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf wins?”

The old man simply replied, “The one that you feed.”

This is a story that you must remember all your life and pass on to your children and grandchildren as well. Feed the good wolf with good deeds, good company and good thoughts, and starve the bad wolf out of existence from your mind and from the world.

Activity D: ***The Right Feeling: Your Moral Compass***

Do this activity by yourself. Think of any problem or issue in your life at present, about which you are unsure as to what action to take. Then sit in the place that you find most peaceful or beautiful. It could be your prayer room at home, your own room, balcony, roof, library, or under a tree in the park. Close your eyes and visualise the image that you hold in the highest and holiest place in your heart. It could be an image of someone who inspires you, your mother, or something else. As you focus on this image, a divinely blissful feeling will fill your heart. In this state of mind, think of the same problem or issue once more and about the answer to the same. You will find your one true answer.

Remember this feeling of purity and practise tuning into it. Reach for it whenever you need guidance. This is your moral compass and you must never lose it.

When you are alone, Mind your Thoughts.
When you are with Friends, Mind your Tongue.
When you are angry, Mind your Temper.
When you are with a Group, Mind your behaviour.
When you are in trouble, Mind your Emotions.
When you are soaring high, Mind your Ego.



Let's Remember

Let's use the rational mind and the intuitive mind to make balanced decisions.

Let's understand the different types of voices that exist within us and what they mean.

Let's always listen to the Good Voice and the True Voice.

Always LISTEN to the Intuitive mind, but USE your Rational mind. If there is any conflict, proceed with caution while making a decision.

My Space

What I liked most about this lesson...

.....
.....

I learnt that

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.....

Engage with Family



- 1. Ask your parents/family members/guardians to narrate incidents when they made a right decision or averted a problem by listening to their intuition.*
- 2. Share with your parents/family members/guardians what you learnt about Good Voice, Bad Voice and True Voice. Ask them to share with you one situation in which they faced the three voices. Ask them which voice they chose to listen to and why.*