

THE USE OF MEDITATION AND INTUITION IN DECISION-MAKING:  
REPORTS FROM EXECUTIVE MEDITATORS

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**Robert Drummond McNaughton**

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This dissertation has been  
accepted for the faculty of  
Fielding Graduate Institute by:

---

Leonard Baca, Ed.D.  
Chair

---

Lenneal Henderson, Ph.D.  
Faculty Reader

---

James Spickard, Ph.D.  
Faculty Reader

---

Gerald Flake  
Student Reader

The Use of Meditation and Intuition in Decision-Making:  
Reports from Executive Meditators  
by  
Robert Drummond McNaughton

Abstract

This was a study of the management styles of executive meditators, with a focus on their use of meditation and intuition in decision-making. Specifically, using quantitative and qualitative methods, this study explored executives' perceptions of their use of meditation and intuition in decision-making; the relationship between their meditative practices, intuition, and decision-making; the benefits they perceive gaining through their meditative practices that affects their decision-making; their use of intuition in decision-making; and the role meditation plays in developing intuition.

The study was conducted in two phases. In Phase 1, both short- and long-time meditators were surveyed regarding their meditative practices, intuition, and decision-making processes. In Phase 2, narrative interviews consisting of semistructured and open-ended questions were conducted with 15 long-time executive meditators (10-plus years) selected from Phase 1 and were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed. Results were triangulated using qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques.

This study found that executive meditators reported using their intuition in the preponderance of their decisions, contradicting previous findings by Agor, Hayashi, Keen, and others. There was little or no difference in decision-making styles and intuitional cues among meditation types, longevity of meditation practice, and gender. Of note, a model for intuitive decision-making was developed.

Executive meditators reported receiving true intuition for decision-making while in altered (higher) states of consciousness, and reported the ability to access these states both in and outside of meditation. They reported their intuition is more accurate following meditation. Not surprisingly, women reported greater intuitional prowess than did men, and women are more willing to use it in making more important and riskier decisions than men.

Executive meditators reported that meditation has a strong positive effect on business profits and on developing higher ethical conduct and standards.

Executive meditators believed that meditation has a significant positive effect on many of the independent variables of decision-making including physiological, psychological, intuition, and decision-making. They believed that the origin of intuition are spiritual in nature, and that meditation and using it are the best ways of training one's intuition.

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## DEDICATION

To my Guru,  
Paramahansa Yogananda  
Without whose guidance  
this work could not have been possible,  
and to my wife,  
whose love and support has sustained me through this process and more.

Beyond intellect there is another stage. In this another eye is opened by which he beholds the unseen, what is to be the future, and other things which are beyond the ken of intellect in the same way as the objects of intellect are beyond the ken of the faculty of discernment and the objects of discernment are beyond the ken of sense. Moreover, just as the man at the stage of discernment would reject and disregard the objects of intellect were these presented to him, so some intellectuals disregard the objects of prophetic revelation. That is sheer ignorance. They have no ground for their view except that this is a stage which they have not reached and which for them does not exist; yet they suppose it is non-existent in itself. When a man blind from birth, who has not learnt about colors and shapes by listening to people's talk, is told about things for the first time, he does not understand them or admit their existence.

Muhammad Al-Ghazzali  
(Al-Ghazzali, 1954, p. 64)

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## CHAPTER ONE

### OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

#### Introduction

With more uncertainty in the marketplace and the world, greater and greater personal and business challenges, stresses and responsibilities, business professionals are increasingly turning inside for answers to their most important decisions.

The business world is at a crossroads. Every day another story breaks about uncertainty in the marketplace; restated corporate earnings; record executive pay; and job layoffs; each leaving us shaking our heads as to what is going on in the business world.

Integral to this is a crisis in executive decision-making.

Western executives have many tools for making decisions, but in the past primarily have relied upon rational thinking and other similar tools while shying away from “spiritual tools” such as meditation and intuition for assisting their decision-making processes, despite evidence that such tools would help them in decision-making.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the decision-making processes of executive meditators who work in the business, government, nonprofit and non-governmental sectors of commerce. Specifically, this study explored meditating executives' experiences of their use of meditation and intuition in decision-making; the relationship they perceive between their meditative practices, their intuition, and their decision-making; their experience of the nature of that relationship; the benefits they perceive gaining through their meditative practices which apply to their decision-making;

their beliefs as to the origins of intuition; their perception of the role meditation plays in developing intuition; their experiences of the effects meditation has on profits; and their experiences of the effects meditation has on business ethics.

### Significance of the Study

In the past 50 years, Western business management has become systematized, made into a science, leaving little room for intuition in decision-making. According to Agor and others, most Western managers prefer making decisions using rational thought, hard facts, and logic, and use intuition only when there is incomplete data, many complex variables, and / or a need for rapid decision-making. (Agor, 1985b; Breen, 1990; Hayashi, 2001; Isenberg, 1984)

For a number of years since I began meditating in 1991, it has been my suspicion that the use of meditation was important for developing one's intuition, and that intuitive decision-making was a superior method of making decisions. Since that time, I have spoken with a number of long-time meditators, from executives to employees, all of whom work in the various areas of commerce and government, and have found a large number of them live their lives using intuition to guide them in the decisions they make. Through these conversations, I came to believe that it was possible to exclusively use intuition, or combine its use with rational thought for the purposes of decision-making, and thus learn to make better, more holistic decisions.

At the same time, over the past 4 years, I have observed a breakdown in decision-making at the executive level that has led to corporate malfeasance and a crisis in ethics, leaving me and many others shaking our heads and wondering what has happened in the

world of business and government, and how can it be fixed. With this crisis, I felt it was time that a study like this was performed that investigated the concepts and possibilities of using spiritual tools in decision-making and living life from within.

### Conceptual Framework

This study introduces the use of meditation and intuition as both tools in decision-making and for developing intuitional decision-making capabilities through examining their use as reported by executives and leaders in business, government, nonprofits, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Until the mid-1970s, there was little or no credence given to intuitive decision-making. Decision-making was reported to be predominantly analytic and rational; the reason for that was that to many scholars, intuition and its processes fell into the purview of the abnormal or paranormal, and as such was beyond the scope of a “scientific study” (Khatri & Ng, 2000).

In the 1970’s, Mintzberg (1976), followed in the next decade by Agor (1986), Isenberg (1984), and Keegan (1984), brought to light that executives use their intuition in making their most important decisions, and subsequent studies by Keen (1996) and others confirm its continued use. They found that executives, in the course of their daily routines, make literally hundreds of decisions, some minor, some very important, and all used their intuition to some degree.

However, executives have been “painted into a corner” by Western business and psychology literatures regarding when to use of intuition; Agor (1986), some 20 years

ago and most recently reiterated by Hayashi (2001), reported that managers use their intuition in situations where

- There is a high level of uncertainty.
- There is little previous precedent.
- Variables not often scientifically predictable.
- Limited facts, or the facts do not clearly point the way to go.
- Time is limited and there is pressure to be right.
- There are several plausible alternative solutions to choose from, with good arguments for each.

This changed in 1996, with Keen (1996) and others who opened the door for more widespread use of intuition in decision-making. In his study, Keen found that intuition was used more extensively in the 1995s business environment than in the environment that Agor (1989a) studied almost 15 years prior; over half of Keen's sample of 108 business executives used intuition to guide more than 50% of their decisions. Of particular interest to this study, Keen found a subgroup which he labeled "Highly Intuitive Decision-Makers" (HIDMs); this group used their intuition to guide 75% or more of their most important decisions.

Keen concluded that the reasons why intuition was used with more regularity had to do with the current business structure, i.e., less people to do more, and the pace of business had increased, but that the circumstances around which decisions were made, i.e., Agor's "big six," had not significantly changed. Additionally, he stated, as did Horton (1993), Fraser (1993), and others, that the decision-making environment in which one worked made a significant difference in one's ability to use and train their intuition. Of note, one of the techniques that he reported managers using to train their intuition was meditation.

Meditation is an ago-old science that has been used for thousands of years as a spiritual practice, and is increasing being used today for its many benefits. Its origins are unknown, though it is thought to originated on the Indian sub-continent in the Vedic traditions, or possibly from indigenous practices hinted at in the seals of the ancient pre-Aryan civilizations of Mohenjodaro and Harappa where a figure is seated in the lotus posture.

Awareness of reflective (meditative) practices began to grow in the West though the popularity of the Beatles and others; soon after, researchers from organizations such as Maharishi University of Management, California Institute of Integral Studies, and others began researching meditation and its various phenomena. Two researchers, Yogananda, an Eastern Yogic mystic, and later Walsh, a psychologist, were among the first in the West to study meditation and its effects (although Yogananda predated the Beatles, his writings were published and became more popular after them); Yogananda, from the perspective of a “Master,” a Christ-like figure who came from the East to spread the teachings of Kriya Yoga in the West, and Walsh, from the perspective of a psychologist and a scientist.

Walsh defined meditation as the “conscious training of attention aimed at modifying mental processes so as to elicit enhanced states of consciousness and well-being” (Walsh, 1982, p. 77). Yogananda defined meditation as “the application of concentration solely to know God” (Yogananda, 1925a, p. 16-1). Basically, the meditator, through a process of disciplined concentration, seeks to remove the focus of his mind from the outside world, and by looking within, get beyond feelings, habits, and desire itself to a point that unifies all experiences (McGreal, 1995).

In the East, meditation was taught as a tool to know God; however, over the years, meditators and scientists have discovered it has many benefits to peoples' lives beyond the spiritual, including being a tool to improve one's health and reduce stress levels; improve one's mental and emotional state, as in psychotherapy; expand one's consciousness beyond normal waking consciousness, and develop one's intuition. These benefits all have a positive impact on one's decision-making capabilities (Benson, 1974; Stanislaw Grof & Grof, 1989; Kabat-Zinn, Lipworth, & Burney, 1985; Kelly, 1996; Tart, 1980; Vaughan, 1979).

Eastern and transpersonal psychology literatures have held the promise of the use of meditation and its ability to assist one in accessing higher states of consciousness (HSC) for the purposes of decision-making. Jung stated that in these higher states we have access to other information which we would not normally have access to through rational processes (Jung, 1958). Equally as important and complimentary is experimental psychology literature, and its study of how people know what they know, including Tart, Grof, Kornfield, and others.

Prior to this study, no studies existed that specifically explored the relationship among meditation, intuition, and decision-making. Previous studies have discussed the situations in which executives use their intuition in decision-making, and only one specifically mentioned using their meditation in decision-making. Horton's (1993) participants stated that meditation or prayer played a role in their decision-making, but did not elaborate further. Levin (1997) looked at meditation within the context of inner work, and found that participants' inner work contributed to an enhanced use of their intuition, a greater involvement of others at work, an increased self-awareness as well as

the awareness of others' contexts, their need for authenticity, both with themselves and others, and the changing perception of the value of work. Finally, Forbes (1999) found that meditation led to an improved inner state, increased functioning at work, improved perceptions of self, a shifting toward greater balance in professional and personal lives, increased sensitivity toward others, increased focus on ethical behavior, improved relationships, and an integration of one's meditation practice with their lives.

The differences between this and previous studies are significant. First, this study is the first to specifically look at meditation and intuition concurrently as tools in decision-making. Second, the executive meditators in this study have come to trust and rely upon their intuition in nearly all circumstances, not just those where they "have to use it" because there is not complete data or enough time to use their more familiar rational modalities of decision-making. Lastly, they "know" the origins of their intuition, and believe that there is a higher purpose to life than just being born, growing up, making money, rearing children, and dying.

This study is the reported application of spiritual tools and principles by meditating executives which results in the expansion of consciousness into higher states and development of one's intuition, and its application to everyday decision-making in their personal and professional lives.

### Operational Definitions

The following are working definitions of the terms that were used in this study.

*Decision-making:* The act of making up one's mind, or bringing resolution to unsolved options or problems.(Webster, 1983)

*Intuitive Decision-Makers:* Those who make their decisions solely, or nearly solely, with intuition.

*Intuitive-Rational Decision-Makers:* Those who make their decisions predominately intuitively, but use rational thinking for portions of the process.

*Rational-Intuitive Decision-Makers:* Those who make their decisions predominately rationally, but use their intuition for portions of the process.

*Rational Decision-Makers:* Those who make their decisions solely, or nearly solely, using rational thinking.

*Ego:* The soul which has become identified with the body and its limitations. Once so identified, the soul can no longer express its omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. That state of conscious that is normal waking consciousness.

*Higher State of Consciousness (HSC):* Analogous to Tart's (1980) discrete Altered States of Consciousness (d-ASC), HSC is a term that is used to describe higher states of consciousness as described by Wilber (1996) or Yogananda (1995; 1997a), i.e., one's consciousness when it is attuned to God or the higher Self (soul), which is distinctly different than d-ASCs that are drug- or hypnosis-induced. In these states one knows of his / her oneness with all life.

*Intuition:* One of the three sources of knowledge (intuition, thought / intellect, senses) that can be accessed only from higher states of consciousness during those instants when one's mind is calm. Soul guidance. Through intuition one can know the world beyond senses and thoughts. When the human mind is calm and free from disturbances, one can receive intuition freely. To differentiate between intuition and thought, intuition comes from within, thought from without (Yogananda, 1982).



*Meditation:* A specialized form of scientific concentration using spiritual techniques in which the attention is focused on God / Spirit / Higher Power. Meditation should not be confused with concentration, which is the act of freeing one's attention from distractions and focusing it on one thought which may be of interest. There are three types of meditation: mindfulness, concentrative, and integrated (Goleman, 1988; Yogananda, 1925a).

*Concentrative Meditation:* Meditation in which the mind focuses on one object, God/Spirit/Higher Power, a mantra, etc.

*Mindfulness Meditation:* Meditation in which the mind observes the thoughts that pass through itself (Goleman, 1988).

*Integrated Meditation:* Meditation using a combination of concentrative and mindfulness techniques (Goleman, 1988).

*Profits:* Advantage, gain; benefit. To reap a reward, financial or otherwise, for self or others. Profits come in both financial and other forms, and are valuable to the giver and receiver (Webster, 1983).

*self:* Ego. Pseudo-soul. A soul that has identified itself with the body and all its limitations, relatives, and possessions. Once a soul has identified itself with the body, it can no longer express its omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. This consciousness, also known as the normal or waking state, is the highest level of consciousness acknowledged by Western psychology. The soul in this state of delusion imagines itself to be limited, just as a king with amnesia wandering in the slums imagines himself to be a pauper (Yogananda, 1995).

*Self:* The soul.

*Soul:* The soul is individualized reflection of ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Joy (God), confined within the body of each and every being. When one is identified with the soul, in opposition to ego (normal everyday waking consciousness) they are said to be in the superconscious state, or what is commonly known as a higher state of consciousness (Yogananda, 1995).

*Spirit.* A Higher Power, Truth, Joy, God, Atman; any of the names to which God is referred.

### Research Questions

The following are the research questions upon which this researcher based this study.

Question #1. How do executive meditators report using their meditation and intuition in their decision-making? How do they describe their decision-making processes?

Question #2. What are the benefits that executive meditators report gaining from their meditation practices which affect their decision-making?

Question #3. What are executive meditators' experiences of the effects of meditation on profits?

Question #4. What are executive meditators' experiences of the effects of meditation on ethics?

Question #5. What are executive meditators' beliefs of the origins of intuition? What are executive meditators' experiences of the effects of meditation on training one's intuition?

Question #6. What are executive meditators' beliefs of the interrelationship among meditation, intuition, and decision-making?

### Assumptions

This researcher is a long-time meditator, having practiced Raja Yoga for more than 10 years. As such, I have become both knowledgeable and identified with Eastern yogic philosophy and teachings. As a long-time meditator, I cannot but help having certain preconceptions regarding the effects and benefits of a meditative practice on decision-making, not only because of the benefits that it has had on my own life, but also from what I have observed in the lives of the many other meditators I know.

With that said, I am also a scientist, a Naval Aviator, and a long-time business professional. I have had two successful careers in government and business. Early in my academic career as a Physics major for undergraduate degree at the U.S. Naval Academy, I learned the discipline and rigor required to be a scientist, which requires one to be as objective as possible in scientific studies such as this; as such, I have done my best to set aside any preconceived notions and ideas about meditation and intuition, and its potential as a tool in decision-making.

Let this study speak for itself.

### Limitations

Size of the sample. For performing quantitative analysis, the size of the sample ( $N = 100$ ) is a relatively small sample. Future studies should strive to increase the number of participants.

Sample and sample recruiting. The majority of participants were recruited through spiritual or quasi-spiritual organizations, or personal relationships, thus potentially setting up an unintentional bias toward the spiritual perspectives of meditation. However, with that said, meditators are generally spiritual people, or, as the quantitative data shows, become spiritual meditators after some period of time. Hence, this outcome was not avoidable.

### Summary

This study was a two-phase, sequential mixed methods study of the self-reported leadership and decision-making styles of American executives who meditate, focusing on their reported use of meditation and intuition in decision-making. Specifically, using quantitative and qualitative methods, this study explored 100 meditating executives' experiences of their reported use of meditation and intuition in decision-making; the relationship they perceive between their meditative practices, intuition, and decision-making; their experience of the nature of that relationship; the benefits they perceive gaining through their meditative practices as they apply to their decision-making; their beliefs on the origins of intuition; their perception of the role meditation plays in developing intuition; their experience of the effect meditation has on profits, and their experience of the role meditation has on ethics.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

For one to understand and apply any practical application of a theory, one must understand the framework of the theory, and the context in which it is applied. So it is with meditation, intuition, and decision-making; for one to understand and apply any practical application of meditation and intuition in the context of business or any other professional decision-making, one must understand the theoretical basis and framework of meditation and intuition, and the context in which it is applied, in business and professional decision-making. Such is the way this literature review has been organized.

Prior to this study, no studies existed that specifically explored the relationship among meditation, intuition, and decision-making. As such, the literatures that formed the foundation for this research included social, clinical, and experimental psychological research on meditation, intuition, and cognition; transpersonal psychology, and Eastern and Western philosophy and spirituality literatures on the impact of meditation and consciousness; and the experimental psychology and business literatures on intuition and decision-making (Beery, 1990).

First, a review of the meditation literature is presented which includes a brief history of meditation; a brief review of the various meditative techniques, followed by the known benefits of meditation; altered states of consciousness and cognitive development; and the interrelationship between meditation and intuition.

Secondly, the intuition literature has been reviewed, with a particular focus on the differences between the Eastern and Western definitions of intuition as well as the

applications and uses of intuition in the business and personal contexts, and the various signs and cues that highly intuitive people use to guide their decisions.

Thirdly, a detailed review of the intuitive decision-making literatures have been provided to further understanding of the framework of decision-making, as so that the reader can understand the context in which meditation and intuition have been found to be effective tools in decision-making.

## Meditation

### *The History of Meditation*

Meditation is an ago-old science that has been used for thousands of years for spiritual practices, and is increasing being used today for other reasons.

The origins of meditation are unknown, though it is thought to have its origins on the Indian sub-continent in the Vedic traditions, or possibly from indigenous practices hinted at in the seals of the ancient pre-Aryan civilizations of Mohenjodaro and Harappa where a figure is seated in the lotus posture. The *Upanishads* (circa 1500 BC) were the first written text that discussed meditation; the word Upanishad has its origin in Sanskrit: *upa* (near), *ni* (down) and *sad* (to sit), describing how, in ancient India, knowledge was passed down from teacher to student, literally, at the feet of the teacher. The *Upanishads* called meditation yoga, which comes from the Sanskrit root *yuj*, signifying union; in Hindu philosophy yoga is usually used to describe the process of uniting the individual soul with Spirit through meditation. Meditation has been advocated by adherents to various Indian religions including Brahmanical Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism.

In addition to the *Upanishads*, there are two other notable texts originating in India which discuss yoga: Patanjali, in his *Yoga Sutras*, outlined the eight-fold path of yoga and described how to achieve this Union, and the *Bhagavad Gita*, commonly known as the Hindu Bible. Depending on the source, all practices of meditation originate from yoga (Chapple, 1995; Hundersmarck, 1995; M. Murphy & Donovan, 1999; Yogananda, 1925d, 1997a).

Although in the past meditation has been primarily an Eastern phenomenon, it is rapidly spreading to the West and becoming more mainstream. Currently, it is estimated that there are over 50 million meditators worldwide, and many books and classes on meditation. At professional gatherings such as the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association, there are an increasing number of presentations and workshops focusing on spiritual and transpersonal approaches to clinical treatment. Retreat centers and spas have sprung up worldwide that offer yoga and other meditation practice training; in the United States, health clubs and cities offer classes on Hatha Yoga (postures), and at the end of these classes, there is a short period of meditation. Meditation is truly becoming a worldwide phenomenon (Kelly, 1996; Lukoff, Turner, & Lu, 1993).

### *The Practice of Meditation*

There are many differing definitions and styles of meditation. According to Walsh, meditation is defined as the “conscious training of attention aimed at modifying mental processes so as to elicit enhanced states of consciousness and well-being.” (Walsh, 1982 p. 77). Barnes (1980) stated that meditation is the shifting of the attention

from the outer to one's inner world. William James, in his *Principles of Psychology*, described this process as "voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention over and over again" (James, 1950, p.424). Wilber (1996 p. 109) defined meditation as "a sustained instrumental path of transcendence." Yogananda (1925a) defined this focusing of concentration as real concentration, and defined meditation as "the application of concentration solely to know God" (p. 16-1).

The meditator, through a process of disciplined concentration, seeks to remove the focus of his mind from the outside world, and by looking within, to get beyond feelings, habits, and desire itself to a point that unifies all experiences.(McGreal, 1995) Yogananda (1995) stated that

the use of yoga techniques that scientifically withdraw the attention from the objective world and focuses on the inner being, which alone possesses the ability to experience and commune with God (p. 588).

The term meditation has been used across many disciplines, and each differs from the other making it difficult to categorize and define them all. However, with that said, meditation can be loosely categorized in three types: concentrative, mindfulness (also known as awareness or insight meditation), and integrated. Concentrative meditation refers to those techniques of meditation such as Raja Yoga, Kabbalah, or Transcendental Meditation which the meditator constantly reorients his concentration to a single object, and in so doing, develops one-pointedness of concentration. Tart (1975) defined concentrative meditation as putting all of one's concentration on one thing. In mindfulness meditation, e.g., Krishnamurti's self-knowledge or Gurdjieff's self-remembering, the techniques entails vigilantly watching each successive moment, a constant awareness of one's thoughts and/or the events which are ongoing around the



meditator. Integrated meditation combines elements of both concentrative and mindfulness techniques (Goleman, 1988; Kornfield, 1993).

Table 1 specifies and categorizes some of the different types of meditation, i.e., concentration, mindfulness, or integrated.

Table 1

*Table of Meditative Techniques*

| System                           | Technique           | Type          |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Hindu Bhakti Yoga                | Japa                | Concentration |
| Jewish Kabbalah                  | Kavvanah            | Concentration |
| Hesychasm (Christian Meditation) | Prayer of the Heart | Concentration |
| Sufi                             | Zikr                | Concentration |
| Raja Yoga                        | Samadhi             | Concentration |
| Transcendental Meditation        | TM (Mantra)         | Concentration |
| Kundalini Yoga                   | Siddha yoga         | Concentration |
| Tibetan Buddhist                 | Vipassana           | Integrated    |
| Zen Buddhist                     | Zazen               | Integrated    |
| Gurdjieff                        | Self-remembering    | Mindfulness   |
| Krishnamurti                     | Self-knowledge      | Mindfulness   |
| Theravada                        | Vipassana           | Integrated    |

Note. From *The Meditative Mind* (p. 106), by Daniel Goleman, 1988, New York: Tarcher/Putnam. Copyright 1988 by Daniel Goleman. Reprinted with permission. See Appendix A for permission letter.

This study concerned itself only with concentrative and integrated types of meditation.

Of all the texts and articles on meditation techniques, Goleman (1988), in *The Meditative Mind*, has done the best job in surveying the various types of meditation techniques. According to him, although some meditators use “pure” techniques such as Zen, Kriya, TM, etc., most meditators use a variety of techniques that make allowances for individual needs, desires, and progress. He suggested that the technique, or blend of techniques, is not as important as is the meditator retraining their attention (Goleman, 1988).

Brown stated that stages of consciousness that meditators of differing disciplines pass through on the way to enlightenment are “cross-cultural and universally applicable (at a deep, not a surface, analysis)” (D. Brown, 1986, p. 219). Goleman (1988) stated that there are three commonalities in the mode and objective techniques between meditative types that he termed purification, meditative concentration, and insight.

According to most meditative traditions, the first step is purification: purification of the mind of distracting thoughts. For example, Goleman (1988) stated that in the Visuddhimagga tradition of Buddhism, purification begins with the observance of codes of behavior that become stricter as one rises on the path from laity to novice to monk. These include abstaining from killing, stealing, unlawful sexual intercourse, lying, and intoxicants. Patanjali, in his Yoga Sutras, calls these *yama* (thoughts and actions from which the meditator should abstain) and *niyama* (thoughts and actions which the meditator should do); *yama* actions include violence, untruthfulness, stealing, sexual non-

restraint, and attachment; *niyama* actions include purity, contentment, austerity, study, and dedication to a meditative ideal (Chapple, 1995; Yogananda, 1995).

In this process of meditation, purity, concentration, and insight arise; first by strength of will, then by the interiorization of the consciousness. Goleman (1988) discussed this transcendence in terms of altered states of consciousness. Interiorization is focusing one's attention inward so as to "distract" and focus the waking consciousness. As this happens, the soul, or superconscious state awakens, giving rise to concentration, as well as insight (intuition) which can be used in making both personal and business decisions.

#### *Meditation and Consciousness*

According to Kornfield, meditation is much more than a process of simple relaxation. He stated that meditation develops concentration which can lead not only to transitory altered states of consciousness, but also promotes the cultivation of mindfulness which seems to produce more lasting personality changes. Tart and Wilber suggested that these states may or may not be valued in and of themselves depending on the particular spiritual discipline and its philosophy, but the effects following meditation of clarity, freshness of perceptions, and general 'aliveness' can give rise to heightened sensory perception of both one's inner and outer worlds (Kornfield, 1977; Tart, 1975; Wilber, 1979).

Wilber stated that the process of meditation is nothing more than a progressive disidentification from one's current habits of thought patterns that are focused outward, and a gradual turning inward of the consciousness. He went on to say that this is

particularly slow process, because it is a radical shifting of one's consciousness with the "gross" outer world to the finer and more subtle inner world. When awareness is no longer identified with the outer world, Wilber called this liberation, or enlightenment, and states that when one is free of distorting thoughts from the outer world, "awareness is now capable of clear, accurate perceptions" (Wilber, 1980a, p. 59; Yogananda, 1925a, 1995).

There are multiple ways to interpret one's experiences in meditation. According to Barnes (1980) and Goleman (1988), a meditator's beliefs and shared interpretive schema determine how s/he interprets their experiences in meditation. Ram Dass (1980) and Walsh and Vaughan (1993) stated that the awareness one gains from meditation allows for a clarity of one's cognitive processes as well as the other forces at work in any situation, including those of higher consciousness. Barnes stated that once the "lived in world" is shifted from exterior to interior, the meditator understands the interior space according to the teachings of the particular religion or spiritual movement to which the meditator ascribes.

### *Normal and Altered States of Consciousness*

How does one describe the color red to someone who has been blind from birth?

All major religions of the world, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism and all meditation literatures, describe altered states of consciousness, and the goal of all meditative paths is the transformation of the mediator's consciousness to a higher state that infuses into all states of consciousness (Goleman, 1988; Wilber, 1979). This requires the meditator to transcend his previous level of

consciousness into higher states of consciousness or, as stated in the Christian Bible, “I die daily” (Bible, 1897, I Cor. 15:31).

According to Yogananda, there are three states of consciousness that are present in humans: waking consciousness, subconscious, and superconscious, sometimes referred to as higher consciousness, Christ Consciousness, or Cosmic Consciousness (Yogananda, 1997a). Goleman (1988) said that there are three normal states of consciousness, waking, sleeping, and dreaming, and that Jhanic, or Cosmic Consciousness, is mutually exclusive of these normal states. Tart stated that these levels of consciousness can be divided into discrete states of consciousness; e.g., “ordinary waking state, non-dreaming sleep, dreaming sleep, hypnosis, alcohol intoxication, marijuana intoxication, and meditative states” (Tart, 1993 p. 35).

Kornfield found that meditation was more than just a relaxation technique, and that the resulting changes in concentration produced transitory states of altered consciousness. In this process, the meditator progressively reaches higher and higher levels of consciousness and becomes aware of “things” that s/he previously would not have noticed. Upon leaving meditation, they are able to progressively “take this higher consciousness with them” into the waking state, until ultimately they transcend normal consciousness. This is in line with Tart’s (1980, p. 201) definition of an altered (higher) state of consciousness, i.e., “a qualitative alteration in the overall pattern of mental functioning, such that the experiencer feels his consciousness is radically different from the way that it functions ordinarily” (Goleman, 1988; Kornfield, 1977; Tolle, 1999; Yogananda, 1995).

Wilber (1996) stated that meditation is, in the beginning, a method of breaking down the ego and its defenses, or, as he termed it, “conceptual translating” (p. 110); as meditation continues, the more “resistant aspects of egoic translation” (p. 114) are slowly disassembled and destroyed, allowing for greater and more subtle transformations to take place and information to be gleaned on the superconscious state.

There are many names that are used to describe the superconscious state: jhana, samyana, samadhi, fana, Daat, turiya, and transcendental consciousness; in this state, purity, concentration, and insight are attained, and answers to questions and guidance are received. That is not to say that these qualities and answers are not received to those who have not attained these states; they are, only that the guidance or insights may not be as clear as they would in this higher state of consciousness (Barnes, 1980; Chapple, 1995; Goleman, 1988).

Grof, in his 17 years of research into the phenomena of higher consciousness, showed through studies of LSD in subjects, that there are higher levels of consciousness that can be accessed through use of consciousness-altering technologies such as LSD, meditation, yoga, or advanced psychotherapy. In fact, he stated that many of the sessions he conducted resembled the phenomena described in Kundalini yoga of the activation and opening of the chakras (Grof, 1980).

James, one of America’s foremost psychologists, wrote “our normal waking consciousness... is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different” (as cited in Wilber, 1979, p. 2). Wilber and Yogananda agreed with this statement, and went on to further state that waking consciousness is separated by the thinnest of veils

from Cosmic Consciousness, and that these higher consciousness levels can break through the veil spontaneously, flooding the conscious mind with knowledge and knowing from “a vast, largely unexplored, but intensely real domain of new-world consciousness” (Wilber, 1979, p. 2; Yogananda, 1997a).

Yogananda, Bucke, and Smith detailed their experiences in this state of Cosmic Consciousness, or, what Maslow called “peak experiences,” that can happen spontaneously, or be brought on through the practice of meditation. Those who have experienced this state described it as Bucke did, a “sense of exultation, of immense joyousness accompanied or immediately followed by an intellectual illumination impossible to describe.” Bucke also stated that the learning he gained in that few seconds of illumination was “more than he could have learned in years, and much of which could not have been taught with any study” (Bucke, 1901, p. 6; Goleman, 1988; Maslow, 1964, 1971; Tart, 2002; Wilber, 1979; Yogananda, 1995).

According to Goleman, although the different types of meditation use different terminology, all concentrative paths describe the same journey into higher consciousness, a “loss of sense awareness, one-pointed attention to the object to the exclusion of all other thoughts, and sublimely rapturous feelings” (Goleman, 1988, p. 110). For mindfulness (awareness) practices that use insight as their tool, all describe “increasingly finer perception of the meditator’s mind, detachment from these events, and a compelling focus on the present moment” (Goleman, 1988, p. 110).

There has been very little documented research relevant to this study into higher and altered states of consciousness. One of the few, Banquet and Lesevre (1980), found that meditators in altered states of consciousness displayed great vigilance and capacity

for selective attention with quicker reaction times (and fewer mistakes) in response to visual choices.

*Understanding these higher states is not a matter of reading about them; one must experience them to understand them and the differences in the descriptions and the states themselves.* These higher states are mutually exclusive of the normal major states of waking sleeping and dreaming. However, with that said, according to Yogananda, Goleman and others, regardless of the path, whether it be concentration or mindfulness, attention is the key, and the goal is to transform the meditator's consciousness so that s/he can carry the higher consciousness out of the meditative state and into all other states (Goleman, 1988; Walsh & Vaughn, 1980; Yogananda, 1925a, 1995).

#### *Meditation Research and Effects of Meditation*

There has been extensive research completed on the effects of meditation, primarily in the physiological and psychological areas. According to the Brain Research Institute (2001), there have been over 600 scientific studies conducted in over 30 countries in colleges, universities, and research institutions that have shown that meditation increases intelligence and creativity that effects every area of our lives, including health, personal relationships, education, business, and society. Most of the research has had little or no direct bearing on decision-making; those that have been selected have been shown to be intervening variables that either facilitate or inhibit the decision-making process.

Walsh stated the effects of meditation are at first subtle, and include:

Increased calm, sensitivity, receptivity empathy, insights and clarity are some of the qualities that may be experienced early as a result of regular



practice. Old assumptions about oneself and the world are gradually surrendered and more finely tuned, comprehensive perspectives begin to emerge. Such immediate benefits, however, are only tastes of what is potentially a profound transformative process, for when practiced intensely meditation disciplines almost invariably lead into the transpersonal realm of experience. Advanced practitioners report states of consciousness, levels of perceptual sensitivity and clarity, and degrees of insight, calm, joy, and love that far exceed those experienced by most people in daily life. A progressive sequence of altered states of consciousness can occur which may ultimately result in the permanent radical shift in consciousness known as enlightenment or Liberation. (Walsh & Vaughn, 1980, pp. 136-137)

### *Physiological Benefits*

#### *Stress*

The literature on meditation as a means of physiological stress reduction is extensive, and significant as stress is an intervening variable in decision-making.

Benson (1974) suggested that the harmful effects of stress are counteracted by regularly using the relaxation response (meditation). He found that use of this relaxation response created changes opposite to the “fight or flight” response in the hypothalamus. He also suggested that use of this technique could reduce alcohol intake, drug abuse, and cigarette smoking, all contributors to stress.

Goleman (1988) stated that meditation is effective in lowering stress and reducing anxiety. Wenk (1997) found that concentrative meditation may promote coping strategies that could be effective in stress management (Currey, 1993).

De Armond (1996) found in randomized controlled studies that transcendental meditation reduced stress by two-three times greater than other non-meditative methods.

Winzelberg and Luskin (1999) found that meditators reported significantly less stress during post-test and follow-up than the control group of non-meditators, as well as

decreased gastronomic, emotional, and behavioral manifestations (as cited in Murphy & Donovan, 2002).

MacLean et al. (1997) found that repeated practice of meditation reverses effects of chronic stress. Easterlin and Cardena (1999) compared beginning and advanced Vipassana meditators, finding that advanced meditators reported having lower anxiety levels, lower stress, and a healthier sense of self-control than did beginning meditators (as cited in Murphy & Donovan, 2002).

Khare and Nigam (2000) found that meditators were in a state of relaxed alertness. They showed an increase of alpha and decrease in beta in meditators, as well as a persistence of the alpha state in the meditators after they opened their eyes twice as much (28.9%) as non-meditators. (Alpha rhythms have been correlated with decreased anxiety and a mental state of passive readiness.)

### *Psychological Benefits*

Much has been written on meditation and consciousness in the Western clinical, developmental, industrial, and general psychology literatures. Western literature is focused primarily on self-exploration or self-regulation strategies to be used for stress and pain management, relaxation, and enhancement of physical health; however, even in Western literature meditation is becoming increasingly more well known as a self-regulation strategy for cognitive functioning, personal insight, understanding and “meaning of live” issues (Kelly, 1996; D. H. Shapiro, 1992). Most previous literature focused on transcendental meditation; however, there is quite a bit from Zen, Vipassana, Kriya, and other forms of meditation.

However, to truly understand the psychological effects of meditation, one must incorporate the transpersonal and Eastern psychology literatures. Wilber (1979) stated that “the mind-body split and attendant dualism [which] is a fundamental perspective of Western psychology” (p. 6) is epidemic, and that “meditation is a sustained instrumental path of transcendence” (Wilber, 1980b, p. 113). According to him, the purpose of meditation is to heal this split, and in this process, reveals a Higher Identity of which we are all part, and that only the transpersonalists (and Eastern psychologists) have studied levels of consciousness and development beyond that state normally called the “ego,” i.e., the conscious and subconscious states, that would account for the psychological changes that one sees as a result of meditation.

### *Personality Change*

Researchers have found both positive and negative personality shifts as a result of meditation. Wilber (1996) stated that in the beginning, meditation breaks down the ego and its defenses, or, as he terms it, “conceptual translating” (p. 110); as meditation continues, the more “resistant aspects of egoic translation” (p. 114) are slowly disassembled and destroyed, allowing for greater and more subtle transformations to take place.

Kornfield (1977) found that meditation seemed to produce lasting personality change. Schmidt-Wilk (1996) found that meditation improved teams’ work relationships, communications, and mutual acceptance; team members had fewer arguments, along with greater trust, openness, happiness, and greater team alignment and cohesiveness; and

individual emotional growth, and work performance. Additionally, her participants reported a more enjoyable family life as a result of meditation.

Bogart (1991) suggested that meditation offers the ability to understand and resolve conflicts between people.

However, Nixon (1990) found that people can become obsessed with becoming enlightened which can lead to psychological blind spots and withdrawal and isolation in relationships.

### *Concentration, Cognition and Decision-making*

Goleman (1988), Wilber (1979), Kelly (1996) and Wade (1996) stated that meditation is a form of intensive attention training, and training one's mind "sharpens its attention" which results in improved concentration that continues beyond meditation and into one's daily life, and the ability to be present in the moment. Wenk (1997) found that meditation training increased vigilance and concentration in both adults and children. Valentine and Sweet (1999) found that meditators' attention and accuracy was greater than non-meditators, and that long-term meditators demonstrated greater attentional processes than short-term meditators.

Balodhi (1986) stated that the practice of Raja Yoga requires behavioral and psychophysiological control, self-analysis, meditation, cognitive change, and change in consciousness, and suggested that its practices gives yield to improved mental health and transcendence to the highest level of consciousness. Kornfield (1993) echoed this, stating that meditation brings about an awareness of how the mind functions, leading to insight on the effects of desire and motivation on one's mind.

Cummings (1994) found that there appears to be a relationship between cognitive development and meditation. Schmidt-Wilk (1996) found that meditation improved mental functioning and work performance in the workplace, both individually and in teams.

Easterlin (1992) found that long-term meditators have greater awareness, less stress, and greater calmness than short-term meditators. Differences in cognition (as defined for this study as clarity, awareness and concentration) between long- and short-term meditators were unable to be determined, possibly because their effects were too subtle to measure or because of the employed methods of measurement. Walsh (1980) cited research by Glueck, Kornfield, Shapiro and others that meditation brings about enhanced insights and clarity into their psychological processes.

Clark (1988) found that meditation training significantly decreased the thought intrusions over the duration of the meditation training sessions, and that there was a significant inverse relationship between thought intrusions and hit rate. This inverse relation increased significantly with meditation training, suggesting that hit rate would increase significantly over time with meditation training.

Walsh (1980) stated that more advanced meditators have reported that as they continue to meditate, they have noticed a deepening of their own understanding of the statements made by more senior meditators, giving rise to the theory that *intellectual understanding of meditation and its effects requires experiential learning*. What was incomprehensible at an earlier stage can be understood by reaching a higher level of consciousness through more and deeper meditation.

Benson and Proctor (1987) cited scientific research which showed electrical activity between the left and right sides of the brain becomes coordinated during certain kinds of meditation or prayer, and when in these states of consciousness, one's mind becomes more capable of being altered and maximizing its capacities. Lyubimov (1999) found that the cortex more freely shares information during meditation, which implies that the body's information systems are more intimately interconnected during meditation and can result in better, more holistic decisions. Lou et al. (1999) studied practitioners of Kriya yoga and found that there were significant differences in EEG readings between the meditative state and "normal consciousness" that included increased theta and strong bilateral hippocampal activation during meditation.

Levin (1997), in a qualitative study, found that the effects of inner work, including meditation, improved multiple aspects of her subjects' professional lives, including decision-making, productivity, strategic thinking, the ability to foresee potential outcomes, and the "ability to stay present, waste less time on little things, and pay better attention to the significant aspects of their jobs" (p. 82). Additionally, her respondents stated that they had gained a greater awareness of the impetus behind their decisions, including realizing how moods affected their decision-making processes and outcomes. They also stated that they involved others in the decision-making process with more regularity, and specifically stated that they did not learn this through reading of management literature.

Schaefer and Darling (1997) found that 70% of their respondents reported that their mental cognitive processes improved as a result of using meditation. Carrington et.al. (1980) respondents' comments included statements such as "my reasoning process

is clearer; I am better able to assign priorities and handle them in a proper order” (as cited in Forbes, 1999, p. 190).

### *Empathy*

Kelly (1996, p. 61) wrote that meditation helps us to see beyond the “illusion of separateness” that the human mind creates, giving new meaning to the word empathy. Goleman (1988) stated that meditation trains the mind to perceive subtle environmental clues, as well as the ability to pick up both the stated and unstated messages of others. McNaughton (1992) wrote of feeling and experiencing other’s feelings simultaneously both in close proximity and from afar.

Wilber (1979) stated that in higher levels of consciousness, one’s identity expands to, or at least extends beyond what we believe to be “a person” in Western psychology. As this expansion of consciousness takes place, one becomes more empathetic to those around him, as that person begins to experience the larger “One” of which we are all part.

Forbes (1999), in a qualitative study studying the effects of meditation in the workplace, found that meditation improved participants’ inner state, including their sensitivity toward and their relationships with others and self.

### *Emotional Intelligence and Well-Being*

Wilber (1980c) stated that meditation is a tool for sustaining growth on the path of “transcendence,” and that transcendence is “sustained personal development or growth.” He used terms such as “transcendence” and “transformation” to describe the effects of meditation on one’s consciousness and personal development.

Gibson (1992) found that meditators are typically people who have made the conscious choice to change their lives by releasing pain and struggle from them.

Schmidt-Wilk (1996) found that organizational teams that practice meditation have improved communications, better awareness and acceptance of the organizations' values, needs, team cohesiveness and alignment, and fewer arguments.

Nightingale (1994) found that meditators' scores significantly increased on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem survey with years of meditation practice.

Forbes (1999) found that meditation improved participants' inner state, including their sensitivity and relationships with others and self, as well as shifted their priorities toward greater balance in their professional and personal lives.

Carrington and Ephron (1975) found that meditators reported a number of key psychological changes as a result of their meditation practice. They included becoming more inner directed; an increased psychological differentiation, with an accompanying clearer sense of identity, greater awareness of personal feelings and needs, and enhanced emotional responsivity; greater self-confidence, a willingness to take on increasingly more risks, and less affected by social pressure; greater spontaneity and creativity; and an increased acceptance of things as they are.

Shafii (1973), whose results were very similar to those found by Carrington and Ephron (1975), found that meditators reported an increased ability to relax and concentrate, and a reduced propensity for repetitive and compulsive behaviors (as cited in Battis, 1981).



### *Intuition*

One of the key benefits to meditation is its ability to activate and improve one's intuition. Vaughan (1979) stated that the single, most powerful way to improve one's intuition is to regularly meditate, and when one is in touch with the center of their being (as is one of the outcomes of meditation), nothing else must be done to enable one's intuition.

Kelly referenced yogic literature such as the *Upanishads* which references intuition as the "inner guru," and speaks of it as coming from the seat of wisdom, what is commonly referred to in Eastern literature as the "third eye," the point on the forehead between the eyebrows. He stated that when this "inner wisdom," i.e., intuition, is contacted, it will always guide you to that "right action." He goes on to say that "with practice, meditation can lead us closer to this intuitive knowledge that can help us make decisions and choose new directions in life" (Kelly, 1996). He also discussed the need in psychotherapy for the use of intuition. Kelly, citing Freud (1925) and Tart (1990), wrote

Freud emphasized that for the therapeutic process to be successful, the therapist needs to achieve an unfixated attentional state that he called "evenly hovering awareness." In meditative practice, this state of mind is known as witness consciousness. One is able to observe all that is going on, but does not have to be caught in all of the emotional reactions and rational judgments that would be typical of the experience. Unfettered by the need to be constantly judging, the individual is free to listen for intuitive insights that may come from within. (Kelly, 1996, p. 62)

Levin found that inner work facilitated the use of intuition in strategic planning and visioning. Additionally, her meditating respondents stated that they regularly rely on their intuition ("internal knowing or wisdom") in decision-making which included knowing when to make and not to make a decision (Levin, 1997, p. 107).

Skaret (1993) found that spiritual exploration/meditation were important in helping people develop awareness of and utilize their intuition.

In an article in Forbes magazine, Ed McCracken, former CEO of Silicon Graphics and a meditator for over two decades, credits meditation for improving his own intuition in business (Sherman, 1994).

### *Creativity*

Ray (1984), in a study exploring the development of creative imagination through focusing on only one thing for an extended period of time, found that meditating children experienced more imagery, while both relaxation and meditation groups experienced lower tension levels and more bodily sensations (possibly related to intuitive sensing), while the control group experienced none of the experiences related to meditation or relaxation.

Levin's (1997) respondents reported that inner work, including meditation, resulted in increased creativity in their professional lives.

### *Ethics*

There have been few studies that discuss meditation as a basis for higher ethics. Originating in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, the *yamas* (do not's) and *niyamas* (do's) are the foundation for yoga practice (Chapple, 1995). Goleman and Walsh echoed these thoughts. Goleman (1988) stated that "purity [of which ethical behavior is part] is the psychological basis for concentration" (p. 7), and Walsh and Vaughan (1993) stated that ethics are the foundation for transpersonal psychological development and a critical

factor for training the mind for meditation. Walsh and Vaughan went on to say that after one reaches and is anchored in higher states of consciousness, ethical behavior flows spontaneously due to the meditator's knowing of their "oneness" with all people and life.

La Forge (1997) took the teaching of ethics beyond universities and business schools; he began teaching ethics through the use of "semi-discursive" meditation in a Japanese university. In this seminal research, La Forge guided his students in meditation and meditative processes, through which they discovered that they were ethical persons; upon this discovery, they then constructed an ethical value system and applied it to themselves. In this process, he reported that they learned to act from their higher Self, and could recognize, analyze, and act upon ethical issues in business. In essence, through the use of meditation, his students became ethical people.

However, there was a significant difference in the type of meditation La Forge (1997) used. In semi-discursive meditation, portions of the meditation are in conjunction with logical, imaginative and artistic thinking, whereas yoga meditation, Zen, and the other forms of meditation as defined by Goleman are what La Forge terms non-discursive.

Kelly (1996) stated that meditation is recognized by all the world's major religions as a sacred tradition a way of transcending self-centeredness and enabling the meditator to see and experience a larger perspective of humanness. When one sees themselves as part of a greater whole, they are less likely to act in a selfish way, which frequently leads to unethical behaviors.

Levin found that those participants who meditated were much more aware of what they termed “compassionate decision-making and ethical decision-making,” and how their decisions would effect others was important to them (Levin, 1997, p. 106).

Forbes (1999), in a qualitative study looking specifically at the effects of meditation in the workplace, found that participants’ priorities shifted toward a greater emphasis on ethical behavior.

Goleman stated that

Purification, meditative concentration, and insight are closely related. Efforts to purify the mind facilitate initial concentration, which enables sustained insight. By developing either concentration or insight, purity becomes, instead of an act of will, effortless and natural for the meditator. Insight reinforces purity, while aiding concentration; strong concentration can have as by-products both insight and purity. The interaction is not linear; the development of any one facilitates the other two. (Goleman, 1988 p. 3.)

### *Profitability*

Levin (1997) found that 93% of her respondents believed that their inner work had an impact on “external rewards such as money, promotions, and effect on the organization” (p. 95), and many of the participants stated that their organizations’ profits and revenues had improved since they had begun meditating; however, not all of the participants believed that the changes that their inner work had manifested would be viewed by all as having been positive; i.e., they became less motivated by money and prestige than they previously had been.

## Intuition and Decision-Making

Webster (1983) defined intuition as “the immediate knowing or learning of something without the conscious use of reasoning: instantaneous apprehension” (p. 693). This very innocuous statement has been the center of controversy for many years.

There has been much written in both the scholarly and popular literature regarding intuition, and its use in decision-making, which can be subdivided into two distinct perspectives: one originating in Eastern and transpersonal literatures, the other in Western psychology and business literatures. Not surprisingly, there has been far more written from the Western perspective attempting to explain the nature of intuition and its use in decision-making than the Eastern or transpersonal perspectives.

### *Intuition Defined*

#### *Eastern and Transpersonal Perspectives*

There have been many prominent men and women in Eastern and transpersonal literatures who have put forth their perspectives on intuition, the origin and source of intuition, how intuition can be cultivated, and how the information gleaned from its revealings can be used in a tangible way. Not surprisingly, many of these perspectives come from God-realized masters; i.e., those who have already been “liberated.” Their perspectives can be verified and duplicated through scientific methods if the examiner is willing to go through the same process that these masters have gone through; if they do this, they will see the truth in these masters’ words.

Yogananda (1997a, p. 176) stated that there are two forces of knowledge that are in operation from birth: human reason, along with its satellites of sensation, perception,

conception, and so forth; and intuition which he states is “soul guidance, appearing in man during those instances when his mind is calm” (p. 176). Jung (as cited in Jung & Campbell, 1971) spoke of intuition as a basic function of the psyche, and is distinct from feeling, thinking, or sensing. Spinoza (as cited in Vaughan, 1979) stated that intuition is knowledge gained directly without the use of reason; i.e., knowledge of something, instead of knowledge about something which is gained through reason.

Vaughan (1979) stated that intuition is knowing by direct experience which occurs when the boundaries between ego and the higher Self (soul) dissolve, and suggested that intuition develops in the course of spiritual growth. She also stated that intuition is thought to be a faculty of the mind which is different than rational thinking and knowing, which is characterized by knowing about something.

Yogananda (1995) suggested that to develop soul-born intuition, meditation is key, as it quiets the mind and enables deep concentration so as to “tune in” and receive the intuition born of the soul. He stated that intuitive consciousness is attained by meditation, and that deep calmness is a natural sequel to intuition.

Husserl described the concept of “intuitive consciousness” as a mode of consciousness that he equated to experiencing the essence of something from one’s inner psychic realm (Elliston & McCormick, 1978).

Sowerby(2001), in a heuristic study of intuition, found that intuition came from a place of higher consciousness such as God, astral plane, auras, soul, Spirit, or some other higher consciousness source, and said that it might be regarded as the “gateway” to the Infinite. Of note, none of his participants reported intuition as coming from subconscious, experience, or memory.

In Indian Yogic and Buddhist literature (Buddhism's roots are in India yoga), both transcendental and practical references to intuition are abundant. For instance, in the transcendental, the knowing of God can be done only through intuition, as can knowing of higher altered states of consciousness. On the practical, the mutual selection by guru and disciple must be done by intuition, knowing that each is right for the other; this selection is often experienced as "instant recognition" (Battis, 1981; Brent, 1972; Goleman, 1988; Tart, 1975).

Vaughan (1979) stated that intuition, by definition, is true, and gives insight into the future, current problems, and / or spiritual realms; however, if an insight gained through intuition turns out to be untrue or wrong, its origins were not intuition but that of subconscious thought, instinct, self deception, or wishful thinking.

### *Western Perspective*

There appears to be a trend in literature dating back to Freud and the scientific revolution that excludes God from any definition of intuition. Most Western definitions of intuition are based on positivistic thinking; i.e., the scientific method of observation, hypothesis, and verification. This requires that all "knowledge" must come from logical, scientific reasoning, and only that which can be verified empirically is real and meaningful (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998). For instance, Marino (2000) stated that "intuition is a costly substitute for logical, systematic and informed thinking" (p. 20). If this were fact, how then would one prove that Jesus rose from the grave, or that metaphysics is a true science? How can a blind man know that there are colors?

In Western psychology and business literature, intuition is explained as coming from deep experience and knowledge of a particular area originating in the subconscious mind, and is, with few exceptions, devoid of the inference of spirituality or soul origins. Isenberg (1984) stated that the human mind is capable of making inferential leaps in logic, and that intuition is its compressing of years of experience and learning into split seconds. Schoemaker and Russo (1993) suggested that intuition comes from “extensive learning from past experiences, [i.e.,] automated expertise” (p. 10).

Burke and Miller (1999) stated that intuition is the result of using our brain’s ability to access our subconscious and bring that knowledge to conscious thought when it is needed. In in-depth, semi-structured telephone interviews with 60 professionals from various industries in the United States, they found that 56% of those interviewed said that intuitive decisions came from experience, and 40% said that intuition is based on one’s emotions or feelings about the information used in decision-making. Of note, none of their participants believed that intuition was a paranormal power.

Rew (2000), found that nurses perceive intuition as information that is “gained immediately as a whole, and is independently distinct from the usual, linear, and analytic reasoning process.” She goes on to say that intuition is “the act of synthesizing empirical, ethical, aesthetic, and personal knowledge . . .” and is “sudden awareness of knowledge that is related to previous experience, perceived as a whole, and difficult to articulate” (pp. 94-95).

Klein (1998; 2003) stated that intuition depends on the use of expertise to recognize patterns to make decisions, and is how we translate our experiences into decisions. Papparone (2001) stated that intuition is an unconscious synthesis process that



sees and synthesizes patterns, and gives the ability to understand and implement decisions even when the information on which to base a decision is inadequate. Hayashi (2001) stated that the mind continuously processes information on both the conscious and unconscious levels, and intuition is the process where the conscious mind learns something that the subconscious mind already knew.

*What is Truth?—Bridging the Two Definitions*

Western psychologists, and management and social scientists have made many attempts at explaining intuition, and would have us believe that it is subconscious understanding, pattern recognition, and subliminal perception, i.e., becoming aware on a conscious level of things already known or understood in the subconscious. If one were to believe this, one must assume that we are born into this world knowing nothing, and what we learn is through the experience that we have gained while living. How can this explain the quantum jumps of knowledge that scientists such as Einstein manifested to develop his Theories of Special Relativity, or other hard science discoveries (Vaughan, 1979)?

Battis (1981), a Western psychologist, began to bridge the gaps when he stated that intuition is the “direct apprehension of ultimates which cannot be encompassed by reason and is said to carry with it a conviction of truth” (p. 9).

Intuition can take on any form, and come at any time and in any state of consciousness. According to Jung, Assagioli, and Vaughan, intuition ranges the continuum of experiences from the most mundane to the deepest spiritual intuition and revelations. For instance, intuition on the personal level might be used to reveal

something of one or another's life, or provide understanding and solution of a current problem. Intuition on a superconscious level is frequently impersonal, has a spiritual aspect such as the oneness of all reality, and may be unfathomable in the current paradigm of reality (Assagioli, 1965; Skaret, 1993; Vaughan, 1979).

Chaudhuri stated that:

Intuition is immediate apprehension of some aspect, form or dimension of the real . . . it is central to all psychic functioning and it therefore is operative on all levels of psychic existence. On a sensory level, intuition is direct apprehension of sense data . . . On the intellectual level, it is the insightful awareness of fundamental assumptions, postulates, and underlying principles of logical thinking.

In the mystical sense of the term, it can be conscious, unconscious, or superconscious. Conscious spiritual intuition reveals the meaning of life in terms of images and symbols during waking hours. . . . Superconscious spiritual intuition is meditative experience in its most sublime form. . . . It provides insight into the spiritual oneness of all existence and into the mystery of Being as the nontemporal ground of the universe . . . . [It] is the kind of ontological experience in which the subject-object dichotomy is completely transcended. (Chaudhuri, 1975, pp. 246-247)

According to Battis and Yogananda, the purest intuition involves entering into the "superconscious" state. In this state, intuition is typically simultaneous, wordless, clearer, more universal and Divine in character, and is less affected by imagination, emotions, fears, memories, and other egoic defense mechanisms (Battis, 1981; Tart, 1975; Yogananda, 1995). St. Teresa stated that intuition is

very distinctly formed, but by the bodily ear they are not heard. They are, however much more clearly understood than if they were heard by the ear. It is impossible not to understand them, whatever resistance we may offer. . . . [The work of imagination] is as something we cannot well make out, as if we were half asleep, but the Divine locution is a voice so clear, that not a syllable of its utterance is lost. (Underhill, 1967, pp. 275-276)

Although the proper conditions for intuition can be manifested through the conscious control of the one's attention and desire, intuition itself is spontaneous and

cannot be forced to appear. It requires a quieting of the mind, “letting go,” a surrender of the ego’s attempts to control the circumstances in which it finds itself and its attempts to acquire knowledge (Deikman, 1974; Yogananda, 1995).

Battis (1981) stated that genuine intuition is not random, nor is it a result for a desire for knowledge; genuine intuition occurs in response to a genuine need to know, and comes when the receiver has a strong desire to be in harmony with the Universe. This means that one must give up one’s own selfish interests in favor of the greater good and the genuine needs of others.

Assagioli stated that it is important to quiet the mind while reining in sensations, intellect and emotions to concentrate the attention, and suggested disidentifying and detaching from external circumstances, and entering into states of calm and serenity as methods for arousing one’s intuition. (Assagioli, 1965; Battis, 1981; Yogananda, 1925d, 1975)

Coincidentally, these are also the goals and results of meditation.

In addition to his Eastern and transpersonal views on intuition, Spinoza (as cited in Vaughan, 1979) also discussed intuition in its relationship to intellectual development, stating that intuition, in its highest form, is possible only with the prior use of reason. Battis, citing Arieti and Ghiselin, concurred with Spinoza, stating that scientists such as Einstein and others that have brought forth new theories of physics or other “hard” sciences typically gained new insights through intuitive leaps, but each leap was preceded by significant study prior to the realization (Arieti, 1976; Battis, 1981; Ghiselin, 1952; Vaughan, 1979).

The Western explanation of this would be “subconscious processing of previously acquired information to form a new pattern”(Battis, 1981, p. 81).

The Eastern and transpersonal perspective would be that this information was intuited in an altered state of consciousness and its source was the soul, or God.

Assagioli (1965, p. 217), perhaps, stated it best. “Intuition is a function which can be active on different levels and can therefore assume different aspects but remain fundamentally the same.”

Intuition is the *knowing of truth* that transcends rational ways of knowing.

### *Intuitive Awareness: Signs and Guidance*

How does one become aware of intuitive signs or guidance, understand what it is telling you, and then follow that guidance?

According to Vaughan (1979), one can become aware of an intuition on any or all of the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual levels simultaneously. For instance, a mystical or spiritual experience of oneness of all beings is an intuitive experience on the spiritual level. Intuition on the emotional level is associated with feelings; physical level with bodily sensations; and mental level with thoughts, images and ideas.

Battis (1981) stated that to the novice intuitive, random thoughts, imaginations, hallucinations, and inference can and frequently are mistaken for genuine intuition by those whose intuition has not been fully developed. Vaughan (1979) explained these as “false intuitions,” and attributed them to wishful thinking, subconscious thoughts, self-deception, or instincts.

Battis went on to say that intuition cannot be guaranteed, even for those who have used it or practiced contemplative arts for a long period of time, but with time and experience, one's intuition becomes cumulative, deepens with time, and one becomes able to better discriminate between true and false intuitions. It is the simultaneous character and the certainty which accompanies intuitive experiences that seems to be a clear indicator of genuine intuition (Battis, 1981).

Many intuitive experiences are beyond words and normal consciousness, and as such, can be difficult or impossible to put into words. Sowerby (2001, p. 202) reported that his participants specified there was a need for "a better language to distinguish the subtleties of the intuitive experience." What frequently happens is that in an attempt to describe and interpret our inner experiences in terms of the outer world, we misinterpret or entirely miss the meaning of the intuition. Thus, many intuitives state that external confirmation is the best way determine if an intuition is valid (Skaret, 1993).

### *Physical Level*

Vaughan (1979) stated that intuitive experiences on the physical level frequently depend on physical or emotional cues to bring them to conscious awareness. These are, she stated, a source of information about oneself and one's environment, and she believes that if one pays attention to them, these sensations will give cues about what one needs at a particular moment. For instance, someone who is feeling tension continuously at work, but does not feel it at other work places, may be receiving intuitive information that they need to change jobs. Someone who feels a great deal of fear for no apparent reason may

be receiving an intuition that there is danger, and they need to take some action to ensure their safety.

Experiences of intuition on the physical level are accompanied by bodily sensations such as “a gut feeling”; tension; headaches; stomach aches; coolness in the hands or feet; feeling of pain in body; sensations in the solar plexus; frozen, an inability to move; a feeling of heat, cold, or “prickly”; chills/goose bumps; bodily shaking; smells; tingling and electrical sensations (Skaret, 1993; Sowerby, 2001; Vaughan, 1979).

### *Emotional Level*

Vaughan (1979) stated that intuitive experiences on the emotional level frequently depend on feeling to bring them to conscious awareness. For instance, love at first sight: A woman meets a man, and immediately “knows” that he is the one she will marry. For one to be able to understand and interpret these type intuitions, one must be in touch and aware of their own feelings and emotions at the time; otherwise, what might be interpreted as an intuition may in fact be projection.

Experiences of intuition on the emotional level include love at first sight; feelings of calm, peace, fear, anxiousness, love and joy; sensing or feeling another’s emotions or feelings; and changes in moods (Skaret, 1993; Sowerby, 2001; Vaughan, 1979).

### *Mental Level*

Vaughan (1979) stated that intuitive experiences on the mental level frequently manifest as images, thoughts, or what may be termed “inner vision.” These intuitions frequently have to do with the future, scientific theories and inquiry, mathematics, or

patterns in one's life. An example of mental intuition would be a business executive has a "gut feeling" to take a particular course of action in strategic planning for their business, or after struggling with a problem, letting it go and the answer suddenly comes into awareness.

Experiences of intuition on the mental level include déjà vu; immediate or direct knowing; seeing images or signs; channeling or psychic abilities; precognitive dreams; seeing colors of auras; clairvoyance; seeing events occur prior to their occurrence; reoccurring thoughts or messages; "visitations" during dreams; unfamiliar words, phrases or songs that come into one's ear; or images of people (Skaret, 1993; Sowerby, 2001; Vaughan, 1979).

### *Spiritual Level*

Vaughan (1979) stated that intuitive experiences on the spiritual level are associated with mystical experiences, and that "spiritual intuition as a holistic perception transcends rational, dualistic ways of knowing and gives the individual a direct, transpersonal experience of the underlying oneness in life" (p. 78). Spinoza termed spiritual intuition "knowledge of God" (as cited in Vaughan, 1979, p. 77); Yogananda called this soul guidance, and writes, "whenever the joy of meditation has returned subconsciously during my active hours, I have been subtly directed to adopt the right course of action in everything, even in minor details" (Yogananda, 1997a, p. 172). These intuitions are pure; i.e., devoid of thoughts, sensations, and feelings, the other three functions referred to by Jung.

Vaughan stated that meditation prepares one for the experience of spiritual intuition, by calming the mind of the restless thought waves which prevent them from being recognized. “Learning to recognize pure awareness or consciousness as the context of all experience, distinct from the contents of consciousness, is one way of understanding this level of intuition” (Vaughan, 1979, p. 79).

Examples of spiritual intuition is feelings of oneness with all creation, a knowing of one of the aspects of God, or a vision of a Saint or another exalted Being (Skaret, 1993; Sowerby, 2001; Vaughan, 1979).

#### *Factors Aiding or Impeding Intuition*

There are multiple things that can aid or impede genuine intuition. These include emotions, fear, environment, stress, and other physical and psychological reasons.

Detachment from emotions or desires aids one’s intuition. Sowerby (2001) found that intuition is found in various states of consciousness, and that there are many levels of intuitive consciousness. Additionally, one person reported that the clarity of the intuition is better if they maintain a sense of detachment.

Frequently, older people tend to have deeper intuitive experiences, and come to rely on their intuition more than when they were younger. Chinen, Spielvogel, & Farrells’ (1985) participants reported that as they grew older, their intuitions occurred at deeper levels, the frequency increased, and they grew to trust them more. This is frequently because younger people’s minds are not as calm as older peoples’ minds; younger people tend to have more going on, and have less experience from which to draw. This would lend evidence to the argument that experience is a factor in intuition;



however, in this case, I think that there is a case being made for both experience and intuition (Skaret, 1993).

Women's intuition frequently is called more effective, deeper, or the like. Chinen et al, (1985) reported that women have deeper intuition than men. Women frequently have more developed intuition primarily for two reasons. First, childrearing; women tend to be more in tune with their children, and have a "sixth sense" about them. Second, women tend to be more in tune the their feelings, especially in Western society, giving rise to their ability to feel intuitive cues. However, this is a dangerous "carte blanche" statement, as there are many men who have trained and use their intuition (Skaret, 1993).

Environmental and organizational factors can be impediments to intuition. Klein (2003) stated that organizational policies, i.e., mistaking paper credentials for experience; rapid turnover; an accelerating change of pace; not enough experience or expertise; and/or personal biases can be impediments to intuition. Horton (1993) and Fraser (1993) found that few school administrators use intuition in decision-making, primarily because of their need for rationalizing their decisions, and that the use of intuition was unsupported by the environment itself.

Emotions and one's physical and psychological states also impede intuition. Agor found that several factors impeded one's intuition, including anxiety, fear, confusion, not feeling balanced, fatigue, not feeling well, not relaxed, physical or emotional tension, co-dependency, not trusting oneself, being too rushed, failing to get necessary background information, and acting impulsively (Agor, 1986; Keen, 1996).

*Indicators of Correct and Incorrect Interpretations of Intuitions*

There are many ways for one to interpret and understand if an intuition is a true or a false intuition. Sowerby (2001) reported that the most common way of knowing an intuition is correct is the “aha,” or the “knowing” that it is correct. Many of his participants stated that without external proof, they had no way of knowing if their interpretation of the intuition was correct or not. Others stated that they just knew. Another reported the feeling “of being guided.” Others reported that a number of signals or indicators that occur simultaneously gives greater credibility to the interpretation.

Some intuitives reported various physical and emotional cues that tell them that their interpretation was incorrect. They attributed wrongful interpretation to such factors as activation of the will,

attachment to outcome, the presence of a strong desire for things to be a certain way, fear/paranoia/impatience/jumping to conclusions, and experience of being too invested in the [situation], excessive optimism, projection, haste, a large range of possible interpretations of any given symbol, a mistake related to reading the “wrong level,” “tricksters,” (i.e., entities or energies that sneak in to distort intuitive information), and wishful thinking. (Sowerby, 2001, p. 174)

#### *What is Knowledge? Physiology, Cognition, and Knowledge*

There has been much learned over the course of the past 20 years with respect to knowledge, intuition, and cognition. Much of this has to do with a better understanding of brain functions, and the processes of cognition. For one to rightly understand either intuitional or integrated decision-making, one must look at the physiology and functionality of the brain, and the sources of knowledge, reason, and intuition.

*Brain Physiology and Cognition*

One of the most influential researchers on the theories of cognition has been Robert Ornstein, who studied the psychology of meditation and the relationship between consciousness and the left and right hemispheres of the brain. Ornstein (1974), after studying the research of Sperry, Bogen and Gazzaniga, came to the conclusion that the left hemisphere of the brain, which is the center for speech, specialized in rational, sequential thought, while the right hemisphere of the brain, which processed information spatially and holistically, specialized in pattern recognition and was the seat for intuition (Battis, 1981).

Ornstein said:

The logical mode of knowledge operates sequentially, arriving at a truth inferentially, proceeding logically from one element to another. Intuition operates simultaneously, is concerned with the sets of relations among elements which receive their meaning from the overall holistic context.

Reason, then, primarily involves an analysis of discrete elements, inferentially (sequentially) linked; intuition involves a simultaneous perception of the whole. It is not the individual, discrete objects, elements, or even ideas which are changed in the shift from a logical mode of consciousness to an intuitive one. Rather, it is the relationship between the elements which changes, and the interpretation of a given bit of sensory data may be different depending on context. (Ornstein, 1977, pp. 25-26)

He went on to say:

It is time to give the simultaneous aspect of our consciousness its due place in our understanding of the mind, in our education and in human affairs. Intuition is not an obscure, mysterious function possessed only by a very few highly creative and unusual artists or scientists who produce interesting theories. The faculty of intuition is, rather, latent in all of us, a primary aspect of our cognitive abilities which we have allowed to degenerate.

It is important to note, in the context of the traditional esoteric psychologies, that the recent discovery of a right hemisphere activation in

intuitive cognition does not reduce the mental aspects of esoteric knowledge to “right-brain’ functioning”. The studies of the right hemisphere in cognition do, however, provide a secure physiological basis for areas of thought often devalued in contemporary Western society. We do not now understand esoteric tradition enough to judge the efficacy of certain processes, but we are beginning to understand the common mode of esoteric activity, especially the diverse methods and techniques used to train intuition. Thus the practices of meditation, whirling, chanting, the design of the Gothic cathedrals and the temples of Islam intended to have an immediate effect on a person, complex geometric symbols, Arabic geometrical designs, the postures of Hatha Yoga and other exercises share a common physiological basis. Their “site of action” is the simultaneous information processing of the right hemisphere of the human brain, an “organ of perception” present, but undeveloped, in everyone. (Ornstein, 1977, pp. 34-35)

Wade (1996), quoting Brown (1986), Maxfield (1994), and Wright (1994), stated that those people born with psychic abilities, including intuition, favor using the right-brain for processing information.

According to Nadel, Hains, and Stempson (1992), some researchers have hypothesized that intuition comes from the ability to access the older (from an evolutionary perspective) portions of the brain, which includes the limbic systems, the reptilian brain, and the neocortex. Kelly (1996) stated that these areas function without use of words. He hypothesized that ancient meditators learned to access these parts of the brain, giving rise to intuition; and for us to learn how to do this, we must learn to relax and let go of the fears and safety that the ego requires. This concurs with Yogananda’s explanation on how to access intuition; i.e., to develop soul-born intuition, meditation is key, as it quiets the mind and enables deep concentration so as to “tune in” and receive the intuition born of the soul (Yogananda, 1995).

Agor (1989b) stated that no section of the brain is capable of problem solving independent of another. Benson and Proctor (1987) cited scientific research which

showed electrical activity between the left and right sides of the brain become coordinated during certain kinds of meditation or prayer, and Lyubimov (1999) found that the cortex more freely shares information during meditation, which implies that the body's information systems are more intimately interconnected during meditation.

This suggests that decisions made or intuited during meditation are utilizing more of one's brain than is normally used outside a meditative or higher consciousness state, and thus can result in better, more holistic decision-making.

Unfortunately, the claims from metaphysicians and intuitives that mystical experiences cannot adequately be communicated verbally have been met with disdain and disbelief by most scientists. According to Maslow, language may be very good for communicating one's experiences when people share them, but, as is the case in altered states of consciousness, very inefficient. How does one communicate information about the color red to someone who has been blind from birth (Tart, 1975; Walsh, Elgin, Vaughn, & Wilber, 1980)?

In essence, we are reduced to oral communicating in relativistic terms.

### *Sources and Functions of Knowledge*

Yogananda stated that there are three sources of knowledge: senses, i.e., information gained through the operation of the five senses: sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell; thought, i.e., information that which is based on the intellect's ability to reason, understand, and experience, of which feeling is a part; and intuition, i.e., that which is beyond thought and senses. He stated that intuition comes from within, whereas thought and senses comes from without. One's ability to reason, he contends, comes

from social institutions and interactions. He stated that thought and senses are limited, and only through intuition can you know or see the real nature of all things; however, one's intuition usually remains undeveloped for want of proper guidance and methods of training; e.g., impartial introspection and deep meditation (Yogananda, 1925b, 1925c, 1997a).

Battis (1981), Sri Aurobindo (1970), and Maslow (1964) described the sources of knowledge similarly to Yogananda. Battis stated that intuition can be used not only to understand the mystical and spiritual experiences, but also for making decisions based on inner guidance. Sri Aurobindo stated that true knowledge is not realized by thinking, but by intuition born of meditation. Maslow stated that peak experiences are highly intuitive, and lead to self-actualization, which lead to more peak experiences.

### *Models of Decision-Making*

[Intuitives] make mistakes far less frequently than other people. And they approach things in a manner which nobody else would. Yet their actions are vindicated by events. This fact is attributed to a form of foreknowledge. (Shah, 1964, p. 17)

In the business and psychology literatures, there is a clear schism between intuitive decision-makers and rational decision-makers. When one looks at the Eastern and transpersonal literatures, one sees the argument for using "soul-born intuition" in decision-making. In contrast, the Western psychology and business literatures discussion of the use of intuition in decision-making is mixed; some literatures state that Western business prefers using rational thinking over intuition, while others state intuition is used in making 89% of all critical decisions at the executive level. Generally, the consensus in literature is that intuition is best used in decision-making where there are many complex

variables, a need for rapid decision-making, and/or incomplete data with which to make decisions.

In actuality, none of the models adequately describe manager's decision-making processes.

Andersen (2000), citing Jung's typology, stated that there are four functions with which we perceive and orient ourselves to the world: sensing, that which is perceived through our senses; thinking, that which gives meaning and understanding; feeling, that which assesses and judges; and intuition, that which tells of the future and enlightens us on the feeling which surrounds all experiences; and stated that all people prefer one of the four functions. He went on to state that Jung's typology can be loosely translated that there are only four ways of solve problems, but that these four functions are incomplete unto themselves.

Andersen, citing Keegen (1984), who based much his work on Jung's four functions, suggests combining these four (or three) functions into eight decision-making styles, each of which includes a dominant function and an auxiliary function. He suggests that each of the four functions are effective in different situations, but stated that the majority of managers are intuitive (Andersen, 2000).

According to Shoemaker and Russo (1993), there are four approaches to decision-making: intuition, rules, importance weighting, and value analysis. Dave Snowden, director of IBM's Cynefin Centre for Organisational Complexity in Wales, stated there are four basic types of problems, and one should base their problem-solving approach based on the nature of the problem. He categorized those types as: problems which are covered by rules (such as legal structures, best practices, etc.); problems where the

situation is complicated and cannot be solved rationally; problems which are complex such as stocks, corporate cultures, or battlefields; and problems that are chaotic such as the collapse of a business (Stewart, 2002).

Schoemaker (1993) stated that decisions based on intuition can be brilliant, and are hard to dispute “because decision makers can’t articulate the underlying reasoning” (p. 10). However, he also stated that they frequently are wrong for two primary reasons: random inconsistency and systematic distortion. Although not aware of it, he is describing subconscious processing and labeling it intuition.

### *Intuitional Decision-Making*

In Western business, we are seeing a shift; in the past, managers preferred using the thinking function to make decisions, specifically rational thinking and analysis, but in the course of the last 20 years, managers are becoming more open to using feeling, sensing and intuitive functions in decision making. This has been brought to light through the research of four primary people: Mintzberg, Isenberg, Agor, and Keegan (Agor, 1985a; Hayashi, 2001; Isenberg, 1984; Keen, 1996).

In many respects, Mintzberg broke ground for the use of intuition in decision making. In his *Harvard Business Review* article, Planning on the left side and managing on the right, Mintzberg (1976) pointed out the lack of literature about intuitive decision-making and decision-making under pressure, and introduced the concepts of using intuition in business decision-making. He stated that it is important for both hemispheres of the brain to be well developed and used in decision-making, and that the truly outstanding managers couple the intuitive faculties of the right hemisphere with the linear



and analytical functions of the left. Senior managers must be capable of conceiving strategies in holistic terms and then translating that into linear sequence for implementation.

Isenberg's (1984) seminal study on how Western executives make decisions was one of the first that said that managers do not make formal decisions using analytical means. In a study of 16 senior executives, he found that executives use their intuition in all phases of problem-solving, including problem finding and defining; and solution generation, choice, and implementation. He also stated that there were at least five distinct ways in which executives applied their intuition: sensing a problem, performing learned behaviors (according to others, this would be considered habit), synthesize bits of data into a coherent picture, a balance check for rational analysis, and to bypass in-depth analysis, especially in situations where there were few facts, or when productivity needed to be increased.

Keen's (1996) and Andersen's (2000) findings agreed with and expanded upon those of Isenberg; Keen found that 89% of managers use their intuition in their most important decisions, and Andersen found that the majority of managers are intuitive and that 25% use intuition as their primary method of making decisions.

Agor performed a series of studies in the 1980s and 1990s that measured the intuitive abilities of over 3000 managers in the public and private sectors. Using both the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and his own survey (AIM), Agor found that intuitive management abilities varied significantly by sex, occupation, management level, and ethnic backgrounds. Summarizing his findings, he found that upper managers scored

higher than lower level managers; women scored higher than men; and Asians scored higher than Caucasians or African-Americans.(Agor, 1985a, 1985b)

In the second phase of the study, Agor (1985b p. 18) interviewed 70 executives, who scored in the top 10% for intuition. He found that executives use intuition to guide their most important decisions, and they went on to specify situations where they felt intuition was most helpful in making the decisions. These included situations where

- There is a high level of uncertainty.
- There is little previous precedent.
- Variables not often scientifically predictable.
- Limited facts, or the facts do not clearly point the way to go.
- Time is limited and there is pressure to be right.
- There are several plausible alternative solutions to choose from, with good arguments for each.

He also identified several relation techniques, as well as mental and analytical exercises, that executives used to train and energize their intuition; of note, meditation was one of the recommended techniques (Agor, 1985b, 1986; Keen, 1996).

Of note, these same criteria are quoted in current management literature by researchers such as Hayashi, Keen, and others.

Of significance, these managers “knew” when they had reached the correct decision through various physical and emotional cues that included excitement, confidence, or a sudden flash of knowing. Conversely, they also knew when they were wrong; they stated that had feelings of discomfort, upset stomach, anxiety, or mixed signals (Agor, 1985b).

There were additional significant studies of intuition in business decision-making. Taylor (1988) found that intuition was affected by management experience, rational tendencies, intuitive dispositions, and degree of intuitive development, and was used primarily in decisions around people, new or unfamiliar situations, and incomplete data.

Breen (1990) found that the preferred method of thinking and decision-making for Western business was linear, i.e., rational decision-making, while Chinese preferred non-linear, i.e., intuitive decision-making, which is consistent with Jung's research on Eastern and Western basis of thought. Of particular interest was that the 12% of Chinese who preferred linear thinking were educated in the United States.

Skaret (1993) found four major themes in how intuition was used in decision-making:

1. In conjunction with rational thinking,
2. Providing initial guidance for action,
3. For timing on a decision or action, and
4. Evaluating choices in a decision.

Kline (2000) found that good decision-making in teams depended on their shared mental models, e.g., common understanding of their norms, identity, and goals, and developed a model for intuitive decision-making.

Battis stated that

While the emergence of intuitive ability may alter the way in which the person chooses to approach problems, there is no evidence that it diminishes intellectual ability in any way. Instead, the [intuitive] seems less interested in a linear approach to problems and more selective in its application. (Battis, 1981, pp. 98-99)

The accomplished intuitive is, in the truest sense of the word, a well-rounded person. Instead of keen intellectual and reasoning prowess, he is able to do something in addition—intuit answers to what appears to be unanswerable questions.

*Decision-Making Research: Applying Intuition in Decision-Making*

Over the past 2 decades, the use of intuition in decision-making has been studied frequently among public school administrators, nurses, and social workers, but, surprisingly enough, not as frequently, and / or in a limited context in the business world. What studies that have been performed have found that the use of intuition in decision-making is widespread and common (but dependent on industry and environment), more likely to be used by more senior personnel such as business executives, usually used primarily in conjunction with rational thought, and most believe it to be “industry specific.”

According to Goleman (1988), a meditator interprets his meditative experience according to his subconscious thoughts and beliefs. Walsh (1980a) stated that the mind is usually filled with thoughts with which we become unwittingly identified which create states of consciousness, identities, and reality. Similarly, one interprets their own intuitive experiences according to their beliefs and thoughts.

Battis (1981) reported that after receiving an intuition, his participants frequently examined the information intellectually; however, they did not see this as important, and felt that it might be best to allow the insight to operate outside the realms of the rational thought processes.

Wenk (1997) found that concentrative meditation training resulted in the deautomation of attention, which would allow someone to see more options in decision-making.

Forbes (1999) found that those people who meditated reported improved functioning at work, including being more productive and focused, and spending less time procrastinating. One of her participants, through his own informal research, stated that the revenues and staff of the organization had increased by 15% and 25%, respectively, following implementation of a company-wide meditation program.

This concurs with Levin's (1997) and Carrington et al.'s (1980) findings.

Crowder (1989) found that there was a link between reflective practices (not meditation) and intuition, and that innovative training methods were required to develop administrators' intuition. However, both Horton (1993) and Fraser (1993) found that few school administrators use intuition in decision-making, primarily because of their need for rationalizing their decisions, and that the use of intuition was unsupported by the environment itself.

Cooper (1994) found that nurses telling stories of their experiences created an environment of trust that enabled them to further develop their intuition. Building on that study, Sublett (1997) found that older nursing students were more likely to use intuition in their decision-making, while the younger students tended to be more silent and less likely to use their intuition. Hemsall (1996) found that expert nurses used their intuition more in decision-making than did non-expert nurses.

This concurred with Isenberg's (1984) findings that senior managers are more likely to have developed and use their intuition as part of their decision-making processes.

Skaret (1993), in a study of Canadian women, found that in more than two-thirds of the women, intuition played a major role in some aspect of their actions or decision-making.

Michaud (1998) found that social workers expressed a clear belief in the use and importance of intuition in decision-making, and that intuition is developed over time and was practice-setting specific.

Burke and Miller (1999) interviewed 60 professionals in multiple industries across the United States, and found that 91.5% of their participants used intuition with data analysis in decision-making, and 66% said that intuition led to better decisions. Their participants cited the increasing speed at which decisions were made and facilitating personnel development as examples of benefits of using intuition in decision-making. Many of their respondents stated that they used intuition in specific situations; e.g., 40% said that they used intuition to make personnel-related decisions such as hiring, scheduling, performance related, and the like.

Horton (1993) found that those less intuitive people tended to speak of their intuition as being from their subconscious, and spoke more of "gut feelings" and "shooting from the hip." They also stated about relying more on their experiences and less on intuition and projecting alternatives to guide their decision-making.

Keen (1996) found that senior managers use their intuition 89% of the time to guide them in their most important decisions, but much training is needed for tomorrow's

managers to understand and develop it for use in making decisions. This concurred with Isenberg's (1984) findings that senior managers used their intuition extensively in decision-making.

According to Khatri and Ng (2000) computer executives were more likely to use intuition as their favored decision-making style, whereas executives in more staid industries such as utilities and banking were more likely to use planning and traditional forms of decision-making.

Intuitive decision-making is reaching into organizations that one would not normally associate with using intuition in the decision-making processes: military and paramilitary (firefighters). BGen McAbee, deputy commander of the Marine Forces Pacific, stated that future generations of battlefield knowledge management systems needs to draw information from databases in such a way so as to spark commanders' intuition as to the right course of action (Caterinicchia, 2002). Lussier and Saxon (1994) stated that sound decision-making in uncertain circumstances such as on the battlefield requires a blend of analysis and intuition. Klein (1998) found that firefighters frequently seize upon the first good idea that comes to them, then to the next, and so forth; to them, it did not seem like deciding.

### Summary

Business literature suggests that Western managers prefer making decisions using rational thought, hard facts, and logic, and their use of intuition is limited primarily to instances with many complex variables or incomplete or sparse data, or when the pace of business is such that speed is of the essence. The literature also suggests that their

intuition frequently is not developed sufficiently to trust it on a consistent basis, and its use is unsupported by the environment itself (Breen 1990; Fraser 1993; Isenberg 1984; Hayashi 2001; Horton 1993).

Eastern, transpersonal, experimental, and clinical psychology; medical; and spirituality literatures suggest that meditation enables greater clarity of thought, awareness, positive moods, intuition, integrity and ethical behavior; and reduces stress and anxiety (Bhushan & Sinha, 2001; Dostalek, 1970; Suchipriya & Singh, 2001; Vaughn, 1979; Walsh & Vaughn, 1980; Yogananda, 1995). In the East, meditation is known to develop intuition, and intuition is widely used in decision-making (Breen 1990; Yogananda 1995).

Only two studies have been completed that discuss meditation and its effects on the work environment and cognitive functioning, and both concluded that its effects were positive (Forbes, 1999; Levin, 1997). One study has been completed on the use of meditation on developing ethics (La Forge, 1997). No studies have been completed on the effect of meditation on business profits.

This study is breaking new ground. Up until now, no studies have been performed on the use of meditation and intuition as tools in decision-making, nor if meditation has an effect on one's cognitive abilities, intuition, and decision-making capacities. *Anecdotal evidence from previously performed studies indicate that meditation's effects on decision-making may be both profound and far-reaching, and anecdotal reporting indicates that highly successful leaders often make their decisions away from the data and from the gut.*



As part of this review of the literature, a keyword search of all the dissertations on file with *Dissertation Abstracts* was completed for the words of meditation, intuition, and decision-making; no other studies were found of the approximately 2 million dissertations on file. Similarly, in looking at other online databases such as *PsychInfo*, *Wilson Business Abstracts*, *ABI/Inform*, *Business and Management Practices*, and others, there were no hits on meditation, intuition, and decision-making.

All in all, the time for meditation and intuitive decision-making is nigh.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This study was conducted in two phases. In Phase 1, short- and long-time executive meditators from industry, government, non-profits, and NGOs were surveyed about their meditation practices and the benefits they perceive gaining from them, as well as their intuition, and decision-making processes. In Phase 2, 15 long-time executive meditators selected from Phase 1 were interviewed using semi-structured, open-ended, probing in-depth questions, and the data was coded and subsequently analyzed using narrative analysis techniques that included recurring themes and patterns, key words and phrases, relationships between meditative groups, and commonalities and differences (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Affiliate institutions played an integral role by assisting this researcher through their identification and selection of subjects.

#### Research Questions

The questions that this researcher was attempting to answer were as follows:

Question #1. How do executive meditators report using their meditation and intuition in their decision-making? How do they describe their decision-making processes?

Question #2. What are the benefits that executive meditators report gaining from their meditation practices which affect their decision-making?

Question #3. What are executive meditators' experiences of the effects of meditation on profits?

Question #4. What are executive meditators' experiences of the effects of meditation on ethics?

Question #5. What are executive meditators' beliefs of the origins of intuition? What are executive meditators' experiences of the effects of meditation on training one's intuition?

Question #6. What are executive meditators' beliefs of the interrelationship among meditation, intuition, and decision-making?

### Research Design

This study utilized a mixed methods approach to triangulate results so as to answer the above questions.

Phase 1 consisted of a 50-question survey administered to 102 executive meditators; a sample of 100 participants had been the desired target. As this was an exploratory study, no comparison group was used.

There were two purposes for Phase 1. First, participants were surveyed to explore their perceptions of how they use meditation in their decision-making process, type meditation practice, frequency, inner-work completed, reasons for meditating, benefits received, how they understand their intuition to work, their decision-making processes, and demographics. Second, Phase 2 participants were selected based on their answers to the Phase 1 survey.

The selection criteria for Phase 1 participation were the participant was currently practicing meditation, and was currently a leader in an organization or society.

Participants were self-selecting through their willingness to participate when informed

about the study; no other demographic variables were considered for inclusion/exclusion criteria. Additionally, they were asked to indicate their willingness to participate in Phase 2 interviews, but this was not exclusion criterion for Phase 1.

Phase 2 consisted of 15 in-depth narrative interviews using semi-structured and open-ended questions to more deeply probe their experiences of the use of meditation and intuition in decision-making by executive meditators. This stratified sample, a subset of the original 102 based on meditation techniques and gender, was selected based on their responses to the Phase 1 survey, and the following selection criteria:

1. Their willingness to participate in an interview.
2. Individuals who have meditated for 10 years or longer. A 10 year period was chosen because previous studies indicated meditators' intuitive skills increase over time non-linearly (Wilber, 1996). (This turned out to be not true; no correlation was found between length of time meditating and self-reported intuitive prowess.) Additionally, it was anticipated those subjects who had meditated longer would have greater awareness and understanding, as well as the ability to enunciate, how they use their meditation and intuition in decision-making; their intuitive, cognitive and decision-making processes; the effects and benefits their meditative practice have had on their decision-making; and the role meditation has played in developing their intuition. (Based on my experience and interpretation of the data gathered, this was true; the interviewees, who were all long-term meditators as defined by the 10 year criteria, had a

greater understanding of their own cognitive and intuitive processes, as well as the other areas; please see the results of chapter 5 for details.)

3. Individuals whose submitted story was perceived to be articulate and sufficiently in-depth to add to the knowledge of meditation, intuition, and decision-making.
4. Individuals who reported using their intuition in decision-making in the majority of their decisions, and those who reported using it in both high- and low-risk decisions.
5. Individuals who reported meditating at least once per day.
6. Any other particularly interesting information that could be gleaned from the participants' survey.
7. Participants' gender. No consideration was given to race, creed, or color.
8. One person was added to the pool because of the researcher's intuitional guidance that he would have a unique contribution to the study.

Narrative interviews consisting of semi-structured and open-ended questions were conducted in person and recorded, and field notes were compared to the recordings for analysis and to capture points of particular relevance and interest that normal transcription would not capture.

Those interviews were first coded according to the research questions as displayed above, and then analyzed using qualitative methods for recurring themes and patterns, key words and phrases, relationships between meditative groups, and commonalities and differences with NVivo 2.0. The more detailed coding schema is displayed later in this chapter.

Finally, the results of the Phase 2 qualitative analysis were compared to the Phase 1 quantitative results to examine how their results compared to a larger sample.

### Research Sample

The sample population for this study was leaders and executives in business, government, non-profits, and NGOs in decision-making positions within their organizations, as well as leaders in society (such as consultants and other recognized leaders), who practice meditation. An equal number of men and women was strived for in order to explore if there are differences in how different genders use meditation and intuition in decision-making; however, an exactly equal number could not be interviewed because the sample of long-time meditators that met the sample selection criteria was not large enough; had this investigator maintained the rigidity of the gender selection criterion, it would have invalidated the overall sample. With that said, there were enough female long-term meditators that fit the selection criteria to give a meaningful comparison to their male counterparts.

## Phase 1 Survey

### *Participant Recruitment*

Phase I participants were solicited in three ways.

First, participants were recruited from contacts that the researcher had made over the years in business, consulting, and personal relationships, and their orientations were primarily spiritual in nature.

Second, participants were recruited at conferences by the researcher. Four conferences were attended which were Business and Consciousness 2002; the Institute of Noetic Sciences' Spirit Rising 2002; the Institute of Management Consultants' National Confab 2002; and the Associate for Global New Thought's Awakening a New Vision 2002. Participants were solicited through personal contact, or through a flyer which was posted at the conference announcement bulletin board. See Appendix B for a sample of the solicitation letter for participants.

Lastly, participants were recruited through referrals and nominations from business, educational, and governmental organizations. Organizations such as the Church of Religious Sciences' Ministers' Council, Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS), TEC (The Executive Committee), Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, The Learning Company, Spirit in Business, and Spirit at Work played an integral role by assisting this researcher through their identification and nomination of potential subjects. These organizations polled their members, posted recruitment notices on membership bulletin boards, and sent out email notices announcing the study, and directing respondents to contact me to find out more information.

I communicated with all potential participants via either email, telephone, or in person to explain the study. Those who expressed a desire to participate and meet the criteria for the study were provided the URL web address and password to the secure website that hosted the survey. There were only four participants who were unable to access the survey via the Internet; those individuals were mailed the survey and I entered the data for them onto the website.

### *Data Collection*

#### *Pilot Study*

Prior to initiating the full administration of the survey to the sample population, a pilot study of the survey was administered to 8 people via the website, both meditators and non-meditators, to both refine the questionnaire and to ensure the functionality of the website. After performing this test of the survey instrument and the website, minor modifications were made to the instrument to ensure clarity of all questions, and all modifications were made prior to the formal investigation. The data from the Phase 1 Pilot were not retained so as to maintain the integrity of the sample population.

#### *Survey Administration and Informed Consent*

A secure website that was ID sensitive and password protected was set up on the World Wide Web, [www.meditationstudy.org](http://www.meditationstudy.org), to administer the survey. The survey served two purposes. First, the survey was designed to further the understanding of the participants' meditative practices, intuition, and decision-making processes. Second, the



survey identified long-term meditators, i.e., those who have meditated for 10 years or longer, for participation in Phase 2 interviews.

To ensure participants read and signed the Informed Consent Form, Appendix C, it was placed on the website as the first page after the login page, and was required to be completely filled out prior to their beginning the survey; unless participants completed all appropriate fields of the ICF, they were not given access to the survey. Once the ICF had been read and completed, participants were given the option to download and print the ICF so that they would have a copy of the form, and were then given access to the survey pages.

### *Measurement*

The survey consisted of 50 pre-coded questions (not exceeding five categories) which was research ethics approved. The survey used a combination of check boxes, radio buttons, and Likert scale (1-6) to measure participants' responses. Sample survey questions included:

- Position, gender, and other demographic factors,
- Meditative practices (technique),
- Length of time practicing meditation,
- Frequency and duration of meditation,
- Reason for meditating, e.g., physiological, psychological, spiritual, or other,
- Other inner work completed (therapy, workshops, etc.),

- Perceived benefits of meditation, e.g., stress reduction, pattern recognition, higher consciousness, greater faith, optimism, higher creativity, greater attentiveness, ability to get along better with others, see more options in decision,
- Selected questions from Agor's AIM intuition survey,
- Questions regarding their meditation, intuition, decision-making processes and styles, and other relevant information, and
- A brief story (less than 250 words) of an instance where they used meditation for making an important decision in their life.

The complete survey can be viewed in its entirety as Appendix D. The permission for use of the Agor AIM survey can be found in Appendix E.

#### *Data Storage and Security*

Once a participant completed the survey, their data were stored on a secure server until which time the researcher downloaded the data to the project computer, to which no others had access. To ensure uniqueness between participants, the website automatically assigned unique, computer generated log-in numbers to participants based on the initials of their first and last names and the time they completed the survey down to the millisecond; no two participants had the same log-in, and thus one participant's responses could not be inadvertently exchanged or confused with another's.

Survey results were downloaded daily and stored on this researcher's project computer; once data were downloaded and stored, the data in the database on the secure

site were deleted to ensure no data was mistakenly entered twice. The downloaded data were backed-up daily to CD-RW and a second project computer.

## Phase 2 Interviews

### *Participant Selection*

For Phase 2, 15 long-term (10-plus years) executive meditators, a subset of the original 102, were interviewed in depth about their experience of meditation, intuition, and decision-making. Long-term meditators were defined as those people who have meditated for ten-years or more, and who meditate on regular (daily or more) basis. There were two primary reasons a 10 year period of meditation was chosen. First, according to Wilber (1996), meditators' intuitive skills increase over time in a non-linear fashion; those subjects who have meditated longer were expected to have a greater awareness of their own cognitive process and intuition, and thus be more capable of clearly enunciating their decision-making processes. The informal "line of demarcation" seemed to be at the 10 year point. This turned out not to be true; no correlation was found between length of time meditating and self-reported intuitive prowess.

Second, it was expected that long-time meditators would be better able to understand and enunciate the effects their meditative practice have had on their decision-making; the effects and benefits they receive from their meditative practices to their decision-making processes; how they use their meditation and intuition in decision-making; and the role meditation has played in developing their intuition. Based on my experience and interpretation of the data gathered, this proved to be true; the interviewees, all of whom were all long-term meditators as defined by the 10-year

criteria, had a greater understanding of their own cognitive and intuitive processes, as well as the other areas; please see the results of chapter 5 for details.

Participants for Phase 2 were selected based on their responses to the survey. A stratified sample based on respondents' reported meditation techniques and gender was used for selection. This was done for two reasons. First, according to Walsh,

It is necessary not only to differentiate meditation from non-meditation, but also usually to limit investigation to one specific type of meditation, e.g., sitting meditation. It is also important to be aware of the probable occurrence of considerable within-trials variability, even where the overt behavior remains stable. (Walsh, 1982, p. 78)

Thus, only those who practiced sitting meditations of the concentrative or integrated types of meditation were permitted to participate in the study. Second, selecting a large enough population of both men and women allowed the researcher to determine similarities and differences in themes and factors influencing meditation and decision-making that may be related to gender.

Once identified, the researcher contacted participants to arrange an interview. All that were contacted were willing to participate save one; she was unwilling to go to the depth necessary in the interviews, and was abandoned in favor of another subject.

The 15 interviewees were selected according to the following guidelines:

1. Their willingness to participate in an interview.
2. Individuals who have meditated for 10 years or longer.
3. Individuals whose submitted story was perceived to be articulate and sufficiently in-depth to add to the knowledge of meditation, intuition, and decision-making.

4. Individuals who reported using their intuition in decision-making in the majority of their decisions, and those who reported using it in both high- and low-risk decisions.
5. Individuals who reported meditating at least once per day.
6. Any other particularly interesting information that could be gleaned from the participants' survey.
7. Participants' gender.
8. My intuitional guidance.

### *Data Collection*

#### *Pilot Study*

Prior to initiating the interviews to the Phase 2 interviewees, a pilot study of the interviews was administered to one person. The purpose of this was to:

- 1) Assess the effectiveness of the interview questions and make the necessary modifications,
- 2) Evaluate the amount of time necessary to allocate to each interview, and
- 3) Refine my interview techniques and gain experience interviewing.

The person who participated in the Phase 2 Pilot, Jeremy, fit the profile of the sample population; although now a senior educator in a school system, he had owned two successful businesses, and was a practicing meditator at the time. His data were included in the sample. However, because some of the interview questions were modified as a result of the pilot, those questions that Jeremy was not asked initially were asked at a subsequent date to ensure the integrity of the data collected.

### *Phase 2 Interviews*

Narrative interviews consisting of semi-structured and open-ended questions were conducted in person and recorded, and field notes were compared to the recordings for analysis and to capture points of particular relevance and interest that normal transcription would not capture. All interviews were conducted in person save two; these two were conducted on the telephone because of the distance to be traveled, costs involved, and the participants' schedules precluded in-person interviews. Follow-up interviews were conducted on some of the participants to clarify answers and trends, and complete gaps; these were conducted over the telephone.

### *Interview Questions*

Interview questions were developed to explore interviewees' perceptions of:

1. The relationship between their meditative practices, their intuition, and their decision-making, and the nature of its relationship;
2. Their use of meditation and intuition in decision-making;
3. The relationship between altered states of consciousness and intuitive guidance;
4. How they use intuitive guidance in decision-making;
5. Their beliefs on what intuition is, and its origins;
6. How they trained their intuition;
7. The benefits they perceive receiving from their meditation practices;
8. The effects they perceive meditation has had on their business ethics; and

9. The effects they perceive meditation has had on their business profits.

The full interview protocol can be viewed as Appendix F.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed in four phases: quantitative analysis of the survey data for determination of interviewees; transcription and qualitative analysis of the interviews; quantitative data analysis; and the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data on which to base study findings and conclusions.

#### *Quantitative Analysis for Determination of Interviewees*

Data analysis was conducted to determine interviewees based on the criteria as stated in the paragraph above detailing Phase 2 participant selection.

#### *Phase 2 Interview Transcription and Qualitative Analysis*

The interviews were recorded digitally using a digital recorder, an Olympus DSS-330, and the recordings were available only to the researcher and a transcriptionist who was briefed on the confidentiality of the material and signed a “Professional Assistance Confidentiality Agreement” to ensure participant confidentiality. Upon completion of each interview, the file was uploaded to my notebook computer, and further uploaded to the transcriptionist’s secure website for transcription. Interviews were then transcribed and subsequently returned to me in Word format. Please see Appendix G for the signed Confidentiality Agreement.

Upon receipt of the transcribed interview, the original digital recording was compared to the transcription and verified for accuracy, and then uploaded into NVivo 2.0, a qualitative analysis software package, for data analysis. The interviews were coded according to coding schema based on the research questions as stated above and subsequently analyzed for recurring themes and patterns, key words and phrases, relationships between meditative groups, and commonalities and differences (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The following coding schema was used:

- 1) Do executives use meditation and intuition in decision-making?
  - a) What are their decision-making processes? Map out their processes and the variations of their processes.
  - b) How do executives use their intuition in decision-making?
    - i) What, if any, are the intuitional cues that they use in their decision-making processes?
      - (1) How do executives know when their decisions are correct?
      - (2) How do they know when they are wrong?
      - (3) How do they tell the difference between true intuition and false intuition?
    - ii) What tools, processes, etc., if any, do they use to access their intuition?
      - (1) Asking
      - (2) Other tools and processes
    - iii) What factors influence their intuition in DM?



- iv) What were the outcomes when they went against their intuition? To what do they attribute the difference in the outcome and the intuition?
- c) What role, if any, does meditation play in their decision-making process?
  - i) Do executive meditators ask for guidance to questions in meditation?
    - (1) Do answers come spontaneously?
    - (2) Do they come after the meditation?
    - (3) How do they come?
  - d) What role, if any, do Higher (Altered) States of Consciousness (HSCs) play in executives' decision-making processes?
    - i) How does one define HSCs?
      - (1) Is one in an HSC when intuition comes?
    - ii) Do executives access HSCs in meditation?
      - (1) Are they the same thing?
    - iii) Can executive meditators access HSCs at will to assist their decision-making process?
      - (1) If so, how do they do this?
      - (2) Is this when intuition arrives in decision-making?
- 2) What, if any, are the benefits relating to decision-making that executives perceive they gain through their meditative practices?
  - a) What, if any, are the benefits of personal benefits of meditation?
    - i) What, if any, physiological benefits do executives perceive they gain from their meditative practices?

- ii) What, if any, psychological benefits do executives perceive they gain from their meditative practices?
    - (1) What cognitive benefits, if any, do executives perceive they gain from their practice of meditation?
    - (2) What benefits to consciousness, i.e., becoming more conscious of thoughts and behaviors, do executives perceive they gain from their practice of meditation?
    - (3) What changes to their personality do executives perceive they gain from their practice of meditation?
  - iii) What benefits, if any, do executives perceive they gain from their meditative practices in the area of intuition?
  - iv) What benefits, if any, do executives perceive they gain from their meditative practices in the area of decision-making?
  - v) What benefits, if any, do executives perceive they gain from their meditative practices in the area of spirituality?
  - b) What benefits, if any, do others gain from executives' meditative practices as perceived by meditating executives?
- 3) What, if any, effect do executive meditators perceive their practices have had on their profits?
  - 4) What, if any, effect do executive meditators perceive their practices have had on their business ethics?
  - 5) How do executive meditators develop and train their intuition?
    - a) What, if any, role does meditation play in developing one's intuition?

b) What are the executives' perceptions of the origins of intuition?

### *Quantitative Analysis*

Once the complete data set was retrieved from the website, it was prepared for uploading into Microcase 4.6, a quantitative analysis software package.

Data were analyzed to determine relationships between variables and cases. Of particular interest initially were data relating to the research questions. For instance, what is the relationship between types of meditative practices; years having meditated; percentage use of intuition in decision-making; and the amount of risk participants are comfortable with using their intuition in their decision-making processes.

### *Triangulation of Quantitative and Qualitative Data*

Once interviews and survey data were analyzed, they were compared to confirm and corroborate findings, as well as examine and compare findings from the qualitative interviews and quantitative survey data of long-term meditators to quantitative survey data from short-term meditators.

Two participants' Phase 1 data were not utilized. One participant was dropped because of fundamental differences in his world views as compared to others' views (his views were that there were no "right or wrong" answers); had his data been included, it would have skewed the sample. Additionally, one other participant was dropped because he did not fit the profile being studied, i.e., not in a leadership position within his organization.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of this study, along with the backgrounds of the participants and a summary of the interviews. The first portion of this chapter is devoted to the demographic overview of the 100 Phase 1 participants, while the second focuses on the demographics of the 15 Phase 2 interviewees along with brief summaries of their interviews. So as to protect participants' confidentiality, pseudonyms have been used in place of their actual names.

#### Phase 1 Participant Demographics

Tables 2 – 9 present an overview of the demographics and background for the study's 100 Phase 1 participants.

Table 2

*Participant Gender by Meditation Type*

|        | Buddhist | Raja Yoga | TM | Christian | Other | TOTAL |
|--------|----------|-----------|----|-----------|-------|-------|
| Male   | 10       | 23        | 3  | 4         | 15    | 55    |
| Female | 6        | 8         | 4  | 5         | 22    | 45    |
| TOTAL  | 16       | 31        | 7  | 9         | 37    | 100   |

Table 3

*Participant Years Meditating by Composite Meditation Type*

| Years Meditating | Buddhist | Raja Yoga | TM | Christian | Other | TOTAL |
|------------------|----------|-----------|----|-----------|-------|-------|
| 0-1 Years        | 1        | 0         | 0  | 0         | 1     | 2     |
| 1-3 Years        | 0        | 2         | 0  | 0         | 8     | 10    |
| 4-6 Years        | 3        | 3         | 0  | 1         | 7     | 14    |
| 7-9 Years        | 2        | 1         | 1  | 0         | 1     | 5     |
| 10-13 Year       | 3        | 4         | 2  | 1         | 2     | 12    |
| > 13 Years       | 7        | 21        | 4  | 7         | 18    | 57    |
| TOTAL            | 16       | 31        | 7  | 9         | 37    | 100   |

Table 4

*Female Participant Years Meditating by Meditation Type*

| Years Meditating | Buddhist | Raja Yoga | TM | Christian | Other | TOTAL |
|------------------|----------|-----------|----|-----------|-------|-------|
| 0-1 Years        | 0        | 0         | 0  | 0         | 0     | 0     |
| 1-3 Years        | 0        | 0         | 0  | 0         | 5     | 5     |
| 4-6 Years        | 2        | 0         | 0  | 0         | 5     | 7     |
| 7-9 Years        | 0        | 1         | 1  | 0         | 1     | 3     |
| 10-13 Year       | 2        | 2         | 1  | 1         | 2     | 8     |
| > 13 Years       | 2        | 5         | 2  | 4         | 9     | 22    |
| TOTAL            | 6        | 8         | 4  | 5         | 22    | 45    |

Table 5

*Male Participant Years Meditating by Meditation Type*

| Years Meditating | Buddhist | Raja Yoga | TM | Christian | Other | TOTAL |
|------------------|----------|-----------|----|-----------|-------|-------|
| 0-1 Years        | 1        | 0         | 0  | 0         | 1     | 2     |
| 1-3 Years        | 0        | 2         | 0  | 0         | 3     | 5     |
| 4-6 Years        | 1        | 3         | 0  | 1         | 2     | 7     |
| 7-9 Years        | 2        | 0         | 0  | 0         | 0     | 2     |
| 10-13 Year       | 1        | 2         | 1  | 0         | 0     | 4     |
| > 13 Years       | 5        | 16        | 2  | 3         | 9     | 35    |
| TOTAL            | 10       | 23        | 3  | 4         | 15    | 55    |

Table 6

*Participant Frequency of Meditations by Meditation Type*

| Frequency Meditating | Buddhist | Raja Yoga | TM | Christian | Other | TOTAL |
|----------------------|----------|-----------|----|-----------|-------|-------|
| ≥ 2/day              | 2        | 18        | 1  | 4         | 8     | 33    |
| 1/day                | 9        | 7         | 2  | 3         | 14    | 35    |
| 2-4/week             | 4        | 4         | 3  | 2         | 15    | 28    |
| 1/week               | 1        | 1         | 1  | 0         | 0     | 3     |
| 1-2/month            | 0        | 1         | 0  | 0         | 0     | 1     |
| TOTAL                | 16       | 31        | 7  | 9         | 37    | 100   |

Table 7

*Participant Average Time of Meditation Session by Meditation Type*

| Time Meditating | Buddhist | Raja Yoga | TM | Christian | Other | TOTAL |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|----|-----------|-------|-------|
| < 10 Minutes    | 0        | 1         | 0  | 1         | 5     | 7     |
| 10-20 Minutes   | 5        | 6         | 4  | 1         | 10    | 27    |
| 21-35 Minutes   | 7        | 6         | 1  | 6         | 13    | 34    |
| 36-50 Minutes   | 3        | 13        | 1  | 1         | 2     | 20    |
| 51-75 Minutes   | 1        | 4         | 1  | 0         | 4     | 10    |
| > 75 Minutes    | 0        | 1         | 0  | 0         | 3     | 4     |
| TOTAL           | 16       | 31        | 7  | 9         | 37    | 100   |

Table 8

*Participant Position Level by Industry Sector*

| Position          | Business | Non-Profit | Government | NGO | TOTAL |
|-------------------|----------|------------|------------|-----|-------|
| Senior Management | 45       | 5          | 3          | 14  | 67    |
| Director          | 6        | 5          | 5          | 3   | 19    |
| Manager           | 7        | 0          | 2          | 0   | 9     |
| Consultant        | 2        | 0          | 0          | 0   | 2     |
| Minister          | 0        | 0          | 0          | 2   | 2     |
| Senior Educator   | 0        | 0          | 1          | 0   | 1     |
| TOTAL             | 60       | 10         | 11         | 19  | 100   |

Table 9

*Participant Job Function by Industry Sector*

| Job Function         | Business | Non-Profit | Government | NGO | TOTAL |
|----------------------|----------|------------|------------|-----|-------|
| Marketing            | 7        | 2          | 0          | 0   | 9     |
| Software             | 0        | 0          | 0          | 1   | 1     |
| Program Manager      | 5        | 1          | 4          | 1   | 11    |
| Executive Management | 17       | 6          | 3          | 8   | 34    |
| Finance              | 3        | 0          | 0          | 0   | 3     |
| Consulting           | 28       | 0          | 0          | 5   | 33    |
| Admin                | 0        | 0          | 1          | 2   | 3     |
| Other                | 1        | 1          | 3          | 1   | 6     |
| TOTAL                | 61       | 10         | 11         | 18  | 100   |

## Phase 1 Findings

*Decision-Making*

Tables 10 – 12 and Figures 1 - 8 summarize the responses from the decision-making portion of the survey.

Table 10 summarizes the survey responses to questions regarding decision-making processes by the participants ( $N = 100$ ). Survey questions summarized in Table 10 were graded using a Likert scale (1 – 6), with one on the scale being least favorable or lowest, and six being most favorable or highest. For instance, to the question “Overall,



the decisions that I regularly use intuition to guide my decision-making process are...”, respondents answered one (1) for “not that important,” and six (6) for “very important.” For the question, “How much risk am I comfortable with when I use my intuition to guide my decision-making process...”, respondents answered one (1) for “not much risk,” and six (6) for “a lot of risk.” To see the full survey, please see Appendix C.

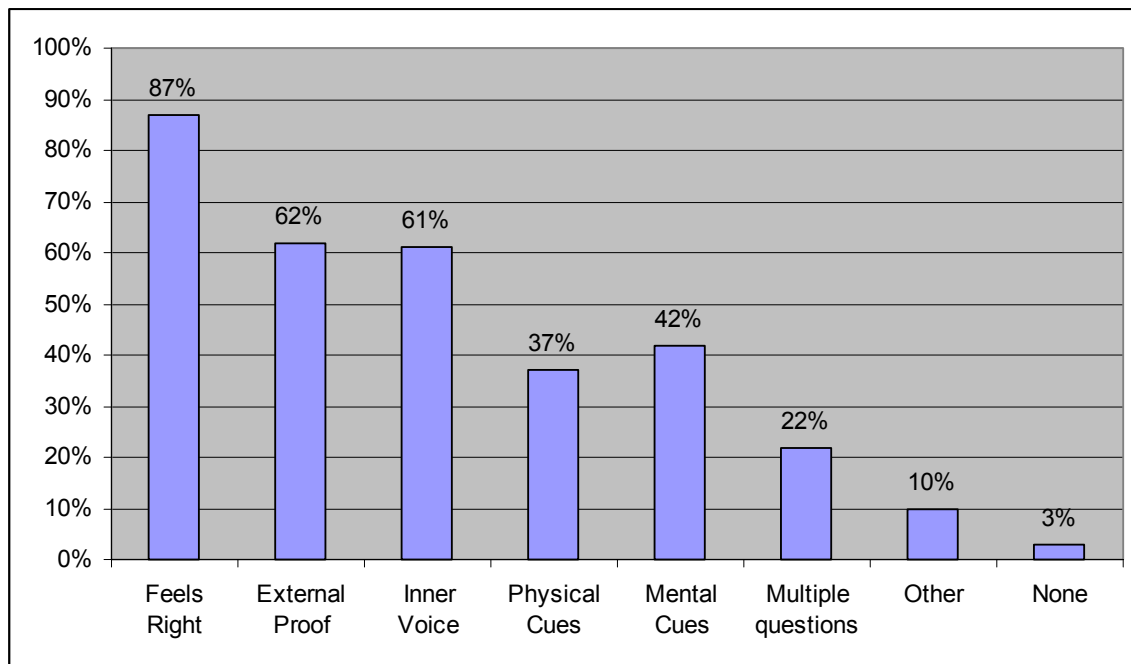
Table 10

*Decision-Making Processes by Participants*

| Question                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5  | 6  |
|--|---|---|---|----|----|----|
| Importance of Decisions Made Using Intuition | 0 | 1 | 0 | 15 | 39 | 45 |
| Amount of Risk Comfortable With Intuition    | 0 | 4 | 1 | 21 | 34 | 40 |
| Ethics as a Result of Meditation             | 0 | 0 | 0 | 24 | 28 | 48 |
| Intuition Accuracy as Applied to Self        | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 41 | 41 |
| Intuition Accuracy as Applied to Others      | 0 | 0 | 2 | 21 | 34 | 42 |

$N = 100$

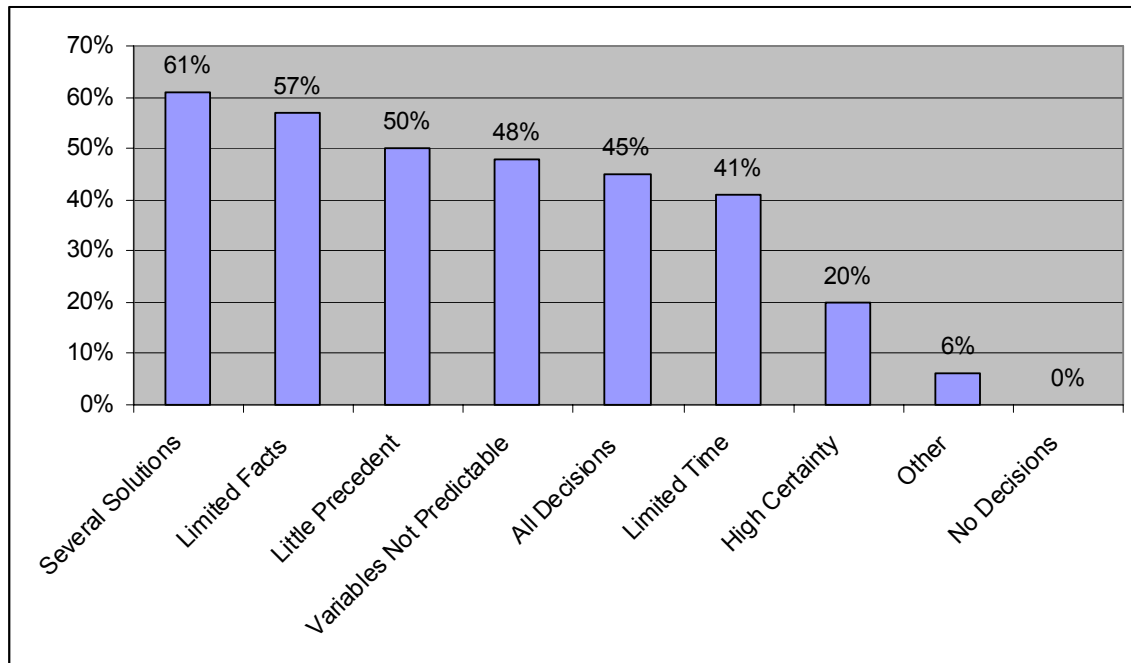
Figure 1 summarizes the survey responses to the question, “How do you tell your intuition is correct . . .”



*Figure 1.* Confirmation of correct intuition.

$N = 100$

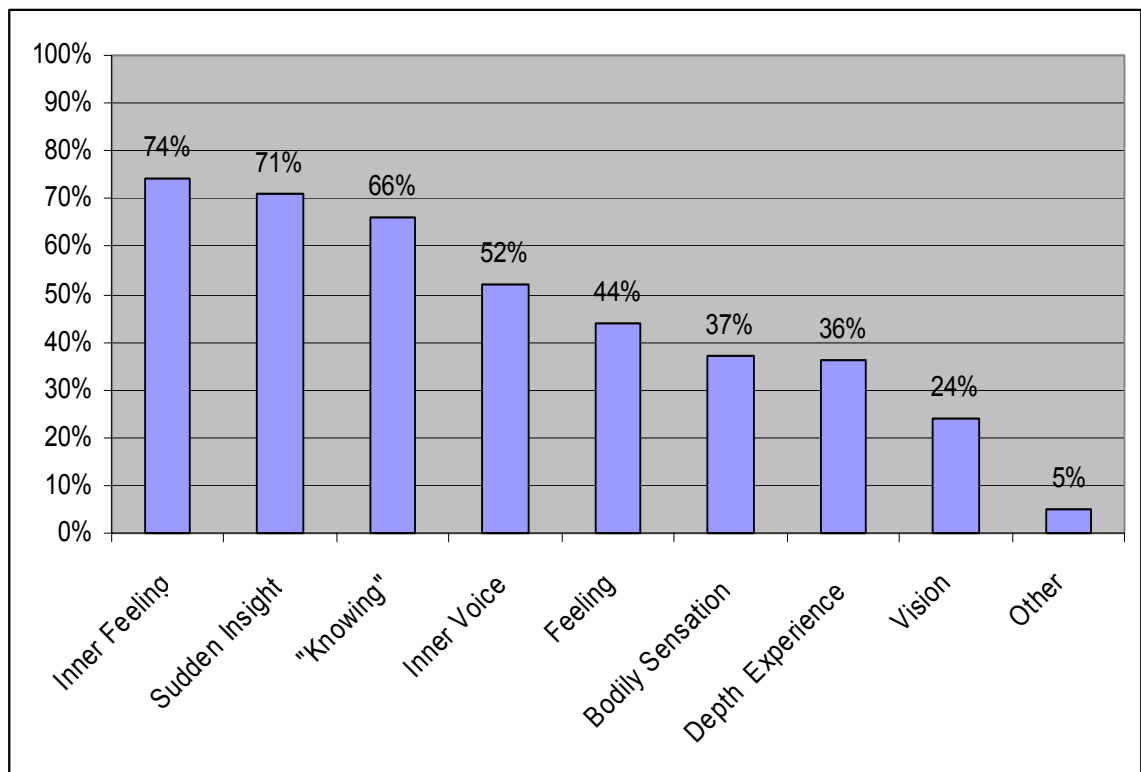
Figure 2 summarizes the survey responses to the question, “In which circumstances do you use your intuition to make your most important decisions . . .”



*Figure 2.* Use of intuition in type decision.

$N = 100$

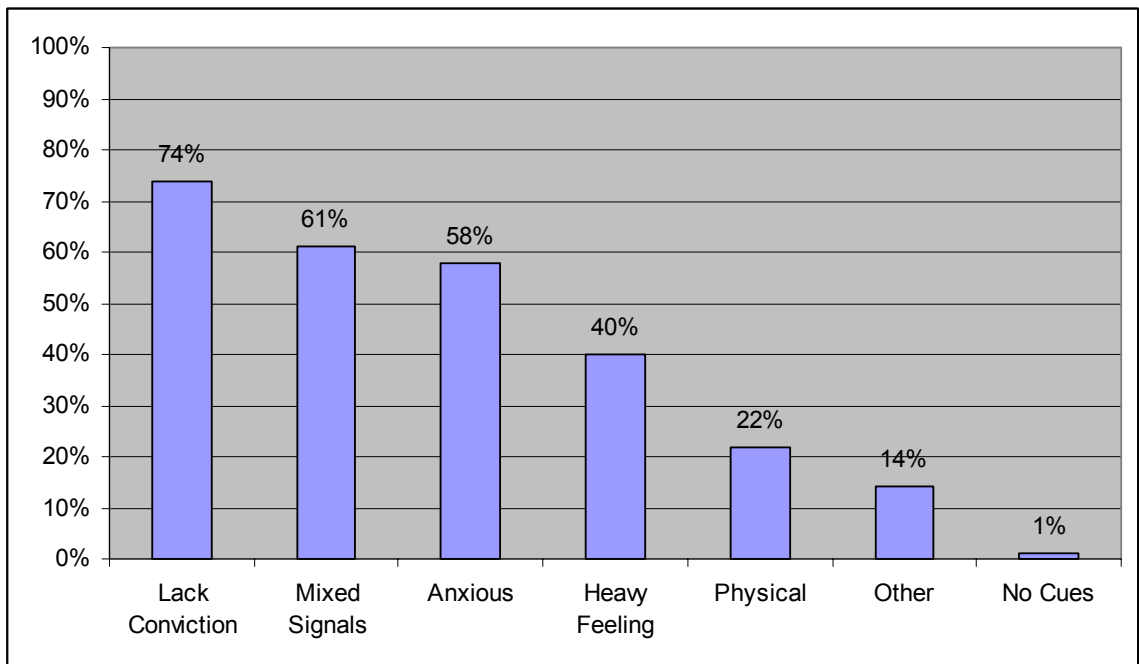
Figure 3 summarizes the survey responses to the question, “What feelings or signals do you get when you ‘know’ that a particular decision is right? What are the cues you rely upon . . . ”



*Figure 3.* Positive intuitional cues.

$N = 100$

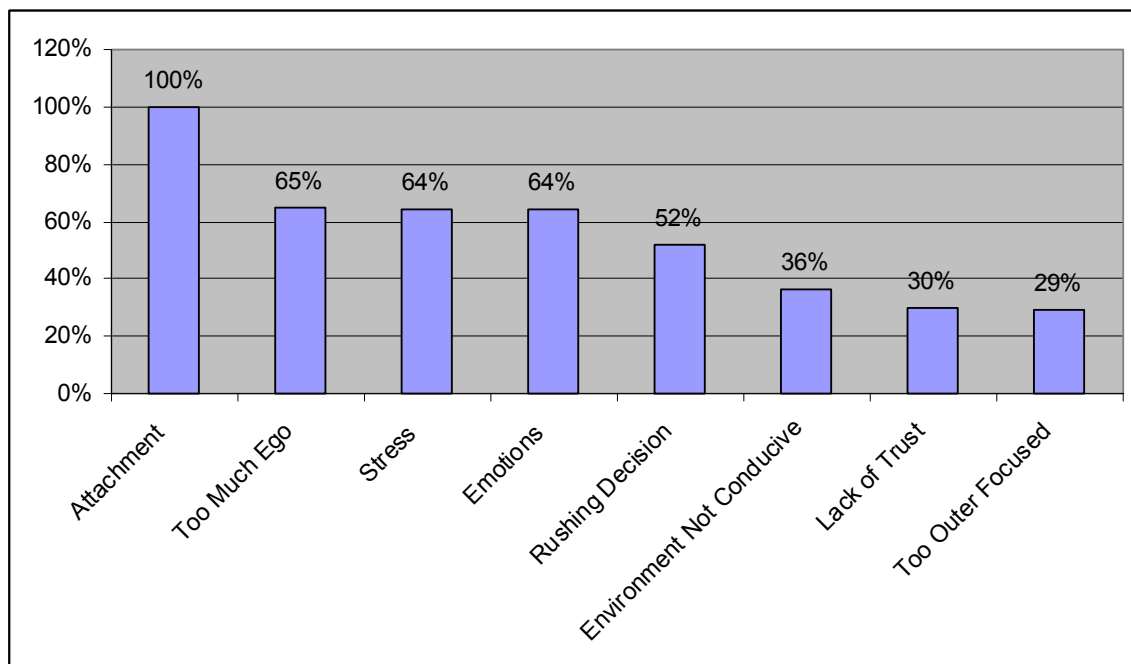
Figure 4 summarizes the survey responses to the question, “What feelings or signals do you get when you “know” you are heading in the wrong direction or should delay your decision for a while . . . “



*Figure 4.* Negative intuitional cues.

$N = 100$

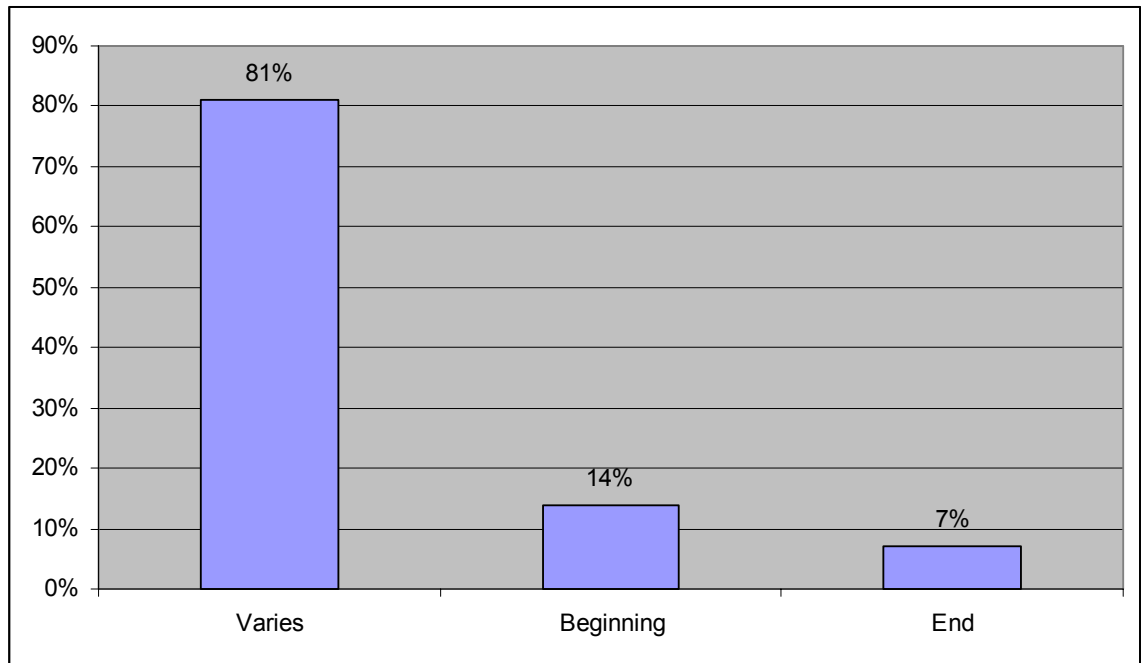
Figure 5 summarizes the survey responses to the question, “What kinds of conditions have obstructed your use of intuition in important decisions-making situations . . . .”



*Figure 5.* Factors obstructing intuition.

$N = 100$

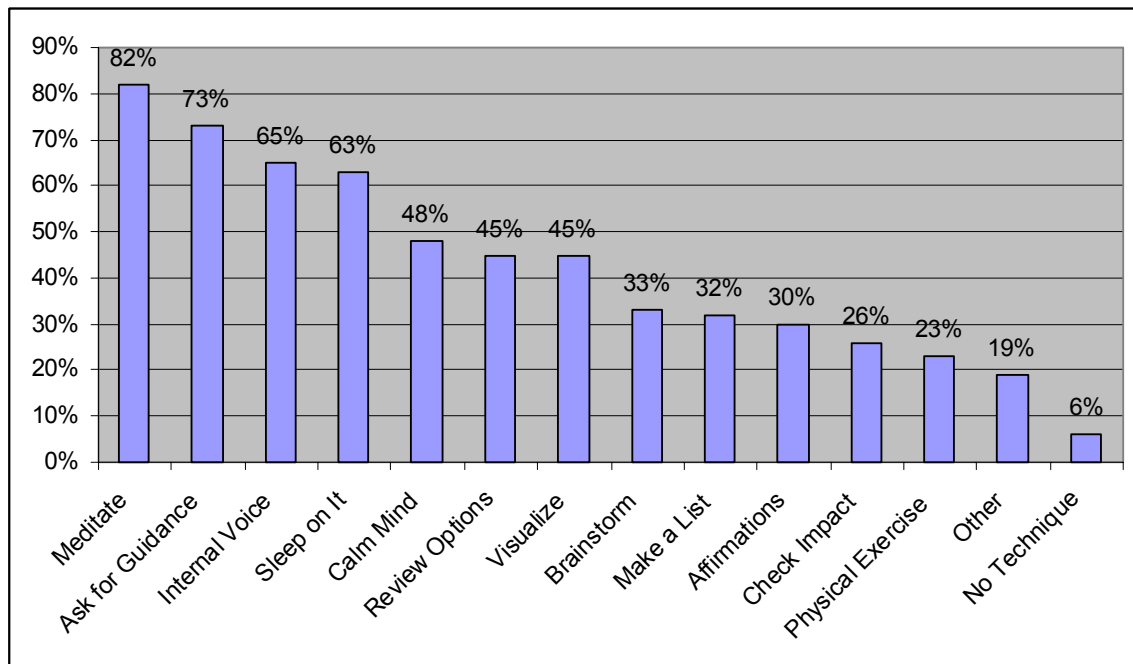
Figure 6 summarizes the survey responses to the question, “When using your intuition to make a decision, when have you found it functions best . . . .”



*Figure 6.* Timing of use of intuition in decision-making.

$N = 100$

Figure 7 summarizes the survey responses to the question, “When making a major decision, do you use any particular technique or method(s) to help you access your intuition more effectively . . .”



*Figure 7.* Tools for accessing intuition.

$N = 100$



Figure 8 summarizes the survey responses to the question, “What, if any, technique(s) do you regularly use to help develop your intuition . . .”

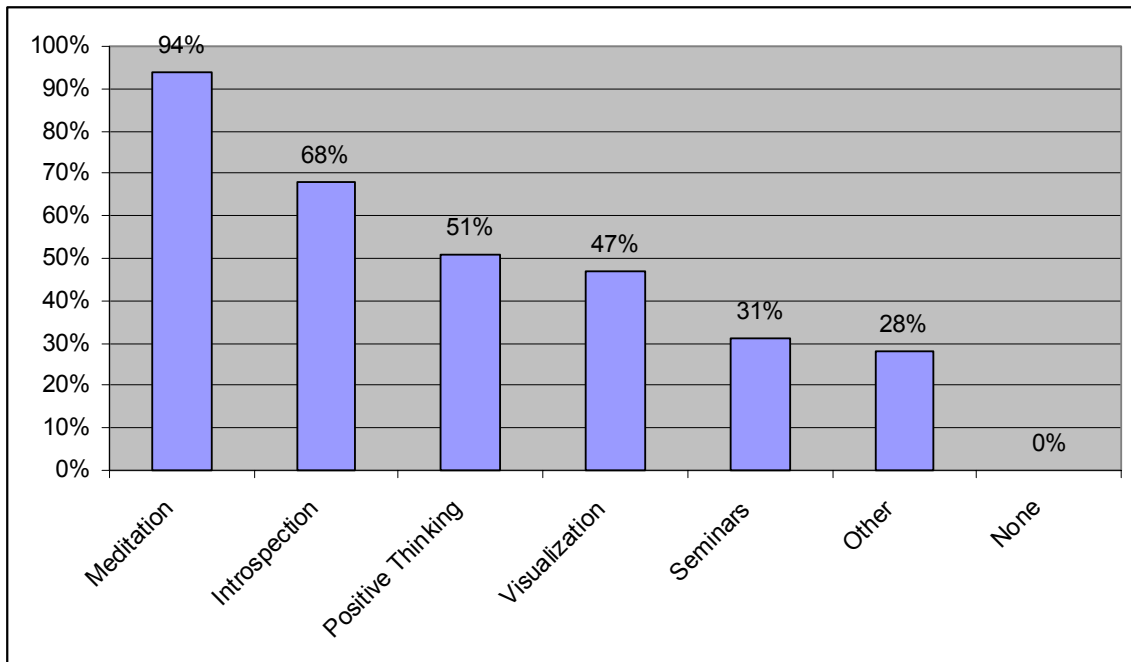


Figure 8. Techniques to develop intuition.

$N = 100$

Table 11 summarizes the survey responses to the question, “Overall, of all the decisions you make, what percentage do you regularly use intuition to guide you . . .”

Table 11

*Percentage of Decisions Using Intuition*

| Percentage of Decisions | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-99% | 100% |
|-------------------------|----|-------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| Respondents             | 0  | 4     | 9      | 37     | 40     | 10   |

$N = 100$

*Benefits of Meditation to Decision-Making*

Table 12 summarizes the survey responses to questions regarding the reported benefits of meditation to decision-making by the participants ( $N = 100$ ).

Table 12

*Reported Benefits of Meditation to Decision-Making*

| Benefit                      | Fully Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Mostly Agree | Fully Agree |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Reduced Stress               | 0              | 0               | 0                 | 10             | 23           | 67          |
| Greater Energy               | 0              | 1               | 2                 | 14             | 33           | 50          |
| Better Health                | 0              | 0               | 1                 | 18             | 31           | 50          |
| Focus and Concentration      | 0              | 0               | 1                 | 9              | 31           | 59          |
| Peacefulness                 | 0              | 0               | 0                 | 7              | 22           | 71          |
| Attentiveness / Alertness    | 0              | 0               | 1                 | 12             | 25           | 62          |
| Conscious of Thoughts        | 0              | 0               | 1                 | 9              | 19           | 71          |
| Conscious of Actions         | 0              | 0               | 1                 | 12             | 25           | 62          |
| Happier                      | 0              | 0               | 2                 | 8              | 28           | 62          |
| Sense of Self                | 0              | 1               | 2                 | 11             | 27           | 59          |
| Greater Optimism             | 0              | 0               | 1                 | 15             | 25           | 59          |
| Get Along Better with Others | 0              | 1               | 2                 | 14             | 28           | 55          |
| Consideration of Others      | 0              | 0               | 5                 | 16             | 25           | 54          |

*Table 12 (Continued)*

| Benefit                             | Fully Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Mostly Agree | Fully Agree |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Trust Self More                     | 1              | 1               | 2                 | 15             | 23           | 58          |
| Intuition Prowess                   | 0              | 0               | 0                 | 17             | 35           | 48          |
| Intuition After Meditating          | 0              | 0               | 1                 | 18             | 42           | 39          |
| Trust Intuition More                | 0              | 0               | 0                 | 8              | 30           | 62          |
| Greater Creativity                  | 0              | 0               | 4                 | 17             | 26           | 53          |
| Sense Others' Thoughts / Feelings   | 0              | 0               | 5                 | 16             | 26           | 53          |
| See More Options in Decision-Making | 0              | 0               | 5                 | 15             | 26           | 54          |
| Know Answers More Quickly           | 0              | 1               | 4                 | 12             | 28           | 55          |
| More Decisive                       | 0              | 1               | 5                 | 24             | 30           | 40          |
| Trust Decisions More                | 1              | 0               | 2                 | 15             | 26           | 56          |
| Greater Faith                       | 3              | 1               | 0                 | 14             | 20           | 62          |
| Higher Consciousness                | 0              | 2               | 2                 | 13             | 24           | 59          |
| Greater Attunement                  | 2              | 1               | 2                 | 3              | 23           | 69          |

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*N* = 100

## Phase 2 Participant Demographics

Tables 13 – 20 present an overview of the demographics and background for the study's 15 interviewees; i.e., those who-participated in Phase 2 interviews.

Table 13

*Interviewee Gender by Meditation Type*

|        | Buddhist | Raja Yoga | TM | Christian | Other | TOTAL |
|--------|----------|-----------|----|-----------|-------|-------|
| Male   | 2        | 4         | 2  | 1         | 0     | 9     |
| Female | 1        | 1         | 1  | 0         | 3     | 6     |
| TOTAL  | 3        | 5         | 3  | 1         | 3     | 15    |

$N = 15$

Table 14

*Interviewee Years Meditating by Meditation Type*

|            | Buddhist | Raja Yoga | TM | Christian | Other | TOTAL |
|------------|----------|-----------|----|-----------|-------|-------|
| 10-13 Year | 0        | 1         | 1  | 1         | 0     | 3     |
| > 13 Years | 3        | 4         | 2  | 0         | 3     | 12    |
| TOTAL      | 3        | 5         | 3  | 1         | 3     | 15    |

$N = 15$

Table 15

*Female Interviewee Years Meditating by Meditation Type*

|            | Buddhist | Raja Yoga | TM | Christian | Other | TOTAL |
|------------|----------|-----------|----|-----------|-------|-------|
| 10-13 Year | 0        | 1         | 0  | 0         | 1     | 2     |
| > 13 Years | 1        | 0         | 1  | 0         | 2     | 4     |
| TOTAL      | 1        | 1         | 1  | 0         | 3     | 6     |

$N = 6$

Table 16

*Male Interviewee Years Meditating by Meditation Type*

|            | Buddhist | Raja Yoga | TM | Christian | Other | TOTAL |
|------------|----------|-----------|----|-----------|-------|-------|
| 10-13 Year | 0        | 0         | 1  | 0         | 0     | 1     |
| > 13 Years | 2        | 4         | 1  | 1         | 0     | 8     |
| TOTAL      | 2        | 4         | 2  | 1         | 0     | 9     |

$N = 9$

Table 17

*Interviewee Frequency of Meditations by Meditation Type*

|                | Buddhist | Raja Yoga | TM | Other | TOTAL |
|----------------|----------|-----------|----|-------|-------|
| $\geq 2$ / day | 0        | 4         | 0  | 3     | 7     |
| 1 / day        | 3        | 1         | 2  | 1     | 7     |
| 2-4 / week     | 0        | 0         | 1  | 0     | 1     |
| TOTAL          | 3        | 5         | 3  | 4     | 15    |

$N = 15$

Table 18

*Interviewee Average Time of Meditation Session by Meditation Type*

|           | Buddhist | Raja Yoga | TM | Christian | Other | TOTAL |
|-----------|----------|-----------|----|-----------|-------|-------|
| < 10 Min  | 0        | 0         | 0  | 0         | 0     | 0     |
| 10-20 Min | 1        | 0         | 3  | 0         | 0     | 4     |
| 21-35 Min | 0        | 0         | 0  | 0         | 1     | 1     |
| 36-50 Min | 1        | 4         | 0  | 1         | 1     | 7     |
| 51-75 Min | 1        | 1         | 0  | 0         | 0     | 2     |
| > 75 Min  | 0        | 0         | 0  | 0         | 1     | 1     |
| TOTAL     | 3        | 5         | 3  | 0         | 3     | 15    |

$N = 15$

Table 19

*Interviewee Position Level by Industry Sector*

|                 | Business | Non-Profit | Government | NGO | TOTAL |
|-----------------|----------|------------|------------|-----|-------|
| Marketing       | 0        | 0          | 0          | 0   | 0     |
| Software        | 0        | 0          | 0          | 0   | 0     |
| Senior          | 6        | 0          | 0          | 3   | 9     |
| Management      |          |            |            |     |       |
| Director        | 0        | 0          | 2          | 0   | 2     |
| Manager         | 1        | 0          | 1          | 0   | 2     |
| Minister        | 0        | 0          | 0          | 1   | 1     |
| Senior Educator | 0        | 0          | 1          | 0   | 1     |
| TOTAL           | 7        | 0          | 4          | 4   | 15    |

$N = 15$

Table 20

*Interviewee Job Function by Industry Sector*

|                      | Business | Non-Profit | Government | NGO | TOTAL |
|----------------------|----------|------------|------------|-----|-------|
| Program Manager      | 0        | 0          | 2          | 0   | 2     |
| Executive Management | 2        | 0          | 1          | 1   | 4     |
| Finance              | 1        | 0          | 0          | 0   | 1     |
| Consulting           | 4        | 0          | 0          | 2   | 6     |
| Admin                | 0        | 0          | 0          | 1   | 1     |
| Other                | 0        | 0          | 1          | 0   | 1     |
| TOTAL                | 7        | 0          | 4          | 4   | 15    |

$N = 15$



## Phase 2 Interviewee Summaries

The following are a summary of the interviews and the backgrounds of the 15 participants in the Phase 2 interviews.

### *Alexis*

Alexis is a single, Caucasian woman in her late-50s. She is a professional, working as the Program Director at a community college for a district-wide adult education program; of note, the program she manages has recently received national recognition for the quality of the program. She practices Raja Yoga, and meditates twice daily.

Alexis was interviewed in her home. We began the interview by first going over the Informed Consent Form that she had signed for the survey.

Alexis began meditating consciously in 1972 when she began studying the Self-Realization Fellowship home study lessons, although she had memories of deep prayer from her childhood.

Alexis very strongly believes in the usefulness of meditation for problem-solving. An intuitive rational decision-maker, she describes how she makes her difficult decisions as predominately intuitive. Her decision-making process is

1. Problem
2. Analyze problem
3. Meditate / HSC
4. Ask for guidance
5. Receive intuition

6. Analyze options

7. Act

Describing her decision-making process, she stated,

Very definitely if I can take my mind off the problem, number one, it's turning the problem over to God, just surrendering it. And then somewhere in one of the books it says to make a decision, look at all of the options, you eliminate the ones that don't seem to be too logical, offer it up, surrender it, meditate. Put your mind on the techniques, and when you get back it's clear as a bell. It frequently will be very clear. And if not, when you finish meditating, shortly thereafter.

When facing particularly difficult decisions,

I'll hold my rose petals in the morning before I leave. If I anticipate difficulty I'll hold my Bolivian pewter container with the rose petals in it and directly talk to [my Guru] and ask for the guidance or surrender the situation, and it's calm. Then I really don't have any problem.

Alexis stated she he was able to enter higher states of consciousness at will and receives intuition both inside and outside meditation. Her intuition manifests in multiple ways: visually, feelings, and audio, and knows her intuition is correct by the “100% feeling” that she feels from within. She also states that she is able to sense others’ thoughts and feelings, and can see auras. The intuitive guidance that she receives is both big-picture and step-by-step. She trusts her intuition implicitly, but said that this was something that had developed over time, and that she has had to overcome both attachment and not trusting to get to the place where she could trust her intuition.

She stated that she had seen both greater profits and ethics as a result of her meditation practice, and that in her there had been a significant personality change for the better.

She believes that intuition comes from the soul, God, and has improved as a result of her meditation and listening to it.

*Corrine*

Corrine is a single, Caucasian woman in her mid-60s. She is a professional, working as the Minister in Charge of a new thought church. She has been Minister in Charge at a number of churches, and is well respected by her peers. She practices Transcendental Meditation, and meditates once daily.

Corrine was interviewed in her office at the church where she works. We began the interview by first going over the Informed Consent Form that she had signed for the survey.

Corrine began meditating consciously on July 10, 1975, which she describes as “the biggest day of my life.” When she first started meditating, she became hyperaware of synchronicity.

Once I started regular meditating and not too long into it—weeks—I could say something and it would plop into my lap almost or I would think of something off the wall like a person’s name in high school and then I’d be out somewhere and then there they’d be. Or, I’d meet someone who said they were from the same town, or just little things all the time coming to me as a validation that there was some kind of connection between what I was thinking and what happened in the world.

Corrine very strongly believes in the usefulness of meditation for problem-solving. An intuitive decision-maker, she describes how she makes her difficult decisions as predominately intuitive. Her decision-making process is

1. Problem
2. Analyze problem (minimally)
3. Meditate / HSC
4. Ask for guidance
5. Receive intuition

## 6. Act

Describing her decision-making process, she states she never receives intuitional guidance in meditation, always outside of meditation.

She stated she is able to enter higher states of consciousness at will, both inside and outside meditation, and that she knows her intuition is correct by the feeling that she feels from within. Her intuition manifests in multiple ways, including visual, feelings, and aural. She also states she is able to sense others' thoughts and feelings, and the intuitive guidance that she receives is both big-picture and step-by-step. She trusts her intuition completely, and knows it is always correct. She can tell the difference between true and false intuition, because "true intuition is always positive."

She stated that she had seen both greater profits and ethics as a result of her meditation practice. She stated that intuition came from the soul, God, and that it had grown as a result of her meditation and listening to it.

### *David*

David is a married, Caucasian male in his mid-40s. He is a professional, working as Administrator and Executive at a nursing home. He practices Raja Yoga, and meditates twice daily.

David was interviewed in my office. We began the interview by first going over the Informed Consent Form that he had signed for the survey.

David began meditating in 1981 when he began studying the Self-Realization Fellowship (SRF) home study lessons, although he had memories of practicing meditation from his childhood.

David very strongly believes in the usefulness of meditation for problem-solving. He is a rational-intuitive decision-maker, and believes that he must stick to his decision-making process for his intuition to work. His decision-making process is

1. Problem
2. Analyze problem
3. Meditate / HSC
4. Ask for guidance
5. Receive intuition
6. Act, getting intuitive guidance at each step to ensure on correct path.

Describing his decision-making process, he stated,

I start by doing all the outer things: analyzing the situation from an intellectual point of view, trying to get myself all the information that I needed to make the decision, but all the way along asking for guidance, and, just little by little—also part of the way I do things sometimes is if I think something's the right direction but I'm not sure is I'll start going that route. Start it, start the process of going that route and see what happens, and sometimes just starting the process you'll be told no, it isn't right or yes, it is right. You'll find out pretty quickly sometimes. . . especially if you're asking for help.

For particularly difficult decisions, he stated using his rose petals to help him attune with his Guru and get the necessary guidance.

David stated he is able to enter higher states of consciousness and receive intuition both inside and outside meditation, but does not fully trust his intuition. He lamented that his wife's intuition is better than his own. His intuition manifests primarily in feelings or through external means, and his confirmation of his intuition is both internal and external. The intuitive guidance that he receives is both big-picture and step-by-step. He is learning to trust his intuition, and is better now than he was in the past.

He stated that he is unable to correlate his meditation and greater profits and ethics, but that he could not discount its effects from previous lifetimes. He attributed many positive benefits due to his meditative practice.

He believes that intuition came from the soul, God, and that his intuition has grown as a result of his meditation and listening to it.

### *Edward*

Edward is a married, Caucasian male in his mid-30s. He owns his own business, working as consultant and speaker. He is a practicing Vipassana Buddhist, and meditates once daily.

Edward was interviewed in his home. We began the interview by first going over the Informed Consent Form that he had signed for the survey.

Edward began meditating consciously in 1986 because he had felt a lack in his life, and wanted to find out if there was more to this life.

Edward very strongly believes in the usefulness of meditation as a problem-solving technique. A rational-intuitive decision-maker, he uses his meditative techniques to assist in his problem solving. His decision-making process is

1. Problem
2. Analyze problem
3. Meditate / HSC
4. Use intuition to feel options energetically in his body
5. Interpret body feelings to guide his decision
6. Act

Describing his decision-making process, he stated,

If the question implies, do I come here and sit and meditate while contemplating the decision in order to, in my meditative state, be more deeply in tune to the right answer. then no. Because my meditation—my sitting time—my sitting time—is really dedicated to one thing, and that is to the practice of Vipassana, the practice of mindfulness, being in the present moment. Now if I have a problem will I then sit quietly, or something in a state of revelry and then become mindful and then turn meditation to the problem, yes. But what I do do I call delineated meditation time, no.

Closing my eyes and breathing into the issue so whatever the question is, just holding a question as an object of meditation, and allowing it to be literally an object which emanates, has an emanation of the senses or the spirit perhaps. So I might have a question or a challenge, and by holding it in my mind as an object it has it's own vibration. It has its own life force, and it begins to emanate clues, signals, insights and (if I get really stuck) I use Tarot cards or the I Ching, the I Ching first and Tarot cards second. I find that those are both comprehensive more than how they're very stimulating to my own intuitive input and insight. Patience and cogitating, being patient, holding it, and being present with it, Patience is the key for me. You know rather than rushing to a conclusion or closure. There's a part of me that wants results. There is a wiser part of me that knows that there's a process to be had and I can't force a process.

Edward stated he is able to enter higher states of consciousness at will and receives intuition both inside and outside meditation. He fully trusts his intuition, and has used it in making the largest decisions of his life, which were to leave monastic life, and to marry. His intuition manifests primarily through energetic feelings or through external means, and his confirmation of his intuition is both internal and external. The intuitive guidance that he receives is both big-picture and step-by-step.

He stated that he attributes greater profits and ethics to his meditation practice, as well as many other benefits.

He stated that intuition comes from the soul, God, and deep consciousness. He attributes the growth of his intuition to his meditation and listening to it.

*Emily*

Emily is a married, Jewish woman in her mid-50s. She is a business owner and a professional, working as a therapist and an intuitive healer. She practices Jewish Kabbalah and meditates daily.

Emily was interviewed in her home. We began the interview by first going over the Informed Consent Form that she had signed for the survey.

Emily began meditating in 1985 when she began practicing yoga. In the early 1990s she had a breakthrough in which her intuition became, as she described it, “fully turned on,” to where she now freely communicates with her guides on a daily basis in both her personal and professional life.

Emily believes very strongly believes in the usefulness of meditation and higher states of consciousness for problem-solving. An intuitive-rational decision-maker, she describes how she makes her difficult decisions as predominately intuitive through asking her guides for guidance. Her decision-making process is

1. Problem
2. Meditate / HSC
3. Ask for guidance
4. Receive intuition
5. Analyze options
6. Act

Describing her decision-making process, she stated,

. . . most of the time it's a communication. It's, you're just sitting [there] and my guidance team is there and they always want to talk and they always want to tell me things and they just need to show me things and



sometimes we do things together and sometimes they do things to me, and that's how it's been for years and years and years and years now.

She stated that when her guidance team want her attention,

they show 11's on the digital clock. I'll wake up in the night once and look at the clock and it's 3:22, and then I know. And sometimes, they just shake my shoulder—usually in the night. During the day if I look at the clock and I see an 11... It's incessant. They won't let me go. I'll look at the clock, it's 3:44. The next time I look at the clock it's 4:33. They won't stop that until I sit down and see what they want. It doesn't do any good to ignore them. I try sometimes. At night they do shake me awake. They physically shake me—get up. You have to do some work.

Emily stated she is able to enter these higher states of consciousness at will and receives intuition both inside and outside meditation, and she knew her intuition was correct by experience and the feeling she feels from within. Her intuition manifests in multiple ways: visually, feelings, and aural. She stated that she is able to sense others' thoughts and feelings, and is very creative. The intuitive guidance that she receives is both big-picture and step-by-step. She trusts her intuition implicitly.

She stated that she is neutral on greater profits, but had seen greater ethics as a result of her meditation practice.

She stated that intuition comes from the soul, God, and her guides, that it had grown as a result of her listening to it.

### *Jeffrey*

Jeffrey is a married, Caucasian male in his late-40s. He is a business owner, having started and run at least two highly successful businesses. He practices Raja Yoga, and meditates at least twice daily.

Jeffrey was interviewed in my office. We began the interview by first going over the Informed Consent Form that he had signed for the survey.

A deeply spiritual yet strong businessman, Jeffrey began meditating consciously in 1975 at the age of 21 because, as he said, "I have this deep longing to reunite my consciousness with God's consciousness."

Jeffrey very strongly believes in the usefulness of meditation for problem-solving. He is an intuitive-rational decision-maker, relying primarily on his intuition to make decisions along with rational thinking to eliminate obviously wrong choices. His decision-making process is

1. Problem
2. Analyze problem
3. Meditate / HSC
4. Ask for guidance
5. Receive intuition
6. Act

Describing his decision-making process, Jeffrey stated,

My tendency is not to discuss or to try to figure out the course of action. My tendency is to ask for help, partnering, or surrendering. An example of this is at work if there is, let's say currently at work there's a problem with certain individuals and their personalities, and it just seems to be discordant. What I will do is I will ask God to help in this situation by taking control of it instead of trying to figure out with my mind what should I be doing? How should I be doing this? What we're trying to manipulate the individual I will try to just surrender and say, "God, I really can't deal with this. I'm not being effective. I want You to take over the situation." And I'll keep revalidating that situation. I can almost say, I shouldn't say this. It might be a jinx. I could almost say 100% of the times if I do that with concentration, and if I do that with clarity, it's worked 100% of the time. A big burden is lifted off of me and resolution of some sort materializes in the circumstance.

For particularly difficult decisions, Jeffrey stated he uses his rose petals to help him attune with his Guru and get the necessary guidance.

Jeffrey stated he is able to enter higher states of consciousness at will and receives intuition both inside and outside meditation. His intuition manifests primarily through his monitoring of his feelings of peace, joy, and inner calmness, and his confirmation of his intuition is both internal and external. He receives both big-picture and step-by-step intuition, and he uses his internal weathervanes of peace, joy, and inner calmness to know he is following the right course of action.

He stated that he is very clearly able to correlate higher profits and greater ethical behavior to his meditative practice.

I would say that the more I meditate the more money I am able to produce. There are others I've watched . . . actually zero effect. But for myself I actually believe if I was able to stay home and meditate hours in the morning and hours in the evening I think the company would make more money.

Additionally, he attributed many positive benefits to his meditative practice.

He stated that intuition comes from the soul, God, and that his intuition has grown as a result of his meditation and listening to it.

### *Jeremy*

Jeremy is a single, Caucasian male in his late 50s. He is currently a senior educator; however, he is a former business owner, having started and run two successful businesses. He practices Raja Yoga, and meditates at least twice daily.

Jeremy was interviewed in my office. We began the interview by first going over the Informed Consent Form that he had signed for the survey.

Jeremy began meditating in 1970 following his return from the Vietnam War in response to his desire to find satisfactory answers to life. He began reading books on meditation, and shortly thereafter found the Self-Realizations Fellowship teachings which he follows to this day.

Jeremy very strongly believes in the usefulness of meditation for problem-solving. He is an intuitive decision-maker, relying nearly solely on his intuition to make decisions. His decision-making process is

1. Problem
2. Analyze problem
3. Meditate / HSC
4. Ask for guidance
5. Receive intuition
6. Act

Describing his decision-making process, Jeremy stated that he comes from a place of higher consciousness.

I've learned from making large decisions rather abruptly according to my ego, emotions, desires, youthful willfulness, and ignorance, that that wasn't the most successful way to approach it. So having gone down the road most traveled, I've learned to go down now the road less traveled and that has made all the difference. And that road is to get to a higher place because when we're in a higher place then Spirit can guide us, because Spirit wants the best for us, because we are expressions of Spirit. So by doing meditation and being intuitive and being calm, it's real simple. Meditation, meditation. If it's a big decision then for myself, you don't do it on one meditation. Sometimes you get the big ka-ching and you just totally know it in one meditation, but it's still good, I have found, to visit it over a period of time, which has not been my style. I'm pretty much a shoot from the hip, quicker kind of personality, but I've learned from the school of hard knocks to take it a little slower and let things gel out a little bit to see if it's (right)—because sometimes what you think you're making a big decision about might not really be the issue at all. It could be a piece

of a bigger puzzle that I don't have yet. So sometimes we can't fight it with our intellect that knows so well about the little piece, because it's part of a bigger piece that our perception has not yet been able to grasp. If we say that our soul consciousness that takes into account an ever-expanding wholeness and everyone in that wholeness as core to the process as opposed to the little ego wanting its own little agenda regardless of what the needs are of others, to take it to the other extreme, I think it's a no brainer.

For particularly difficult decisions, Jeremy stated that he has heard God speaking directly to him, giving him guidance.

Jeremy stated he is able to enter higher states of consciousness at will and receives intuition both inside and outside meditation. His intuition manifested primarily through visual, aural, and thoughts, and his confirmation was both internal and external. He received both big-picture and step-by-step intuition. He trusts his intuition completely.

Jeremy stated that he could very clearly correlate higher profits and greater ethical behavior to his meditative practice. Additionally, he attributed many positive benefits due to his meditative practice.

He stated that intuition comes from the soul, God, and that his intuition has grown as a result of his meditation and listening to it.

### *Joshua*

Joshua is a married, Caucasian male in his mid-60s. He is a business owner, having started and run a highly successful consulting and coaching practice, and formerly was the district superintendent for a moderate size school district (eight schools). He practices Transcendental Meditation, and meditates daily.

Joshua was interviewed in his home. We began the interview by first going over the Informed Consent Form that he had signed for the survey.

A deeply spiritual and strong leader, Joshua began meditating consciously in 1978 because

I was under a lot of self-induced stress at the time and had a fairly significant job as superintendent and wasn't getting enough rest or sleep, drinking a lot and there was just a lot of stress and strain and lack of focus. And so I did it to try to calm myself down, to try to get back to some semblance of serenity . . . not serenity but somewhere from where I was, closer to that. Trying to get a little sanity in my life. It took several weeks before I began to notice (the effects), but that even in the first week or two that I realized that it had potential so, even . . . I was living sort of a crazy life as a single person at the time and doing a lot of drinking. It was still effective. I began to become calm and I began to get centered after several weeks.

Joshua very strongly believes in the usefulness of meditation for problem-solving. He is an intuitive decision-maker, relying nearly solely on his intuition to make decisions. His decision-making process is

1. Problem
2. Meditate / HSC
3. Ask for guidance
4. Receive intuition
5. Act

Describing his decision-making process, Joshua stated,

I always use meditation to get me centered and focused, and after I get into that centered state, I then ask a basic question like, this is my intention, this is my intended outcome, and I want the guidance of Inner Wisdom, Spirit. And so I get into that centered place and ask the question and then I stay centered until I feel the formation of the first sense of thought, idea and I pick up the pen and pad and I start writing.

Joshua stated he is able to enter higher states of consciousness and receives intuition both inside and outside meditation. His intuition manifests primarily through feelings and thoughts, and his confirmation is both internal and external. He receives both big-picture and step-by-step intuition, and completely trusts his intuition.

Joshua stated that he is very clearly able to correlate higher profits and greater ethical behavior to his meditative practice. Additionally, he attributes many positive benefits, including his cessation of drinking “and leading the wild single life” to his meditative practice.

He stated that intuition comes from the soul, God, and that his intuition has grown as a result of his meditation and listening to it.

### *Kristin*

Kristin is a single, Caucasian woman in her late-30s. She is a consultant and a business owner, working in the area of information technology. She practices Bodreana Buddhism, and meditates twice daily.

Kristin was interviewed in my office. We began the interview by first going over the Informed Consent Form that she had signed for the survey.

Kristin began meditating when she was 12 years old following the passing of her father as a means to discover who she was.

Kristin very strongly believes in the usefulness of meditation for problem-solving. An intuitive-rational decision-maker, she makes her difficult decisions predominately with intuition. Her decision-making process is

1. Problem
2. Analyze problem
3. Meditate / HSC
4. Ask for guidance
5. Receive intuition—feel the energy of the situation
6. Act

Describing her decision-making process, she stated that

I look at the energy of the situation. If I put myself in that situation is it going to increase or decrease my energy? So that's one, that's an important question I ask myself. Is this going to increase or decrease my energy? And generally speaking, if I feel that it's going to decrease my energy, I really have to question whether it's something I want to get involved in or not. If it's going to increase my energy, that's a really positive sign. So at this point in time, it's a pretty simple process if I use that reasoning. If it decreases my energy I don't want anything to do with it. There are times when you have to do something that you know is going to tax your energy, and you can go into those situations as long as you are aware of that and protect yourself by getting in, doing what you have to do, and getting out, and then regenerating, replenishing yourself in some way.

Kristin stated she he is able to enter higher states of consciousness at will and receives intuition both inside and outside meditation. Her intuition manifests in multiple ways: visually, feelings, and audio, and knows her intuition is correct by the feeling that she feels from within. She also stated that she is able to sense others' thoughts and feelings. The intuitive guidance that she receives is both big-picture and step-by-step. She trusts her intuition implicitly, and intimated that this was something that had evolved over time.



She stated that she has seen both greater profits and ethics as a result of her meditation practice, and that in her there had been a significant personality change for the better. She stated

my income definitely has increased through my meditation process. Once again, I think it has a lot to do with the fact that I am living in a limitless attention as a result of that practice which opens up many more doorways and many more possibilities which are generally more lucrative if you're going in, if you're heading in that direction then you would experience otherwise. So yeah, it definitely did that.

She stated that intuition comes from the soul, God, and it has grown as a result of her meditation and listening to it.

### *Mary*

Mary is a married, Caucasian woman in her mid-40s. She is a professional, and works as a Director in a large city government department. She has developed her own style of meditation, and meditates daily.

Mary was interviewed in her home. We began the interview by first going over the Informed Consent Form that she had signed for the survey.

Mary began meditating in 1980 as an outgrowth of doing some therapy. Her therapist had told her that she

needed to learn to sit still. I was like a spring wound too tight. And so she suggested that I try meditation and she said just try sitting and relaxing. I had a very difficult time with that at the beginning, and then I just started to rely on it to calm down and feel like I had a better handle on things and really start to trust myself again, because one of the things I found was that I was relying on my husband [for] the psychologist perspective of things rather than my own, and so when I got back in touch with myself through meditation, it helped me to really get in touch with my own perspective and then be able to state more clearly how I felt about things to him and to myself and be more honest. So it just helped overall in my whole perception change.

Mary very strongly believes in the usefulness of meditation for problem-solving. An intuitive decision-maker, she nearly solely relies on her intuition to guide her most important decisions. Her decision-making process is

1. Problem
2. Meditate / HSC
3. Ask for guidance
4. Receive intuition
5. Act

Describing her decision-making process, she stated,

I sit at the center and then tune into my emotions and the feelings that I'm having about something and have a sense of what is the issue is—what I need to focus on. That's where I see the emotions coming into play, and sometimes I need to tune into my body and see where I'm tight and that will help me go specifically to what emotion is that's connected to whatever that tightness is or the fear or whatever. I will then try to get any mental imagery about what it is or a thought and that's where my mind comes in and then I will try to trace the thread . . . it's almost like a spelunker going down into the depths of my being, of what it is that is the root cause and what is the root knowingness that I need to have about this particular situation. That feels to me like a spiritual knowingness that's tapping into the intuition, and that's the part that actually gives me the answers or the knowingness of what it is that I need to do and either the mind, the emotions or the body.

Mary stated she he is able to enter higher states of consciousness at will and receives intuition both inside and outside meditation. (Note: for the entire interview, I was in a higher consciousness state of bliss, and awoke the next morning in that same state of bliss.) Her intuition manifests in multiple ways: visually, feelings, and audio, and she knows her intuition is correct by the feeling that she feels from within. She also

stated that she is able to sense others' thoughts and feelings. The intuitive guidance that she receives was both big-picture and step-by-step. She trusts her intuition implicitly.

She stated that she has seen both greater profits and ethics as a result of her meditation practice, and that in her there has been a significant personality change for the better.

She stated that intuition comes from the soul, God, and that it has grown as a result of her meditation and listening to it.

### *Rachel*

Rachel is a single, Caucasian woman in her early-40s. She is a business owner and consultant, working in training and human resources. She has owned her own business for more than 15 years. She is a practicing Vipassana Buddhist, and meditates daily.

Rachel was interviewed in this researcher's office. We began the interview by first going over the Informed Consent Form that she had signed for the survey.

Rachel began meditating consciously in 1981 because she was in so much pain emotionally and psychologically as a result of growing up with an alcoholic father and a rageaholic mother.

Rachel very strongly believes in the usefulness of meditation for problem-solving. An intuitive decision-maker, she describes making her business decisions solely through the use of meditation, and is learning to do this with her personal life. Her decision-making process is

1. Problem
2. Meditate / HSC
3. Ask for guidance
4. Receive intuition
5. Act

When asked about her decision-making process, she stated,

Well, this is what happens. It's not like I go into a question into my meditation. I know some people do that. But I almost become like a finely tuned being about decisions, because my mind's much more quiet. So I have absolute body sensations. My intuition is clear as a whistle.

Rachel stated she he is able to enter higher states of consciousness at will, both in and outside of meditation, and receives intuition only outside of her meditations. Her intuition manifests through feelings and thoughts, and knows her intuition is correct by the feeling that she feels from within. She also stated that she is able to sense others' thoughts and feelings. The intuitive guidance that she receives is both big-picture and step-by-step. She trusts her intuition implicitly from a business perspective, and is learning to do so from a personal perspective.

She stated that she has seen both greater profits and ethics as a result of her meditation practice, and that in her there had been a significant personality change for the better.

She stated that intuition comes from the soul, God, and that it has grown as a result of her meditation and listening to it.

*Samuel*

Samuel is a single, Caucasian male in his late-50s. He is a professional, working in the mental health field in prison systems at the Director level. He practices Kundalini yoga, and meditates once or twice daily.

Samuel was interviewed in his home. We began the interview by first going over the Informed Consent Form that he had signed for the survey.

Samuel began meditating in 1975 because he had an eye tic and a muscle spasm in his neck. At the recommendation of a friend, he began to meditate because “I didn’t want to go the doctor and spend \$200 and be prescribed valium . . . 3 weeks later, no muscle spasm and no eye tic.”

Samuel very strongly believes in the usefulness of meditation for problem-solving. He described an instance in which he used his meditation to assist in the development of one of his programs, along with some of the benefits that others received through his practice.

[People] tell me they always feel calmer in my presence. They can trust me faster. I worked in setting up a [mental health] unit in California prison. First time we were there I read every article I could find on treatment at prisons. And when I designed the program it got accepted. They said ok, we’ll give you 88 guys and one third are Cripps gang members and one third are neo-Nazi skinheads and one third are Mexican mafia. See if you can do something with that group, hmm? When I walked into the unit and they said, “Hey man, where’s your magic carpet? You got an elephant in the bathroom?” [He is a Sikh.] I just flowed with that. We created one of the best programs they had ever seen in the state prison system. Now, I thought that that was a fluke until I worked for another organization, created the same thing and then I created the same thing with the men I work with now.

A rational-intuitive decision-maker, he uses his meditative techniques to assist in his problem solving. His decision-making process is

1. Problem
2. Analyze problem
3. Meditate / HSC
4. Ask for guidance
5. Receive intuition
6. Look at impact of decision
7. Act

Describing his decision-making process following a particularly difficult event in his life, he stated,

Well there were all three parts to that. I wrote a letter to my spiritual teacher and but what I did personally is I increased my spiritual practices both frequency of meditations and length of meditations. I changed my diet and I focus on the positive outcome of why this is happening and then trust the Universe that it would have a good outcome so there were many processes involved (and everything is coming out fine).

Samuel stated he is able to enter higher states of consciousness at will, and receives intuition both in and outside meditation. His intuition manifests primarily through thoughts, feelings, and visual, and his confirmation of his intuition is both internal and external. The intuitive guidance that he receives is both big-picture and step-by-step. He fully trusts his intuition, and has used it in making the largest decisions of his life.

He stated that he attributes greater profits and ethics to his meditation practice, as well as many other benefits.

He stated that intuition comes from both the soul, God, and attributed the growth of his intuition to his meditation and listening to it.

*Scott*

Scott is a married, Caucasian male in his late-40s. He is a Senior Manager, working as consultant in the defense industry. He practices Transcendental Meditation, and meditates once daily.

Scott was interviewed via the telephone. We began the interview by first going over the Informed Consent Form that he had signed for the survey.

Scott began meditating in 1990 because he was having difficulties in his job, and he felt that he needed some focus and direction. His wife had started meditating some time before, and had had positive results with it, so he decided that he would try it also.

Scott very strongly believes in the usefulness of meditation for problem-solving. An intuitive-rational decision-maker, he makes his difficult decisions predominately with intuition. His decision-making process is

1. Problem
2. Analyze problem
3. Ask for guidance
4. Meditate / HSC
5. Ask for guidance
6. Intuition
7. Act

He described a difficult situation at work and how he used his meditation to help resolve it.

my boss came to me and he had all these things that had to be done and they had to be done right after lunch so I came home and I was just completely frazzled because I had no idea how I could possibly do it, and my wife says why don't you just go out in the car and go meditate

somewhere. So I drove the car down to this quiet place and just sat there and meditated, and when I got back to the office two of the things he told me had to be done all of a sudden it turned out they didn't need to be done and the third thing was very straightforward. I was able to do it immediately. So, you know, it convinced me that it really was a valuable practice to be able to, especially when I was all upset or I was all frazzled about something to just go meditate and then when I would come out of it, I would be much more able to handle the situation.

Scott stated he is able to enter higher states of consciousness at will and receives intuition both inside and outside meditation. His intuition manifests primarily through feelings and thoughts, and confirmation of his intuition is both internal and external. The intuitive guidance that he receives is both big-picture and step-by-step.

He stated that he attributes greater profits and ethics to his meditation practice, as well as many other benefits.

He stated that intuition comes from both the soul, God, and attributes the growth of his intuition to his meditation and listening to it.

### *Walter*

Walter is a single, Caucasian male in his mid-50s. He is an author, retreat leader, and practicing Christian minister and monk. He practices Christian Meditation, i.e., Centering Prayer, and meditates twice daily.

Walter was interviewed via the telephone. We began the interview by first going over the Informed Consent Form that he had signed for the survey.

Walter began meditating in 1973 on the advice of his spiritual teacher.

He very strongly believes in the usefulness of meditation for problem-solving. An intuitive decision-maker, he nearly solely uses his intuition to make his most important decisions. His decision-making process is



1. Problem
2. Meditate / HSC
3. Ask for guidance
4. Receive intuition
5. Act

He described the writing of his dissertation and his use of meditation and higher states of consciousness to complete it.

I remember having some difficulty getting stuck in my doctoral dissertation when I was in the monastery in New Hampshire. I was going to be in the seminary in the fall and I had to finish the doctorate, and so I had written three or four chapters of what was to be seven, and I just couldn't figure out how to bring it all together. So I . . . following my meditation, I went for a walk and had a walking meditation and I just asked the Holy Spirit to show me how it comes together and within 30 seconds of asking, it all came together and it was shown to me how it came together. I ran home and made a slew of notes and then followed those notes for the rest of the dissertation; it turned out superb.

Walter stated he is able to enter higher states of consciousness at will and receives intuition both inside and outside meditation. His intuition manifests primarily through feelings, thoughts, and visual, and confirmation of his intuition is both internal and external. The intuitive guidance that he receives is both big-picture and step-by-step.

He stated that he attributed greater profits and ethics to his meditation practice, as well as many other benefits.

He stated that intuition comes from both the soul, God, and attributes its growth to his meditation and listening to it.

*William*

William is a single, Caucasian male in his early-40s. He is a business owner, working as a consultant for profit and nonprofit businesses. He practices Buddhist and Diamond meditations, and meditates once daily. He described his practice as

an original arising of a teaching that integrates ancient Western philosophy, particularly sort of Socratic or post-Socratic practices, particularly the practice of inquiry and spiritual practices from Sufi to Buddhism to Christianity to anything that touches the core of life to depth psychology.

William was interviewed at his home. We began the interview by first going over the Informed Consent Form that he had signed for the survey.

William began meditating in 1978 while in university for spiritual reasons through his beginning yoga postures at the suggestion of his then girlfriend. He had been doing deep exploration of the Third Reich, and had achieved a very deep opening into his pain and that of the era which “forced” him into pursuing a deeper spiritual practice.

William very strongly believes in the usefulness of meditation for problem-solving, coupled with his ‘Diamond Approach’ inquiry into the exploration of Truth. An intuitive-rational decision-maker, he makes his difficult decisions predominately with knowing through intuition. His decision-making process is

1. Problem
2. Analyze problem
3. Meditate / HSC
4. Ask for guidance
5. Use intuition as part of inquiry
6. Act

He described a difficult situation at work and how he used his meditation to help resolve it.

my experience is not that of like a voice telling me go right or go left. One of my ways of dealing with decisions and practices is I would think about something very precisely and weigh the various alternatives and write them down and I'd be very specific and analytic. And then I would lie down, and I would hold the question and the options in my inner field of awareness, and I would just sense them directly, and as I sense the reality of these options, they will inform me what to choose. And I can see that the quality of my decision has a lot to do with the quality of my spaciousness and my depths of content, and its still might be doubted by my mind, but it's not necessarily that it resolves all doubt. But at that level of depth, I'm clear, and there's a sense of harmony and clarity and rightness.

William stated he is able to enter higher states of consciousness at will and receives intuition both inside and outside meditation. His intuition manifests primarily through feelings and thoughts, and confirmation of his intuition is both internal and external. The intuitive guidance that he receives is both big-picture and step-by-step.

He stated that he attributes greater profits and ethics to his meditation practice, as well as many other benefits.

He stated that intuition comes from both the soul, God, and attributed the growth of his intuition to his meditation, listening to it, and his practice of inquiry.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of this study. The major and minor themes of the study are presented, along with supporting quantitative and qualitative analysis and findings. As part of this analysis, themes that were unique to individual respondents are presented, as well as a comparison of the Phase 2 interviews to the survey data that were collected in Phase 1 for similarities, differences, and trends. So as to protect participants' confidentiality, pseudonyms have been used in place of actual names.

#### Major Themes

There were five major themes that directly correlated to the six research questions. They were:

1. Respondents' perceived use of meditation and intuition in decision-making,
2. Respondents' perceived benefits of meditation that impact decision-making,
3. Respondents' perceived effects of meditation on profits,
4. Respondents' perceived effects of meditation on ethics, and
5. Respondents' beliefs on the origin and training of intuition.

## Theme 1: Use of Meditation and Intuition in Decision-Making

Question #1. How do executive meditators report using their meditation and intuition in their decision-making? How do they describe their decision-making processes?

My findings with respect to the uses of meditation and intuition in decision-making were, in a word, remarkable. Through analysis of the 15 interviews, corroborated with the survey data, a relatively clear picture of how executive meditators make decisions was found, enabling the development of a model for decision-making using meditation as a technique to access higher states of consciousness and enable intuition.

In this section, the decision-making processes of the interviewees are presented, along with the role meditation, intuition, and higher states of consciousness play in their decision-making processes; the intuitional cues, both positive and negative, that they use in decision-making, and how they distinguish between true and false intuitional guidance; their techniques for accessing their intuition; the role environment plays in their ability to access their intuition; and the results when they made decisions that went against their intuition.

Appendix H summarizes the 15 interviewees' decision-making styles.

### *Decision-Making Model*

Not surprisingly, the decision-making styles of the interviewees were strongly weighted toward intuitive. Based on their reported decision-making processes and the subsequent narrative analysis, 6 of 15 interviewees were deemed to be intuitional decision-makers, using their intuition nearly exclusively in decision-making process; 6 of 15 combined the use of intuitive and rational techniques but were predominately intuitive in their decision-making process; and the remaining 3 of 15 interviewees combined intuitive and rational techniques, but were predominantly rational in their decision-making process.

Based on data collected from the 15 interviews, the decision-making process used by executive meditators entailed the following seven steps; the one significant difference was regarding the use of rational thinking in the model which is discussed below. Besides this one point, their decision-making processes varied surprisingly little.

One note of caution in applying this model. These steps happen simultaneously or nearly simultaneously, necessitating an artificial separation and categorization of the steps. This categorization is a difficult and complex task, and as a result, many of the intuitional cues, tools for accessing intuition, and processes are grouped in categories other than what one might expect intuitionally.

Table 21 summarizes the decision-making model developed from the decision-making processes of the 15 executive mediator interviewees.

Table 21

*Reported Decision-Making Model of Executive Meditators*

- 
1. Identification of the problem or goal
  2. Analysis of the problem \*
  3. Meditate to access Higher States of Consciousness
  4. Ask for guidance from God / Higher Power / Self / Universe / Higher Truth
  5. Receiving intuitional guidance.
  6. Examine guidance for validity, options, and / or impact of decision \*
  7. Implement decision
- 

\* Steps optional depending on user's decision-making style

Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 follow the basic decision-making model as depicted above; the utilization of steps two and six are dependent upon whether or not the interviewee is predominantly an intuitive or combination rational-intuitive decision-maker. Of note, these steps were presented to and verified by a statistically significant number of the interviewees. Alexis spelled out her process which is representative of the model.

if I can take my mind off the problem, number one, it's turning the problem over to God, just surrendering it. To make a decision, look at all of the options, eliminate the ones that don't seem to be too logical, offer it up, surrender it, meditate. Put your mind on the techniques, and when you get back (to the problem, the answer) is clear as a bell. It frequently will be very clear. And if not, when you finish meditating, shortly thereafter.

Rachel stated

It's not like I go into a question into my meditation. I know some people do that. But I, become like a finely tuned being about decisions, because of this, because my mind's much more quiet. So I have absolute body sensations. My intuition is clear as a whistle (which is a byproduct of meditation).

There are nuances to the basic model. For instance, as a general rule, intuition plays a large part in each decision-making process; however, when intuition is used, i.e., at the beginning, end, or throughout the process, is dependent on both the situation and the decision-maker.

The following is an explanation of the individual steps.

#### *Identification of the Problem or Goal*

Problems, challenges in life, or goals come up in many ways. Interviewees related many problems or goals that they had solved or accomplished in the different facets of their professional and personal lives; however, one frequent theme was their use of intuition to resolve personnel (people) issues. Many of the interviewees stated they use their intuitional processes, including their ability to access higher states of consciousness, for the purposes of making personnel decisions, especially in the areas of employment (hiring or firing).

#### *Analysis of the Problem*

Most interviewees, whether they stated it explicitly or not, perform some initial analysis of the problem as a tool to facilitate access to their intuition. These tools are both rational and intuitive, and include affirmations, making lists, brainstorming,



reviewing the options, training one's inner voice, physical exercise, visualization, or other techniques. The interviewees confirmed using a number of these techniques, and all use more than one technique. Their belief is that intuition is always present, and that these techniques are used to enable them to detach from the situation, thus allowing clearer access to their intuition.

For instance, intuitive-rational decision-makers such as Alexis use a task such as making lists of potential options, and eliminating those that are obvious, for her initial analysis. For others, as was the case for Corrine, this step happens nearly simultaneously with accessing HSCs.

Pure intuitives such as Rachel stated they do no conscious analysis; her process is that when she needs to make a decision, she immediately accesses a HSC and intuits the correct course of action / decision.

Rational intuitives such as David stated that he must go through his full process, i.e., rational analysis, in order to make decisions, and indicated that were he not to go through the process, he believed that he would not be able to make the decision using his intuition.

#### *Using Meditation and Other Tools to Access Higher States of Consciousness*

From an Eastern perspective, the primary reason for meditation is to increase one's attunement with God / Guru / Spirit / Universe, and in this process of meditation comes an accessing of higher states of consciousness necessary for attunement. As part of this process, the mind is quieted and detachment is gained from the decision, allowing one to access their true intuition.(Vaughan, 1979; Yogananda, 1995).

In accessing higher states of consciousness, or, as some participants such as Corrine stated “normal” or “meditative states of consciousness,” the conscious, rational mind is quieted and a sense of detachment is gained from the decision, allowing one to access or recognize intuitive guidance. Quoting Thomas Keating who is his teacher, William stated “our inner spiritual senses are activated through meditation practice. We become more attuned to that Reality, and there isn’t a need even for words in relationship with this because it’s all very clear, just from directly unmediated Spirit.”

Meditation was cited as the most significant way executive meditators access their intuition. Of the population surveyed, 82% ( $N = 100$ ), including all 15 of 15 interviewees, reported using meditation as a tool for accessing or utilizing their intuition more effectively. This is significant in light of Yogananda (1925e) and Vaughan (1979), who stated that intuition is best accessed and trained through meditation; when one can access their intuition, it opens up to them a better and more holistic way of decision-making.

Corrine stated that “I have tools and techniques and it’s about a certain kind of self talk. It’s about meditating to take yourself out of that anxiety place so that you can think straight, and then just trust.”

Walter stated that “Thomas Keating [told me that] our inner spiritual senses are activated through meditation practice. We become more attuned to that Reality and there is no need even for words in relationship with this because it’s all very clear.”

Jeffrey stated that

What I would normally do is I would meditate when a problem or situation is upsetting me enough that I’m no longer feeling connected to my spiritual self and I will go reconnect myself, address the issue with my spiritual self and then go and try with a renewed energy to deal with it.

I'll give you an example. Let's say someone wants to sue me over something, and it disturbs me because I don't believe in that. What I do is I'll meditate and I'll ask for help and then sometimes, rather quickly someone calls up and you talk to them. Oh, I had that problem and here's how I dealt with it and it worked out wonderfully. So the result doesn't come to me internally in the meditation. It comes to me in the course of activity, almost always.

Edward explained how he uses his meditation and higher states of consciousness to access his intuition.

Closing my eyes and breathing into the issue so whatever the question is, just holding a question as an object of meditation, and allowing it to be literally an object which emanates, has an emanation of the senses or the spirit perhaps. So I might have a question or a challenge, and by holding it in my mind as an object it has it's own vibration. It has its own life force, and it begins to emanate clues, signals, insights and (if I get really stuck) I use Tarot cards or the I Ching, the I Ching first and Tarot cards second. I find that those are both comprehensive more than how they're very stimulating to my own intuitive input and insight. Patience and cogitating, being patient, holding it, and being present with it, Patience is the key for me. You know rather than rushing to a conclusion or closure. There's a part of me that wants results. There is a wiser part of me that knows that there's a process to be had and I can't force a process.

As a general rule, interviewees reported taking their larger problems into meditation, and, following their interiorization process, asking for guidance on their resolution. However, all interviewees reported the ability to access these HSCs outside meditation and use them to access their intuition for making smaller, or moment to moment decisions.

#### *Accessing HSCs Outside Meditation*

Interviewees reported accessing HSCs both in and outside meditation, and all interviewees reported having access to HSCs at will; some called it centering, others

becoming calm, others yet described it as entering a meditative state. This is important in making everyday decisions outside of normal meditation periods.

Samuel stated that he frequently goes into a HSC when receiving intuitive guidance.

Jeremy stated that raising one's consciousness is important in decision-making because frequently we do not know the bigger picture, and raising our consciousness is critical for seeing the larger picture.

Edward said that "meditation is where I'm most tuned out of my ego state, this discursive internal conversation and most amenable to information from a different Source than my thinking source."

Jeremy stated that when he is making a decision, he is coming from a higher state of consciousness.

If we say that our soul consciousness that takes into account an ever-expanding wholeness and everyone in that wholeness as core to the process, as opposed to ego [consciousness] wanting its own little agenda regardless of what the needs are of others, to take it to the other extreme it might be, I think it's a no-brainer.

Regardless of the language, each is lifting their consciousness to a plane higher than normal waking consciousness so as to gain better access to their intuition.

### *Meditating on God or the Problem*

Executive meditators, as a general rule, reported that they do not meditate on their problems. Rather, in all cases, 15 of 15 interviewees stated that the object of their meditation is God / Universe / Higher Truth, and that the intuitive answers come from meditating on God. However, one interviewee, Samuel, stated that on occasion, he goes

into meditation specifically to solve a problem and does not focus on God but on the problem. He did not indicate as to whether or not the results are any different than when meditating on Spirit.

*Other Tools for Accessing Intuition*

*Listening to and Training Their Internal Voice.* Sixty-five percent of participants ( $N = 100$ ), including 11 of the 15 interviewees, reported using listening to their internal voice as a tool for accessing or utilizing their intuition more effectively. This is significant in light of Yogananda (1925e), who stated that intuition is the “still small voice” within you, the voice of God within. When one listens to their Self, their intuition is flawless as is their decision-making.

Mary stated that she went through a process called voice dialogue, which was the process of giving voice to each of the inner voices that “were chattering away.”

I was able to very clearly separate out which voice was which, what it’s underlying gift was to me, making my contracts with that particular voice to assist me in a different way that was helpful, and in doing that, it calmed down the inner parts of myself. I did that process extensively for 2 or 3 years. The first time I said, “Oh gosh, is this ever going to end?” What happened in the process was that I started realizing that it was easy to get to my calm center and listen to the inner part of myself, and that all of these other pieces didn’t have to chatter away at me because I was willing to listen to them and get what they were saying, and the value that came from it.

*Calm mind.* Forty-eight percent of participants ( $N = 100$ ), including 11 of 15 interviewees, reported using calming their mind as a tool for accessing or utilizing their intuition more effectively. None of the interviewees commented specifically upon using a calm mind as a tool for accessing or utilizing their intuition; however, each commented

upon using meditation and / or other techniques which calm the mind to access their intuition.

Review Options. Forty-five percent of participants ( $N = 100$ ), including 12 of 15 interviewees, reported using reviewing all the options as a tool for accessing or utilizing their intuition more effectively.

Visualization. Forty-five percent of participants ( $N = 100$ ), including 9 of 15 interviewees, reported using visualization as a tool for accessing or utilizing their intuition more effectively. This is significant in light of Yogananda (1925e) and Vaughan (1979), who stated that visualization is a way to access one's intuition, and is key in intuitional decision-making.

Samuel uses a combination positive thinking and visualization as part of his techniques to access his intuition.

I'll also focus on the positive so it's like tapping in a core guide, your attitude and gratitude. It's a mental focus on what you want, not what you do not want, not what you do not have. It's a positive attitude towards life and a visualization of what you want and how it'll come to be.

Brainstorm. Thirty-three percent of participants ( $N = 100$ ), including 7 of 15 interviewees, reported using brainstorming as a tool for accessing or utilizing their intuition more effectively.

Make a List. Thirty-three percent of participants ( $N = 100$ ), including 4 of 15 interviewees, reported using the task of making lists as a tool for accessing or utilizing their intuition more effectively. This is significant in light of Yogananda (1925e), who stated that making a list is part of one of the techniques for accessing intuition.

Scott uses list making as a tool for accessing his intuition. Scott stated that "There have been other times when I have actually written down questions before I go

into meditation. And then, during the meditation, there may be some answers that come to those questions or they may come later.”

*Affirmations.* Thirty percent of participants ( $N = 100$ ) reported using affirmations as a tool for accessing or utilizing their intuition more effectively, including 5 of 15 interviewees. According to Yogananda (1981), affirmations are a form of visualization that have been proven effective in changing the patterning of one’s subconscious mind and thus eliminating unwanted or unconscious biases which is critical for intuitional decision-making.

*Physical Exercise.* Twenty-three percent of participants ( $N = 100$ ), including 1 of 15 interviewees, reported using physical exercise as a tool for accessing or utilizing their intuition more effectively.

*Other Tools.* Sixteen percent of participants ( $N = 100$ ), including 3 of 15 interviewees, reported using something other than the above tools for accessing or utilizing their intuition more effectively. These include kinesiology, using a pendulum, allowing time for intuition to manifest, tapping into the “energy” of the situation, using the I Ching, gathering more information, releasing pent up emotional energy, prayer, breathing techniques, taking a hot bath, and talking about it with someone (two occurrences).

Heightened awareness of one’s intuition can come from the use of a pendulum, kinesiology, or other spiritual tools such as the I Ching. Emily stated that she used a pendulum or kinesiology to access her intuition. Edward and Kristin said they use the I Ching for assistance in particularly difficult decisions.

Anecdotal comments include Kristin, who stated that she uses the techniques that she has learned in meditation for accessing her intuition, but in particularly difficult decisions she uses the I Ching. She said,

The I Ching is wonderful for me because it's so close to what the voice of my intuition sounds like that I'm very comfortable with the advice it gives. If I've been very good about being very clear about my question, it's not a yes or no type of answer question, but it's looking for direction, usually I get a really spot-on answer from I Ching. If I haven't done a good job with my question I get a garbage answer. I know it's garbage because it doesn't ring true. It doesn't feel right and so forth. So that's something that I use when I'm having a difficult time. It helps point me in the same direction as if I were to get very still and I was very detached regarding the situation that I would get to by just listening to my intuition.

*Do Not Use Any Particular Technique.* Six percent of participants ( $N = 100$ ) reported not using any technique or tool for accessing or utilizing their intuition more effectively.

#### *Asking for Guidance*

The process of asking for guidance from God / Guru / Higher Power / Universe serves multiple purposes which were reported as necessary for accessing one's intuition. It enables the alignment of one's purpose with the Higher Purpose, which entails surrendering one's smaller desires and attachments for a specific outcome to God and His higher purpose. Through this process of surrender comes attunement to Consciousness, God, the Source of intuition.

This step was reported as critical for all but one interviewee, and the sense that I had was that this was merely unstated.

Seventy-three percent of participants ( $N = 100$ ), including 14 of 15 interviewees, reported asking God / Spirit / Higher Power for help or guidance as a tool for accessing



or utilizing their intuition more effectively. This is significant in light of Ponder (1987), Yogananda (1925e), and Thurman (1963), who wrote about the power of prayer, i.e., asking for help or guidance, which is a key step in decision-making.

Representative of the group, Jeffrey stated that

My tendency is not to discuss or to try to figure out the course of action. My tendency is to ask (God) for help, partnering, or surrendering. An example of this is at work if there is, let's say currently at work there's a problem with certain individuals and their personalities, and it just seems to be discordant. What I will do is I will ask God to help in this situation by taking control of it instead of trying to figure out with my mind what should I be doing? How should I be doing this? I will try to just surrender and say, "God, I really can't deal with this. I'm not being effective. I want You to take over the situation." And I'll keep revalidating that situation. If I do that with concentration and clarity, it's worked 100% of the time. A big burden is lifted off of me and resolution of some sort materializes in the circumstance.

Walter stated that he received the inspiration for a book that he wrote as a result of dedicating it to God.

The inspiration began the moment I consecrated the book to God, the Divine Reality, and for the benefit of all ascended beings. The inspiration came palpably within 30 seconds of making that intention. And then often from meditation, I would get an insight that needed to be in this chapter or that chapter or whatever, you know? But the whole book was written from an inspired state.

Edward was the only neutral in asking God for help or assistance as a technique for accessing his intuition. He stated that his technique is to detach himself emotionally and mentally from his problems, and place himself in the Void, i.e., God, and that the answer becomes clear as it rises above the energy, e.g., emotions, of the situation.

Whereas this is not technically asking God for help, there is a spiritual overtone to the process; hence a neutral.

### *Receiving Intuitional Guidance*

Intuitional guidance was reportedly received either in or of outside meditation. Of note, all interviewees reported they are in HSCs when receiving true intuition. Twelve of 15 interviewees reported receiving intuitive guidance both in and outside of their meditation, and 3 of 15 reported receiving guidance only outside of their meditations.

In receiving guidance, all 15 interviewees stated that they received step-by-step guidance. Twelve of 15 interviewees stated they received both step-by-step and big picture guidance, and 3 of 15 stated they received only step-by-step guidance.

Mary reported receiving both big picture and situation; however, in this case following a near tragedy in her family, she was guided step-by-step. She stated

I'm just going to get through this big clump of a transition and then I'll deal with things as they come. But even so, I felt like I wasn't getting the guidance. It was coming to me, but it was coming to me in a different way I guess. It was coming as ok, what's the next step that I need to do right in front of me. Ok, go unpack this box and go put it up in the cabinet. It wasn't these deep wonderful thoughts you know, kind of inside out. It was very practical step-by-step stuff and I don't like that. It's not as fun. Sometimes it's this wonderful, philosophical yes, I understand the meaning.

However, most all interviewees reported that in most large decisions, intuitional guidance did not come all at once. They stated that frequently this process would go on over the course of days, or, in some cases, a period of months or years, but that they were guided each step of the process.

Executive meditators reported that their intuition manifests, i.e., comes into their conscious awareness, so as to guide them in their decision-making process in many ways. These includes physical, including high energy, and bodily and inner "gut feelings";

feelings (in opposition to emotions), including “inner feelings,” peace, calmness, and joy; visual, including visions, graphics, dreams, words spelled out, or future events; audio, including intuitive hearing, i.e., a Voice that is heard through the consciousness but cannot be mistaken for inner self-talk and not heard by others in the immediate vicinity; and intuitive knowing, including inner knowing, direction, or guidance to be open to the process as the right answer may come from someone other than ourselves. All interviewees reported receiving some type of these cues, and were very clear that the source of the intuitional guidance was spiritual in nature; i.e., Self / Soul / God / Spirit / Higher Power / Universe / Atman; the various names of God. This concurs with Yogananda’s (1995) (1925e) descriptions of intuition, its origins, and the various ways it manifests.

For discussion purposes, intuition has been categorized as positive or negative, i.e., positive in that the subject is going in the correct direction, or that it is a vision of a future event, and negative in that they are proceeding in the wrong direction or that it is not the correct time to make the decision. However, no value judgment should be placed on them as a result of their labeling; they are merely labels, nothing more.

#### *Positive Intuitional Cues*

*Inner Feelings.* “Inner feelings” were cited by 74% of participants ( $N = 100$ ) as the most frequent positive cue they receive when heading in the right direction with a decision; 100% of interviewees (15 of 15) stated that they receive inner feelings as a positive intuitional cue. Included in inner feelings are “otherworldly” peace, joy, and calmness. Some described the feeling as a “whole body feeling,” others stated that it was

centralized in the gut, i.e., the region of the solar plexus in the body. Vaughan (1979) referred to this as an emotional manifestation of intuition, or what is commonly called “women’s intuition.”

Jeremy stated “the awareness of God within, which for me is a feeling, it's a vibration, it's a high calming, knowing that it's God manifesting in this vibration within me.”

Interviewees such as Jeffrey and David monitor their feelings of peace, calmness, and joy to ascertain the correct decision. Jeffrey stated that these feelings are

very palpable physiological, mental, emotional states that are different than normal consciousness or a normal state of being. You know that you're being aided and you know that you're walking down the right road in a situation by the manifestation of otherworldly peace, calmness and joy.

Alexis described them as “a full body intuitive gut-level feeling. There's no excitement with it, it's just an earthy feeling; it's not emotional. You know it's right.”

*Awareness or Insights.* Sudden awareness or insights were cited by 72% of participants ( $N = 100$ ) as the second most frequent positive cue they receive when heading in the right direction with a decision; 100% of interviewees (15 of 15) stated that they receive sudden awareness or insights into the particular situations that they are facing. Vaughan (1979) described these as mental manifestations of intuition.

Corrine, in describing her moving back to California, described it “as though there was a rope around me pulling [me back].” In another passage, she stated that when she knew her decision was right she felt an “energetic whoosh [that] felt as though the tumblers of a lock had fallen into place.”

Knowing. “Knowing” was cited by 66% of participants ( $N = 100$ ) as the third most frequent positive cue they receive when heading in the right direction with a decision; 47% of interviewees (7 of 15) stated that they “just knew” when guidance was right. Vaughan (1979) referred to this a mental manifestation of intuitive guidance.

William explained knowing very eloquently.

There’s intellectual knowing [that is] scientific knowing which really knows nothing because it doesn’t feel confident in its knowing. It needs a structure to prop itself up, and it might be true within a certain paradigm, but it doesn’t have in itself direct [Truth], and so you could call that intellectual knowing. But there is a direct knowing, which, when you are knowing something directly [from God], *you know it*. The knowing is so full and so . . . it’s a Presence, and it comes with such confidence and such clarity, that you just know.

Inner Voice. Inner voice was cited by 52% of participants ( $N = 100$ ) as the fourth most frequent positive cue they receive when heading in the right direction with a decision; 33% of interviewees, (5 of 15) stated that they have “heard” an inner voice as a positive intuitional cue. Vaughan (1979) referred to this a mental manifestation of intuitive guidance; however, this is direct knowing, i.e., God talking directly with you, which is more readily explained by spiritual literatures such as Yogananda (1995).

Corrine related a story about direct Guidance.

I was in Hawaii with my kids on the beach. My son was in the water and my daughter was playing next to me. She was 6 years old. It was my day off, and I had arranged myself on this mat with a radio and juice and a book and I had my head in the shade, my legs in the sun. I was in bliss when I heard this voice as loud as if someone were shouting in my ear. It said, “MOVE!” and I went, what was that? Did someone say something? And I just kept on and put the book back. MOVE! And it took three times. Usually it doesn’t come to me as a voice but it did and so I picked up everything. It actually was more like an inner voice now that I think about it, but it was loud. So I got, I picked up everything. I moved it all over on my blanket and put it all back and said, “Are you happy?” Just as I laid down I heard this huge thud and I looked over and I could see the indentation of where my head had been. It was now about a 30 pound

coconut lying there that had fallen at least 40 feet from the sky. Do you know there are about 60 people a year killed in Hawaii by falling coconuts? So something told me to get out of there but see, it doesn't say, it doesn't produce fear. My intuition doesn't say that's something bad is going to happen. It always affirms. MOVE!

Jeremy related a story about hearing direct Guidance.

I've had that a number of times, significant times in my life. Half a dozen times where it's like, somebody is inside your head and sometimes it could be so strong, and it's startling when the Divine actually speaks, unlike the times when you feel what is right, and you feel that thought and you get acknowledgement, a clear sense that this feels right on a more of a feeling level, not so much on a verbal level. But Spirit can express Itself infinitely, and sometimes strongly if It chooses to. I've had it more than once. Not as a regular thing, but from time to time I've gotten straight-on guidance.

*Physical or Bodily Sensations.* Bodily sensations were cited by 37% of participants ( $N = 100$ ) as a frequent positive cue they receive when heading in the right direction with a decision; 40% of interviewees (6 of 15) stated that they receive physical sensations as a positive intuitional cue. Many of the interviewees used the analogy of using the body as a radio to receive intuition. This concurs with Vaughan (1979) and Yogananda (1925e) on ways of sensing intuition.

Emily described an instance when her “guides” awoke her by physically shaking her shoulder while she was asleep to get her attention to give her guidance.

*Depth or Intensity of Experience.* Depth or intensity of experience was cited by 36% of participants ( $N = 100$ ) as a frequent positive cue they receive when heading in the right direction with a decision; 27% of interviewees (4 of 15) stated that depth or intensity of experience is a positive intuitional cue. Closely paralleling this, excitement or high energy was cited by 44% of respondents ( $N = 100$ ) as a frequent positive cue to positive intuitional guidance; 13% of interviewees (2 of 15) stated that they receive inner

feelings as intuitional guidance. Vaughan (1979) spoke of this in terms of physical manifestations of intuition.

Edward, when relating an experience of positive confirmation, stated that “it felt exciting.”

Visions. Visions and other mental manifestations were cited by 24% of participants ( $N = 100$ ) as a frequent positive cue they receive when heading in the right direction with a decision; 40% of interviewees (6 of 15) stated that they receive visions or other mental manifestations of intuition as a positive intuitional cue. Vaughan (1979) referred to this a mental manifestation of intuitive guidance.

Alexis related a story about receiving a combination of visual and feeling guidance during a time when she was out of work.

I frequently see someone in a black flowing, like a coat. It's changed from a long robe to more of a coat. But I see it's [Yogananda's] coat. I'm like a child when He hugs me, I now see He's much bigger. And He's not much bigger than I, I mean He wasn't 6 foot tall or anything, He was a small person. But I feel the tremendous warmth and acceptance and [a knowing that] everything will be okay. And I feel the arms around me. A feeling. Right now it's feeling, but I think it's the same, or could be the same, that gives the guidance. I do think it could be the same.

Walter related receiving guidance on completion of his dissertation.

the structure [of the dissertation] just it came my mind in such a way that I saw it like a realization. Then I ran home and wrote it all down in notes and then the notes are my guide to doing the rest of it and I did.

Mary related receiving symbolic visions to help her ascertain the correct decision.

She stated

I think I mentioned the one decision that was my most recent one in the survey that I gave you is that deciding to either stay at my old job in guidance services or go to the new one in planning. And I very, at first I was just sort of thinking that this planning thing was sort of at the periphery and just sort of bugging me because it kept kind of coming up

because I really didn't have a lot of interest in it but it kept nagging at me. It was kind of like tapping me on the shoulder saying 'look at this' and so in spite of myself I couldn't seem to ignore it, and I know well enough now that if I try to do that it just gets stronger until I pay attention. So I did some focused meditation on seeing the choices between staying or going to another job. When I saw staying at the old job I kept seeing steel doors coming down; in fact I saw a steel vault shutting. When I saw the new job it felt like it was open and light and I thought, "that's interesting," because it wasn't what I wanted at the conscious level.

Other participant responses from the survey of receiving intuitive guidance included sounds, absence of conflicting signals (either internal or external), or a clarity of the next step.

### *Negative Intuitional Cues*

*Lack of Conviction or Uncertainty.* Lack of conviction or uncertainty was cited by 74% of respondents ( $N = 100$ ) as the most frequent negative intuitional cue they receive when heading in a wrong direction with a decision; 100% of interviewees (15 of 15) stated that they have a lack of conviction or uncertainty as a negative intuitional cue.

Alexis stated that "It comes back to haunt me, or it comes back in my thoughts, or I don't have that good feeling even though the decision is made, and there's not a good feeling about it."

Emily stated that "it'll nibble at me. [The decision] will come back into my consciousness [as if to say] 'You're not done with me yet.'"

*Mixed Signals.* Mixed signals were cited by 61% of respondents ( $N = 100$ ) as the second most frequent negative intuitional cue they receive when heading in a wrong direction with a decision; 100% of interviewees (15 of 15) stated that they frequently have a mixed signals as a negative intuitional cue.



Anxious. Being anxious was cited by 58% of respondents ( $N = 100$ ) as the third most frequent negative intuitional cue they receive when heading in a wrong direction with a decision; 100% of interviewees (15 of 15) stated that they frequently have anxiety as a negative intuitional cue.

Regarding incorrect decisions, Edward stated that “I’m thinking that an incorrect decision is one that issues a sense of distress or anxiety.”

Negative Feelings or Depressed. Negative feelings or depression was cited by 40% of respondents ( $N = 100$ ) as the fourth most frequent negative intuitional cue they receive when heading in a wrong direction with a decision; however, 100% of interviewees (15 of 15) stated that they nearly always have negative feelings as a negative intuitional cue.

Jeffrey stated that “You usually feel an abrupt departure of the peace and the joy.” David stated that “there’s an uneasiness inside me that tells me right away when I’ve made a bad decision. I think I know a bad decision faster than I know a right decision.”

Physical Symptoms. Upset stomach or other physical symptoms were cited by 22% of respondents ( $N = 100$ ) as a frequent negative cue they receive when heading in a wrong direction with a decision; however, 100% of interviewees (15 of 15) stated that they frequently have negative physical symptoms as a negative intuitional cue.

Scott stated that “When I was trying to force myself into the other [wrong] decision, all kinds of things were coming up [and] I just [got] really, really upset and feeling physically uncomfortable.”

Edward stated that when he made a bad decision that “Everything in my body said don’t go there . . . just don’t do it. It’s going to turn out to be [wrong] . . .” and that

“There’s a heaviness in my body, a loss of energy, a regret. There’s a very strong sense in my gut and usually in my chest, usually a constriction or pressure in my stomach and chest that tells me that was a bad decision.”

Other anecdotal manifestations of negative intuitional cues included significant resistance to moving forward, negative visual or audio cues, an inner knowing, and external confirmation.

### *Sorting Out True Intuition from False*

Sorting out what is a true or a false intuition can be tricky, especially for new meditators who have not trained or developed their intuition adequately to recognize true intuitions from false intuitions. Vaughan (1979) stated that “intuition is true by nature. If a seemingly intuitive insight turns out to be wrong, it did not spring from intuition but from self-deception or wishful thinking” (p. 45). However, Yogananda (1925e) clearly stated that one should not be attached to outcomes, as what one intuits as the outcome may not at all be the correct outcome because God can change anything He wishes. This is critical for decision-making; one must know and act upon true intuitions to make good and holistic decisions.

Executive meditators used a variety of means for distinguishing between true and false intuition. Of note, interviewees reported that with longevity of meditation and usage, their intuition became more attuned, and they were better able to distinguish between true and false intuitions.

*Inner Feeling.* “Feels right,” or inner feelings, was the most frequently cited way executive meditators distinguish between true and false intuition; 87% of survey

respondents ( $N = 100$ ), including 15 of 15 interviewees, use inner feelings to discern between true and false intuition.

Anecdotal comments included Corrine, who stated that

True intuition for me is always affirmative. It never involves anybody else and it doesn't massage my ego in any way. It doesn't produce feelings of "ha ha ha I'm going to do this," and it doesn't ever kick up any fear. Whereas, if I just say "I think I'm going to do it" but get all kinds of other stuff around that [that] it's not right, you know, doubt, fear, [I know it is not true intuition]. With intuition there's no doubt. For me it's not a process. I don't wrestle with it. It's just there, whereas when I'm trying to do without intuition I'm wrestling.

David described it as "just a feeling. I really think it's just a feeling inside. I don't think you can describe it in intellectual terms."

Jeremy stated,

the way one proves that [it is a true intuition] is in a couple of ways. One, is there that complete sense of calmness and contentment about what's being revealed and an acceptance of that? And the other is, does it manifest?

Scott stated that "another indicator is the information that comes to me is something I couldn't possibly have dreamed up. It just fits, [and it] isn't what I would've thought or come to if I'd just used rational thinking or logic.

*Sleeping on Decisions.* "Sleeping on decisions" tied as the second most frequently cited way executive meditators distinguish between true and false intuition; 63% of survey respondents ( $N = 100$ ), including 60% (9 of 15) interviewees, reported using sleeping on a decision to discern between true and false intuition.

*External Proof.* External proof tied as the second most frequently cited way executive meditators distinguish between true and false intuition; 63% of survey

respondents ( $N = 100$ ), including 47% (7 of 15) interviewees, reported using external results to discern between true and false intuition.

*Inner Voice.* “Inner voice” was the fourth most frequently cited way executive meditators distinguish between true and false intuition; 61% of survey respondents ( $N = 100$ ), including 53% (8 of 15) interviewees, reported using external results to discern between true and false intuition.

*Mental Cues.* Mental cues was a frequently cited way executive meditators distinguish between true and false intuition; 42% of survey respondents ( $N = 100$ ), including 53% (8 of 15) interviewees, reported using mental cues to discern between true and false intuition.

*Physical Cues.* Physical cues was a frequently cited way executive meditators distinguish between true and false intuition; 37% of survey respondents ( $N = 100$ ), including 40% (6 of 15) interviewees, reported using physical cues to discern between true and false intuition.

*Check the Impact of the Decision.* Checking the impact of the decision was a frequently cited way executive meditators distinguish between true and false intuition; 23% of survey respondents ( $N = 100$ ), including 33% (5 of 15) interviewees, reported using checking the impact of the decision to discern between true and false intuition.

#### *Factors that Influence Intuition*

Factors that influence one’s intuitive guidance can be categorized two ways: those that positively influence one’s ability to access their intuition, and those that impede one’s ability to access their intuition.

Factors Assisting Intuition Access. There was strong consensus that there are many factors that assist one in accessing their intuition. These varied from maintaining inner peace; non-attachment to outcomes and results; trusting one's intuition; meditation; maintaining spiritual company; remaining emotionally detached; and a positive attitude that included tenacity, faith, being open to the process, a long-term view on life, and surrender. Of the 15 interviewees, 14 discussed factors which assist them in accessing their intuition.

Inner Calmness. Inner calmness was the most frequently cited reason by interviewees as a positive factor contributing to their accessing their intuition; 100% of the 14 interviewees (14 of 14) stated that calmness is important. Although all meditate for spiritual reasons, this inner calmness is one of the results of their meditative practices that enables them to access their intuition. This finding concurs with Yogananda (1995) and Vaughan (1979), that inner calmness is critical to accessing intuition.

Corrine stated that

In order to live here without losing your sanity and retaining a sense of love and an ability to express it and be happy, you have to have contact with something beyond this world. The only way [to get this inner peace] is to retreat from the world, take your attention off the world [through meditation].

David stated that "I think meditation definitely helps me to be calm, helps me to be less attached to a particular outcome, so it's going to help me to make decisions in a more productive way. I'm sure of it."

Positive Attitude. A positive attitude, including tenacity, faith, being open to the [spiritual] process, long-term view, and surrender, was the second most frequently cited reason by interviewees as a positive factor contributing to their accessing their intuition;

71% of the 14 interviewees (10 of 14) stated that attitude is important in assisting access. This is consistent with Yogananda (1995) and Vaughan (1979), who stated that attitude is important in the access of intuition.

Jeffrey spoke to this attitude of surrender, faith, long-term view of things, and tenacity, i.e., strength of will;

Something happens and you see a result; not until a day, a week, a month later does the result make any sense—that this happened and now I understand why it happened. You can go through an enormous amount of stress if you didn't surrender [and have faith], and you have to have that sort of tenacity [to see it through].

Jeremy stated,

Sometimes the things we love in our humanness have to be surrendered in meditation. So meditation isn't easy escaping from the world. No. Sometimes meditation is deep willingness to surrender the things even most loved, to surrender it in trust to the Divine, which you can't do unless you have a divine relationship with (God).

*Training One's Intuition.* Trusting one's intuition was the third most frequently cited reason by interviewees as a positive factor contributing to their accessing their intuition; 50% of the 14 interviewees (7 of 14) stated trusting one's intuition is important. This concurs with Vaughan (1979) in that trusting one's intuition is important in being able to access it.

Joshua stated that

it still takes trust, and trusting to know that I am using a process of getting in touch with this inner strength that I call Spirit, the connection of the Source, so that I know that what I'm doing and the decisions I'm making and the direction my life is going is not only for the benefit of me, but for the benefit of others.

Corrine stated that "I have always completely trusted myself to know what's the best thing for me. I totally trust my intuition."

Other anecdotal factors that interviewees mentioned that assist positively in their accessing intuition included spiritual company (2 of 14) and empathy for others (1 of 14).

Alexis had a particularly poignant example of this.

stuff comes out of me if I'm in a space where I'm trusted and I can speak. The words just come out of me, and I don't know where they come from. This happens constantly with students, friends; people I don't even know will come into the office and plop down in the chair and start talking and then crying and whatnot, and I don't even know what I say. And there's a voice that comes through me that guides.

*Factors Impeding Intuitional Access.* There was strong consensus that there are many factors that impede one from accessing their intuition. All interviewees (15 of 15) agreed that intuition is always present; however, 14 of the 15 mentioned at least one factor that impedes their recognition of intuitional guidance. Only one person, Emily, stated that there was nothing that impedes her ability to recognize intuitional guidance. However, this is contrary to her survey; in it she cited stress as an impeding factor to intuition.

*Attachment.* Attachment was the most frequently cited factor that impedes access to one's intuition; 100% of the 14 interviewees (14 of 14) stated that attachment is an impediment. There was no survey response for attachment. Attachments includes desire for a particular outcome, the most common of which was financial, relationships, events, "knowledge" of how an event or process should transpire, job, lifestyle, and other things. Anecdotal evidence suggested that attachment is rooted in an unfulfilled desire which concurs with Yogananda (1995).

Corrine stated that

people who don't have high use of intuition are often people who are very attached to getting their ducks in a row and keeping them. They don't

want anything to change. If you don't want anything to change, then you don't have much use for an inner prompting other than to know who's on the telephone.

Kristin stated that "You can't access [your intuition] clearly if it's clouded by an attachment, a desire for an outcome. You can't hear it if your mind is clouded."

David stated that

if you can be totally desireless on a subject and totally indifferent to the direction that it goes, I think your likelihood of understanding it and picking up the intuition is much better. If you have a desire for it to turn out a certain way, the stronger that desire is, I think the less likely your ability to perceive intuition is going to be.

*Too Much Ego.* "Too much ego" was second most frequently cited factor that impedes access to one's intuition; 65% of survey respondents ( $N = 100$ ) and 79% of the 14 interviewees (11 of 14) cited "too much ego" as an impediment. Ego included willfulness, need for recognition, selfishness, self-importance, inability to accept criticism, ambition, identification with the problem, and other negative personality traits. This is significant in light of Yogananda (1995) and Vaughan (1979), who state that ego is an impediment to intuition, and thus an impediment to decision-making.

Jeffrey stated that "If you try to resolve something for your own selfish ends, a lot of times you're totally blocking on the spiritual force of helping you." He went on to say, "[Desires are] all basically manifestations of ego . . . feelings of self-importance. I would say that out of a feeling of self-importance, you know, comes all of the other things."

Edward stated that his willfulness would frequently get in the way;

I have my own kind of persistent side that this is what I want to do. I can feel this is not going to work out, I hear this is the wrong thing, [and I tell my intuition to] shut up. I want to do this." When asked what the results were, he stated, "I just get frustrated at the end and say, why did I do this? This was not the right thing to do.



Jeremy summed it up, “If you get cloudy or upset about it, then you haven't surrendered it and your ego's going to cloud your perception of what Spirit may have in mind for you.”

*Stress and Emotions.* Stress and being too emotional were tied as the third most frequently cited factors which impede access to one's intuition.

Sixty four percent of respondents ( $N = 100$ ) cited stress as an impediment; however, only one interviewee, Scott, specifically mentioned stress as an impediment.

Scott attributed meditation for relieving the anxiety around a work problem.

Once I had the information he gave me and with [my intuition] not being blocked by anxiety, which is the main thing. I think meditation helped me to distance [myself from the problem and] to not have that blockage anymore. I think the information was always there. It's just [that] I wasn't seeing it or I wasn't perceiving it because I was so anxious.

Sixty four percent of interviewees (9 of 14) cited emotions, or being too emotional, as an impediment to accessing one's intuition. Included in emotions are fear, worry, anger, anxiety, and other emotions. Interestingly enough, interviewees made no differentiation between positive or negative emotions. Of note, only 30% of survey respondents ( $N = 100$ ) cited emotions as an impediment; however, 47% cited anger and 57% cited fear as impediments. This is significant in light of Yogananda (1995) and Vaughan (1979) who stated that being emotional is an impediment to intuition which can significantly impact decision-making.

However, this researcher must be clear on this point. This does not mean stuffing one's emotions or not feeling emotions; what this means is feeling the emotions and being able to rise above or distance oneself from them.

David stated that “I’m convinced that if you’re able to be less [emotional] . . . if you’re sitting there with your emotions and your feelings and your intellect constantly churning and worrying, it prevents you from being able to feel that intuition.”

Jeremy stated it best.

Emotions are pre-angled by all your past history. Because of your experiences, you're colored with your opinions about things. And when your emotions get involved, then you're angled. You're not in the clear place to bring in information from multiple people in business or relationships. And clearly put that on the screen of your even-mindedness just to let it filter out to what would be the ideal way to resolve this with the best benefit to all people. No, you're angled; everything's colored your color, your emotions. So the power of meditation, getting back to that calm space, gives you a power, a tremendous power of self-control that will serve not only yourself but everybody you're dealing with. It's huge.

*Rushing Decisions.* Rushing one’s decision was the fourth most frequently cited factor that impedes access to one’s intuition; 52% of survey respondents ( $N = 100$ ) and 43% of the 14 interviewees (6 of 14) stated rushing decisions is an impediment.

Edward stated it best.

When a decision comes up, [I can] feel the anxiety and feel the discomfort, and know that I’ve been through thousands of hours of that already [during my meditations], so I can sit in the presence of discomfort and decision without having to rush to a decision, without having to resolve it, just to be present with it and let it unfold within me around me.

*Environmental Factors.* One’s environment was the fifth most frequently cited factor that impedes access to one’s intuition; 36% of the 14 interviewees (5 of 14) cited environmental factors as an impediment. Environment include the work organization, organizational politics, the physical setting, and the people with which one had to deal.

This is significant in light of Fraser’s (1993) and Horton’s (1993) findings that environment was a factor in limiting the use of school administrators’ intuition, as well as

Yogananda (1925e), who stated that environment is stronger than will power, and that maintaining one's inner calmness (which is necessary to access one's intuition) is easiest in quiet environs. When one's environment limits one's intuition, one's decision-making capacities are impaired.

Three examples stood out on this impediment. David, who worked in healthcare, stated,

There are times when I make decisions that are strictly based on the needs of the industry or the regulations in the industry, and not necessarily what I think is right. I've had to fire people that I really didn't want to fire that I thought were good nurses and were good for the industry, but, because of what the industry expected from me and what the Department of Health Services expected of me, I've had to fire people like that before. So I understand that to protect, to . . . you're reducing liability for the company and things like that. That's a tough situation. . . . The environment absolutely limited my choices.

Samuel worked in a particularly difficult environment—a prison. He stated,

if I go into a very dense [vibrational] environment, then I have to work a little harder to stay, to get that consciousness . . . it's like if I go through [paper] it just takes but a millisecond and if I'm going through steel reinforced concrete it takes longer. So environment is a critical factor.

The third was interesting in that it had to do with someone else's feelings, and how the marital environment can constrain follow-through on the intuition. Edward stated,

this might sound odd, but I can't think of what impedes my intuition. My intuition is there. I think it's more a fault of the second part which is how closely I follow through. And that would be like my wife might have certain needs. She's much more security conscious than I am. I'm much more adventure seeking or risk taking. She's much more risk adverse. Being a householder, there are some intuitive things that I want to do that seem too risky in her context so I back off from them, [such as] money or responsibility. Those are a few.

Other anecdotal comments regarding impediments of one's intuition in decision-making included a lack of trust in one's intuition; 29% (4 of 14) of the interviewees cited

this which concurred with the survey's 30% ( $N = 100$ ); 29% (4 of 14) cited being too outer focused, or getting too caught up in the situation; 21% (3 of 14) cited sensitivity to others' criticisms; 7% (1 of 14) cited monthly hormonal changes; and 7% (1 of 14) cited not meditating enough.

#### *Examine Guidance for Validity, Options, and / or Impact of Decision*

This step is primarily used by those interviewees whose decision-making styles are what is termed rational intuitive, i.e., they are intuitive, but their predominant style tends to be rational. Three of the 15 interviewees fell into this category. These 3 interviewees stated that after receiving intuitional guidance, they examine it for validity and review it for impact on the decision; once reviewed, they make their decisions.

Based on previous research on the use of intuition in decision-making, I believe that this step is the exception rather than the rule. These individuals tend to use a more rational rather than an intuitive decision-making style, which may be indicative that they do not trust their intuition as completely as do others. (Breen, 1990; Vaughan, 1979)

The predominance of executive meditators, once they receive intuitional guidance, act upon it without analyzing the information; that the act of analyzing frequently leads to one's second guessing one's intuition, which was termed to be "death" by several of the interviewees.

The exception to this is situations where the guidance is cryptic or not clear. In these situations, interviewees suggested that further meditation is needed, that the decision is not yet ready to be made and / or the timing for the decision is not right. This is significant in light of Levin (1997), who stated that a few of her participants stated that

when an intuition was not clear, it was frequently because its time had not yet come. This understanding, that the timing is not right, is significant for decision-making; frequently decisions are not ready to be made, and the intuitive guidance is not clear purposefully so as to slow down the timing of the decision and / or perhaps save one from making a mistake.

### *Implement and Confirm Decision*

All interviewees stated that once they had received intuitive guidance, they would act as they had been guided, and would receive feedback that they were proceeding on the right course of action. This confirmation came both from internal and external cues, and frequently this guidance was more of the negative vein, i.e., they would receive guidance that they were proceeding in the wrong direction, instead of positive confirmation of the right direction.

Corrine stated that she gets a feeling of “a deep sense of peace or an actual click, a felt click like ‘whoosh,’ something comes into play as though something’s been connected, [like] the tumblers of a lock falling into place.”

Mary stated that she had both internal and external confirmation of her decision.

I could feel a sense of inner peace about it. I felt calm and it’s very interesting, too, because as soon as it became clear to me, all of the doors came down in the old place and it started to fall apart, where I was, to the point that there was a lot of political stuff that happened, there were some incidents there at work that made it very clear that to stay would’ve been foolish from a career standpoint.

*Results When Decision Went Against Intuition*

Generally, when one went against their intuition, interviewees stated that they “paid for the decision” in terms of difficulty in their professional or personal lives. The reasons for going against their intuition could be grouped into three areas: ego, i.e., their “buttons” were pushed regarding desires they had; they did not trust their intuition and rationalized their decisions; or were too restless to intuit the correct course of action.

There was a metaphysical perspective to some interviewees’ decision-making. Thirty-one percent (4 of 13) of the interviewees believed that there was no such thing as a “wrong course of action,” only lessons and learning, and inherent in choosing the ways we learn lessons is the difficulty factor associated with the path of learning.

Anecdotal comments representative of this line of thinking included Dan, who stated that “I think sometimes when you make decisions that externally seem wrong it doesn’t necessarily mean they were wrong; it was just something that you had to go through in your life for some reason.”

*Ego.* Eighty five percent (11 of 13) of the interviewees who answered the question stated that ego was the primary reason for going against their intuition, and in all cases, the result caused some sort of hardship, disappointment, and / or waste of time.

For instance, Edward knew that the decision to work with a business partner was wrong going in, but he did so anyway.

He was able to press the right buttons. He was a good salesman. He sold me, and I didn’t know it, on something I wanted. He offered to help me increase business and make more money. I’m in a place where I’m supporting my family, I’m growing my business—those are the two things that are real hot buttons. So my need, unmet need as it were, or just a need, was to increase my business and make more money. I was rationalizing that above my intuitive sense.

Emily became willful and went against her guidance and consequently missed the wedding of her best friend due to a scheduling conflict. “It’s not smart to ignore Guidance.”

Jeremy stated that his ignoring his intuition resulted in “pain.”

Samuel found himself in legal trouble for being willful and ignoring his intuition in asking a subordinate for a date. He stated,

don’t ask anyone out that is in your supervisory chain, and I did ignore that. Then the woman filed for sexual harassment just because I asked her out to lunch. That was a big one. And the feeling was, “Don’t do that. You’re going to get in trouble” and I said “No, I want to do it.” The great Universe is absolutely fair and just. Was I told? Yeah. Did I ignore it? Yep.

*Not Trusting Intuition.* Fifteen percent (2 of 13) of the interviewees stated that their not trusting their intuition was the reason for going against it, and in all cases, the result was hardship or disappointment.

Although 15% is not necessarily statistically significant, their reasons are significant and valid, and are relevant to those who have not yet trained themselves to fully trust their intuition. For instance, Rachel took a consulting job out of fear; she needed the money. That same day, she was offered another consulting job which she was forced to turn down that would have paid her five times as much money. She stated,

I took a project at XYZ Company, paying \$15 an hour, this was back in '90, just a 3-month project with x number of hours. It was more hours than I should have given it, but I [said] \$15 is better than \$0. Every part of my body was [saying], no this isn't for you to do. And I was [saying], "Well I'm grabbing it." Within the day, within the day, I got a call for a \$75 an hour project with a woman doing really interesting things and I said to her that I was so sorry, but she caught me at a time when I was very busy, and I wished that she would be all right with me calling her when this other project was done. And she said certainly.

*Too Restless to Hear Intuition.* Fifteen percent (2 of 13) interviewees stated that their being too restless was the reason that they went against their intuition, and in all cases, the result was hardship or disappointment.

Anecdotal comments included David, who stated “I feel that people are having intuitions constantly, but because of restless[ness] they are ignoring them most of the time.” He related a story about attending nursing school 20 years after he first had the intuition to go.

I was very interested in going to nursing school when I graduated from Davis back in 1983, and here it is, 20 years later I’m finally getting into nursing school. So would it have been better for me to go back then? I don’t know. Maybe it was a mistake to not go back then. I really don’t know. . . . Strictly from an external point of view, I think it was a mistake for me to go to Chiropractic College because career wise it wasn’t a good fit for me. I think I would’ve been better off going to nursing school right away. Financially, certainly I would’ve been better off. But whether it was a good decision or a bad decision, I don’t know. I can’t really say that. It’s hard to say. I think sometimes when you make decisions that externally seem wrong it doesn’t necessarily mean they were wrong because it was just something that you had to go through in your life for some reason.

Alexis nearly had an accident because she ignored her intuition.

about 2 months ago, driving back (home) from Yuma, before I left from here. Had the intuition, “need to check those tires.” I took it in and had the oil changed in Yuma, and they did the tires right there for me. So I knew they were fine. That morning I got out and I looked, yeah, they're all four round, but I didn’t check them closer, and there was a stronger intuition. I had a blowout on the way back, right outside, between Alpine and El Cajon right there on the crest of green field on the drive home.



### *Quantitative Corroboration*

The use of meditation as a tool to access higher states of consciousness and one's intuition for decision-making appears to be appropriate. There was a strong positive correlation between accuracy of intuition immediately following meditation and intuitive prowess ( $r = 0.516$ ), indicating that those who use meditation to access their intuition have greater intuitive prowess, thus confirming meditation's usefulness as a tool in accessing intuition and HSCs, and the timing of making decisions immediately following meditations as appropriate. Accuracy of intuition immediately following meditation remained a strongly significant predictor ( $\beta = .299$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for use of intuition and importance of decision, less stress, knowing answers more quickly, more decisive, trusting one's decisions more, and risk and use of intuition in decision-making.

There was a strong positive correlation between the reported knowing answers to questions more quickly and intuitive prowess ( $r = 0.506$ ), indicating that those who know answers to questions more quickly have greater intuitive prowess, corroborating the "aha" factor of decision-making. Knowing answers to questions more quickly remained a strongly significant predictor ( $\beta = .291$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for use of intuition and importance of decision, less stress, more decisive, trusting one's decisions more, intuitive prowess following meditation, and risk and use of intuition in decision-making.

There was a strong positive correlation between the respondents' self-reported intuitive prowess and their level of comfort with the use of intuition in decisions of high importance ( $r = .468$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and with respondents' self-reported intuitive prowess and

their comfort level with their use of intuition in decisions of higher risk ( $r = .376$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting that those who believe in their intuitive prowess are more comfortable using intuition in all decisions, including those that are important and risky.

This is significant in light of Yogananda (1944), Vaughan (1979), and others who indicated intuition is a superior way of making decisions, and Benson and Proctor (1987) and Lyubimov (1999), whose research showed greater coordination between the two hemispheres of the brain during meditation.

#### Gender Differences in Process

No statistical significance could be drawn between gender and decision-making processes because of the small sample size. However, of the 15 interviewees, 9 men and 6 women; 50% of women were intuitive decision-makers (3 of 6), whereas only 33% of men (2 of 6) were intuitive decision-makers. Of the 6 intuitive-rational decision-makers, 50% (3 of 6) were men and 50% (3 of 6) were women; of the rational intuitive decision-makers, 100% (3 of 3) were men. This indicates that women executive meditators tend to be more intuitive in their decision-making styles than men.

Table 22

#### *Interviewee Decision-Making Styles*

| Gender | Intuitive | Intuitive Rational | Rational Intuitives |
|--------|-----------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Men    | 3         | 3                  | 3                   |
| Women  | 3         | 3                  | 0                   |

$N = 15$

To get confirmation of this, a t-test was performed. Women reported greater intuitive prowess than did men; the difference of the means between women and men was statistically significant ( $t = 2.495, p = .014$ ).

Table 23

*Intuitional Prowess by Gender*

| Gender | N  | M     | SD    |
|--------|----|-------|-------|
| Male   | 55 | 5.145 | 0.780 |
| Female | 45 | 5.511 | 0.661 |

Difference of means across groups is statistically significant (Prob. = 0.014)

$N = 100$

Additionally, women reported a greater accuracy of their intuition immediately following meditation than did men; the difference of the means between women and men was statistically significant ( $t = 2.564, p = .012$ ).

Table 24

*Accuracy of Intuition following Meditation by Gender*

| Gender | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Male   | 55       | 5.018    | 0.757     |
| Female | 45       | 5.400    | 0.720     |

Difference of means across groups is statistically significant ( $p = 0.012$ )

$N = 100$

Women reported greater willingness to trust their intuition with more important decisions than did men; the difference of the means between women and men was statistically significant ( $t = 2.578, p = .011$ ).

Table 25

*Use of Intuition in Important Decisions by Gender*

| Gender | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Male   | 55       | 5.091    | 0.867     |
| Female | 45       | 5.489    | 0.626     |

Difference of means across groups is statistically significant ( $p = 0.011$ )

$N = 100$

Women also reported a greater willingness to trust their intuition with riskier decisions than did men. Although the difference of the means between women and men was not statistically significant ( $t = 1.762, p = .081$ ), the  $p = .081$  may be a result of a small sample, and similar difference of means with a slightly larger sample would be significant.

Table 26

*Willingness to Trust Intuition in Riskier Decisions by Gender*

| Gender | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Male   | 55       | 4.891    | 1.083     |
| Female | 45       | 5.244    | 0.883     |

Difference of means across groups is NOT statistically significant ( $p = 0.081$ ), but is instructive.

$N = 100$

Table 27

*Meditation Type by Decision-Making Style of Interviewees*

|           | Intuitive | Intuitive-Rational | Rational-Intuitive | Rational |
|-----------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Buddhist  | 1         | 1                  | 1                  | 0        |
| Raja Yoga | 1         | 2                  | 2                  | 0        |
| TM        | 2         | 1                  | 0                  | 0        |
| Christian | 1         | 0                  | 0                  | 0        |
| Other     | 2         | 1                  | 0                  | 0        |
| TOTAL     | 7         | 5                  | 3                  | 0        |

$N = 15$

*Meditation Type and Differences in Process*

There appeared to be no difference between type of meditation practiced and decision-making process in the interviewees.

*Meditation Type and Intuitive Prowess*

There was a moderate positive correlation between respondents' self-reported intuitive prowess and type of meditation ( $r = .220, p < .05, N = 100$ ), indicating that those who practice the Other, Christian, and Transcendental Meditative styles believe they have more intuitive prowess. Additionally, there was a moderate positive correlation between type of meditation and respondents' self reported intuitional accuracy following meditation ( $r = .171, p < .05$ ), indicating that those who practice the Other,

Christian, and Transcendental Meditative styles believe they have more intuitive accuracy following meditation.

There was no correlation between respondents' self-reported intuitive prowess and longevity of years meditating.

#### *Types of Decision Using Meditation and Intuition*

Executive meditators stated that they use their intuition in the preponderance of their decisions which contradicts previous findings by Agor (1985b), Hayashi (2001), Keen (1996) and others. This study found that executive meditators were comfortable using their meditation in nearly all their decisions, from the daily mundane to the important and risky, not just in the instances that Agor delineated, e.g., decisions where there is a high level of uncertainty; little previous precedent; variables not often scientifically predictable, limited facts, or the facts do not clearly point the way to go; time is limited and there is pressure to be right; or several plausible alternative solutions to choose from, with good arguments for each.

There was a strong positive correlation between respondents' self reporting of their intuitional prowess and the use of intuition in important decisions ( $r = .387$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and between respondents' self-reporting of their intuitional prowess and the degree of risk with which they are comfortable using their intuition in decision-making ( $r = .367$ ,  $p < .01$ ); these two findings, coupled with the interviews of the 15 executive meditators who reported using their meditation and intuition as their primary tool in all types of decisions, indicate that executive meditators are comfortable in using their intuition in all decisions, not just those as previously stated by Agor and others.

In response to the question, “Overall, the decisions that I regularly use intuition to guide my decision-making processes are . . . ,” respondents answered using a Likert 1-6 with  $M = 5.270$ ,  $SD = 0.790$ ,  $N = 100$ ; when the one person who was clearly not comfortable using their intuition is removed from the data, there are significant increases:  $M = 5.303$ ,  $SD = 0.721$ ,  $N = 99$ .

In response to the question, “How much risk am I comfortable with when I use my intuition to guide my decision-making process?”, respondents answered using a Likert 1-6 with a  $M = 5.050$ ,  $SD = 1.009$ , and  $N = 100$ ; when the 5 people who were clearly not comfortable using their intuition in risky situations are removed from the data, there were significant increases:  $M = 5.200$ ,  $SD = 0.780$ ,  $N = 95$ .

However, because this sample is small compared to the overall populations previously studied, more research should be conducted with a larger group.

From the interviews, interviewees specifically stated that they use their intuition frequently on decisions that involve people, especially in those requiring judgments about hiring and similar decisions. They also stated that they use intuition as a tool to understand peoples’ intent behind their stated words. Jeffrey and Alexis stated that frequently they were able to discern through intuition when someone was not being truthful, i.e., there was a disconnect between peoples’ stated words and their intentions.

Alexis stated

On some level you get a feeling for whether somebody’s being truthful with you... when they start telling you that, and [I observe] his outer behavior, I felt myself kind of pulling back. Why? I'm not comfortable hiring this person. This is my intuition.

*Timing of Using Intuition in Decision-Making*

The timing of receiving guidance appeared to be situational. According to the survey, the participants' timing of using intuition in decision-making varied significantly; 30% ( $N = 100$ ) stated they use their intuition at the beginning of process, 16% ( $N = 100$ ) stated the end of the process, and 80% ( $N = 100$ ) stated that it varies as to when they use their intuition depending on the problem.



## Theme 2: Meditation Benefits which Influence Decision-Making

Question #2. What are the benefits that executive meditators report gaining from their meditation practices which affect their decision-making?

These benefits and effects of meditation have been well documented by researchers and academics such as Walsh, Vaughan, Wilber, Kabat-Zinn, and others; additionally, a large body of research has come from the Maharishi University of Management, California Institute of Integral Studies, California School of Professional Psychology (now Alliant International University), and others. I did not attempt to go back and duplicate this research; what was done was a) examine and validate that which was done in those areas that apply to decision-making, at whatever organizational level may be appropriate, and, b) create a dataset that establishes a baseline for this and future research.

The effects of meditation are not purely spiritual, nor are they only physiological and psychological; they impact decision-making in very tangible ways as could be seen by the results of the survey and interviews. There were many reports of these benefits extending into peoples' everyday lives and impacting their decision-making in their professional and personal lives in substantive ways. For instance, Kristin stated

the effects of [your meditation] practice affect everything in your life. So you could ask me that question and say does it affect the way that you think about something else in your life, and I would say yes, because it affects everything in my life. So in a broad sense, my ability, the skills of being able to concentrate very well and to stay highly focused and to have a sense of clarity about something definitely affects their decision-making process, and especially from an intuitive perspective. I don't feel that one can be really in tune with their intuition if they're not in some level of clarity in their mind and have some level of detachment with regard to the subject they're dealing with. Your intuition is not clear. You can't access it clearly if it's clouded by an attachment, a desire for an outcome. You're involved in a serious action relative to it or your mind is very clouded you

have lots of ideas about what it is you're dealing with, so your intuition doesn't have an opportunity to, you know, express itself because you can't hear it. You can't hear it. It's got a very quiet voice, if you will, inside of you that if you don't get real still and listen you're not going to hear it. So that's why the meditation's important because it gives you the skill set in the middle of chaos to take your mind . . . . It's mind control in a certain respect. If you can take your mind in the middle of a total chaotic thing and get into a very still, detached place and feel what the chaos is really about [you can feel your intuition].

Jeffrey stated that "the goal is to have the expanded consciousness that meditation brings permeate all aspects of life. Business life is desperately in need of this process."

This is what meditation does; it raises one's consciousness, and the effects of that consciousness are far-reaching and tangible in every aspect of peoples' lives.

I have segmented my research on meditation benefits to decision-making into distinct areas. First, the research was subdivided into direct decision-making, intuition (including creativity), psychological (self and others), physiological, and spiritual. Psychological was further subdivided into benefits to cognition, consciousness, and personality. Following these sections are listed other benefits not elsewhere categorized.

Participants were surveyed regarding the benefits of meditation that they perceive receiving in the various areas which are intervening variables to decision-making. Each benefit section on the survey began with the following statement,

Many people experience some of the following [physiological / psychological / intuitive / decision-making / spiritual] benefits from meditating. For each of the following, please mark the response which comes closest to describing the impact meditation has had on you.

The statement was followed by specific questions (statements) regarding known and postulated benefits of meditation that may be intervening variables in decision-making, and respondents were asked to mark their response using a Likert 1-6 rating scale as to whether they agreed or disagreed to the statement.

For example, to the statement, “My stress is reduced,” respondents were asked to mark as to whether or not they agreed with the statement using the following scale.

Fully Disagree       Fully Agree

For Phase 2, the qualitative interviews, interviewees were asked if they manifest that particular benefit as a result of their practice, and to comment on each.

### *Reported Decision-Making Benefits of Meditation*

Although never previously studied as a tool in decision-making, there are numerous benefits realized from meditation that impact one’s decision-making abilities. The results of the survey and interviews were startling; most people directly stated that they use meditation and intuition in their decision-making, and that their meditation improves their intuition which is their primary tool in decision-making.

### *See More Options in Decision-Making.*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one’s seeing more options in decision-making as measured through the respondents’ self-reporting of their ability to see more options in decision-making. To the statement, “I see more options in decision-making,” the mean of respondents’ self-assessment of their seeing more options in decision-making as a result of their meditation was 5.290 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.902$ ), and was supported by 80% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of benefits to seeing more options in decision-making (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that they see more options in decision-making as a result of their meditation practices.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported knowing answers to questions more quickly and seeing more options in decision-making ( $r = 0.539$ ), indicating that those who know answers to questions more quickly can see more options in decision-making. Knowing answers more quickly remained a strongly significant predictor of seeing more options in decision-making ( $\beta = .385$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, more decisive, focus and concentration, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, trusting intuition, consideration of others' thoughts and feelings, attentiveness / alertness, and consciousness on a higher plane.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported consideration of others' thoughts and feelings and seeing more options in decision-making ( $r = 0.527$ ), indicating that those who are more considerate of others' thoughts and feelings can see more options in decision-making. Consideration of others' thoughts and feelings remained a strongly significant predictor of seeing more options in decision-making ( $\beta = .326$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, more decisive, focus and concentration, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions,

trusting intuition, knowing answers to questions more quickly, attentiveness / alertness, and consciousness on a higher plane.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included Corrine, who stated that “[meditation] seems to restore the mind to its natural state, which would be clear and would see more than one option.” However, even though interviewees saw more options in decision-making, more than one stated that they did not look at more options because “I knew what the correct answer was, and why bother [with more options] when you have the right answer . . . “

#### *Know Answers More Quickly.*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one’s knowing answers more quickly as measured through the respondents’ self-reporting of their ability to know answers to questions more quickly. To the statement, “I am able to recognize patterns and know answers to questions more quickly,” the mean of respondents’ self-assessment of their knowing answers more quickly as a result of their meditation was 5.320 out of a possible 6 (N=100), and was supported by 83% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels knowing answers more quickly (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

There was a strong positive correlation between reported seeing more options in decision-making and knowing answers to questions more quickly ( $r = 0.539$ ), indicating that those who see more options in decision-making know answers to questions more quickly. Seeing more options in decision-making remained a moderate significant

predictor of knowing answers more quickly ( $\beta = .199$ ,  $p < .05$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, more energy, sensing others' thoughts and feelings, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, trusting intuition, and consciousness on a higher plane.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported trusting of decisions and knowing answers to questions more quickly ( $r = 0.644$ ), indicating that those who trust their decisions know answers to questions more quickly. Trusting one's decisions remained a strongly significant predictor of knowing answers more quickly ( $\beta = .340$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, more energy, sensing others' thoughts and feelings, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, decisiveness, trusting oneself, trusting intuition, and consciousness on a higher plane.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported trusting oneself and knowing answers to questions more quickly ( $r = 0.630$ ), indicating that those who trust themselves know answers to questions more quickly. Trusting oneself remained a strongly significant predictor of knowing answers more quickly ( $\beta = .335$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, more energy, sensing others' thoughts and feelings, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, decisiveness, trusting one's decisions, trusting intuition, and consciousness on a higher plane.

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that they know the answers more quickly as a result of their meditation practices.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included Corrine, who stated that “(meditation) seems to restore the mind to its natural state which is clear and (knowing) what to do; that’s your natural state.

Scott stated that

if I’m really upset about something or, you know, trying to agonize over a decision concerning finances, I’ll go into a meditative state and an answer will come to me... do this or call this person or find out about this program or whatever. It just really makes a big difference.

### *More Decisive*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one’s becoming more decisive as measured through the respondents’ self-reporting of their being more decisive. To the statement, “I am more decisive,” the mean of respondents’ self-assessment of their being more decisive as a result of their meditation was 5.030 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.969$ ), and was supported by 70% of 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of being more decisive (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that they are more decisive as a result of their meditation practices.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported trusting decisions and decisiveness ( $r = 0.622$ ), indicating that those who trust their decisions are more decisive. Trusting one’s decisions remained a strongly significant predictor of decisiveness ( $\beta = .432$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, more energy, sensing others’ thoughts and feelings, being

conscious of one's thoughts and actions, seeing more options in decision-making, trusting oneself, trusting intuition, and consciousness on a higher plane.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported sense of self and decisiveness ( $r = 0.530$ ), indicating that those with a stronger sense of self are more decisive. Sense of self remained a strongly significant predictor of decisiveness ( $\beta = .300$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, more energy, sensing others' thoughts and feelings, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, seeing more options in decision-making, trusting decisions, trusting oneself, trusting intuition, and consciousness on a higher plane.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported seeing more options in decision-making and decisiveness ( $r = 0.487$ ), indicating that those who see more options in decision-making are more decisive. Seeing more options in decision-making remained a moderately significant predictor of decisiveness ( $\beta = .180$ ,  $p < .05$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, more energy, sensing others' thoughts and feelings, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, knowing answers to questions more quickly, trusting decisions, trusting oneself, trusting intuition, and consciousness on a higher plane.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included Kristin, who stated that

meditation gives you the skill set in the middle of chaos to take your mind. . . . It's mind control in certain respect. If you can take [control of] your mind in the middle of a total chaotic thing and get into a very still, detached place and feel what the chaos is really about, [you will get guidance to make your decision].



Corrine stated that

[meditation] seems to restore the mind to its natural state which would be clear and would know what to do; that's your natural state, so those are the effects, and I think meditation restores you more to your natural state.

Samuel stated that “another benefit of yoga and meditation is that you stay neutral, [that decisions are made] not from anger or resentment and emotions,” thus taking judgmentalism, emotions, and unconscious biases out of decision-making.

### *Trusting Decisions More*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one's becoming more trusting of their decisions as measured through the respondents' self-reporting of their becoming more trusting of their decisions. To the statement, “I trust my decisions more,” the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their trusting their decisions more as a result of their meditation was 5.330 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.922$ ), and was supported by 82% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of becoming more trusting their decisions (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

Of note, women reported trusting their decisions more as a result of their meditation practices than did men; the difference of the means between men and women was statistically significant ( $t = 2.735$ ,  $p = .007$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that they trust their decisions more as a result of their meditation practices.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported trusting oneself and trusting one's decisions ( $r = 0.651$ ), indicating that those who trust themselves trust their

decision more. Trusting oneself remained a strongly significant predictor of trusting decisions ( $\beta = .237, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, more energy, sensing others' thoughts and feelings, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, knowing the answers to decisions more quickly, seeing more options in decision-making, trusting decisions, trusting intuition, and consciousness on a higher plane.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported knowing answers to questions more quickly and trusting one's decisions ( $r = 0.644$ ), indicating that those who know answers to questions more quickly trust their decision more. Knowing answers to questions more quickly remained a moderately significant predictor of trusting decisions ( $\beta = .235, p < .05$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, more energy, sensing others' thoughts and feelings, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, seeing more options in decision-making, trusting decisions, trusting oneself, trusting intuition, and consciousness on a higher plane.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported trusting one's intuition and trusting one's decisions ( $r = 0.651$ ), indicating that those who trust their intuition trust their decisions more. Trusting one's intuition remained a strongly significant predictor of trusting decisions ( $\beta = .363, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, more energy, sensing others' thoughts and feelings, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, knowing the answers to decisions more quickly, seeing more options in decision-making, trusting one's decisions, trusting oneself, and consciousness on a higher plane.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included Alexis, who stated that she definitely trusts her decisions more, and has learned “not to be attached to them, which is possibly a bigger issue.”

Corrine, when asked if she trusted her decisions more as a result of her meditation, said, “Absolutely.”

Scott stated that

if I’m really upset about something or, you know, trying to agonize over a decision concerning finances, that’s one of the things that, you know, a lot of times I’ll go into a meditative state and an answer will come to me. . . . well do this or do that or you know call this person or find out about this program or whatever. And it really makes a big difference.

#### *Reported Intuition Benefits of Meditation*

There was much evidence that meditation has a strong effect on developing one’s intuition and its various manifestations, which concurs with Vaughan (1979), who stated that the single, most powerful way to improve one’s intuition is to regularly meditate; when one is in touch with the center of their being (which is one of the results of meditation), nothing else must be done to enable one’s intuition. Rachel stated that, “I almost become like a finely tuned being about decisions, because of this, because my mind's much more quiet. So I have absolute body sensations. My intuition is clear as a whistle [as a result of my meditations].”

### *Intuition*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one's intuition as measured through the respondents' self-reporting of their intuitional prowess, both in everyday life and immediately following meditation. To the statement, "How would you rate your intuitive prowess," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their intuitional prowess as a result of their meditation was 5.310 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.748$ ), and was supported by 83% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range. To the statement, "Overall, the effectiveness of my intuition after meditating is," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their intuition being more effective after meditating was 5.190 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.761$ ), and was supported by 81% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of the benefits of being more intuitive, and greater effectiveness of their intuition immediately following meditation (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

However, women reported increased intuitional prowess ( $t = 2.495$ ,  $p = .014$ ) and more effective intuition following meditation ( $t = 2.564$ ,  $p = .012$ ) than did men; the difference of the means between women and men was statistically significant.

Table 28

*Intuition - How would you rate your own intuitive prowess?*

| Category              | Freq. | %                 | Cum.%          | Z-Score |
|-----------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------|---------|
| 1) Not Intuitive      | 0     | 0                 | 0              | 0       |
| 2) Mildly Intuitive   | 0     | 0                 | 0              | 0       |
| 3) Slightly Intuitive | 0     | 0                 | 0              | 0       |
| 4) Lukewarm Intuitive | 17    | 17.0              | 17.0           | -1.751  |
| 5) Mostly Intuitive   | 35    | 35.0              | 52.0           | -0.414  |
| 6) Highly Intuitive   | 48    | 48.0              | 100.0          | 0.922   |
| <i>M</i> = 5.310      |       | <i>SD</i> = 0.748 | <i>N</i> = 100 |         |
| <i>Mdn</i> = 5.000    |       | Variance = 0.559  | Missing = 0    |         |

Table 29

*Intuition - Overall, the effectiveness of my intuition after meditating is?*

| Category                  | Freq. | %                 | Cum.%          | Z-Score |
|---------------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------|---------|
| 1) Fully Less Accurate    | 0     | 0                 | 0              | 0       |
| 2) Mostly Less Accurate   | 0     | 0                 | 0              | 0       |
| 3) Somewhat Less Accurate | 1     | 1.0               | 1.0            | -2.876  |
| 4) Somewhat More Accurate | 18    | 18.0              | 19.0           | -1.563  |
| 5) Mostly More Accurate   | 42    | 42.0              | 61.0           | -0.250  |
| 6) Fully More Accurate    | 39    | 39.0              | 100.0          | 1.064   |
| <i>M</i> = 5.190          |       | <i>SD</i> = 0.761 | <i>N</i> = 100 |         |
| <i>Mdn</i> = 5.000        |       | Variance = 0.580  | Missing = 0    |         |

Table 30

*Intuitional Prowess by Gender*

| Gender | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Male   | 55       | 5.145    | 0.780     |
| Female | 45       | 5.511    | 0.661     |

Difference of means across groups is statistically significant ( $p = 0.014$ )

$N = 100$

Table 31

*Intuitional Effectiveness Following Meditation by Gender*

| Gender | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Male   | 55       | 5.018    | 0.757     |
| Female | 45       | 5.400    | 0.740     |

Difference of means across groups is statistically significant ( $p = 0.012$ )

$N = 100$

*Trusting Own Intuition.*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one trusting their own intuition as measured through the respondents' self-reporting of their trusting their own intuition. To the statement, "I trust my intuition more," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their trusting their own intuition more as a result of their meditation was

5.540 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.642$ ), and was supported by 92% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of increased trust of their intuition (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

There was a strong positive correlation between reported creativity and trusting one's intuition ( $r = 0.564$ ), indicating that those who are creative trust their own intuition. Creativity remained a moderately significant predictor of trusting intuition ( $\beta = .161$ ,  $p < .05$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, sensing others' thoughts and feelings, more decisive, focus and concentration, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, trusting one's decisions, knowing answers more quickly, and consciousness on a higher plane.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported sensing others' thoughts and feelings and trusting one's intuition ( $r = 0.648$ ), indicating that those who sense others' thoughts and feelings trust their intuition. Sensing others' thoughts and feelings remained a strong significant predictor of trusting intuition ( $\beta = .352$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, creativity, more decisive, focus and concentration, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, trusting one's decisions, knowing answers more quickly, and consciousness on a higher plane.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported trusting one's decisions and trusting one's intuition ( $r = 0.651$ ), indicating that those who trust their decisions trust their intuition. Trusting one's decisions remained a strong significant predictor of trusting intuition ( $\beta = .376$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years

meditating, type of meditation practice, sensing others' thoughts and feelings, more decisive, focus and concentration, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, creativity, knowing answers more quickly, and consciousness on a higher plane.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported peacefulness and trusting one's intuition ( $r = 0.500$ ), indicating that those who are peaceful trust their intuition. Peacefulness remained a strongly significant predictor of trusting intuition ( $\beta = .185, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, sensing others' thoughts and feelings, more decisive, focus and concentration, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, trusting one's decisions, knowing answers more quickly, and consciousness on a higher plane.

### *Creativity*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one's creativity as measured through the respondents' self-reporting of their being creative. To the statement, "I have greater creativity," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their creativity as a result of their meditation was 5.280 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100, SD = 0.889$ ), and was supported by 79% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of being more creative (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that they experience greater creativity as a result of their meditation practices and their improved connection with Source.



This is significant in light of Ray (1984) and Levin (1997), who found that meditation leads to greater creativity, and Einstein, who stated that we cannot solve problems from the same level of consciousness that created them. Creativity in decision-making can be a very useful trait, as it can lead to seeing more options, and approaching and solving problems in unique ways.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported sensing others' thoughts and feelings and creativity ( $r = 0.544$ ), indicating that those who could sense others' thoughts and feelings were more creative. Sensing of others' thoughts and feelings remained a strongly significant predictor of creativity ( $\beta = .292, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, focus and concentration, being conscious of one's thoughts, trusting intuition and decisions, knowing answers more quickly, and consciousness on a higher plane.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported decisiveness and creativity ( $r = 0.448$ ), indicating that those who were decisive were more creative. Decisiveness remained a strongly significant predictor of creativity ( $\beta = .247, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, more decisive, focus and concentration, being conscious of one's thoughts, trusting intuition and decisions, knowing answers more quickly, and consciousness on a higher plane.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported trusting one's intuition and creativity ( $r = 0.564$ ), indicating that those who trust their intuition were more creative. Trusting intuition remained a moderately significant predictor of creativity ( $\beta = .273, p < .05$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type

of meditation practice, more decisive, focus and concentration, being conscious of one's thoughts, trusting decisions, knowing answers more quickly, and consciousness on a higher plane.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported consciousness on a higher plane and creativity ( $r = 0.449$ ), indicating that those whose consciousness was on a higher plane were more creative. Consciousness on a higher plane remained a strongly significant predictor of creativity ( $\beta = .420, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, faith, and attunement.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included Kristin, who stated that “Creativity has a lot to do with kind of being open to whatever it is you're engaging yourself in and to whatever the possibilities that need to take place.”

Edward stated that “And now creativity is a process [and] a function of meditation, [which] allows me to actually have a better creative outflow.”

Jeffrey stated that he has much greater creativity in business as a result of his meditation, “Oh much greater creativity, an absolute fearlessness. Part of being a successful businessman is being very fearless.”

Walter stated that “all of my writing and speaking comes out of my meditation, so it's an inexhaustible reservoir of wisdom. If I'm open to that stream of creativity from God you know and that inspiration, then I can, you know, be endlessly creative in my writing or whatever and speaking.”

Rachel stated that the inspiration and creativity for her thesis came from her intuition. She stated,

Daniel Goleman was speaking at a business conference in Oakland, and San Francisco State asked me to come as their guest. I was sitting at the

[speaker's] table. One minute I'm listening to him, very entertaining, very interesting, so it's not like I was bored—I was engaged. But I had been praying about the topic for my thesis. I was praying, because I didn't want to intellectualize the topic. I wanted it to come intuitively. So I'm sitting there taking notes about what he's saying and the next thing you know, here this stream of consciousness comes, and it talked about the mystics, taking mystical teachings and bringing them into corporate today. And I wrote a paragraph about this, never thinking it was a play or anything, but thinking that I would do that, try to bridge the two worlds. And when I was working on it, it all just came out, like each of the mystics were matched up with the proper managers. Even that was weird to me, intellectually. It just naturally flowed and it was perfect. You understood it from their backgrounds why they were, but I didn't do any of that consciously. That was all altered state. I think creativity, the creative state is [higher] state. The state of creativity.

### *Sense Others' Thoughts and Feelings*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one's ability to sense others' thoughts and feelings as measured through the respondents' self-reporting of their ability to sense others' thoughts and feelings. To the statement, "I can sense others' thoughts and feelings," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their ability to sense others' thoughts and feelings as a result of their meditation was 5.270 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.908$ ), and was supported by 79% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of benefits to sensing others' thoughts and feelings (for all,  $t = ns$ ). However, long-term meditators, i.e., those who have meditated for 10-years or longer, reported being able to sense others' thoughts and feelings than did short-term meditators; the difference of the means between long- and short-term meditators was statistically significant ( $t = 2.023$ ,  $p = .046$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that they can sense others thoughts and/or feelings as a result of their meditation practices; of note, some termed it empathy, some intuition.

This is significant in light of previous research which shows that meditation breaks down the ego barriers which are artificially constructed between people, allowing one to access Universal Consciousness of which we are a part,. When this happens, one is able to access / sense others' thoughts and feelings, which could be very helpful in decision-making.(Wilber, 1979; Yogananda, 1995)

There was a strong positive correlation between reported trusting one's intuition and sensing others' thoughts and feelings ( $r = 0.648$ ), indicating that those who trust their intuition can sense others' thoughts and feelings. Trusting one's intuition remained a strongly significant predictor of the ability to sense others' thoughts and feelings ( $\beta = .416, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, more decisive, focus and concentration, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, trusting decisions, knowing answers more quickly, and consciousness on a higher plane.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported knowing the answers to questions more quickly and sensing others' thoughts and feelings ( $r = .653$ ), indicating that those who know answers to questions more quickly can sense others' thoughts and feelings. Knowing answers more quickly remained a strongly significant predictor of the ability to sense others' thoughts and feelings ( $\beta = .427, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, more decisive,

focus and concentration, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, trusting intuition and decisions, and consciousness on a higher plane.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported trusting one's decisions and sensing others' thoughts and feelings ( $r = 0.387$ ), indicating that those who trust their decisions can sense others' thoughts and feelings. Trusting one's decisions remained a strongly significant predictor of the ability to sense others' thoughts and feelings ( $\beta = .321, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, more decisive, focus and concentration, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, trusting intuition, knowing answers more quickly, and consciousness on a higher plane.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported conscious of one's actions and sensing others' thoughts and feelings ( $r = 0.387$ ), indicating that those who are conscious of their actions can sense others' thoughts and feelings. Consciousness of actions remained a strongly significant predictor of the ability to sense others' thoughts and feelings ( $\beta = .226, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, more decisive, focus and concentration, being conscious of one's thoughts, trusting intuition, knowing answers more quickly, trusting one's decisions, and consciousness on a higher plane.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included Samuel, who, when asked about sensing others' thoughts and feelings, stated "I can finish most peoples' sentences," and related a story.

At one time there was an inmate, I was supervising social worker. And he was describing this inmate and I got this flash that his conflict was that he was like on top of the highest mountain in the world with one foot on one and one on the other and he couldn't maintain his balance any longer. He

was going to split down the middle and I said I want you to go back and ask him what his thoughts are in evening time when he's going to sleep and the guy came back and described exactly that. It happens every once in awhile. I'll get a visualization. I'll know something about that person that you couldn't know by, you know, I've never met him before and then I'll just get like that. What is that? Did I have it before I started doing yoga? I've always been sensitive. Did it enhance that? Yes.

Walter perhaps best exhibited this ability. Explaining that he can sense others' thoughts and feelings when he is completely relaxed, and not trying or even aware of thinking about that, he related a story of being in the presence of the Dali Lama who he has known for 15 years.

on a number of occasions when I have been in his presence, that is [just] the two of us with his secretary or something, we've been in another space entirely that you can't even put into words because there's no words to describe it. All I can say is that we were in a much larger mind than our own minds. We were in a consciousness greater than ourselves in which there was no distinction between our consciousnesses, and his thoughts were my thoughts and my thoughts were his thoughts. His feelings were my feelings and my feelings were his feelings, meaning we had complete access to each other's thoughts and feelings and that any attempt to say anything with words would only create misunderstanding. So it was as it you enter this huge room in which something is totally aware of you and you can't hide anything from that Reality.

Interestingly enough, many did not view the ability to sense others' thoughts or feelings as a positive manifestation of intuition. In response to the question, "Can you sense others' thoughts and feelings, Jeffrey stated,

Unfortunately yes. When I say unfortunately it's because a large percentage of people will be saying one thing and thinking another and almost when they're finished with you they'll almost do, something different than they said they would do and when you can read through that duplicity, it's amazing. You know it's amazing and it's sad sometimes, but it has a positive effect too. The positive effect is I don't want to be like that.

Alexis stated nearly the same thing, terming her ability to sense others' thoughts and feelings "scary."

Because to have someone else in your thoughts, it's the only thing that's private that is really yours, we think. And it may not be. But it's coming. I can read more people's thoughts. The more I meditate the more thoughts I can read. But I don't really want to do that. It influences how I feel about them and decisions that I make then maybe, based on what they're thinking. They're saying one thing, but they're thinking something else. It definitely influences how I react to them. I tell you, that's been a year or so ago that happened, and it just frightened the devil out of me because then I want nothing to do with that person.

### *Reported Psychological Benefits of Meditation – Self*

There are many psychological benefits of meditation that influence one's ability to make good decisions. I categorized them into three categories: Cognitive Benefits, Consciousness, and Personality.

#### *Benefits to Cognitive Functioning*

Respondents reported significantly better cognitive capabilities, including more focus and concentration, more peaceful / increased quieting of the mind, more attentive and alert, greater clarity, and greater productivity, as a result of their meditative practices, all of which were corroborated by the qualitative interviews.

#### *Better Focus and Concentration.*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one's focus and concentration as measured through the respondents' self-reporting of their ability to focus and concentrate. To the statement, "I have better focus and concentration," the mean of

respondents' self-assessment of their improved focus and concentration as a result of their meditation was 5.480 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.703$ ), and was supported by 90% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of benefits to their focus and concentration (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that they have better focus and concentration as a result of their meditative practices.

This concurs with the findings of Schaefer and Darling (1997), Carrington et al. (1980), Cummings (1994) and Easterlin and Cardena (1999), who reported that meditation improved respondents' mental cognitive processes, including reasoning, assigning of priorities, and accomplishing of goals, all of which are key factors in decision-making.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported attentiveness / alertness and better focus and concentration ( $r = 0.655$ ), indicating that those who are more attentive / alert, a benefit of meditation, are more focused and concentrative. Attentiveness / alertness remained a strongly significant predictor ( $\beta = .633$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, knowing answers more quickly, being more decisive, trusting one's decisions more, and consciousness on a higher plane.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included Kristin, who stated that meditation is a



. . . different form of having control over your mind which affects everything in my life. . . . My ability to concentrate very well, to stay highly focused, and to have a sense of clarity about something, definitely affects the [decision-making] process, especially from an intuitive perspective.

Jeffrey said that “when you meditate, you focus your mind.” Jeremy stated that meditation “clears out” the emotions and other things that get in the way of his focusing his mind. Rachel stated the meditation “helps her focus dramatically.”

Edward related to focus from the wife’s perspective. He stated,

If I go more than 5 or 6 days [without meditating], my wife is says you need to go [meditate] now, because I get more confused when I need a [meditation] fix. So I agree, [I am] more clear and more focused.

### *More Peaceful*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one’s peacefulness as measured through the self-reporting of the respondents’ peacefulness. To the statement, “I am more peaceful,” the mean of respondents’ self-assessment of their being more peaceful as a result of their meditation was 5.640 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.612$ ), and was supported by 93% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of peacefulness (for all,  $t = ns$ ). This finding contradicts Easterlin (1992), who found that long-term meditators have greater calmness than short-term meditators.

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that they are more peaceful as a result of their meditative practices.

This is significant in light of Yogananda (1995), who suggested that meditation quiets the mind and enables deep concentration so as to ‘tune in’ and receive the intuition born of the soul, which is critical in intuitive decision-making.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported being happier and peacefulness ( $r = 0.677$ ), indicating that those who are happier, a benefit of meditation, are more peaceful. Being happier remained a strongly significant predictor ( $\beta = .416$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, greater optimism, greater health, more focused, sense of self, more decisive, greater faith, consciousness on a higher plane, and greater energy.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included David, who stated that “I think meditation helps you to be calm and I think that calmness helps you to make better decisions.”

Edward said that “It doesn’t go more than five or six days before my wife is saying, you need to go [meditate] now, because I get more uptight when I need a [meditation] fix.”

Jeffrey stated that “Peace is just a nature of your soul. The more you contact it [through meditation] the more peaceful you’re going to be.”

Scott stated that after meditating in response to a problem that he was having at work, “I experienced a lot of the clarity and peaceful feeling and slowing down of the heart rate and just generally calming myself down.”

Kristin stated that

Meditation gives you the skill set in the middle of chaos to take [control of] your mind. . . . It's mind control in certain respect. If you can take [control of] your mind in the middle of a total chaotic thing and get into a very still, detached place and feel what the chaos is really about, [you will get guidance to make your decision].

*More Attentive and Alert*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one's attentiveness and alertness as measured through the self-reporting of the respondents' attentiveness and alertness. To the statement, "I am more attentive and alert," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their being more attentive and alert as a result of their meditation was 5.480 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.745$ ), and was supported by 87% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of benefits to their attentiveness and alertness (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that they are more attentive and alert as a result of their meditation practices.

This is significant as Goleman (1988), Walsh (1982), Wilber (1979), Wenk (1997), Kelly (1996), Easterlin (1992), Carrington et al. (1980) and Wade (1996) stated that the process of meditation trains one's attention which results in improved concentration that continues beyond meditation and into one's daily life, which is important in decision-making.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported improved focus and concentration and attentiveness / alertness ( $r = 0.655$ ), indicating that those who have improved concentration and focus, a benefit of meditation, are more attentive and alert. Improved focus and concentration remained a strongly significant predictor ( $\beta = .399$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, more conscious of one's thoughts and actions, more decisive, consciousness on a higher plane, and greater energy.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported being more considerate of others' thoughts and feelings and attentiveness / alertness ( $r = 0.618$ ), indicating that those who are more considerate of others' thoughts and feelings, a benefit of meditation, are more attentive and alert. More considerate of others' thoughts and feelings remained a strongly significant predictor ( $\beta = .257$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, more conscious of one's actions, more decisive, consciousness on a higher plane, sensing another's thoughts and feelings, and greater energy.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included Rachel, who stated that meditation allowed her to better quiet her mind and "tune in," i.e., be alert and attentive to her intuition.

Jeremy stated that "keener perception comes from calmness, and that meditation gives him the perception of what is important, and allows him to be more attuned, i.e., more alert and attentive to what then is important."

Corrine stated that “meditation seems to restore the mind to its natural state, which would be clear, which would see more than one option, which would be more loving and friendly, which would know what to do [at all times].”

### *Benefits to Being More Conscious*

Respondents reported the ability to be significantly more conscious of both their thoughts and their actions as a result of their meditative practices, both of which were corroborated by the qualitative interviews. This “becoming conscious” is a key intervening variable in decision-making, because it allows one to become aware of the motivators that influence, bias, or prejudice one’s decisions.

#### *More Conscious of Thoughts*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one’s becoming conscious of their thoughts as measured through the respondents’ self-reporting of their being conscious of their thoughts. To the statement, “I am more conscious of my thoughts,” the mean of respondents’ self-assessment of their being conscious of their thoughts as a result of their meditation was 5.600 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.696$ ), and was supported by 90% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of being more conscious of their thoughts (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that they are more conscious of their thoughts as a result of their meditation practices.

The importance of one's being conscious of one's thoughts is critical in decision-making. Unknown biases, habits, and other negative influences frequently create a predilection toward one option or another in a decision, or may cause an unknown habitual way of thinking and being. Becoming conscious of one's thoughts, habits, etc., is one of the keys to making better decisions; as one's reasoning process becomes clearer, one can better assign priorities and complete tasks in the correct order. (Carrington et al., 1980; Wilber, 1980c; Yogananda, 1925e, 1995)

There was a strong positive correlation between reported consciousness of one's actions and consciousness of one's thoughts ( $r = 0.802$ ), indicating that those who are more conscious of their actions, a benefit of meditation, are more conscious of their thoughts. Conscious of one's actions remained a strongly significant predictor ( $\beta = .733$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, more decisive, more focused / attentive / alert, consciousness on a higher plane, and greater energy.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included Kristin, who stated that her meditation allows her to become more mindful, i.e., conscious of her thoughts, and, "through my mindfulness, I can see objectively myself [going into a depression] and I recognize it, and I throw myself a rope and pull myself out as much as I can.

Joshua stated that

I'm paying attention to more of [my thoughts] and that's also been an unfolding process that I would say for 7 or 8 years. But I think it's been like this; it's a funnel. It's not that I have been unconscious, but I think I'm becoming more conscious, more aware.

### *More Conscious of Actions*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one's becoming conscious of their actions as measured through the respondents' self-reporting of their being conscious of their actions. To the statement, "I am more conscious of my actions," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their being conscious of their actions as a result of their meditation was 5.480 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.745$ ), and was supported by 87% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of being more conscious of their actions (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that they are more conscious of the actions as a result of their meditation practices.

This is significant in light of the findings of Kabat-Zinn et al. (1985) who found that meditation can lead to the awareness necessary to break patterns of destructive behaviors, and Shafii (1973), who found that meditators reported an increased ability to relax and concentrate, and a reduced propensity for repetitive and compulsive behaviors; when one is aware of their behaviors, they can see how their behaviors can affect their decision-making processes, and thus retaining the positive and eliminating the negative.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported consciousness of one's thoughts and consciousness of one's actions ( $r = 0.802$ ), indicating that those who were more conscious of their thoughts were more conscious of their actions. Consciousness of thoughts remained a strongly significant predictor of consciousness of actions ( $\beta = .677$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of

meditation practice, less stress, more decisive, focus and concentration, trusting intuition, knowing answers more quickly, consciousness on a higher plane, and greater energy.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported trusting one's intuition and consciousness of one's actions ( $r = 0.487$ ), indicating that those who trusted their intuition more were more conscious of their actions. Trusting intuition remained a strongly significant predictor of consciousness of actions ( $\beta = .175$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, more decisive, focus and concentration, conscious of thoughts, knowing answers more quickly, consciousness on a higher plane, and greater energy.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported knowing of answers more quickly and consciousness of one's actions ( $r = 0.562$ ), indicating that those who were quicker to know the right answer were more conscious of their actions. Knowing of answers more quickly remained a strongly significant predictor of consciousness of actions ( $\beta = .199$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, more decisive, focus and concentration, trusting intuition, consciousness on a higher plane, and greater energy.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included Samuel, who had two salient comments; first, his practicing of yoga led him to break his habit of drinking coffee through becoming conscious of the habit, and second, his implementing of a yoga program which enabled others to break their drug addictions.

It happened basically at one of the first Tantric yoga courses I took. I came out of that 10-day retreat so pure, so purified that I had to consciously make a decision of whether I was going to get a cup of coffee, if I even needed a cup of coffee, because that was an old habit pattern. So [meditation] starts to break addictive patterns of behavior. We noticed that in the drug program that we had using Kundalini yoga. It started



releasing people from their attachments and their addictions, which is another byproduct of meditation and yoga practices. So it's a technology for self-mastery and self-healing and it does that by increasing awareness where then you make a conscious choice whether you want to keep the same old [habits] or whether you want to change your lifestyle.

when you start engaging in spiritual practices, as you increase your consciousness and awareness you come to a wide juncture in the world where either you keep doing the practices and you stop the negative habits or you keep the negative habits and you stop the spiritual practices. On higher levels it becomes intolerable to live in your own duality. The beauty of meditation, yoga, is that it brings you to the juncture point where you could make a decision to either enhance yourself or [continue in the same way]. You become so aware of the importance of your spiritual connection that it starts to positively impact on negative habits that you have and so you have them, then you make a decision which way. That's the lifestyle juncture point change is when the yoga and meditation boost your awareness up high enough to see the duality of it and if you want Universality you have to then stop and you start to minimize your negative habits and keep your practices going. And that's a very powerful effect of doing the meditation and yoga and spiritual practices.

### *Benefits to Personality Traits*

Respondents reported significant changes in their personality traits as a result of their meditation practices which were corroborated by the qualitative interviews.

William summed it up nicely, stating, "when you do inner work and you develop spiritually, you are challenging the structures of your ego." The result of inner work is that one's personality changes; personality is a key intervening variable in decision-making, and when one develops awareness of the motivators that influence their decisions, one makes better and more holistic decisions.

### *Happier*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one's happiness as measured through the respondents' self-reporting of their being happy. To the statement, "I am happier," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their being happier as a result of their meditation was 5.500 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.732$ ), and was supported by 90% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of being happier (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that they are happier as a result of their meditation practices.

This is significant in light of Walsh (1980), who stated that advanced meditators report levels of joy and love that far exceed what is experienced by most people in their daily lives, and Carrington and Ephron (1975), who found that meditators reported a greater awareness of personal feelings and needs, and an increased acceptance of things as they are, which can lead to being happier; all these factors have a significant influence on one's decision-making abilities and processes.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported peacefulness and being happier ( $r = 0.677$ ), indicating that those who more peaceful, a benefit of meditation, will be happier. Greater peacefulness remained strongly significant ( $\beta = .454$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, greater energy, greater optimism, and alertness.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported greater optimism and being happier ( $r = 0.601$ ), indicating that those who are more optimistic, a benefit of

meditation, are happier. Greater optimism remained strongly significant ( $\beta = .258$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, greater peacefulness, more attentive / alert, and greater energy.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported greater consideration for others' thoughts and feelings and being happier ( $r = 0.636$ ), indicating that those who considerate of others' thoughts and feelings, a benefit of meditation, are happier. Greater consideration for others' thoughts and feelings remained strongly significant ( $\beta = .456$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, greater peacefulness, more attentive / alert, and greater energy.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included Rachel, who intimated that the happiness and freedom from depressions that her meditation practice has brought her has given her the will to live.

I had attempted suicide several times in my life, once when I was 12 or 13. I don't know [why], just because of the nuthouse that I was in. I just wanted out. I was very prone to deep depression. I say that if I hadn't gotten into meditation in my spiritual life, I probably wouldn't be here.

Mary and Jeffrey both stated that their happiness was no longer contingent on outward circumstances. In a somewhat extreme example, Mary states

I think there was a sense before I started doing meditation of I'm searching for some missing piece. I don't feel that anymore, and I think I do attribute happiness to just feeling happy in whatever it is that I'm doing. The real test for me was when I had burned myself in a gas oven explosion. I was on the way to the hospital and had this moment of clarity. I said to my husband, "This is only pain. I'm totally at peace and I'm totally happy," and he said, "She's lost it." But he understood later what I was talking about. He really thought I'd gone into shock. But I was totally at peace and I knew that I suffered from the pain. I was able to

very clearly feel the pain and look at it and say, that's a really bad burn and it's going to hurt like hell, but I am not the burn. It's not all consuming and I feel totally at peace, and I was happy. I was totally calm and cool and collected. And I think it also helped to release that fear I've had of extreme pain that if I were in extreme pain that I wouldn't be able to be happy and there was something about being in the middle of that extreme pain. It didn't have an effect on my happiness.

Jeffrey stated

The corresponding joy that we feel [as a result of meditation can't be defined] in a dictionary, it's not going to really answer the question. The effects of meditation are physio-psycho-spiritual. It affects your body. It affects your mental and emotional states. It affects your spiritual state. The joy aspect of this is a very subtle physiological presence within the spine, heart and brain that consciously answers the thoughts and feelings you have by either increasing or decreasing. It's not just a happy-go-lucky, walking down the street singing in the rain type of feeling. It's a conscious soul identity that you establish that manifests itself as joy. In its extremes, it's bliss and ecstasy. For most practitioners of meditation, bliss and ecstasy tend to be infrequent experiences because they're basically incapacitating. You'll have to be an exceptional being to perform your daily duties while walking around in a state of bliss or ecstasy. Most people would just rather just crumble into a protoplasmic mass when they're in that experience. So the bliss and ecstasy are part of the joy is very tangibly felt or not felt, and it really lets you know if it's intuitive or if it's just your mind just making you believe. Of course, your mind could go, "my son," and you know in a very sweet way your mind will start talking to you and there's a lot of delusional people out there. However, if you rely on the inner state of joy your mind can't produce that. Only God can give you that.

### *Greater Sense of Self*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one's sense of self as measured through the respondents' self-reporting of their sense of self. To the statement, "I have an improved sense of self," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their sense of self as a result of their meditation was 5.410 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,

$SD = 0.842$ ), and was supported by 86% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of a better sense of self (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that they have a better sense of self as a result of their meditation practices.

Knowing oneself, i.e., one's own thoughts and feelings is critical in decision-making, especially in light of the findings that meditation improves one's intuition, and that meditators frequently can sense others' thoughts and feelings. This increased psychological differentiation, with its accompanying clearer sense of identity and greater awareness of personal feelings and needs as found by Carrington and Ephron (1975) is important in decision-making, because one must know who they are and whose thoughts and feelings they are thinking when making decisions.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported greater optimism and sense of self ( $r = 0.657$ ), indicating that those who are more optimistic, a benefit of meditation, have a greater sense of self. Greater optimism remained strongly significant ( $\beta = .349$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, greater peacefulness, more attentive / alert, more considerate of others, trusting one's self more, being more decisive, trusting one's decisions more, and greater energy.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported more consideration of others' thoughts and feelings and sense of self ( $r = 0.679$ ), indicating that those who are more considerate of others' thoughts and feelings, a benefit of meditation, have a greater

sense of self. More consideration of others' thoughts and feelings remained strongly significant ( $\beta = .436, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, greater peacefulness, more attentive / alert, trusting one's self more, being more decisive, trusting one's decisions more, and greater energy.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported trusting one's self more and sense of self ( $r = 0.547$ ), indicating that those who trust themselves more, a benefit of meditation, have a greater sense of self. Trusting one's self more remained strongly significant ( $\beta = .445, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, greater peacefulness, more attentive / alert, more considerate of others, being more decisive, trusting one's decisions more, and greater energy.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported more decisive and sense of self ( $r = 0.530$ ), indicating that those who are more decisive, a benefit of meditation, have a greater sense of self. More decisive remained strongly significant ( $\beta = .397, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, greater peacefulness, more attentive / alert, more considerate of others, trusting one's self more, trusting one's decisions more, and greater energy.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included David, who stated that he has a better sense of himself, but that it is something that he struggles with. "I'm pretty hard on myself, very judgmental toward myself but I think [meditation] helps me to soften that.

Edward stated that he has “very strong sense of self, and a continuously evolving sense of self.”

Of note, William and Jeremy approached the question of “better sense of self” from a spiritual perspective, i.e., their sense of self comes from identification with the higher Self, the soul, God. William stated that meditation and inner work give one a better sense of your true Self, the soul, “which is, of course, why you feel you are happy, peaceful and selfless.” Jeremy stated that meditation definitely improves sense of Self over time, and that “a more accurate way [of stating this is] that you discover your [true] Self through this process.” These concur with Wilber (1996 p. 110., p. 114.), who stated that meditation is, in the beginning, a method of breaking down the ego and its defenses, or, as he terms it, “conceptual translating”; as meditation continues, the more “resistant aspects of egoic translation” are slowly disassembled and destroyed, allowing for greater and more subtle transformations to take place.

### *More Optimistic*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one’s optimism as measured through the respondents’ self-reporting of their optimism. To the statement, “I am more optimistic,” the mean of respondents’ self-assessment of their being more optimistic as a result of their meditation was 5.420 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.781$ ), and was supported by 84% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, and long- and short-term meditators reported similar levels of optimism, as did Other, Christian, and TM meditators ( $t = ns$ ). However, the difference between the means between Other meditators, and Raja Yoga and Buddhist meditators,

statistically significant; Other type meditators reported being more optimistic than did Raja Yoga ( $t = 2.647, p = .010$ ) and Buddhist meditators ( $t = 2.881, p = .007$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that they are more optimistic as a result of their meditation practices.

This is significant in light of Freeman (1997), Vroom (2002), and Shapiro, Schwartz, and Santerre (2002), who found that meditation improves one's optimism, and Yogananda (1925e), who stated that optimism and positive thinking are key factors in successful decision-making and accomplishing one's goals.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported being happier and being optimistic ( $r = 0.601$ ), indicating that those who are happier, a benefit of meditation, are more optimistic. Being happier remained strongly significant ( $\beta = .296, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, greater peacefulness, more attentive / alert, more considerate of others, being more decisive, greater sense of self, trusting one's decisions more, and greater energy.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported trusting one's decisions more and being optimistic ( $r = 0.549$ ), indicating that those who trust their decision more, a benefit of meditation, are more optimistic. Trusting one's decisions remained strongly significant ( $\beta = .304, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, greater peacefulness, more attentive / alert, more considerate of others, being more decisive, greater sense of self, being happier, and greater energy.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported greater sense of self and being optimistic ( $r = 0.657$ ), indicating that those with a greater sense of self, a benefit of



meditation, are more optimistic ( $\beta = .391, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, greater peacefulness, more attentive / alert, more considerate of others, being more decisive, being happier, trusting one's decisions more, and greater energy.

Those who chose to expound on their optimism spoke from a decidedly spiritual perspective. Walter stated that he is “far more optimistic, and the older I get the more optimistic I get, even if the world seems to be falling apart.”

Jeremy stated that he has “

Divine optimism [which is the ability to stand unshaken amidst] the crash of breaking worlds. I am very positive because I know where I'm going, I've seen where I've come from, and I feel it, I know it as my experience. I don't know it intellectually like, for instance, I got a letter that I may be going to someplace really nice if I'm a good boy and I practice my meditation. No, I know it on a cellular level, [throughout my whole being]. It gives you absolute confidence.

William stated that “I wouldn't call it optimism anymore. You know the fundamental goodness of Reality (God); therefore, you know that that's the only way the journey can ultimately go.”

Table 32

*Means, Standard Deviations and Number of Cases of Optimism by Meditation Type*

| Type Meditation | N  | M     | SD    |
|-----------------|----|-------|-------|
| Buddhist        | 16 | 5.125 | 0.806 |
| Raja Yoga       | 31 | 5.194 | 0.910 |
| TM              | 7  | 5.429 | 0.787 |
| Christian       | 9  | 5.667 | 0.707 |
| Other           | 37 | 5.676 | 0.580 |

Difference of means across groups is statistically significant ( $p = 0.041$ )

$N = 100$

#### *Get Along Better with Others*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one's ability to get along better with others as measured through the respondents' self-reporting of their ability to get along better with others. To the statement, "I get along better with others," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their ability to get along better with others as a result of their meditation was 5.340 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.867$ ), and was supported by 83% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of being able to get along better with others (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

This is significant in light of Schmidt-Wilk's (1996) findings that meditation improved teams' work relationships, communications, and mutual acceptance. The team

members had fewer arguments, along with greater happiness and a more enjoyable family life. Additionally, Bogart (1991) suggested that meditation offers not only the ability to understand but to resolve conflicts between people. Personality factors can have a large effect on decision-making processes, especially in group decision-making scenarios.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported peacefulness and getting along better with others ( $r = 0.671$ ), indicating that those who are more peaceful, a benefit of meditation, get along better with others. Peacefulness remained strongly significant ( $\beta = .201$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, more attentive / alert, more considerate of others, being more decisive, greater sense of self, trusting one's decisions more, and greater energy.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported consideration of others' thoughts and feelings and getting along better with others ( $r = 0.812$ ), indicating that those who are more considerate of others' thoughts and feelings, a benefit of meditation, get along better with others. Consideration of others' thoughts and feelings remained strongly significant ( $\beta = .547$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, more attentive / alert, peacefulness, being more decisive, greater sense of self, trusting one's decisions more, and greater energy.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported sense of self and getting along better with others ( $r = 0.679$ ), indicating that those who have a greater sense of self, a benefit of meditation, get along better with others. Sense of self remained strongly significant ( $\beta = .252$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years

meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, more attentive / alert, more considerate of others, being more decisive, peacefulness, and greater energy.

There was a moderate positive correlation between reported years of longevity meditating and getting along better with others ( $r = 0.189$ ), indicating that the longer one meditates, the more likely they will get along better with others. Longevity of years meditating remained moderately significant ( $\beta = .205, p < .05$ ) even when controlling for gender, and type of meditation practiced.

Table 33

*Analysis of Variance for Getting Along Better with Others*

| Source     | Sum of Squares | DF | Mean Square | F     | p     |
|------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------|
| REGRESSION | 4.686          | 3  | 1.562       | 2.150 | 0.099 |
| RESIDUAL   | 69.754         | 96 | 0.727       |       |       |
| TOTAL      | 74.440         | 99 |             |       |       |

|          | Unstand.b | Stand.Beta | Std.Err.b | t       |
|----------|-----------|------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender   | 0.014     | 0.008      | 0.177     | 0.078   |
| Med Type | 0.120     | 0.164      | 0.075     | 1.597   |
| M Years  | 0.383     | 0.205      | 0.185     | 2.067 * |

N = 100      Missing = 0

Multiple R-Square = 0.063      Y-Intercept = 4.333

Standard error of the estimate = 0.852

LISTWISE deletion (1-tailed test)      Significance Level: \*=.05

*More Considerate of Others' Thoughts and Feelings*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one becoming more considerate of others' thoughts and feelings as measured through the respondents' self-reporting of their being conscious of their thoughts. To the statement, "I am more considerate of others' thoughts and feelings," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their being more considerate of others' thoughts and feelings as a result of their meditation was 5.280 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.911$ ), and was supported by 79% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of being more considerate of others' thoughts and feelings (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that they are more considerate of others' thoughts and feelings as a result of their meditation practices.

This is significant in light of Schmidt-Wilk's (1996) findings that meditation improved teams' work relationships, communications, and mutual acceptance. The team members had fewer arguments, along with greater happiness and a more enjoyable family life. Additionally, Bogart (1991) suggested that meditation offers not only the ability to understand but to resolve conflicts between people. Personality factors can have a large effect on decision-making processes, especially in group decision-making scenarios.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported getting along better with others and consideration of others' thoughts and feelings ( $r = 0.812$ ), indicating that those who get along better with others, a benefit of meditation, are more considerate of

others' thoughts and feelings. Getting along better with others remained strongly significant ( $\beta = .679, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, more attentive / alert, being more decisive, greater sense of self, trusting one's decisions more, greater faith, consciousness on a higher plane, and greater energy.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported seeing more options in decision-making and consideration of others' thoughts and feelings ( $r = 0.812$ ), indicating that those who see more options in decision-making, a benefit of meditation, are more considerate of others' thoughts and feelings. Seeing more options in decision-making remained strongly significant ( $\beta = .164, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, more attentive / alert, being more decisive, greater sense of self, trusting one's decisions more, greater faith, consciousness on a higher plane, and greater energy.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported consciousness on a higher plane and consideration of others' thoughts and feelings ( $r = 0.466$ ), indicating that those whose consciousness is on a higher plane, a benefit of meditation, are more considerate of others' thoughts and feelings. Consciousness on a higher plane remained strongly significant ( $\beta = .179, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, more attentive / alert, being more decisive, greater sense of self, trusting one's decisions more, greater faith, and greater energy.

Taking into account others' thoughts and feelings can promote a more harmonious work environment, and thus improve decision-making. This is significant in

light of Forbes (1999), who found that meditation improved participants' sensitivity toward others and self, and Wilber (1979), who stated that as that person experiences an expansion of consciousness as a result of meditation, they begin to understand that they are part of a larger whole which results in increased empathy to all.

### *Trust Myself More*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one trusting themselves more as measured through the respondents' self-reporting of their trusting themselves more. To the statement, "I trust myself more," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their trusting themselves more as a result of their meditation was 5.600 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.984$ ), and was supported by 90% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of trusting themselves more (for all,  $t = ns$ ). However, women reported trusting themselves more than did men; the difference of the means between men and women was statistically significant ( $t = 2.816$ ,  $p = .006$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that they trust themselves more as a result of their meditation practices.

Trusting oneself more can improve one's decision-making, and usually results in one being willing to risk when it is appropriate to do so. This is significant in light of Schmidt-Wilk (1996), who found meditation improved teams' work relationships with greater trust and individual emotional growth, and with Walsh (1980b) and Wilber (1996) who stated that through the meditative process one becomes more identified with the Self

(soul) and less with the ego; in the subsequent transformation, one gains greater understanding and faith in ourselves, realizing it is a Higher Power that is working through us.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported consciousness of one's actions and trust of oneself ( $r = 0.560$ ), indicating that those who were more conscious of their actions were more trusting of themselves. Consciousness of actions remained a strongly significant predictor of trusting oneself ( $\beta = .217, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, more decisive, focus and concentration, trusting intuition and decisions, knowing answers more quickly, consciousness on a higher plane, and greater energy.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported knowing answers to questions more quickly and trusting oneself ( $r = 0.630$ ), indicating that those who knew the answers to questions more quickly were more trusting of themselves. Knowing answers more quickly remained a strongly significant predictor of trusting oneself ( $\beta = .236, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, more decisive, focus and concentration, trusting intuition and decisions, consciousness on a higher plane, and greater energy.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported sense of self and trusting oneself ( $r = 0.547$ ), indicating that those with a greater sense of self were more trusting of themselves. Sense of self remained a strongly significant predictor of trusting oneself ( $\beta = .326, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, optimism, focus and concentration, trusting intuition



and decisions, knowing answers more quickly, consciousness on a higher plane, and greater energy.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported trusting decisions and trusting oneself ( $r = 0.651$ ), indicating that those who trusted their decisions more were more trusting of themselves. Trusting of decisions remained a strongly significant predictor of trusting oneself ( $\beta = .217, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, more decisive, focus and concentration, trusting intuition, knowing answers more quickly, consciousness on a higher plane, and greater energy.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included Mary, who stated that

I have a deep sense of trust now that I didn't, and I also trust my intuition to lead me. I feel my conscious mind is a better follower instead of trying to take the lead. That was a shift, a definite shift I remember when that occurred.

Edward stated that

I do trust myself more, and in part it's meditation and in part its that I accept myself more and I actually love myself more. The science of meditation is that after so many years and so many thousands and thousands of hours of meditation, the consequences of that is I do trust myself more. And part of it is that I put myself to a challenge every day or many days a week in that I sit here for an hour and not move. That creates a lot of trust because I know that I'll follow through.

David stated that he trusted himself more, but that "again, I have this problem with being too judgmental, even toward myself, and so it definitely slows me down in trusting myself sometimes, but I think it's probably improved with meditation."

*Reported Psychological Benefits of Meditation – Others*

There was anecdotal evidence from the interviews that one's meditation practice affects others. All interviewees had stories to this end; most came from the obvious result of the meditators' changes in themselves, e.g., the outpouring of love and service that Alexis gives a Mexican woman burn victim, her family, and others in their community; and the establishment of an ethics program at a school within Joshua's school district. However, Samuel and Scott had tangible stories of how their meditation practice had created changes in people and situations.

Samuel stated that his work had created a shift in the consciousness at his work environment and in the personalities of the people with whom he worked. He stated

People at my work tell me they always feel calmer in my presence. They can trust me faster. I worked in setting up a [mental health] unit in a California prison. First time we were there I read every article I could find on treatment at prisons. And when I designed the program it got accepted. They said, "OK, we'll give you 88 guys: 1/3 are Cripps gang members, 1/3 are neo-Nazi skinheads, and 1/3 are Mexican mafia. See if you can do something with that group." We created one of the best programs they had ever seen in the state prison system. Now, I thought that that was a fluke until I worked for another organization, created the same thing and then I created the same thing with the men I work with now.

Scott talked about a work situation that he had in which his boss' personality changed as a result of his meditation. He said,

[when] I got back to the office I had a very calm demeanor and it was an honest calm. My boss, who was a very high-strung individual, was talking in a very calm language and presenting this to me in a way that I knew that everything was handled. You know that it could be done very, very directly. My meditation calmed me down, and it affected my boss as well, I'm convinced it did. I'm sure that during the time I was meditating he probably was, you know, getting a lot more clarity in his thinking as well.

This is significant in light of Schmidt-Wilk's (1996) findings that meditation improved teams' work relationships, communications, and mutual acceptance. The team

members had fewer arguments, along with greater happiness and a more enjoyable family life. Additionally, Bogart (1991) suggested that meditation offers not only the ability to understand but to resolve conflicts between people. Personality factors can have a large effect on decision-making processes, especially in group decision-making scenarios.

### *Reported Physiological Benefits of Meditation*

#### *Reduction of Stress*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on the reduction of stress as measured through the self-reporting of the respondents' stress levels. To the statement, "my stress is reduced," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their reduction of stress as a result of their meditation was 5.570 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = .671$ ).

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of stress-reduction (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 stated that their stress is reduced as a result of their meditation practices.

This concurs with Kabat-Zinn et al.'s (1998) and Benson's (1974) findings that meditation reduces stress, and is especially important in light of Janis and Mann's (1977) and Baradell and Klein's (1993) findings that decisions made under stress can frequently lead to a failure to consider all options, poor information processing, and hypervigilance and rapid shifting between options.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported greater peacefulness and less stress ( $r = 0.555$ ), indicating that those who are more peaceful, a benefit of meditation, are less stressed. Greater peacefulness remained a strongly significant

predictor ( $\beta = .355$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, optimism, greater energy, better health and greater sense of self.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported greater energy and being less stressed ( $r = 0.536$ ), indicating that those who have greater energy, a benefit of meditation, are less stressed. Greater energy remained strongly significant ( $\beta = .281$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, health, focus, and optimism.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported decisiveness and less stressed ( $r = 0.440$ ), indicating that those who are more decisive, a benefit of meditation, are less stressed. Being more decisive remained a strongly significant predictor ( $\beta = .278$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, optimism, alertness, and conscious of thoughts.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported attentiveness / alertness and less stressed ( $r = 0.539$ ), indicating that those who are more attentive / alert, a benefit of meditation, are less stressed. Being more attentive / alert remained a strongly significant predictor ( $\beta = .357$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, optimism, decisiveness, and conscious of thoughts.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included Edward, who stated that “I think that the decisions that I make under duress are definitely flawed, so when I am able to be more relaxed or calm about a process I really make good decisions.”

Mary stated

the therapist said I needed to learn to sit still, [that] I was like a spring wound too tight. She suggested that I try meditation and she said [to] just sit still and let your mind go. I had a very difficult time with that in the beginning, [but] then I started to rely on it to calm down and feel like I had a better handle on things.

### *Greater Energy*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one's having greater energy as measured through the self-reporting of the respondents' energy levels. To the statement, "I have greater energy," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their improved energy levels as a result of their meditation was 5.290 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = .856$ ), and was supported by 83% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of greater energy (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

This is significant in light of Yogananda (1925e), who stated that when people have low energy, their ability to intuit is impaired, a critical factor in intuitive decision-making.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported better health and greater energy ( $r = 0.626$ ), indicating that those who are healthier, a benefit of meditation, have greater energy. Better health remained a strongly significant predictor ( $\beta = .439$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, alertness, and optimism.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported trusting one's own decisions more and greater energy ( $r=0.626$ ), indicating that those who trust their

decisions more, a benefit of meditation, have greater energy. Greater trust of one's own decisions remained a strongly significant predictor ( $\beta=.439$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, conscious of own thoughts, knowing answers more quickly, alertness, and optimism.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported knowing answers more quickly and greater energy ( $r=0.606$ ), indicating that those who are quicker to know answers in decision-making, a benefit of meditation, have greater energy. Quicker to know answers remained a strongly significant predictor ( $\beta=.439$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, conscious of own thoughts, alertness / attentiveness, and focus.

Anecdotal comments included Alexis, who said that meditation is the only way she knows to control the tremendous energy that she has. She stated, "When I look at the implementation of programs, my evaluations say that I constantly do the work of more than two people, two other employees."

Samuel stated that "I have more energy" during the day as a result of his morning meditation.

### *Health Benefits*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on health as measured through the self-reporting of the respondents' health. To the statement, "I have improved health," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their improvement of their health as a result of their meditation was 5.300 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = .798$ ), and was supported by 81% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of benefits to their health (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15 interviews, all 15 stated that their health has improved as a result of their meditation practices.

This is significant in light of previous research by Tancer (1990), Murphy (2001), Coates (1969), and Lesikar (2000) who found that sickness or illness had negative effects on cognition, and on Yogananda (1925e), who stated that when people have health challenges, their ability to intuit is impaired.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported greater energy and better health ( $r = 0.626$ ), indicating that those who have greater energy, a benefit of meditation, will have better health. Greater energy remained a strongly significant predictor ( $\beta = .526, p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, alertness, and peacefulness.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported peacefulness and better health ( $r = 0.545$ ), indicating that those who are more peaceful, a benefit of meditation, will have better health. Peacefulness remained a moderately significant predictor ( $\beta = .190, ^{\dagger} p < .05$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, alertness, creativity, and peacefulness.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported abilities to sense others' thoughts and feelings and better health ( $r = 0.500$ ), indicating that those who have greater energy, a benefit of meditation, will have better health. The ability to sense others' thoughts and feelings remained a moderately significant predictor ( $\beta = .278, p < .05$ ) even

when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, health, optimism, alertness, creativity, and decisiveness.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported abilities to see more options in decision-making ( $r = 0.495$ ), indicating that those who have greater energy, a benefit of meditation, will have better health. The ability to see more options in decision-making remained a moderately significant predictor ( $\beta = .199$ ,  $p < .05$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, less stress, health, optimism, alertness, creativity, and decisiveness.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included Samuel who attributed better health to his beginning mediation. He had been under stress in his job as a hospital administrator and had acquired an eye tic and a muscle spasm in my neck. He said,

I didn't want to go to a doctor and spend \$200 and be prescribed Valium, so I asked a friend of mine what I could do. She [recommended] yoga... and three weeks later no muscle spasm and no eye tic.

William that he become coordinated after years of being uncoordinated. He stated

I was very, very klutzy as a kid and a young college student, but within 3 weeks of learning to meditate and meditating, my reaction time became like lightening. It integrated my unconscious and conscious mind with the Ultimate Consciousness, and my coordination became almost perfect.

Joshua attributed his stopping drinking to his meditative practice. He had been meditating for about 5 years, but was still living the 1980s "crazy life as a single person."

He stated

I absolutely attribute my decision [to stop drinking to meditation]. I think it came in 1983 when I made a final decision to stop. I can attribute it directly to positive results of this meditation process . . . if I take my life now back to where it began I think the first step in that process was learning to meditate. There's absolutely no doubt in my mind.



### *Reported Spiritual Benefits of Meditation*

Although there are many benefits to one's physiological, psychological, intuitive, and decision-making capabilities, meditation is primarily a spiritual practice, and its benefits are spiritual in nature. Among these are greater faith, one's consciousness on a higher plane, and greater attunement with God / Higher Truth / Spirit; whatever name you call Him.

Although these benefits may not directly influence decision-making, they at least have a tangential effect and have been included.

#### *Greater Faith*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on one's faith as measured through the respondents' self-reporting of their faith. To the statement, "I have greater faith," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their faith as a result of their meditation was 5.330 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 1.111$ ), and was supported by 82% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range.

If one was to eliminate 4 people who, based on their responses to the survey, were suspected agnostics or atheists, the mean rises to 5.500 ( $N = 96$ ,  $SD = 0.740$ ), a significant change.

Men and women, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of benefits to having greater faith (for all,  $t = ns$ ). However, long-term meditators reported greater faith than did short-term meditators; the difference of the means between long- and short-term meditators was statistically significant ( $t = 2.436$ ,  $p = .017$ ).

There was a strong positive correlation between reported consideration of others' thoughts and feelings and greater faith ( $r = 0.457$ ), indicating that those who were more considerate of others' thoughts and feelings had greater faith. Consideration of others' thoughts and feelings remained a strongly significant predictor of greater faith ( $\beta = .256$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, sensing others' thoughts and feelings, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, knowing the answers to decisions more quickly, seeing more options in decision-making, trusting decisions, trusting oneself, trusting intuition, consciousness on a higher plane, and higher attunement.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported consciousness on a higher plane and greater faith ( $r = 0.619$ ), indicating that those whose consciousness was on a higher plane had greater faith. Consciousness on a higher plane remained a moderately significant predictor of greater faith ( $\beta = .239$ ,  $p < .05$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, sensing others' thoughts and feelings, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, knowing the answers to decisions more quickly, seeing more options in decision-making, trusting decisions, trusting oneself, trusting intuition, more considerate, and higher attunement.

There was a strong positive correlation between reported attunement and greater faith ( $r = 0.624$ ), indicating that those who were more attuned had greater faith. Attunement remained a strongly significant predictor of greater faith ( $\beta = .421$ ,  $p < .01$ ) even when controlling for gender, longevity of years meditating, type of meditation practice, sensing others' thoughts and feelings, being conscious of one's thoughts and actions, knowing the answers to decisions more quickly, seeing more options in decision-

making, trusting decisions, trusting oneself, trusting intuition, consciousness on a higher plane, and consideration.

Table 34

*Meditation and Greater Faith*

| Category             | Freq. | %                 | Cum.%          | Z-Score |
|----------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------|---------|
| 1) Fully Disagree    | 3     | 3.0               | 3.0            | -3.899  |
| 2) Mostly Disagree   | 1     | 1.0               | 4.0            | -2.998  |
| 3) Somewhat Disagree | 0     | 0                 | 0              | 0       |
| 4) Somewhat Agree    | 14    | 14.0              | 18.0           | -1.198  |
| 5) Mostly Agree      | 20    | 20.0              | 38.0           | -0.297  |
| 6) Fully Agree       | 62    | 62.0              | 100.0          | 0.603   |
| <i>M</i> = 5.330     |       | <i>SD</i> = 1.111 | <i>N</i> = 100 |         |
| <i>Mdn</i> = 6.000   |       | Variance = 1.233  | Missing = 0    |         |

Table 35

*Meditation and Greater Faith: Subsets*

| Category           | Freq. | %                 | Cum.%         | Z-Score |
|--------------------|-------|-------------------|---------------|---------|
| 4) Somewhat Agree  | 14    | 14.6              | 14.6          | -2.027  |
| 5) Mostly Agree    | 20    | 20.8              | 35.4          | -0.676  |
| 6) Fully Agree     | 62    | 64.6              | 100.0         | 0.676   |
| <i>M</i> = 5.500   |       | <i>SD</i> = 0.740 | <i>N</i> = 96 |         |
| <i>Mdn</i> = 6.000 |       | Variance = 0.547  | Missing = 4   |         |

### *Raising One's Consciousness*

One of the key benefits of meditation is its effect on raising one's consciousness. Meditation was found to have a significant effect on raising one's level of consciousness as measured through the self-reporting of the respondents' level of consciousness. To the statement, "My consciousness is on a higher plane," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their consciousness on a higher plane as a result of their meditation was 5.360 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.927$ ), and was supported by 83% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range. If one was to eliminate 4 people who, based on their responses to the survey, were suspected agnostics or atheists, the mean rises to 5.479 ( $N = 96$ ,  $SD = 0.725$ ), a significant change.

Men and women, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of benefits to their having a higher consciousness (for all,  $t = ns$ ). However, long-term meditators reported their consciousness on a higher plane than did short-term meditators; the difference of the means between long- and short-term meditators was statistically significant ( $t = 2.091$ ,  $p = .039$ ).

Table 36

*Meditation and Higher Consciousness*

| Category             | Freq. | %                  | Cum.% | Z-Score        |
|----------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|----------------|
| 1) Fully Disagree    | 0     | 0                  | 0     | 0              |
| 2) Mostly Disagree   | 2     | 2.0                | 2.0   | -3.625         |
| 3) Somewhat Disagree | 2     | 2.0                | 4.0   | -2.546         |
| 4) Somewhat Agree    | 13    | 13.0               | 17.0  | -1.467         |
| 5) Mostly Agree      | 24    | 24.0               | 41.0  | -0.388         |
| 6) Fully Agree       | 59    | 59.0               | 100.0 | 0.691          |
| <i>M</i> = 5.360     |       | <i>SD</i> =: 0.927 |       | <i>N</i> = 100 |
| <i>Mdn</i> = 6.000   |       | Variance = 0.859   |       | Missing = 0    |

Table 37

*Meditation and Higher Consciousness: Subset*

| Category           | Freq. | %                 | Cum.% | Z-Score       |
|--------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|---------------|
| 4) Somewhat Agree  | 13    | 13.5              | 13.5  | -2.040        |
| 5) Mostly Agree    | 24    | 25.0              | 38.5  | -0.661        |
| 6) Fully Agree     | 59    | 61.5              | 100.0 | 0.718         |
| <i>M</i> = 5.479   |       | <i>SD</i> = 0.725 |       | <i>N</i> = 96 |
| <i>Mdn</i> = 6.000 |       | Variance = 0.526  |       | Missing = 4   |

*Greater Attunement with God/Guru/Higher Power*

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on raising one's attunement to God as measured through the self-reporting of the respondents' level of attunement. To the statement, "I have deeper attunement with God / Guru / Higher Power," the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their attunement as a result of their meditation was 5.510 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.980$ ), and was supported by 92% of the 100 survey respondents who scored in the 5-6 range. The standard deviation was .980. If one was to eliminate 3 people who, based on their responses to the survey, were suspected agnostics or atheists, the mean raises to 5.639 ( $N = 97$ ,  $SD = 0.648$ ), a significant change.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of benefits to being more attuned (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

Table 38

*Meditation and Attunement with God/Guru/Higher Power*

| Category             | Freq. | %                | Cum.%       | Z-Score |
|----------------------|-------|------------------|-------------|---------|
| 1) Fully Disagree    | 2     | 2.0              | 2.0         | -4.604  |
| 2) Mostly Disagree   | 1     | 1.0              | 3.0         | -3.583  |
| 3) Somewhat Disagree | 2     | 2.0              | 5.0         | -2.562  |
| 4) Somewhat Agree    | 3     | 3.0              | 8.0         | -1.542  |
| 5) Mostly Agree      | 23    | 23.0             | 31.0        | -0.521  |
| 6) Fully Agree       | 69    | 69.0             | 100.0       | 0.500   |
| $M = 5.510$          |       | $SD = 0.980$     | $N = 100$   |         |
| $Mdn = 6.000$        |       | Variance = 0.959 | Missing = 0 |         |

Table 39

*Meditation and Attunement: Subset*

| Category             | Freq. | %                 | Cum.% | Z-Score       |
|----------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|---------------|
| 3) Somewhat Disagree | 2     | 2.1               | 2.1   | -4.070        |
| 4) Somewhat Agree    | 3     | 3.1               | 5.2   | -2.528        |
| 5) Mostly Agree      | 23    | 23.7              | 28.9  | -0.986        |
| 6) Fully Agree       | 69    | 71.1              | 100.0 | 0.556         |
| <i>M</i> = 5.639     |       | <i>SD</i> = 0.648 |       | <i>N</i> = 97 |
| <i>Mdn</i> = 6.000   |       | Variance = 0.421  |       | Missing = 3   |

### Theme 3: Reported Effects of Meditation on Profits

Question #3. What are executive meditators' experiences of the effects of meditation on profits?

There were no quantitative data for the research question "What are executive meditators' experiences of the effects of meditation on profits"? However, there were ample qualitative data to analyze, interpret, and discuss the question of meditation and its perceived effects on profits.

Of the 15-participants, 13 stated that they experience greater profits in their "business lives" as a result of their meditative practices, and 2 were neutral. Of the 2 neutral, 1 did not directly address business finances but rather personal finances, and the other could not make the correlation because, as she said, "I've been blessed with abundance my whole life, and money comes in at the will of Spirit." Of the 15, 8 were in for-profit businesses, and 7 in government, nonprofit, or NGOs.

Table 40

#### *Phase 2 Participant Position by Industry*

| Position          | Business | Government | Nonprofit | NGO | TOTAL |
|-------------------|----------|------------|-----------|-----|-------|
| Senior Management | 7        | 0          | 0         | 2   | 9     |
| Director          | 0        | 2          | 0         | 0   | 2     |
| Manager           | 1        | 1          | 0         | 0   | 2     |
| Minister          | 0        | 0          | 0         | 1   | 1     |
| Senior Educator   | 0        | 1          | 0         | 0   | 1     |
| TOTAL             | 8        | 4          | 0         | 3   | 15    |

*N* = 15



Table 41

*Phase 2 Male Participant Position by Industry*

| Position          | Business | Nonprofit | Government | NGO | TOTAL |
|-------------------|----------|-----------|------------|-----|-------|
| Senior Management | 4        | 0         | 0          | 2   | 6     |
| Director          | 0        | 0         | 1          | 0   | 1     |
| Manager           | 1        | 0         | 0          | 0   | 1     |
| Minister          | 0        | 0         | 0          | 0   | 0     |
| Senior Educator   | 0        | 0         | 1          | 0   | 1     |
| TOTAL             | 5        | 0         | 2          | 2   | 9     |

 $N = 9$ 

Table 42

*Phase 2 Female Participant Position by Industry*

| Position          | Business | Nonprofit | Government | NGO | TOTAL |
|-------------------|----------|-----------|------------|-----|-------|
| Senior Management | 3        | 0         | 0          | 0   | 3     |
| Director          | 0        | 0         | 1          | 0   | 1     |
| Manager           | 0        | 0         | 1          | 0   | 1     |
| Minister          | 0        | 0         | 0          | 1   | 1     |
| Senior Educator   | 0        | 0         | 0          | 0   | 0     |
| TOTAL             | 3        | 0         | 2          | 1   | 6     |

 $N = 6$

*For Profit Businesses*

Seven of the 8 stated that they have seen increased revenues and/or profits in their businesses as a result of their meditations, with 1 neutral. Of note, 6 of the 8 that attributed increased profits to their meditative practices have direct control of their firms' bottom lines, and come from the demographic of senior management.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included Rachel, who stated that her business profits have increased dramatically.

It's the meditation, because I'm clear on what to pick, and what to go after, and I get inspired thoughts to do certain things, and they're well received. I'm not looking [for more business], it's like creating the business from the center out, vs. trying to look out what kind of business should I have to match the people around me, or to match the economy, or to match the industries.

Jeffrey stated that

I would say that the more I meditate the more money I am able to produce. There are others I've watched with actually zero effect. But for myself, I believe if I was able to stay home and meditate hours in the morning and hours in the evening I think the company would make more money. At one time in my life I had that opportunity and [the company was very successful and profitable.]

Scott, a manager at his consulting firm, directly attributed his input regarding his firm not taking a particular contract which subsequently became litigious to his meditation; had his firm taken the contract, they potentially would have realized significant losses. Although this correlation between meditation practice and profits is less clear than others, it was considered a positive.

While Emily did have direct control over her firm's bottom line, she was neutral with respect to attributing greater profits to her meditation practices, even though her entire business is based on her intuitive skills. She stated that she felt that she had always

been very blessed with abundance, and could not separate her profits from her meditation practice, believing that profits come as grace from Spirit. Of note, the two times in her life that she had no business, both of those times were instances when she was going through particularly difficult times (burnout and injury / sickness), and there were good reasons for her not to be working.

Joshua fit the demographic of both for-profit and government, but was counted as business for demographic reasons because his current position is that of a consultant. Formerly the superintendent of a large school district, he was able to attribute the success of his consulting practice and the turnaround of the school system directly to his meditation practice. In his consulting practice, he stated that he gets the guidance that he asks for in writing his books, both of which have been very successful.

Joshua also directly attributes the turning around a school system to his meditation practice. He stated,

[when] I got much more serious about my meditation practice... [the] school district took off and produced and had happy teachers and cooperation with the teachers and union [even in heavy serious negotiations]. Academic achievement improved steadily. My leadership style began to change significantly from the kick butt, take names, fire people who weren't doing, to transition into a leadership style that supported people. I [began to] use meditation often to solve problems such as what's the best approach, what makes sense . . . there were several decisions that came directly out of me taking the time to ask my inner wisdom and Spirit [for] guidance.

#### *Nonprofit, Government, and NGOs*

For the 7 interviewees who were from non-profits, government and NGOs, the results were equally as conclusive. Of the 7, 6 stated that they have seen increased profits which they directly attribute to their meditation practices, and 1 was neutral.

Alexis stated that she continually received intuitive guidance both in and out of her meditations on the administration of ESL and bilingual education programs for migrants, immigrants, and their children.

the programs have grown and are benefiting society as a whole. . . . If migrants and immigrants and their children can read and write, and get some education and a better job, they're not going to be stealing your tires. They're not going to be breaking into your house out of need, sometimes, because they have to feed their families. How will you get them there? You start with the ABC's. The programs better educate the children and the families, [and once] they learn to solve problems, which is part of the classes too, they become better citizens and participants in society here, wherever they live.

Samuel saw that the program that he started in one the California prisons had the lowest recidivism of any in that state, and those results lasted 2 years after the program was closed down.

David was neutral in his response. While he did not speak directly to his meditative practice and his business profits, he indicated that even though his life had been “profitable” financially and that he and his wife had always been able to meet their bills and had never had a problem with their finances or their credit, they have never been blessed with an overabundance of money.

Very clearly, these participants see a relationship between their meditative practices and their profits, whether they were in for-profit, government, nonprofit or NGO industry.

#### Theme 4: Reported Effects of Meditation on Ethics

Question #4. What are executive meditators' experiences of the effects of meditation on ethics?

Meditation was found to have a significant effect on ethics as measured through the self-reporting of the respondents' ethics. To the statement, "Overall, the decisions that I make since beginning to meditate are..." the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their ethical decision-making since beginning to meditate was 5.240 out of a possible 6 ( $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.818$ ).

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of ethical decision-making (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

The qualitative interviews agreed with the survey results. Of the 15-interviewees, 93% (14 of 15) indicated that meditation has had a strong, positive effect on their ethics and making ethical decisions, and one indicated that it may have had an influence. Not surprising, many of their answers related to spirituality, as meditation is known and used by them as a spiritual practice.

The use of meditation to help one make more ethical decisions is extremely important in light of today's business and governmental climates which at time appear to be devoid of ethical decision-making. This is significant in light of La Forge's (1997) findings which were, as one found their true Self, they also found their own personal values and ethics, and were in concert with higher spiritual ethical behavior. Goleman (1988) stated that in the process of meditation, purity, concentration, and insight arise; first by strength of will, then by the interiorization of the consciousness.

However, there is a significant difference between La Forge's findings and these findings. La Forge used what he termed "semi-discursive" meditation, i.e., meditation that uses in part logic, imaginative and artistic thinking, whereas yoga meditation, Zen, and the other forms of meditation as defined by Goleman as concentrative and integrative are focused on God.

Table 43

*Meditation and Ethics*

| Category                      | Freq. | %                 | Cum.%          | Z-Score |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------|---------|
| 1) Significantly Less Ethical | 0     | 0                 | 0              | 0       |
| 2) Mostly Less Ethical        | 0     | 0                 | 0              | 0       |
| 3) Somewhat Less Ethical      | 0     | 0                 | 0              | 0       |
| 4) Somewhat More Ethical      | 24    | 24.0              | 24.0           | -1.516  |
| 5) Mostly More Ethical        | 28    | 28.0              | 52.0           | -0.293  |
| 6) Significantly More Ethical | 48    | 48.0              | 100.0          | 0.929   |
| <i>M</i> = 5.240              |       | <i>SD</i> = 0.818 | <i>N</i> = 100 |         |
| <i>Mdn</i> = 5.000            |       | Variance = 0.669  | Missing = 0    |         |

Participants gave many explanations as to why meditation was so effective in promoting and instilling ethics in people which require examination of both the qualitative and quantitative data. Most were of a spiritual nature, relating to their identification with the higher Self, God, Spirit, Higher Power. Many interviewees suggested that they are able to know that they are part of a larger whole, and from this

knowing, have come to realize that they can not or will not do anything unethical that would hurt either themselves or others.

Anecdotal comments from the interviews included Joshua, who stated that prior to establishing a meditation practice, most of his decisions had been made based on how best to boost his own career and ego gratification,. When he began using meditation “in a serious way to implement changes in the school system, [he] was sure that the ethics of the entire leadership of the organization changed as a result of [his] changes.” He also related a story of a principal in his district who had implemented an ethics program as a result of Joshua’s mentoring that soon became a requirement for every teacher and student in that school.

Jeffrey stated that

For me it’s been a product of meditation. I find it hard to perform acts that would be incredibly beneficial financially for the business at the expense of people, and a lot of times that has maybe hindered enormous financial growth, but I’ve told you already I’ve never been a believer that the ends justify the means.

Of note, Jeffrey stated that he was unable to behave a different way in business than he could in his personal life. “. . . if I cannot behave the same at home with my family, at church, and in business, I have a flawed business paradigm.”

Corrine, speaking like most in the group, took it a step further, stating that

I think it’s impossible to be unethical when you’re tapped into your true Self, because, to me, unethical has to do with fear, a sense that there’s not enough for me, and I have to get it in some way [which] leads to attacking and defending and maneuvering and manipulating. Meditation dissolves some of the ego barriers we have between ourselves and other people, and you feel more of what they call oneness.

Edward had a decidedly spiritual bent toward the reasons he was ethical.

My intention is to be able to sit and meditate and have as quick an access to that altered state or to mindfulness. . . . The more I have on my mind . . . guilt, shame, anger, fear, to name a few of the effects of unethical behavior . . . that's what I'm meditating on. Essentially my body, my mind is full of guilt, shame, fear, anger. It's not worth my meditative time to waste it on shame, fear, guilt, and anger, so it's easy for me to live the code of ethics that I can live with and be in harmony with my existence, so when I'm meditating I'm not wasting my time, my rare time to devote my spiritual enlightenment.

My code of ethics is informed by my spiritual beliefs and that is to say that it's Buddhism. It's compassion and non-violence. . . . I want to live [my] life where I continue toward enlightenment, and support all other beings to be happy to live towards their enlightenment, so ethical behavior is that which aligns with those two principles, and unethical behavior would diminish that capacity for myself and others. In other words, if I'm acting in a way that's harmful or painful to myself or others, that is unethical.

David was the one interviewee who could only partially correlate his ethics to meditation. Although he stated that meditation had helped to develop his ethical standards, he stated that he had high ethical standards before beginning to meditate, and that he was unable to readily discern as to whether or not meditation had any effect on his ethics (even though he admitted that as a child there were times when he had been “less than ethical.”) He stated,

I think a lot of [my ethical behavior] I must've developed from previous incarnations. I have a really strong desire, it's very intense, to relieve suffering and to promote happiness in people. It's very intense. Whenever I've done something that I feel like I've hurt somebody it really, it makes me hurt a lot. I can't stand it. It really, really hurts me if I know that I've hurt somebody. Even if I know that I had to do it. . . . I'm not saying that I was a little kid out of the womb being totally honest. I remember lying many times when I was a kid. I remember I was able to get the teacher's answer book to my 6th grade math class. I had that thing, but you know what? I couldn't use it. I could not use that thing. My conscience would not let me. I felt so horrible having it so I threw the thing away because I just, you know, for whatever reason, I had that conscience. I thank God for it. It's wonderful to have a conscience but where it came from I don't really know.



## Theme 5: Origins and Training of Intuition

Question #5. What are executive meditators' beliefs on the origins of intuition?

What are executive meditators' experiences of the effects of meditation on training one's intuition?

### *Believed Origins of Intuition*

From the Phase 2 qualitative interviews, participants clearly believe that intuition comes from a source other than conscious thinking or sensing, which is significant in light of Yogananda's model of the sources of knowledge, i.e., thinking, sensing, and intuition (Yogananda, 1925c). All 15 interviewees indicated the origin of intuition is spiritual in nature, regardless of how it manifests, and it comes from their soul, Higher Power, Consciousness, or other words synonymous with God or a higher spiritual Consciousness or Being.

However, one participant, a Buddhist meditator, stated that intuition comes from cognitive (conscious and subconscious), experience, and spiritual.

Participants reported that when they access their intuition, they generally are in an "altered state of consciousness," which, upon deeper inquiry, was equated by the participants as a meditative state or higher state of consciousness.

Interesting enough, there was no difference in the beliefs of the origins of meditation between type meditation practiced; any differences there were could be attributed to cognitive styles and not meditation type. This is based primarily on the responses of the remaining 14 participants, which included 2 of the 3 Buddhist meditators, and the remaining 12 participants who practiced concentrative types of

meditation, i.e., Raja Yoga, Transcendental Meditation, Christian, and Other (Jewish and self-taught styles of meditation); all were solidly (14 of 14) in the God-origin camp.

Anecdotal comments included Corrine, a TM practitioner, who stated that intuition comes from Consciousness, or what many call God, and is accessed through “higher states of consciousness.” She further states that

[these higher states] are a natural state in all of us, but people who meditate tend to have access to it more readily. It’s buried in people whose minds are too cluttered up with thought. . . . but once you clear and slow the thought processes down then what was already there becomes conscious. The door opens between the conscious mind and the rest of you I call it. So I think [this Consciousness] is in everybody.

Jeremy stated that intuition comes from the soul. “It’s an awareness of our God-self, when the ego quiets down.” When asked about the origins with respect to the physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual, he stated,

it’s like Giuseppe shows us in the movie *The Reluctant Saint*, that he takes the blanket for the bishop and folds it in three parts: Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost. It’s all one blanket. So [there is] one intuition as I described earlier. When you’re having emotions around things and you get an intuitional window and you feel something the emotions will express. If you’re having an experience, a mental experience or a physical experience, and you’ve touched your intuition there, then it’ll express and deal with it, an expression, that way. There’s only one God, one intuition, one soul that you are. And it will express itself in those different ways that we divide up and call separate things physical, mental, emotional, spiritual. It is not [different], to my perspective it’s the one blanket.

This is in opposition to Vaughan (1979), who intimated that the different levels of intuitional awareness (physical, emotional, mental and spiritual) specifically apply to those areas. Jeremy and others clearly state that the origin of intuition is spiritual, and that intuitional cues can manifest in many ways; physical intuitional cues need not be only for physical things.

Kristin stated that “intuition for me is being in touch with your soul, with who you are, with your eternal enlightened aspect of your being. That’s why I say it’s always right because it’s Eternity. Eternity’s always right.”

Rachel, perhaps, states the origins of intuition the most clearly in relating a story which occurred when she first began to meditate.

I was in a lot of pain, and I was screaming out to God, "Where are you? I'm here, I'm praying, I'm doing everything. Why aren't you helping me?" And God screams back, "Because you're not meditating. You need to clear your mind so you can hear me. You're praying, I can hear all that, but you can't hear my response over all the din in your mind." It's not a word I would use. That was an interesting thing. And that was the beginning of me taking [meditation] much more seriously.

Edward, a Buddhist male, was the 1 interviewee who attributed the source of intuition to be other than spiritual, stating that he believed that this intuition was a combination of cognitive (conscious and subconscious), experience, and spiritual.

At first brush, this researcher assumed that this difference was attributed to his type meditation practiced, because he practiced an integrated type of meditation, i.e., Vipassana Buddhist. However, upon deeper examination that included survey, field notes and researcher recollections, this initial conclusion was believed to be erroneous. Quantitative data showed that Edward’s decision-making style was markedly more rational than intuitive; Edward self-rated himself a “4”, i.e., using his intuition in decision-making 51-75% of the time, ( $M = 4.430$ ,  $SD = 0.935$ ,  $N = 100$ ), and the remaining 14 participants scored significantly higher than the mean ( $M = 4.643$ ,  $SD = 0.633$ ,  $N = 14$ ). Additionally, my field notes and initial conclusions indicated Edward’s predisposition toward rational thinking. Thus, I concluded that Edward’s

primary decision-making style is rational-intuitive, and his beliefs on the origin of intuition mirror his decision-making style.

### *Reported Training of Intuition*

There were two primary themes that underscored the training of one's intuition that could be summed up as contemplative, i.e., meditation and introspection, or applied creative thinking, i.e., positive thinking, workshops and seminars, visualization, reading, inner listening, mindfulness, or journaling. Table 44 gives the breakdown of percentages of the tools that respondents stated they use for developing their intuition.

Table 44

#### *Tools Used for Developing Intuition.*

| Theme                     | Tool                  | Percentage of Respondents Using This Technique |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Contemplative             | Meditation            | 94   |
|                           | Introspection         | 68   |
| Applied Creative Thinking | Positive Thinking     | 51   |
|                           | Workshops or Seminars | 31   |
|                           | Visualization         | 47   |
|                           | Other                 | 28   |

$N = 100$

The preponderance of respondents use contemplative practices for training their intuition; 94% of participants ( $N = 100$ ) stated that they use meditation as a method for developing their intuition, and 51% stated that they use introspection as a tool for developing their intuition. However, a statistically significant number answered in the affirmative as to using positive thinking (51%) and visualization (47%) for training their intuition.

These data were corroborated by the qualitative interviews. Of the 15 Phase 2 participants, all stated that their intuition has increased over the years, and 94% (14 of 15, 1 neutral) attribute this to their meditative practices, stating that meditation has calmed / stilled their mind which is instrumental in accessing their intuition.

Corrine stated that

Meditation [develops] peaceful minds. [Intuition] is buried in people whose minds are too cluttered up with thought. You can't access [your intuition] if you're thinking all the time, but once you clear and slow the thought processes down [through meditation], then what was already there becomes conscious.

Mary stated that “the more experienced I am at listening to my [intuition], the less I can get off track.”

The data confirms Yogananda and others who suggested that to developing soul-born intuition, meditation is key, as it quiets the mind and enables deep concentration so as to “tune in” and receive the intuition born of the soul. Yogananda further stated that intuitive consciousness is attained by meditation, and that deep calmness is a natural sequel to intuition (Forbes, 1999; Levin, 1997; Sherman, 1994; Skaret, 1993; Vaughan, 1979; Yogananda, 1995).

Another theme in training one's intuition was the necessity of trusting, using, and following through on one's intuition. Sixty-seven percent (10 of 15) interviewees stated that it is critical to use, listen, and follow-through on intuitive guidance. Edward, in anecdotal comments that are representative of most all the interviewees, stated that developing his intuition is analogous to developing a friendship, in that

the more I demonstrated affection towards this friend and followed through on its sage advice, the more it wants to come back and give me advice. . . . I know over the years [the more] I follow through on intuition, the more I can trust it and the more it has come, the more present it is in my life.

Differentiating between intuition and cognitive thought can be a problem for new meditators, or those who have not trained their intuition; that problem is overcome by meditation and by using, training, and trusting one's intuition. Wayne, a Christian meditator, stated that meditation is an access point for his intuition, and he has learned to trust his intuition more

so that [now] I have that self-consciousness that when I have a perception or am receiving [intuition], I know I'm receiving it and I don't just think of it as something coming into my mind that I'm thinking about. I realize it's an [intuition] I'm getting.

William, a Buddhist meditator, discussed training his intuition in conjunction with inquiry, which is a fundamental part of his spiritual practice. Analogous to mindfulness practice, he explains,

inquiry [introspection] isn't an intellectual inquiry, it's [significantly deeper]. . . . it is trying to understand and express all the levels of the experience of the moment. And more and more, when inquiry gets deep is when Guidance [intuition] takes over. The [inquiry] process guides itself and True Nature guides you closer and closer and closer to the truth of the moment. . . . This process transforms and gradually replaces ego structure built on the past experiences [with the] structure of Reality arising in you every moment [that is] appropriate to this moment.

Emily was the one person who did not attribute improving her intuition to her meditation. Her intuition was “turned on” during a workshop she attended some 10 years ago, and since that time has never had any difficulty in accessing it. For her, training her intuition had to do with her learning to trusting it, and that her “sense of trust has deepened considerably; that’s probably the primary thing [to training her intuition].”

## Summation

The effectiveness of intuition following meditation corroborates both the origin of intuition and meditation's effectiveness in training one's intuition. To the question, "How would you rate your own intuitive prowess?" respondents rated themselves using a Likert scale (1-6) with 1 = Not Intuitive and 6 = Highly Intuitive. In the *t*-test, the difference in means across groups between self reported intuitional prowess as compared to intuitional prowess immediately following meditation, was statistically significant.

Table 45

*Self-Reported Intuitional Prowess*

| Category                | Freq. | %                 | Cum.%          | Z-Score |
|-------------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------|---------|
| (1) Not Intuitive       | 0     | 0                 | N/A            | N/A     |
| (2) Partially Intuitive | 0     | 0                 | N/A            | N/A     |
| (3) Somewhat Intuitive  | 0     | 1                 | 4.000          | N/A     |
| 4) Lukewarm Intuitive   | 17    | 17.0              | 17.0           | -1.751  |
| 5) Mostly Intuitive     | 35    | 35.0              | 52.0           | -0.414  |
| 6) Highly Intuitive     | 48    | 48.0              | 100.0          | 0.922   |
| <i>M</i> = 5.310        |       | <i>SD</i> = 0.748 | <i>N</i> = 100 |         |
| <i>Mdn</i> = 5.000      |       | Variance = 0.559  | Missing = 0    |         |



Table 46

*Intuitional Prowess Following Meditation*

| Category                  | Freq.             | %              | Cum.% | Z-Score |
|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------|---------|
| 1) Fully Less Accurate    | 0                 | 0              | 0     | 0       |
| 2) Mostly Less Accurate   | 0                 | 0              | 0     | 0       |
| 3) Somewhat Less Accurate | 1                 | 1.0            | 1.0   | -2.876  |
| 4) Somewhat More Accurate | 18                | 18.0           | 19.0  | -1.563  |
| 5) Much More Accurate     | 42                | 42.0           | 61.0  | -0.250  |
| 6) Fully More Accurate    | 39                | 39.0           | 100.0 | 1.064   |
| <hr/>                     |                   |                |       |         |
| <i>M</i> = 5.190          | <i>SD</i> = 0.761 | <i>N</i> = 100 |       |         |
| <i>Mdn</i> = 5.000        | Variance = 0.580  | Missing = 0    |       |         |

Table 47

*Self-Reported Intuitional Prowess by Intuitional Prowess Following Meditation*

| Category                   | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| (1) Fully Less Accurate    | 0        | N/A      | N/A       |
| (2) Much Less Accurate     | 0        | N/A      | N/A       |
| (3) Somewhat Less Accurate | 1        | 4.000    | N/A       |
| (4) Somewhat More Accurate | 18       | 4.833    | 0.857     |
| (5) Much More Accurate     | 42       | 5.119    | 0.705     |
| (6) Fully More Accurate    | 39       | 5.718    | 0.510     |

Difference of means across groups is statistically significant ( $p = 0.000$ )

$N = 100$

Table 48

*Analysis of Variance for Intuitional Prowess Normal and Following Meditation*

| Source  | <i>SS</i> | <i>dF</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> |
|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Between | 15.562    | 3         | 5.187     | 12.504   | 0.000    |
| Within  | 39.828    | 96        | 0.415     |          |          |
| TOTAL   | 55.390    | 99        |           |          |          |

$N = 100$       Missing: 0

*ETA* Square = 0.281

*R* Square = 0.267     $F = 0.960$      $p = 0.386$

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

##### *Overview and Purpose*

The purpose of this study was to explore the decision-making processes of executive meditators who work in the business, government, nonprofit and non-governmental sectors of commerce. Specifically, this study explored meditating executives' experiences of their use of meditation and intuition in decision-making; the relationship they perceive between their meditative practices, their intuition, and their decision-making; the reported nature of that relationship; the benefits they perceive gaining through their meditative practices as they apply to their decision-making; their perceived origins of intuition; their perception of the role meditation plays in developing intuition; their experience of the effect meditation has on profits; and their experience of the effect meditation has on business ethics.

##### *Overview of Previous Literature*

Business literature suggests that Western managers prefer making decisions using rational thought, hard facts, and logic, and their use of intuition is limited primarily to instances with many complex variables or incomplete or sparse data, or when the pace of business is such that speed is of the essence. The literature also suggests that their intuition frequently is not developed sufficiently to trust it on a consistent basis, and its use was unsupported by the environment itself (Agor, 1986; Breen, 1990; Fraser, 1993; Hayashi, 2001; Horton, 1993; Isenberg, 1984).

Eastern, transpersonal and clinical psychology; medical; and spirituality literatures suggests that meditation enables greater clarity of thought, awareness, positive moods, intuition, integrity and ethical behavior; and reduces stress and anxiety (Bhushan & Sinha, 2001; Dostalek, 1970; Suchipriya & Singh, 2001; Vaughan, 1979; Walsh & Vaughn, 1980; Yogananda, 1995). In the East, meditation is known to develop intuition, and intuition is widely used in decision-making (Breen, 1990; Yogananda, 1995).

This study is ground breaking. Prior to this, no studies had been completed regarding the use of meditation as a tool in decision-making, nor if meditation had an effect on one's cognitive abilities, intuition, decision-making capacities, and profits. Only two studies had been completed that discuss meditation and its effects on the work environment and cognitive functioning, and both concluded that its effects were positive (Forbes, 1999; Levin, 1997).

### *Methodology*

This study was conducted in two phases. In Phase 1, 100 short- and long-time executive meditators from business, government, nonprofits, and NGOs completed a web-based survey regarding their meditation practices and the benefits they perceive receiving from them. As this was an exploratory study, no comparison group was used.

In Phase 2, a stratified sample of 15 long-time executive meditators (10-plus years) based on meditation type selected from Phase 1 was interviewed to explore their perceptions of the influence meditation has in their professional lives; how they use meditation and intuition in decision-making; the relationship between their meditative practices, intuition, and decision-making; and the benefits they receive from their

meditation practices. Narrative interviews consisting of semi-structured and open-ended questions were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed, and their results compared to the quantitative survey data for statistical significance and congruence.

### *Summary of Findings*

#### *Theme 1: Use of Meditation and Intuition in Decision-Making*

My findings with respect to the use of meditation and intuition in decision-making were, in a word, remarkable. Through analysis of the 15 interviews, corroborated with the survey data, a relatively clear picture of how executive meditators make decisions was found, enabling the development of a model for decision-making using meditation as a technique to access higher states of consciousness and enable intuition.

#### *Decision-Making Process*

Executive meditators reported using a relatively standardized 7-step decision-making process that is strongly weighted toward intuitive; intuition is their reported preferred mode for decision-making, and they use it in all types of decisions. Their decision-making process can be summed up as:

1. Identification of the problem or goal
  2. Analysis of the problem \*
  3. Meditate to access Higher States of Consciousness
  4. Ask for guidance from God / Higher Power / Self / Universe / Higher Truth
  5. Receiving intuitional guidance.
  6. Examine guidance for validity, options, and / or impact of decision \*
  7. Implement decision
- \* Steps optional depending on user's decision-making style

Of the 15 interviewees, all 15 follow this basic decision-making model as depicted above; the utilization of steps 2 and 6 is dependent upon whether or not the interviewee is predominantly an intuitive or combination rational-intuitive decision-maker.

There are nuances to the basic model. For instance, as a general rule, intuition was reported as playing a large part in each decision-making process; however, when intuition is used, i.e., at the beginning, end, or throughout the process, is dependent on both the situation and the decision-maker.

#### *Analysis and Tools for Accessing Intuition*

Most executive meditators, whether explicitly stated or not, performed some initial analysis of the problem. Ninety six participants ( $N = 100$ ) reported using at least one tool to facilitate access to higher states of consciousness and their intuition, and all

interviewees ( $N = 15$ ) reported using more than one technique. These are categorized as both rational and intuitive, and include meditation, affirmations, making lists, brainstorming, reviewing the options, training one's inner voice, physical exercise, visualization, or other techniques. Figure 9 lists the various tools executive meditators used to access their intuition.

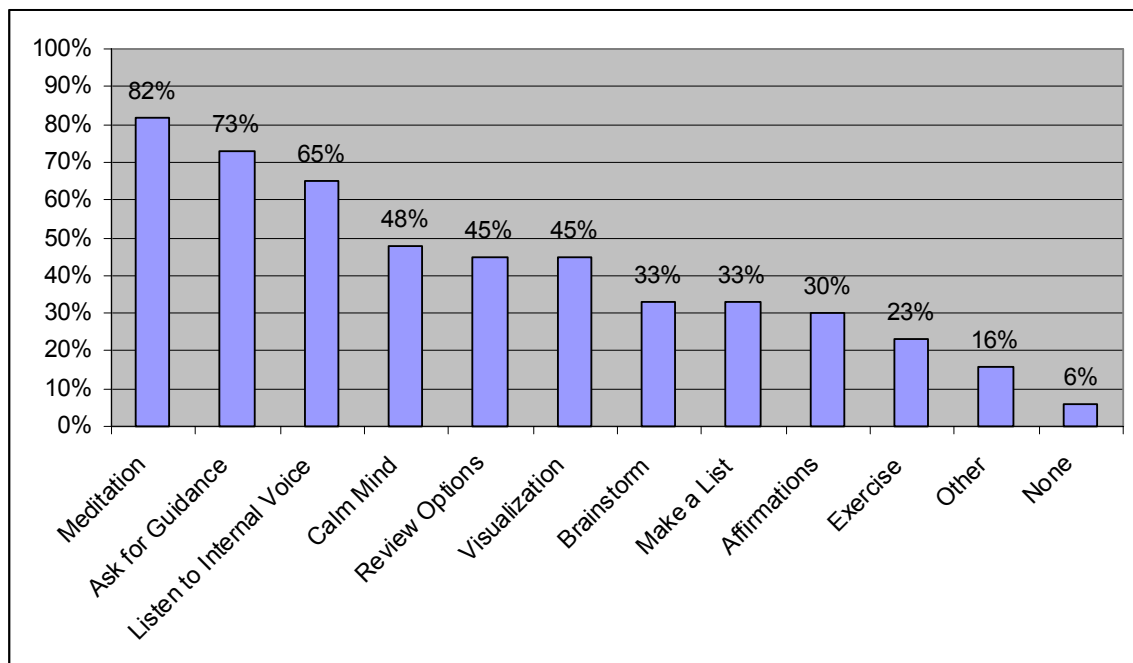


Figure 9. Tools for accessing intuition

$N = 100$

By far, executive meditators reported preferring meditation to all other tools for accessing their intuition. Of the population surveyed, 82% ( $N = 100$ ), including all 15 interviewees, reported using meditation as a tool for accessing or utilizing their intuition more effectively. Additionally, there was a strong positive correlation between accuracy of intuition immediately following meditation and intuitive prowess ( $r = 0.516$ ),

indicating that those who use meditation to access their intuition have greater intuitive prowess, thus confirming meditation's usefulness as a tool in accessing intuition and HSCs, and the timing of making decisions immediately following meditations as appropriate.

Of note, interviewees stated that intuition is always present, and these techniques enable them to detach from the situation so as to gain clearer access to their intuition.

#### *Higher States of Consciousness and Receiving Intuitional Guidance*

Executive meditators reported the ability to access HSCs at will, both in and outside meditation; some called it centering, others becoming calm, others yet described it as entering a meditative state. Within these higher states of consciousness, guidance appears very naturally and timely. This ability is important for intuitive decision-makers in making decisions outside of normal meditation periods for making smaller, or moment-to-moment decisions.

Executive meditators reported receiving guidance both in and outside of meditation. Twelve of 15 interviewees reported receiving intuitive guidance both in and outside of their meditation, whereas 3 of 15 reported receiving guidance only outside of their meditations. Of significant note, all reported being in HSCs when receiving intuition.

One of the critical steps for executive meditators using intuition in decision-making is the asking for guidance in decision-making. Nearly all executive meditators (73%,  $N = 100$ , 14 of 15 interviewees) reported asking for guidance from God / Guru / Higher Power in their process.



Executive meditators reported receiving both long-term strategic direction, i.e., big picture guidance, and short-term tactical, i.e., step-by-step guidance. All 15 interviewees stated that they receive step-by-step guidance; 12 of 15 receive both step-by-step and big picture guidance, and 3 of 15 stated they receive only step-by-step guidance. Of note, interviewees reported that in most large decisions, intuitional guidance did not come all at once, but step-by-step. Length of time of the project did not appear to be a factor.

Executive meditators also reported knowing the answers to questions more quickly. There was a strong positive correlation between reported knowing the answers to questions more quickly and intuitive prowess ( $r = 0.506$ ), indicating that those who know answers to questions more quickly have greater intuitive prowess, corroborating the “aha” factor of decision-making.

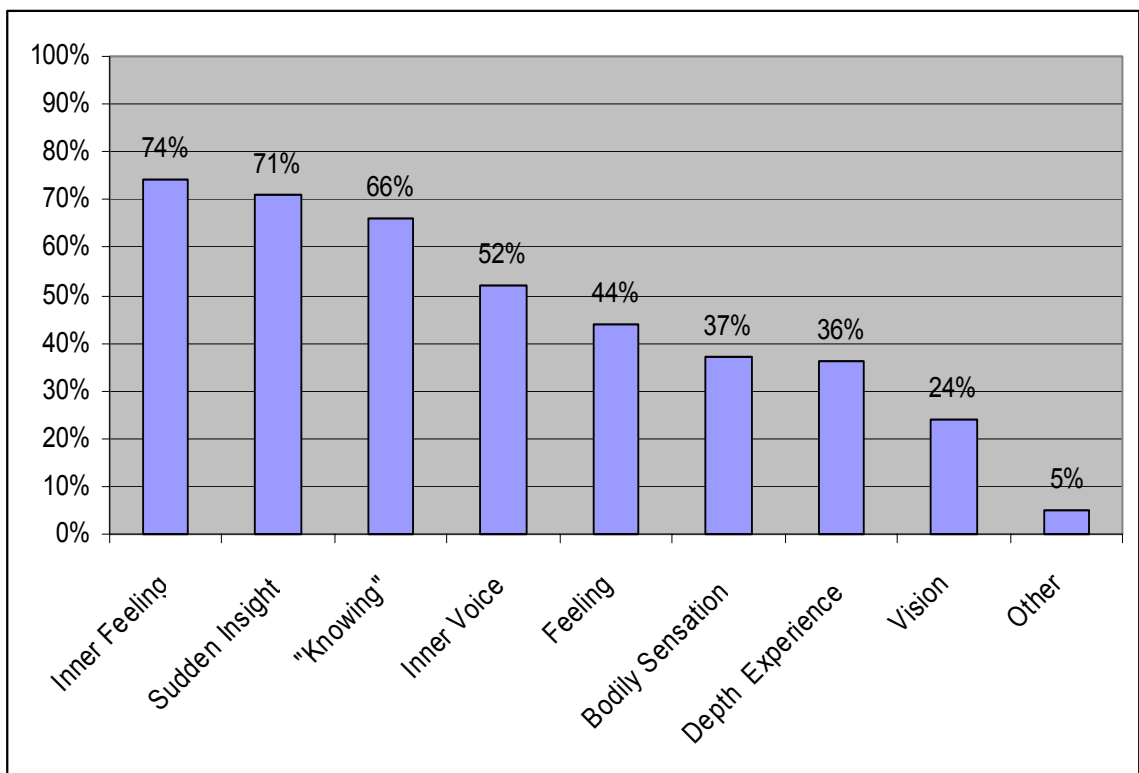
Executive meditators reported using their intuitive decision-making process in both important and risky decisions. There was a strong positive correlation between the respondents’ self-reported intuitive prowess and their comfort with the use of intuition in decisions of high importance ( $r = .468, p < .01$ ), and with respondents’ self-reported intuitive prowess and their comfort level with respect to degree of risk with their use of intuition in decision-making ( $r = .376, p < .01$ ), suggesting that those who believe in their intuitive prowess are more comfortable using intuition in all decisions, including those that are important and risky

As a general rule, executive meditators reported that they do not meditate on their problems. The object of their meditation was God / Universe / Higher Truth, and at the end of their meditation, they ask for guidance on a problem. Only one interviewee stated

he went into meditation specifically to solve a problem and focused on the problem instead of God; this practice was the exception instead of the rule. He did not indicate if his results were any different than when meditating upon God.

### *Intuitional Cues and Guidance*

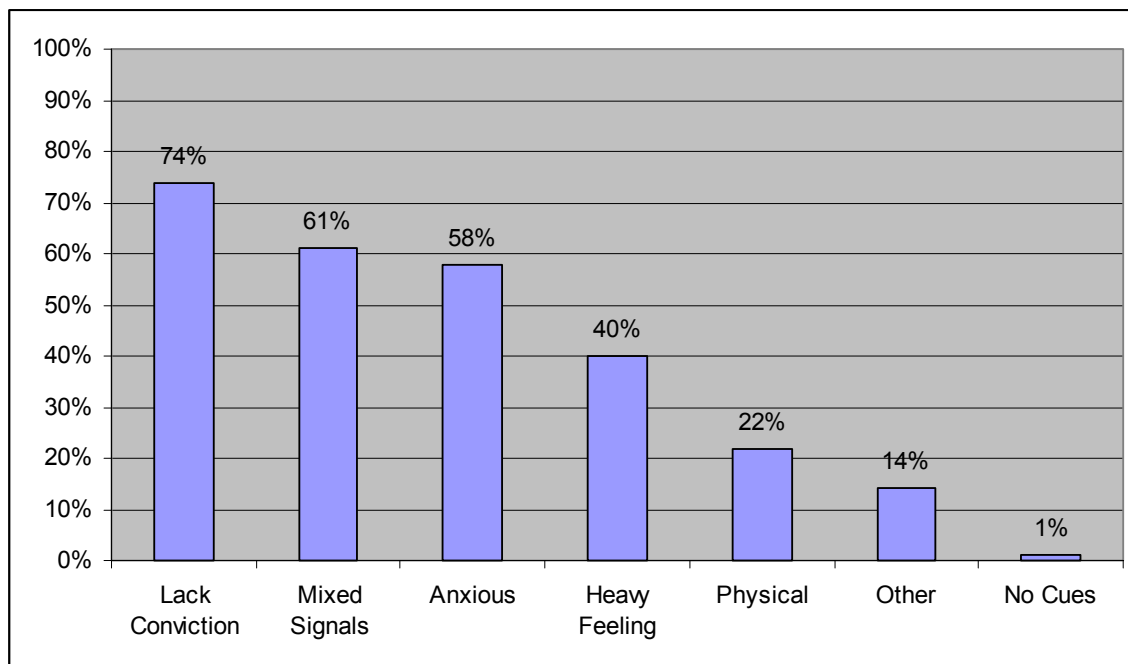
Executive meditators reported receiving guidance in multiple ways so as to guide them in their decision-making process. Figure 10 summarizes the positive intuitional cues they reported receiving and their reported frequency.



*Figure 10.* Positive intuitional cues.

*N* = 100

Figure 11 summarizes the negative intuitional cues executive meditators reported receiving and their reported frequency.

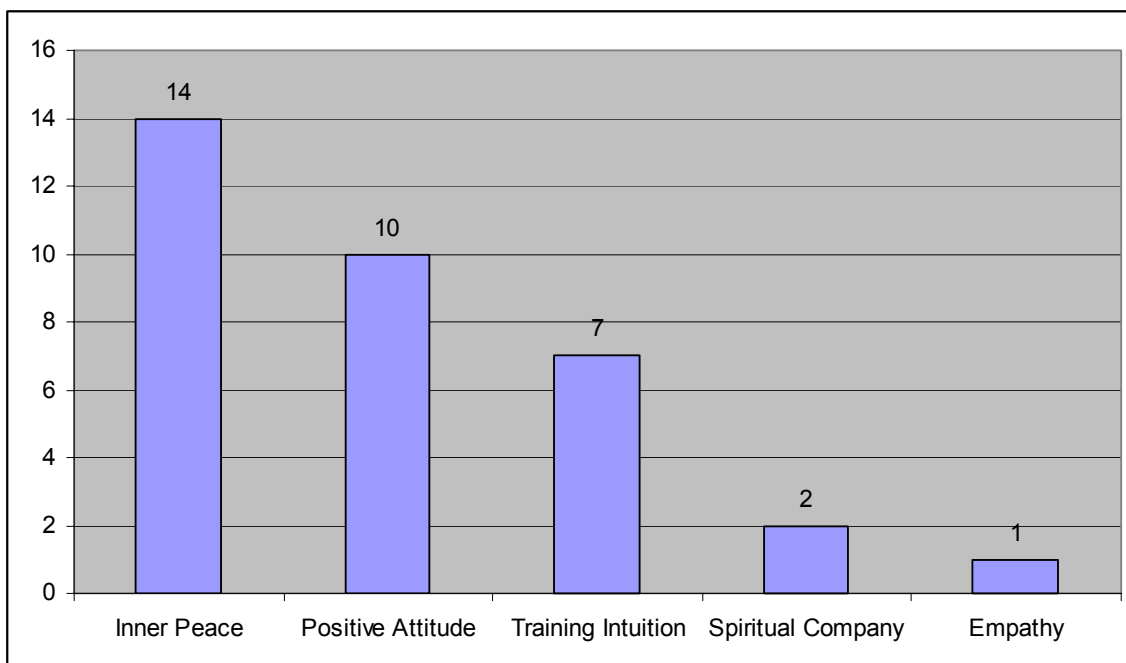


*Figure 11.* Negative intuitional cues.

$N = 100$

### *Factors Influencing Intuition*

Executive meditators reported a number of positive and negative factors that affect their ability to access their intuition. Figure 12 summarizes the positive environmental factors reported by executive meditator interviewees which affect their ability to access their intuition.



*Figure 12.* Positive environmental factors.

$N = 14$

Figure 13 summarizes the negative environmental factors reported by executive meditator interviewees which affect their ability to access their intuition.

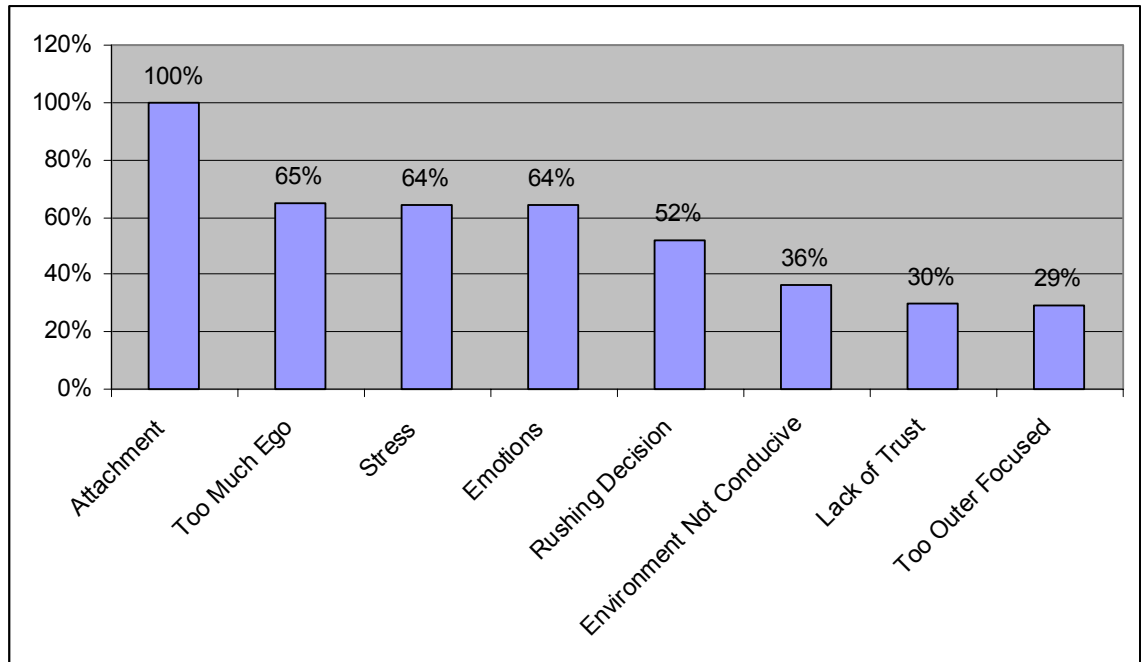


Figure 13. Negative environmental factors.

$N = 100$

#### *Including Rationality in Intuitional Decision-Making Processes*

Those executive meditators who included rational thinking as part of their decision-making process, i.e., the three rational intuitives, reported that after receiving intuitional guidance, they examine intuition for validity and review it for impact on the decision; once reviewed, they make their decisions.

However, the predominance of executive meditators reported that once they receive intuitional guidance, they act upon it without analyzing the information; that the

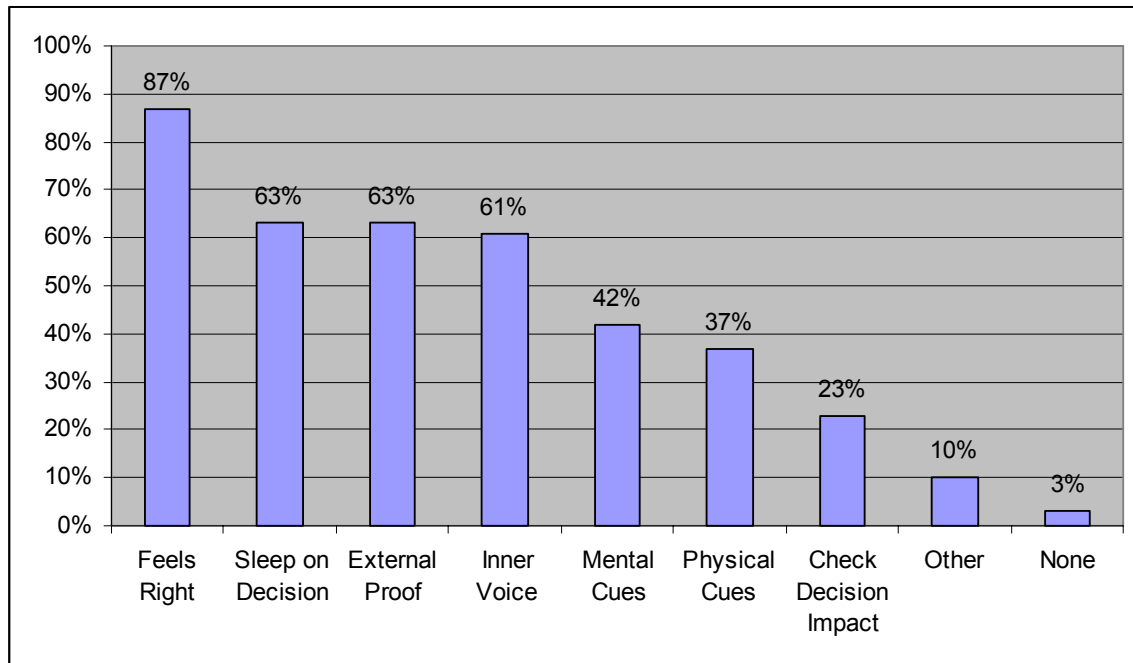
act of analyzing frequently leads to one second guessing one's intuition, which was termed to be "death" by several of the interviewees.

The exception to this was situations where guidance was unclear or cryptic. In these situations, interviewees suggested that further meditation is needed, that the decision is not yet ready to be made and / or the timing is not right.

#### *Distinguishing Between True and False Intuition*

Executive meditators used a variety of means for distinguishing between true and false intuition. Of note, interviewees reported that with longevity of meditation and usage, their intuition becomes more attuned, and they are better able to distinguish between true and false intuitions.

Figure 14 lists the various means reported for sorting between true and false intuition.



*Figure 14.* Distinguishing between true and false intuition.

$N = 100$

### *Implementing Decisions*

Executive meditators reported that once they receive intuitive guidance, they act as they had been guided, and receive feedback that they are proceeding on the right course of action. This confirmation comes as both internal and external cues, and frequently is more negative, i.e., guidance states they are proceeding in the wrong direction, instead of positive confirmation of the right direction.

Generally, executive meditators reported that if they go against their intuition, they “pay for the decision” in terms of difficulty in their professional or personal lives.

Their reasons for going against intuition can be grouped into three areas: ego, i.e., their “buttons” were pushed regarding desires they had (85%); they did not trust their intuition and rationalized their decisions (15%); or were too restless to intuit the correct course of action (15%).

#### *Gender Differences in Decision-Making*

Executive women meditators reported a greater intuitive prowess than did men ( $t = 2.495, p = .014, N = 100$ ), as well as a greater effectiveness of their intuition immediately following meditation than did men ( $t = 2.564, p = .012, N = 100$ ). Women also reported a greater willingness to trust their intuition with more important decisions ( $t = 2.578, p = .011, N = 100$ ) and riskier decisions ( $t = 1.762, p = .081, N = 100$ ), than did men.

#### *Meditation Types and Differences in Process*

No relationships could be inferred between reported type of meditation practiced and decision-making process. There may be a correlation between Buddhist type of meditation and combination of rational / intuitive decision-making, but the sample size was too small to make any definitive statement in that regard.

Executive meditators who practice the ‘Other’ and Transcendental Meditative styles reported moderately more intuitive prowess than did practitioners of Raja Yogis and Buddhists ( $r = .220, p < .05$ ). Additionally, practitioners of ‘Other’ and Transcendental Meditative styles reported moderately more intuitive accuracy following meditation than did practitioners of Raja Yoga and Buddhist traditions



( $r = .171$ ,  $p < .05$ ). There appeared to be no relationship between respondents' self-reported intuitive prowess and longevity of years meditating.

#### *Types of Decisions Using Meditation and Intuition*

Executive meditators reported that they use intuition in the preponderance of their decisions. There was a strong positive correlation between respondents' self-reporting of their intuitional prowess and use of intuition in important decisions ( $r = .387$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and between respondents' self-reporting of their intuitional prowess and the degree of risk with which they are comfortable using their intuition in decision-making ( $r = .367$ ,  $p < .01$ ); these two findings, coupled with the interviews of the 15 executive meditators who reported using their meditation and intuition as their primary decision-making tool in all types of decisions, indicate that executive meditators are comfortable using their intuition in all decisions.

In response to the question, "Overall, the decisions that I regularly use intuition to guide my decision-making processes are . . .," respondents answered using a Likert 1-6 with  $M = 5.270$ ,  $SD = 0.790$ ,  $N = 100$ . When the one person who was clearly not comfortable using their intuition is removed from the data, there are significant increases:  $M = 5.303$ ,  $SD = 0.721$ ,  $N = 99$ .

In response to the question, "How much risk am I comfortable with when I use my intuition to guide my decision-making process?", respondents answered using a Likert 1-6 with a  $M = 5.050$ ,  $SD = 1.009$ , and  $N = 100$ ; when the 5 people who were clearly not comfortable using their intuition in risky situations are removed from the data, there were significant increases:  $M = 5.200$ ,  $SD = 0.780$ ,  $N = 95$ .

However, because this sample is small compared to the overall populations previously studied, more research should be conducted to get a more statistically valid sample.

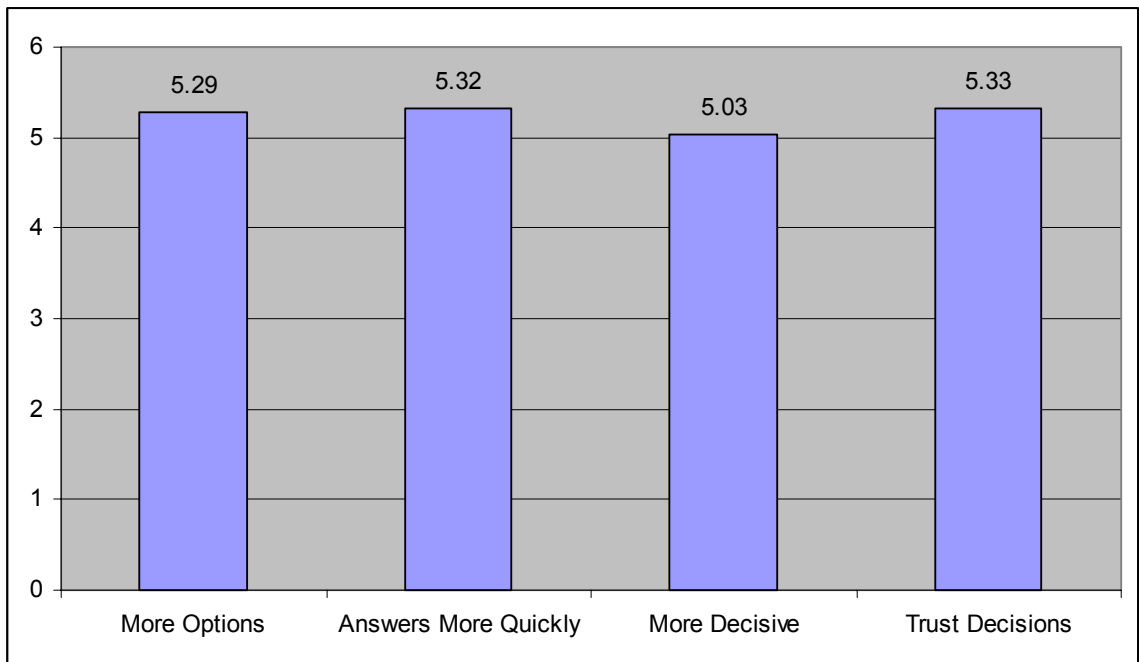
*Timing of Using Intuition in Decision-Making*

The timing of receiving guidance appears to be situational. According to the survey, the participants' timing of using intuition in decision-making varies significantly; 30% ( $N = 100$ ) stated they use their intuition at the beginning of process, 16% ( $N = 100$ ) stated the end of the process, and 80% ( $N = 100$ ) stated that, depending on the problem, it varies as to when they use their intuition.

*Theme 2: Benefits of Meditation to Decision-Making*

*Reported Decision-Making Benefits of Meditation*

Executive meditators reported meditation having a significant effect on decision-making. Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of improvement to decision-making (for all,  $t = ns$ ), with the exception of women, who reported trusting their decisions more than did men. Figure 15 details the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their improvement to decision-making as a result of their meditation.



*Figure 15.* Reported decision-making benefits from meditation.

$N = 100$

Knowing answers to questions more quickly ( $r = 0.539$ ) and consideration of others' thoughts and feelings ( $r = 0.527$ ) were strongly significant predictors of seeing more options in decision-making.

Trusting oneself ( $r = 0.630$ ) and trusting one's decisions ( $r = 0.644$ ) were strongly significant predictors of knowing answers to questions more quickly. Seeing more options in decision-making ( $r = 0.539$ ) was a moderately significant predictor of knowing answers to questions more quickly.

Trusting one's decisions ( $r = 0.622$ ), sense of self ( $r = 0.530$ ), and seeing more options in decision-making ( $r = 0.487$ ) were strongly significant predictors of decisiveness.

Trusting oneself ( $r = 0.651$ ) and trusting one's intuition ( $r = 0.651$ ) were strongly significant predictors of trusting one's decisions. Knowing answers to questions more quickly ( $r = 0.644$ ) was a moderately significant predictor of trusting ones' decisions.

#### *Reported Intuition Benefits of Meditation*

Executive meditators reported meditation having a significant effect on their intuition. Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of intuitional improvement (for all,  $t = ns$ ), with the exception of women, who reported greater intuitive prowess than did men, both normally and following meditation; and long-term meditators, i.e., those who have practiced meditation for 10 years or longer, who reported better able to sense others' thoughts and feelings than did short-term meditators.

Figure 16 details the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their intuitional capabilities as a result of their meditation.

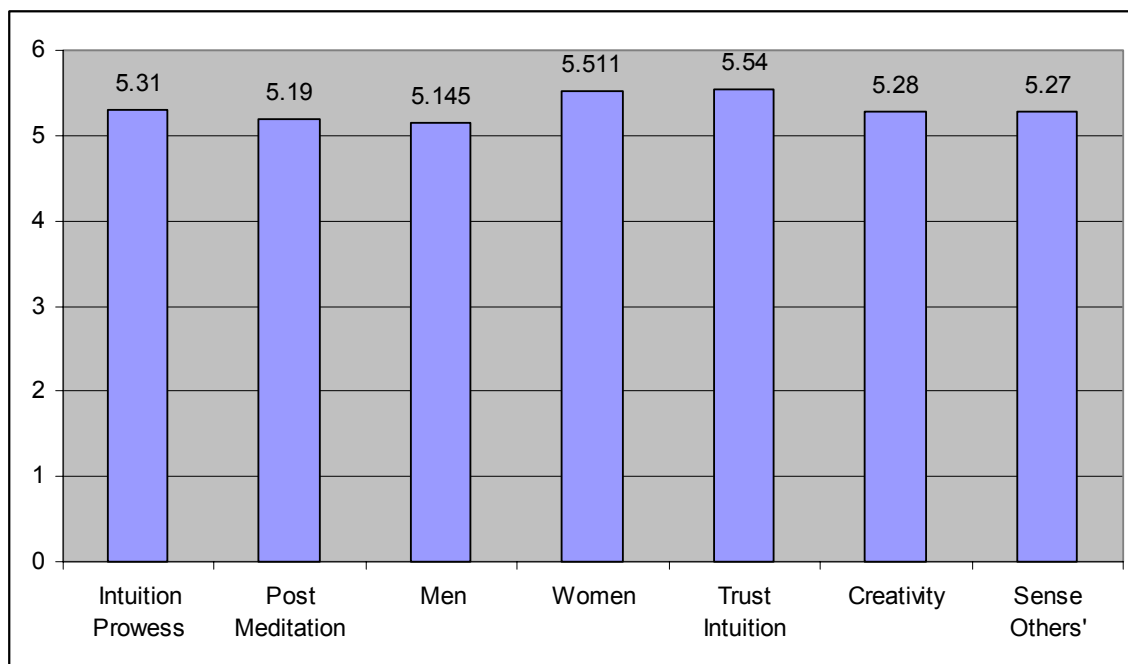


Figure 16. Reported intuitional benefits from meditation.

$N = 100$

Creativity ( $r = 0.564$ ), sensing others' thoughts and feelings ( $r = 0.648$ ), trusting one's decisions ( $r = 0.651$ ), and peacefulness ( $r = 0.500$ ) were strongly significant predictors of trusting one's intuition.

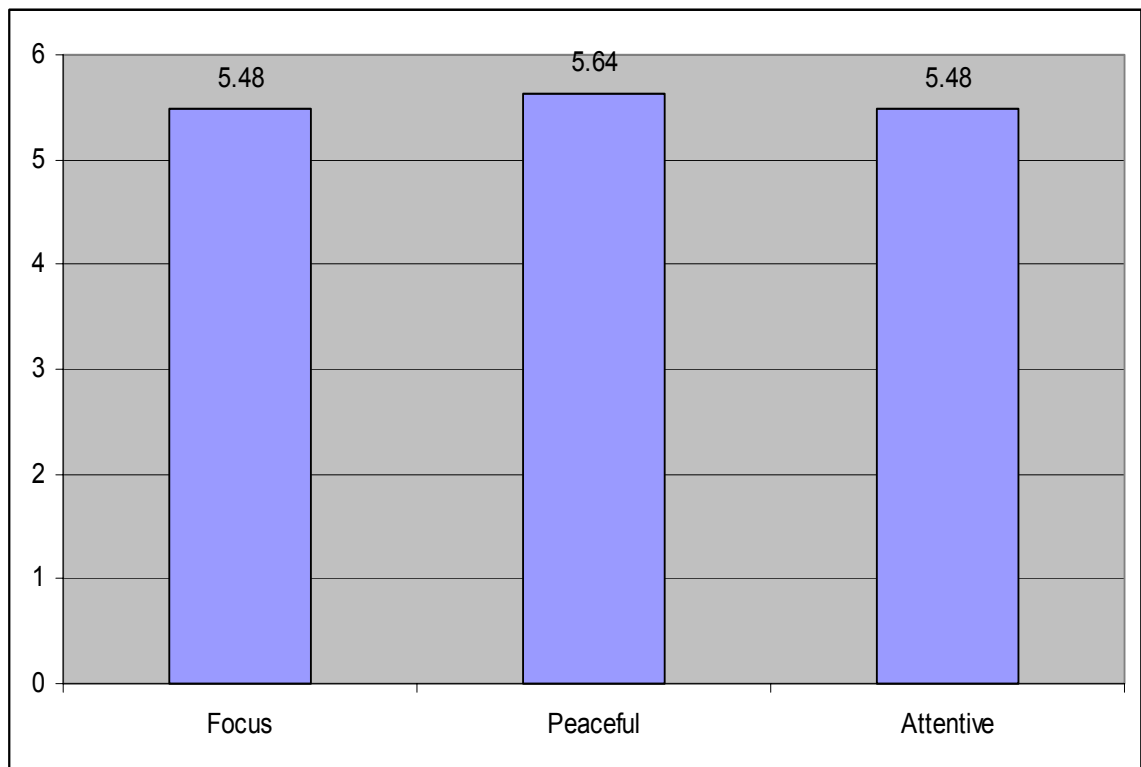
Sensing others' thoughts and feelings ( $r = 0.544$ ), decisiveness ( $r = 0.448$ ), trusting one's intuition ( $r = 0.564$ ), and consciousness on a higher plane ( $r = 0.449$ ) were strongly significant predictors of creativity.

Trusting one's intuition ( $r = 0.648$ ), knowing the answers to questions more quickly ( $r = .653$ ), trusting one's decisions ( $r = 0.387$ ), and conscious of one's actions ( $r = 0.387$ ) were strongly significant predictors of sensing others' thoughts and feelings.

*Reported Psychological Benefits of Meditation to Self*

Executive meditators reported meditation having a significant beneficial effect on their cognitive processes, consciousness, and personality. Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of benefits to their cognitive processes, consciousness, and personality (for all,  $t = ns$ ). The exceptions to this were “Other” meditators reported more optimism than did Raja Yogis and Buddhists; and women reported trusting themselves more than did men.

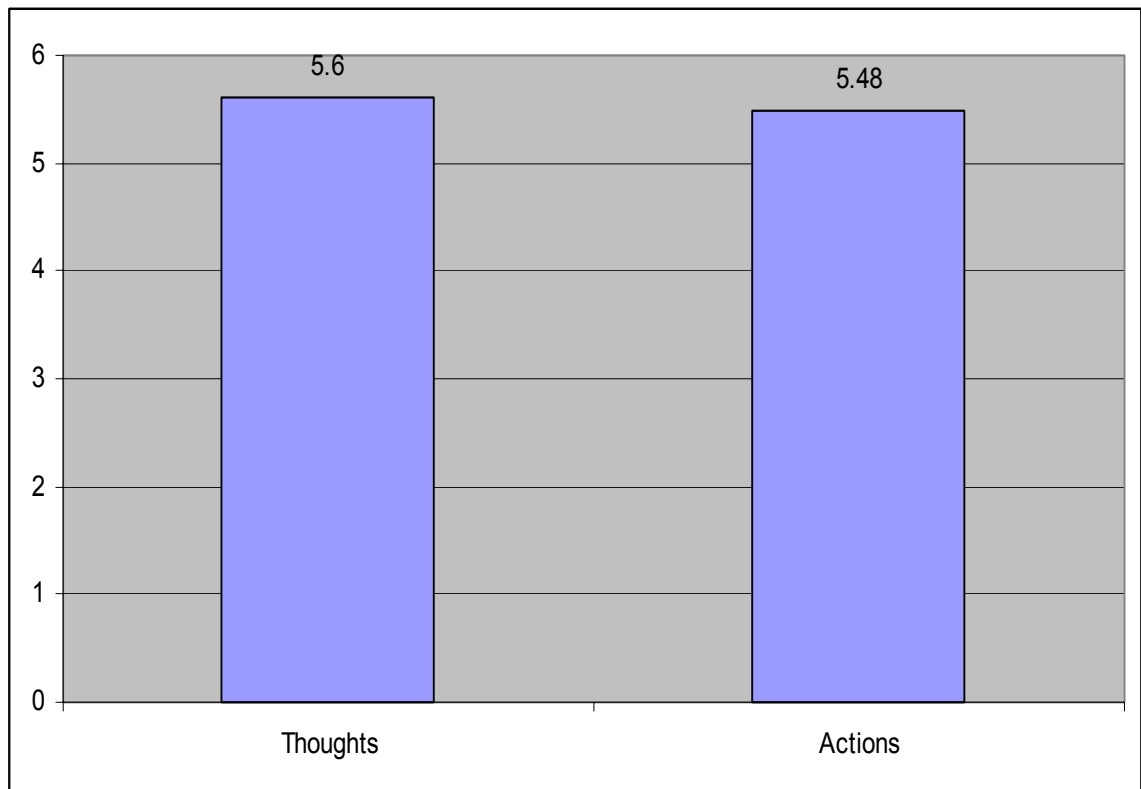
Figure 17 details the mean of respondents’ self-assessment of the benefits to their cognitive processes as a result of their meditation.



*Figure 17.* Reported cognitive benefits of meditation.

$N = 100$

Figure 18 details the mean of respondents' self-assessment of the benefits to their consciousness as a result of their meditation.



*Figure 18.* Reported consciousness benefits of meditation.

$N = 100$

Figure 19 details the mean of respondents' self-assessment of the benefits to their personality as a result of their meditation.



Figure 19. Reported personality benefit of meditation.

$N = 100$

Attentiveness / alertness ( $r = 0.655$ ) was a strongly significant predictor of better focus and concentration.

Being happier ( $r = 0.677$ ) was a strongly significant predictor of peacefulness.

Improved focus and concentration ( $r = 0.655$ ) and being more considerate of others' thoughts and feelings ( $r = 0.618$ ) were strongly significant predictors of being more attentive and alert.

Consciousness of one's actions ( $r = 0.802$ ) was a strongly significant predictor of consciousness of one's thoughts.



Consciousness of thoughts ( $r = 0.802$ ), trusting one's intuition ( $r = 0.487$ ), and knowing of answers more quickly ( $r = 0.562$ ) were strongly significant predictors of consciousness of actions

Peacefulness ( $r = 0.677$ ), greater optimism ( $r = 0.601$ ), and greater consideration for others' thoughts and feelings ( $r = 0.636$ ) were strongly significant predictors of happiness.

Optimism ( $r = 0.657$ ), more considerate of others' thoughts and feelings ( $r = 0.679$ ), trusting one's self more ( $r = 0.547$ ), and more decisive ( $r = 0.530$ ) were strongly significant predictors of improved sense of self.

Being happier ( $r = 0.601$ ), trusting one's decisions more ( $r = 0.549$ ), greater sense of self ( $r = 0.657$ ), and type meditation practiced (Other and TM) were strongly significant predictors of sense of self.

Peacefulness ( $r = 0.671$ ), consideration of others' thoughts and feelings ( $r = 0.812$ ), and sense of self ( $r = 0.679$ ) were strongly significant predictors of getting along better with others.

Years of longevity meditating ( $r = 0.189$ ) was a moderately significant predictor of getting along better with others.

Getting along better with others ( $r = 0.812$ ), seeing more options in decision-making ( $r = 0.812$ ), and consciousness on a higher plane ( $r = 0.466$ ) were strongly significant predictors of consideration of others' thoughts and feelings.

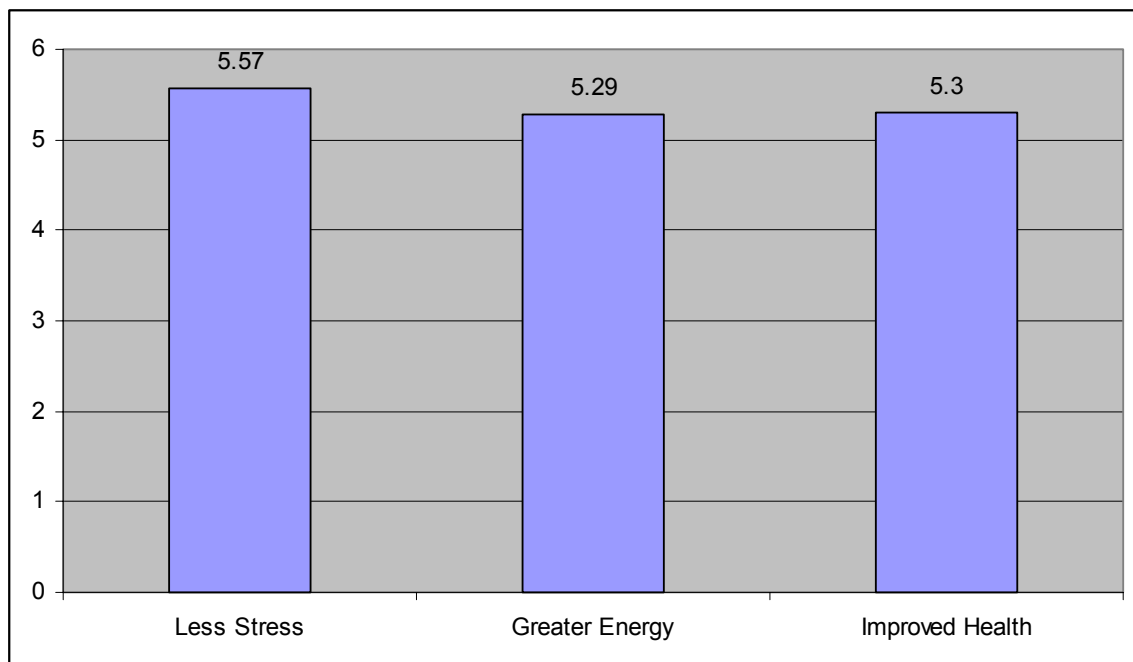
Consciousness of one's actions ( $r = 0.560$ ), knowing answers to questions more quickly ( $r = 0.630$ ), sense of self ( $r = 0.547$ ), and trusting one's decisions ( $r = 0.651$ ) were strongly significant predictors of trusting oneself.

Additionally, there was anecdotal evidence from the interviews that one's meditation practice affected others, e.g., people feeling calmer in meditators' presence, or able to trust them more quickly.

### *Reported Physiological Benefits of Meditation*

Executive meditators reported meditation having a significant effect on reducing stress, greater energy, and improved health. Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of stress-reduction, greater energy, and improved health (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

Figure 20 details the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their reduction of stress, greater energy, and improved health as a result of their meditation.



*Figure 20.* Reported physiological benefits of meditation.

$N = 100$

Reported peacefulness ( $r = 0.555$ ), greater energy ( $r = 0.536$ ), decisiveness ( $r = 0.440$ ), and attentiveness / alertness ( $r = 0.539$ ) were strongly significant predictors of less stress.

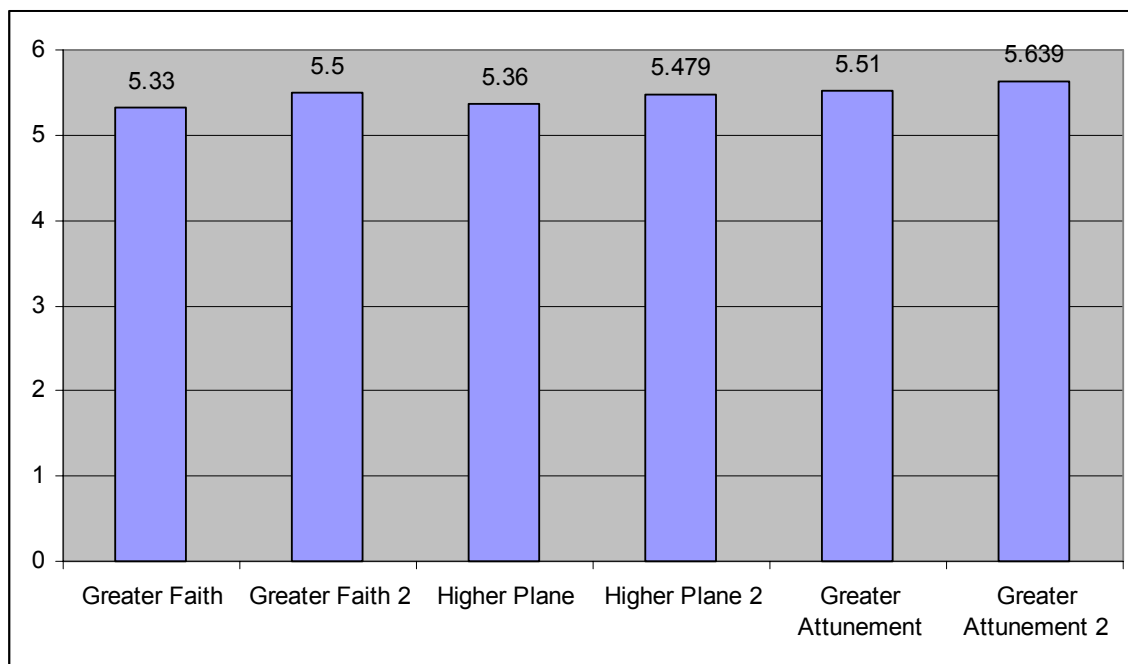
Reported better health ( $r = 0.626$ ), trusting one's own decisions more ( $r = 0.626$ ), knowing answers more quickly ( $r = 0.606$ ), were strongly significant predictors of greater energy.

Reported greater energy ( $r = 0.626$ ), peacefulness ( $r = 0.545$ ), ability to sense others' thoughts and feelings ( $r = 0.500$ ), ability to see more options in decision-making ( $r = 0.495$ ) were strongly significant predictors of improved health.

#### *Reported Spiritual Benefits of Meditation*

Executive meditators reported meditation having a significant effect on spiritual lives. Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of spiritual benefits (for all,  $t = ns$ ), except that long-term meditators reported greater faith and their consciousness on a higher plane than did short-term meditators.

Figure 21 details the mean of respondents' self-assessment of their spiritual benefits as a result of their meditation.



*Figure 21.* Reported spiritual benefits of meditation.

$N = 100$  for Greater Faith, Higher Plane, and Greater Attunement

$N = 96$  for Greater Faith 2, Higher Plane 2, and Greater Attunement 2

There were clearly a few agnostics or atheists who took the survey and skewed the results. Those individuals' data have been removed from Greater Faith 2, Higher Plane 2, and Greater Attunement 2; Figure 21 shows the difference between the two readings.

Consideration of others' thoughts and feelings ( $r = 0.457$ ), greater attunement ( $r = 0.624$ ), and consciousness on a higher plane ( $r = 0.619$ ) all were strongly significant predictors of greater faith.

*Theme 3: The Role of Meditation in Increasing Profits*

Executive meditators reported that they had seen increased revenues and/or profits in their “businesses” as a result of their meditations. Of the 15-interviewees, 13 stated that they experience greater profits in their “business lives” as a result of their meditative practices, and 2 were neutral.

Seven of the 8 for profit businessmen and women reported higher profits with 1 neutral. Of note, 6 of the 8 that attributed increased profits to their meditative practices had direct control of their firms’ bottom lines, and were of the senior management demographic. The 1 neutral who could not make the correlation stated that “I’ve been blessed with abundance my whole life, and money comes at the will of Spirit.”

Of the 7 interviewees from nonprofits, government and NGOs, the results were equally as conclusive. Of the 7, 6 stated that they have seen increased profits which they directly attribute to their meditation practices, and 1 neutral. The 1 neutral did not directly address business finances but rather personal finances, and could not directly correlate meditation with “higher profits” in his personal life.

Very clearly, these participants saw a relationship between their meditative practices and their profits, whether they were in for-profit, government, nonprofit or NGO industry.

*Theme 4: The Role of Meditation in Developing Ethics*

Executive meditators reported a higher sense of ethical behavior as a result of their meditations ( $M = 5.240$ ,  $N = 100$ ,  $SD = 0.818$ ), which was corroborated by 14 of 15 interviewees. Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of ethical decision-making (for all,  $t = ns$ ).

Interviewees had many explanations as to why meditation is so effective in promoting and instilling ethics in people which required examination of both the qualitative and quantitative data. Most responses were of a spiritual nature, relating to their identification with the higher Self, God, Spirit, Higher Power. Many interviewees stated that through their meditative practices they are able to know they are part of a larger whole, and from this knowing, came to realize that they can not or will not do unethical things that could potentially hurt themselves or others.

One interviewee could only partially correlate his ethics to meditation. Although he stated that meditation has helped to develop his ethical standards, he stated that he had high ethical standards before beginning to meditate, and that he was unable to readily discern as to whether or not meditation has had any effect on his ethics (even though he admitted that as a child there were times when he had been “less than ethical”).

## *Theme 5: The Origins and Training of Intuition*

### *Origins of Intuition*

Executive meditators clearly believe that intuition comes from a source other than conscious thinking or sensing. All 15-interviewees, regardless of meditation type, reported the origin of intuition as spiritual in nature, coming from their soul, Higher Power, Consciousness, or other words synonymous with God or a higher spiritual Consciousness or Being, regardless of how it manifests, with one exception; one Buddhist male believed the source of intuition to be a combination of cognitive (conscious and subconscious), experience, and spiritual. However, this difference was attributed to his cognitive style and not his meditation type.

Participants reported that when they access their intuition, they generally are in an “altered state of consciousness,” which, upon deeper inquiry, was understood to be meditative or higher state of consciousness.

### *Training Intuition*

Executive meditators reported their primary way of training their intuition is contemplative, i.e., meditation and introspection, with a limited number using applied creative thinking, i.e., positive thinking, workshops and seminars, visualization, reading, inner listening, mindfulness, or journaling. Figure 22 shows the methods and percentages of respondents using the particular ways of training their intuition.

Executive meditators cited meditation as the most essential tool for training their intuition; 94% of survey respondents selected this response, and this number was corroborated by 15 of 15 interviewees.

Notably, although not a survey response, 67% (10 of 15) of interviewees cited listening, using, following through, and trusting their intuition as essential for its development.

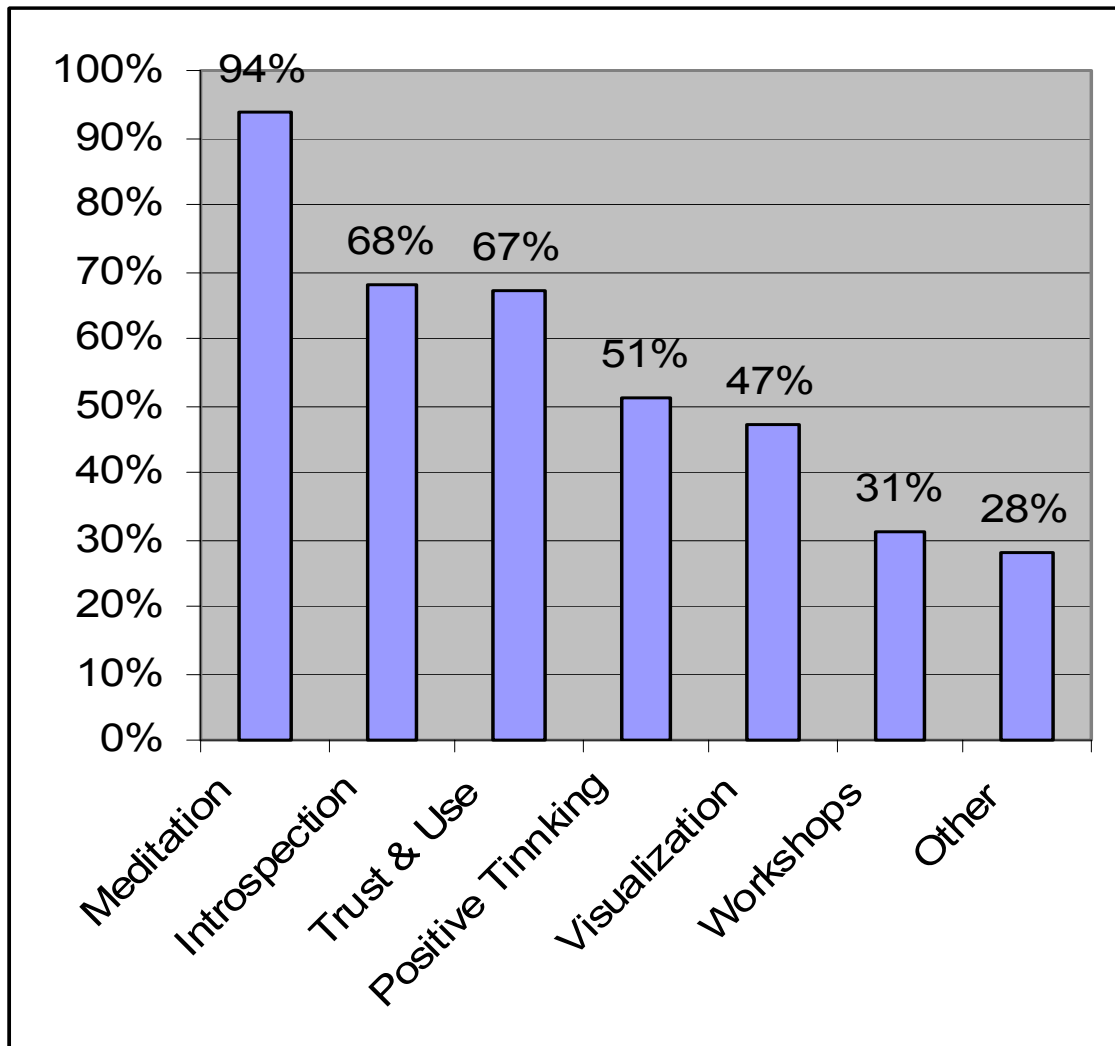


Figure 22. Tools used for developing intuition.

$N = 100$



## Conclusions

Why would Edward, a successful manager in corporate America, leave his job, liquidate all his funds to build a 200 sq ft house in the wilderness and live the life of a monk in solitude, then suddenly leave that life to “return to civilization,” get married, have two children with his wife not working, buy a house, and go from nothing to a highly successful consulting practice, all in 4 years?

The answer? Intuitive guidance. Not hocus pocus, not imagination. True intuition, and the faith and fortitude to act upon it.

### *The Use of Meditation, Intuition in Decision-Making*

The findings of this study were, in a word, remarkable; however, to those who have been practicing meditation for a long period of time, they were not surprising. The 100 executive meditators who have “done their inner work” and hear, use, and trust their intuition in the majority of their decisions, regardless of risk, have come to understand there is no separation between their business and spiritual lives, and that the relationship between meditation, intuition, and decision-making is very strong and tangible.

The use of meditation and intuition tools in business decision-making would be, for many, antithetic, i.e., mixing what some might call “woo-woo” or spiritual and “real world” business. However, for these 100 executive meditators, this was their “normal” way of making decisions, and they use it in nearly every decision they make. For them, there is a decidedly causal relationship among meditation, intuition, and decision-making. Executive meditators believe that meditation develops intuition ( $n = 94$ ,  $N = 100$ ) which is used in the majority of their decision-making ( $M = 5.303$ ,  $SD = 0.721$ ,  $N = 99$ ). and

that their intuition is more accurate immediately following meditation ( $M = 5.290$ ,  $SD = 0.761$ ,  $N = 100$ ).

However, this relationship goes further than just one of reported causality; it personifies the way they live their lives. For them, it is one of trust and faith between themselves and God which is reflected in their decision-making processes, one which transgresses gender, longevity of meditation, and type of meditation practiced.

First, identification of the problem. Executive meditators were “normal” in this first step in that they reported identifying the problem; however, as part of problem identification, executive meditators reported examining the problem from a higher consciousness perspective, i.e., what is the learning for me in this next set of circumstances. They trust the process, understanding that this is the next step in their own and others’ growth, and have faith that everything works out for their and others’ highest good.

Second, not unlike rational problem solvers, they reported frequently examining options rationally for solving problems; however, executive meditators include in this step processes to assist with the accessing of their intuition.

Third, executive meditators reported raising their consciousness to a higher plane through meditation or other spiritual techniques to facilitate greater access to their intuition. They do not as a general rule, take their problems into meditation. Instead, meditation time was for meditation, and at the end of the meditation they reported asking for guidance on a particular problem. The object of their meditation was God / Universe / Higher Truth, and that the intuitive answers came from meditating on God and then asking for His guidance.

Fourth, executive meditators reported asking for guidance, i.e., surrendering the problem to God. They live their lives from a higher consciousness and principles, inviting God into their lives and asking His assistance in decision-making. Jeffrey stated that when he is faced with a problem, he will talk to God and say “Lord, I can’t do this, you have to,” and the problem is frequently solved. This approach requires much faith, but as was seen by the mean when corrected for agnostics ( $M = 5.500$ ,  $SD = 0.740$ ), these executive meditators reported having faith that their requests for guidance will be answered.

Part of this faith was that these executives *know* their questions will be answered, although not necessarily on their timeframe, and sometimes cryptically. As a result, executive meditators tend to take a longer view of situations. They realize that the timing of things happening is not theirs but that of the Universe. For instance, Corrine, who took a job in Florida, knew that it was the right job at the time, but that it would not last for long; she ultimately left that position for another within 2 years.

Many remarked that the solution they receive is unique and nothing that they would come up with on their own.

Once they receive guidance, executive meditators reported generally acting on their intuition. This was not unlike other executives, but their underlying motivations and intentions are significantly different, and add to the uniqueness of the solutions. For instance, living from a higher consciousness sometimes means giving up significant amounts of money. Jeffrey stated that he had left \$1,000s on the table because he followed his intuitive guidance and was more ethical than others in his industry.

Rachel told a story about a time where she turned down a potentially lucrative client based on her intuition.

I was really worried, financially, I was just seeing the end of a certain project, and I got a call by XYZ Corporation to do some recruiting for them, and my boyfriend at the time was with me, so I pick up the phone and I'm listening to somebody from the corporation and she had this project that was \$15,000 a month for 2 months. It was \$30,000, and I wasn't making money like that at that moment. And every part of my body lit up, don't do it. This is not for you to do. I just absolutely felt it. I'm saying the numbers, I'm talking to the woman, I'm forgetting my boyfriend's there. So by the time we were done, I don't usually say point blank no. I'll give them a referral because I have to say no a lot as I'm following this (process), and that's what I did in this case. I lied. I said I couldn't because of some other commitments that I had, and I hung up the phone. He was gasping for air. He couldn't believe I would turn this down. And I said, "Honey", I went over to him, he's like, "But, but..." And I said, "Honey first of all, you have had a salary job all your life. You're a manager, you do whatever you do." I said, "But the thing is you don't have to understand this. I understand it. I know this is not for me to do." And all the money in the world (wouldn't make me take this) because I'd seen in my trial and error period what happened when I would take something and I over rode [my intuition]. And there was always anguish and crap that went with it. And I just knew that all the money [I receive in this job] I'd end up spending to cover the pain of what I was going through.

Living one's life from this perspective takes time. One executive remarked that "the goal is to have the expanded consciousness that meditation brings, permeate all aspects of life." Occasionally it happens quickly, but usually it takes years. Joshua stated that his took him nearly 20 years before he began to fully trust the process.

It's been a slow process and a long journey that has evolved, and in that process, sometime, it just kept getting stronger to the point where I trusted it more. So I could go back right now and say well yeah, just 4 or 5 or 6 years ago I noticed more that I trust, and that I know I trust. It may have been happening before, then but I guess maybe I wasn't paying attention enough or I wasn't focused enough where I, you know I don't know. But the time that I can recall and put a timeline on it that I really trusted me in this process and trusted using this process, has been within the last 6 or 7 years maybe 8 at the most. So that's a long time from when I started.

Many executive meditators reported believing that there is no right or wrong decisions in the classical sense, i.e., decisions leading to more money in the case of corporations. Right decisions are those that in tune with God's wishes, and that the situations that arise are their next learning opportunity in life and are for the good of the whole. Yogananda (1997b) quoted Babaji in that "the office was brought for you, and not you for the office," i.e., situations are created for our own evolution and development, and not we for the situation. In situations, people grow and learn. They are not necessarily easy, for "an easy life is not a victorious life." (Author unknown).

*The Use of Higher States of Consciousness in Decision-Making*

Albert Einstein said that "We cannot solve a problem from the same level of consciousness that created it." So why do Western executives believe they can solve problems through rational thinking when that was what caused them in the first place?

With the exception of the areas of Eastern and transpersonal psychology, there is a fundamental duality inherent in psychology dating back to Descartes. As a result of this schism, the ego mind is the highest level of consciousness acknowledged by Western psychologists and scientists, who either completely discount the existence of higher states of consciousness and one's ability to access them through meditation or other scientific techniques, or pathologize their existence through a "diagnosis." In Western science and positivism, objectivity and intellect are king, and that which cannot be proven by the scientific method is not valid; consequently, those who have not experienced those states dismiss them as "nonsense at best or psychopathology at worst." (Walsh & Vaughn, 1980 p. 21.; Wilber, 1980a)

These higher states of consciousness are real, and for proof of their existence and nature one must turn to the great mystics and sages from Eastern and Western spirituality including Yogananda, Emerson, Bucke, Thoreau, Whitman, and others. Just because one has not yet experienced these states does not mean that they do not exist; they do, and to discount or not believe in their existence, as Al-Ghazzali stated, is “sheer ignorance.” (Al-Ghazzali, 1954, p. 54; Walsh & Vaughn, 1980)

The effectiveness of intuition following meditation helps to corroborate the existence of these states. Executive meditators reported clear differences in decisions they make while in higher states of consciousness which corroborates both the origin of intuition and meditation’s effectiveness in training one’s intuition. To the question, “How would you rate your own intuitive prowess?,” respondents rated themselves on a Likert 1-6 with 1 = Not Intuitive and 6 = Highly Intuitive as ( $M = 5.310$ ,  $SD = 0.748$ ,  $N = 100$ ). To the question, “How would you rate the effectiveness of your intuition immediately following meditation?” as ( $M = 5.190$ ,  $SD = 0.761$ ,  $N = 100$ ). In a *t*-test, the difference of the means of self reported intuitional prowess as compared to intuitional prowess immediately following meditation was statistically significant.

Joshua related a story of writing one of his books in a higher state of consciousness.

I can recall two or three times when I was writing the book that was published 2 years ago. I was using meditation as a guide most of the time, and then I’d get into the work. I’d get one chapter done and I’d forget the process that works and stay at the computer for 2 or 3 hours. The next day I’d look at what I wrote and say, where did that come from? It doesn’t seem to fit. It doesn’t seem to flow. It doesn’t make sense compared to the last chapter as to where I’m going. And so then I’d go back in to a meditative state and say ok, I need guidance, direction, and boom, I’d discover that I had written from somewhere else, not from a higher state of consciousness where I needed to be. From back here go back into

meditation, get the answer . . . I'd rewrite that chapter that I'd written the day before – just throw it out and start over again. That happened a few times that I'd forget what works. I'd forget to take the time to do the process that I knew worked. I'd get into my ego or self-based, small “s” self and thinking I can do this. I've done this all my life. I know how to do this stuff, and then it's not coming from the center, the higher Self. This is a different process and I'm trying to create something that's more internal true rather than John's experience and my personal point of view.

Using these higher states gives access to a higher consciousness than that of rational thinking, and thus opens up new and more creative ideas in problem solving. Executive meditators reported significantly higher intuitive and creative abilities, especially following meditations where they reported having raised their consciousness to a higher plane.

### *Meditation and Its Developing Intuition*

Webster (1983) defined intuition as “the immediate knowing or learning of something without the conscious use of reasoning: instantaneous apprehension.”

However, Webster did not state from whence intuition comes, nor how it originates.

There is much stimulus in the world, whether it be CNN or Fox News on the war in Iraq, emotional traumas, etc., that pull our consciousness in multiple directions at any given time. The result: that still small voice cannot be heard over all the din.

There had been a fundamental mistake in the origins of intuition in the Western business and psychology literatures; those literatures incorrectly state that the origin of intuition is from the rational or subconscious mind as pattern recognition. This, according to the 15 Phase 2 subjects of this study, simply is not true.

This study showed clearly that executive meditators believe that intuition is that “small, still voice from within,” and that its origins are spiritual in nature. This finding is

significant in light of some of the great spiritual teachers and scholars of the centuries, including Yogananda (1995), who stated that to develop soul-born intuition, meditation is key, as it quiets the mind and enables deep concentration so as to “tune in” and receive the intuition born of the soul.

Intuition begins when mind chatter stops. One executive meditator stated that

[Intuition] has a very quiet voice inside of you that if you don't get real still and listen, you're not going to hear it through all the chatter of the mind. That's why meditation is important, because it gives you the skill set in the middle of chaos to take your mind to that quiet place so that [you can] hear that small still voice of intuition.

Another key finding of this study was that executive meditators believe that the practice of meditation develops one's intuition, and they stated that they receive multiple intuitive cues so as to guide their decision-making processes.

However, Vaughan (1979), in an attempt to categorize the various ways intuition manifests, e.g., physical, emotional, mental and spiritual, has placed artificial constructs on intuition which can be limiting and obscure the origin of intuition. The source of intuition is the Self, the soul, God individualized, and by categorizing intuition, one can be confused as to its origins and also limit one's perception of the ways in which it can manifest; as one of the interviewees stated, labeling intuition as such is as though a blanket has been folded into four sections—one must realize it is still the same blanket.

### *Intuition and Decision-Making*

Executive meditators reported that they use their intuition in the preponderance of their decisions, contradicting previous findings by Agor (1985b), Hayashi (2001), Keen (1996) and others.



According to these executive meditators, they are comfortable using their meditation in nearly all their decisions, from the daily mundane to the important and risky, and not only in decisions where there is a high level of uncertainty; little previous precedent; variables not often scientifically predictable, limited facts, or the facts do not clearly point the way to go; time is limited and there is pressure to be right; or several plausible alternative solutions to choose from, with good arguments for each; which were findings from previous research.

There was a strong positive correlation between respondents' self reporting of their intuitional prowess and the use of intuition in important decisions ( $r = .387$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and between respondents' self reporting of their intuitional prowess and the degree of risk with which they are comfortable using their intuition in decision-making ( $r = .367$ ,  $p < .01$ ); these two findings, coupled with the anecdotal evidence from interviews of the 15 executive meditators who reported using their meditation and intuition in decision-making as their primary tool all types of decisions, indicate that executive meditators are comfortable in using their intuition in all decisions, not just those as previously stated by Agor and others.

However, in this finding, one must understand the differences between these executive meditators and those executives from previous studies. These executives reported living their lives from a place of higher consciousness. They report using their intuition on a daily basis and the ability to access it at will. They reportedly have trained their intuition, and have active spiritual practices which helps them sustain and increase their access to higher levels of consciousness. They have worked, and continue to work at developing and maintaining these higher levels of consciousness, whereas executives

from previous studies have not done these necessary things to access and train their intuition. It is no wonder that these executive meditators use their intuition in decision-making to the large extent that they report doing; they can, so they do, because it works better for them.

### *Meditation and Profits*

Executive meditators reported increased revenues and/or profits in their “businesses” as a result of their meditations. Of the 15-interviewees, 13 stated that they experience greater profits in their “business lives” as a result of their meditative practices, and 2 were neutral.

Seven of 8 for profit executive meditator interviewees reported higher profits with 1 neutral. Of note, 6 of 8 that attributed increased profits to their meditative practices have direct control of their firms’ bottom lines, and are of the senior management demographic. The 1 neutral who could not make the correlation stated that “I’ve been blessed with abundance my whole life, and money comes in at the will of Spirit.”

Of the 7 executive meditator interviewees who were from nonprofits, government and NGOs, the results are equally as conclusive. Of the 7, 6 stated that they see increased profits which they directly attribute to their meditation practices, and 1 was neutral.

Men and women, long-term and short-term meditators, and meditators of various types all reported similar levels of higher profits.

Very clearly, these participants see a relationship between their meditative practices and their profits, whether they were in for profit, government, nonprofit or NGO industry.

*Meditation and Ethics*

Executive meditators self-reported significantly higher ethical behaviors and standards as a result of their meditation. This is no surprise, and concurs with previous studies by La Forge (1997). However, in those previous studies, La Forge does not say why meditation results in higher ethical standards, and uses semi-discursive rather than non-discursive meditation.

Executive meditators reported striving for, and some reaching, that egoless state in which one realizes their lives are not separate from God, or, for that matter, anyone else. What is interesting and invaluable in this process is this; those who meditate need not do anything else but meditate to become ethical, which is decidedly different than La Forge's findings.

In the process of meditation and accessing higher states of consciousness, one's normal waking consciousness is changed. This process, although it happens very gradually and subtly, changes one's thoughts and feelings; they become aware of others' thoughts and feelings, and that they are a part of a greater whole. With this realization, it becomes increasingly difficult to be unethical; in fact, unethical behaviors frequently drop away (Yogananda, 1925e, 1995).

This brings up three interesting points.

First, meditators come to realize that their decisions have at least some impact, if not a great impact, on others; in the cases of business executives, ministers, and others, their decisions potentially have impact on thousands or millions of others. They understand their intellect is unable to see the larger picture, and know that only by

expanding their consciousness through meditation can they hope to understand the larger picture.

Second, in this process of expansion and conscious unification, they come to know their oneness with the Higher Self, the soul, and ultimately with all; as such, they come to realize that when they make unethical decisions, they are ultimately hurting themselves.

Third, greed is frequently driven by fear of not enough. In the process of meditation, one's faith is developed and expanded, and they come to realize that God will take care of them and provide whatever they *need*, not necessarily want, whenever they need it. They then settle into the knowing that there is no need for fear and greed.

### *Spiritual Transformation of Executive Meditators*

Executive meditators reported gaining numerous benefits from their meditative practices, physiological, psychological, and spiritual; indeed, we have seen that there are many benefits of meditation, including stress reduction and other physiological benefits; happier, more optimistic, more conscious of thoughts and actions, and other psychological benefits; greater intuitional prowess, creativity, abilities to sense others' thoughts and feelings, and other intuitive benefits; knowing answers more quickly, more options, and other decision-making benefits; and greater faith, consciousness on a higher plane, attunement with God, and other spiritual benefits. This does not tell the whole reason why they meditate.

Bottom line: Meditation has changed their lives.

The process of meditation (yoga) is a decidedly spiritual process. In the East, where meditation originated, yoga is known as a scientific path to attaining God realization, i.e., the knowing of the Self to be the indwelling God within each of us, and of our oneness with the whole Cosmos.

Another phenomenon that takes place as a result of meditation is the changing of one's purpose for meditating. The findings clearly show that regardless of the reason one begins meditating, after a time their reasons for continuing to meditate become spiritual. This is because when one puts themselves into the presence of God as happens in meditation, either consciously as in those who meditate for spiritual purposes, and unconsciously for those who meditate for purposes other than spiritual, a deep (and frequently unconscious) inner change takes place within that person; the Self, their soul, begins to awaken from its sleep. What typically happens in this process of awakening is that layers of ego consciousness which are filters and obscure the soul begin to fall away, i.e., habits of thought patterns and behaviors frequently change without conscious knowing. For instance, someone may "wake up" one day and realize that they don't like the taste of sugar, or they are not getting hooked or baited by others in debates as they were previously.

The fact is, *those who meditate need not do anything else but meditate to realize these changes within themselves.* The process is that after one practices meditation, be it for weeks or years, one begins to feel better about themselves, and slowly but surely begins to see life through a "different set of eyes," i.e., they perceive things differently than they previously did, soon discovering old behaviors no longer yield the same pleasures that they previously did. This comes as a result of their consciousness

changing, and it soon becomes a priority for them to maintain this higher consciousness, thus they abandon old habits of thinking and behaving.

Executive meditators reported striving to live their lives from this place of higher consciousness, and work to bring that consciousness which is born of meditation into their everyday lives. Jeffrey stated that one of his goals in meditation is to take that meditative state and make it a part of his everyday life. He stated, “the goal is to have the expanded consciousness that meditation brings, permeate all aspects of life, and business life is desperately in need of this process.”

Living one’s life from this perspective has the potential to make a significant impact on multiple facets of leadership, decision-making, and organizational effectiveness, and throughout the interviews, there were numerous reports of how these higher states of consciousness expanded into executive meditators’ everyday lives to impact their professional and personal lives in substantive and tangible ways. For instance, Joshua told of the impact his beginning to meditate had on his own personality and leadership style which he stated was the causal factor for the turnaround of the school district at which he was superintendent. He states

I began as superintendent in 1979 in what was a medium size school district, 6 schools initially, 7 by the time I finished as superintendent, in a middle class, primarily bedroom, community.

It was a huge mess. The community and county were up in arms. The community was just aching. They hired me because they knew I had the courage to go in and clean things up, and I fired two principals in that first year. That got the things started and got everybody’s attention, but it was 3 years later before I stopped drinking and wasn’t really relying on the meditation process—I was relying on my experience and my personal skills. Those first 4 years was really clean up and get the mess done.

In a school district, the bottom line isn’t dollars and cents. The bottom line is, are the kids learning and do you have verification that kids are

learning? The academic achievement results should've been far better than they were getting. They were average to mediocre to slightly below and they didn't need to be.

In 1983 I made the decision to change and refocus my life. I stopped drinking and got much more serious about my meditation practice. I don't believe that I would do much different than I had during the first 4 years, but in the next 7 until I retired, that school district took off and produced. We had happy teachers and cooperation with the teachers and union, even in heavy serious negotiations process, and school learning, academic learning. Academic achievement improved steadily.

As a result of my meditation practice, my leadership style began to change significantly from the kick butt, take names, fire people who weren't performing, to a leadership style that supported people. Not coincidentally, in that very first year my director of instruction came in who introduced me to Cognitive Coaching, a mentoring program, along with a lady walked in who was a big wheel in the self-esteem movement, which our kids needed and some of our teachers needed.

That coaching process was not there by coincidence. It was there because I needed something that would help me change my leadership style and do it in a way that would support all of the administratives in the district. That became part of the process of how we could change the bottom line in the school district of getting greater academic achievement.

When we got the Cognitive Coaching process, I often used meditation to solve problems such as what's the best approach, what makes sense . . . knowing all the information and data that I had gathered over the previous 4 – 5 years. What's the best approach to take regarding . . . There were several decisions that I made. I'm not even sure that I could conjure them up on specifics, but there were several decisions that came directly out of me taking the time to ask my inner wisdom and Spirit for guidance.

That was really the beginning of my process where I began to apply my meditation and intuition in the world other than in my own personal. And so I've been using it in that kind of way ever since. That was the beginning.

*Summary*

In this study we heard reports from 100 executive meditators whose decision-making styles are markedly different than the vast majority of other Western executives, and in direct conflict with many of the previous management and academic theorists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Agor and others would argue that executives use their intuition in making decisions only in circumstances such as high uncertainty; little previous precedent; variables not often scientifically predictable; limited facts, or do not give clear direction; or limited time or pressure to be right; but these executive meditators reported there is another, more effective way to make decisions, or, for that matter, to live their lives.

These executives do not look any different than any one of us; if you were to walk down the street, you would not be able to discern them from anyone else from their looks. Yet, there is something different about them. They walk their talk. There is integrity in their words and actions.

These executive have made the conscious choice to live their lives according to Higher principles, and are guided by Spirit in their decision-making. They make every effort to remain attuned through their meditation practices and their daily lives. Their lives are not proselytizing or preaching, nor are they exclusionary; they are lived in congruence with their beliefs of the Oneness of all life, and act from a place of integrity, truth, and compassion. Their business lives are extensions of their spiritual lives; in fact, most see little or no separation between the two, hence their higher ethics and congruence between their words and actions.



These executives reported using their meditation to access higher states of consciousness through which they access and train their intuition, and use their intuition in nearly every decision they make. They look to a Higher Consciousness to guide them, and as a result, they answer to their decisions in a different way, with higher ethical standards, than does most of the world.

They have *chosen* to live their lives from the inside out, to bring God into their lives through their practice of meditation and their asking His guidance in making decisions, and in such, have risen to a higher consciousness toward the level described by Al-Ghazzali (1954) when he said “Beyond intellect there is another stage. In this another eye is opened by which he beholds the unseen, what is to be the future, and other things which are beyond the ken of intellect . . . ” (p. 54). Their decisions come from within as a result of their meditation practices and willingness to listen to that “still small voice from within.”

The decision-making process executive meditators use occurs nearly simultaneously and with very little forethought. Their meditation practices develop their intuition which they use in their decision-making. This is not a conscious process; the conscious portion is their commitment to use it.

The benefits of meditation may not manifest instantly or overnight. Initially, there may be very tangible benefits such as what Samuel received for his neck tick, or what Mary received for her nervousness. However, to receive the deep benefits that these 15 interviewees have received, it may take a significant amount of time. However, it is well worth the patience that the practice develops. Michael Stephen, former Chairman of Aetna International said,

The one piece of advice I got from my boss when I joined Aetna as a Vice President in 1974 was to meditate. The results weren't immediate, but, looking back to when I started, I can clearly state that it was worth it, and I never could have done it without the meditation. It cleared my mind, helped me to focus, directed me in ways that I never would have been able to conceive of had I not been meditating. Was it worth it? Absolutely—I've never missed a day!"(Stephen, 2002)

Rachel echoed this sentiment.

So I knew that I needed to develop this [use of intuition in decision-making], and it was trial and error in the beginning. Sometimes I thought I knew, and then you would see the whole thing blow up and I could retrace my steps. I was very conscious about trying to figure it out though, so I would retrace my steps and I could see where my ego got in. And it wasn't pretty.

These processes are not designed to enhance the bottom lines of corporations, although in many cases that is the result. They are designed for deeper purposes, as William stated,

These practices can help with business, but in order for them to be really fully lived, business needs to be much less than a secondary priority. Therein lies the conflict; in business, your work is expected to be primary, but if you're a lover of the Truth it can't be primary. It has to be secondary to the Truth and that often leads to ways of being, perceptions, or saying or doing things that do not necessarily fit into the context of business. I think that's where we have a challenge with bringing these practices into business as a kind of enhancer of the bottom line. They're not designed to enhance the bottom line. They're designed to know the Truth.

To use meditation and intuition in decision-making effectively, one must rise above the current paradigm of business, i.e., that business is only about making money, and realize that there is a bigger endgame going on as these executive meditators have found. As Jeremy stated,

Of course your focus is on successful . . . improving the success rate of decision-making, as it focuses in business and what a valuable thing that is. But like I said, the three folds in the blanket, it's really one blanket. It is not just business, inner personal relationships, self-esteem issues, and

your spiritual life. It's really a very holistic thing that you get in touch with through meditation and that is that God is love. And we are love. It manifests as joy, and that is the goal of life itself. So, business and all these other aspects are just vehicles for us to increasingly come in touch with our true nature, which is that all-satisfying love which is our true nature.

One note. This subject is very difficult to research, as Western research methods are based on positivistic thinking; i.e., that which cannot be explained scientifically cannot exist, and the subject of meditation, intuition, and decision-making is not easily dissected as the three are intertwined very closely. This is a problem; science has not progressed to the point where it has designed instruments and scientific protocols which can measure what God-realized Masters have known for centuries.

These truths cannot be proven through the current “scientific” means; they can only be proven through going through the same processes that these same individuals have chosen for themselves, and each individual’s results will be the same; *however*, these results may not manifest in this lifetime, or even the next. One embarks on this road purely on faith and inner knowing, because they come to the age old question, “What is the meaning of life,” because their current lives do not hold the meaning on an intellectual basis that they have come to expect from soul realization.

However, if they do choose to attempt to replicate what Masters have known for centuries, they will discover, as others before them have discovered, that there is a Higher Consciousness beyond intellect, beyond reasoning, beyond the senses.

Beyond intellect there is another stage. In this another eye is opened by which he beholds the unseen, what is to be the future, and other things which are beyond the ken of intellect in the same way as the objects of intellect are beyond the ken of the faculty of discernment and the objects of discernment are beyond the ken of sense. Moreover, just as the man at the stage of discernment would reject and disregard the objects of intellect were these presented to him, so some intellectuals disregard the objects of

prophetic revelation. That is sheer ignorance. They have no ground for their view except that this is a stage which they have not reached and which for them does not exist; yet they suppose it is non-existent in itself. When a man blind from birth, who has not learnt about colors and shapes by listening to people's talk, is told about things for the first time, he does not understand them or admit their existence.(Al-Ghazzali, 1954, 64)

### Recommendations

On the basis of this summary and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered.

I would suggest further studies be conducted on:

- The effect that meditation and intuition have on profits, thereby taking any questions out of the minds of positivists that one can be directed from within though intuition and still make profits.
- The role that meditation can play in the development of business ethics. Our world is at a crossroads; we have a crisis in ethical decision-making, and the only answers can come from within.
- Intuition and the sources of knowledge. Experimental and transpersonal psychologists have touched upon this, but there is much more work to be done, especially in the areas of accessing higher states of consciousness.
- The effects of hormonal changes in women on their abilities to access higher states of consciousness and intuition.
- Effective methods of training one's intuitional capabilities using causal methodologies.
- Comparing executive meditators to the results from Agor (1986a) and Keen (1996) for significant differences in intuitional capabilities.

I would also suggest the development of a realistic measurement tool for intuition. The current tools are antiquated and, in light of the existence of higher consciousness states, not valid.

Finally, I would recommend that all business leaders establish a meditation practice, and investigate for themselves the premises set forth in these pages.

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APPENDIX A  
PUTNAM PERMISSION LETTER

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APPENDIX B  
PARTICIPANT SOLICITATION LETTER

(Date)

Dear (Potential Participant),

I am looking for leaders, managers, consultants, and business owners who meditate to participate in a research study exploring the links between meditation, intuition, and decision-making. This research will be used to complete the requirement for my PhD, as well as future books and articles on how business and society could benefit from establishing a meditation practice.

The study is in two phases. Phase 1 is an online survey of 50 questions that explores and validates the link between meditation, intuition, and decision-making which takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. Phase 2, which will begin in early February, consists of in-depth interviews of 15 people based on their responses to the survey. If you are chosen to be interviewed, I will meet you at a place of your choice, and the interview will last approximately 1 ½ hours. All total, for both phases, your time commitment will be no more than 2 ½ hours.

Participating is a simple process. To ensure a fit in the group that I am studying, I need to know the following:

- What do you do for work?
- Your title at work?
- Type decisions you make at work?
- What style meditation do you practice?

The primary beneficiaries of my research will be the business, scientific, educational and spiritual communities, as well as the individual participants. Some of the benefits that I perceive them gaining include:

- Exploring and reflecting on their experiences of meditation, and developing further insight into their meditation practices and how they relate to intuition and decision-making.
- Contributing to further understanding of how people experience intuitive guidance in meditation.
- Being part of a research study on a topic that interests them.

Thanks in advance for your answers—I look forward to getting them. And, in the meantime, if you know anyone else who is an "executive meditator" who might be interested in participating in this confidential study, please ask them to contact me [drumm@meditationstudy.org](mailto:drumm@meditationstudy.org) or (760) 740-0200.

Best regards,

Drumm

\*\*\*\*\*

Drumm McNaughton, MA, CMC  
 Ph.D. Student  
 Fielding Graduate Institute  
 Studying the "use of meditation and intuition in decision-making"

11148 Arco Drive  
 Escondido, CA 92026  
 (760) 740-0200 (O)  
 (760) 740-0210 (F)  
[drumm@meditationstudy.org](mailto:drumm@meditationstudy.org)

APPENDIX C  
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

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APPENDIX D  
PHASE 1 SURVEY



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## APPENDIX E

## AGOR PERMISSION LETTER

Dr. Weston Agor has authorized Robert Drummond McNaughton use of his AIM Survey for the purposes of Mr. McNaughton's Ph.D. dissertation research. The copyright for this survey is held solely by Dr. Agor, ENFP Enterprises, 5525 N. Stanton Street, #18-D, El Paso, TX 79912, © 1989, 1992. The original permission and release forms are on file and available on request.

APPENDIX F  
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. When did you begin meditating?
2. Why (did you start meditating)?
3. How often do you meditate?
4. What style meditation do you practice? Will you please describe it for me in general terms?
5. Do you use meditation as part of your decision-making process?
6. Would you please relate to me a time in your life where you had to make a major decision in your life that you took it into meditation and asked for guidance on (in opposition to meditated on the problem), and your answer came to you either in meditation or as a direct result of your meditation?
7. How was it that you came to the solution? Describe for me your solution process.
8. How did you know that decision was correct? Did your answer come in response to your asking for guidance to the problem or decision that you had to make at the time, or did it come to you spontaneously?
9. When the answer came to you, were you in an altered state of consciousness?
10. Many people, when they describe their meditations, state that they enter altered states of consciousness. When you meditate, do you enter into HSCs?
11. Would you please describe a HSC to me?
12. Have you entered HSCs spontaneously, during meditations, or both, and if so, would you describe one to me?



13. Do you get guidance to specific questions in an HSC? (*For instance, R.M. Bucke described an experience in Cosmic Consciousness in which he experienced a “sense of exultation, of immense joyousness accompanied or immediately followed by an intellectual illumination impossible to describe.”*)

14. Have you meditated when you’ve had a problem to solve or a question, and then after meditating, the answer “just came to you?” Would you please tell me about that?

15. Many people say that after meditating, they have:

- more clarity
- better focus
- more alert
- more productive
- better concentration
- see more options
- know the right course of action
- know it more quickly

What is your experience of this?

16. Have you noticed that your business’ profits increased since beginning to meditate, or any other indication that you would like to tell me about?

17. Has meditation had any effect on your business ethics, or on your making ethical decisions? Would you tell me about that?

18. Have you experienced greater creativity since you began meditating? Would you tell me about that?

19. Many people describe the benefits that they gain from their meditation practices.

20. Do you experience . . . , and how does it help or hinder your decision-making?
- Stress reduction
  - Happier
  - Peaceful
  - Sense of self
  - Optimism
  - Conscious of thoughts
  - Trust self
  - Sense others thoughts/feelings
  - Know answers more quickly
  - More decisive
  - Trust decisions more
  - Intuition
21. How does environment affect your intuition?
22. According to Paramahansa Yogananda, there are three sources of knowledge: sensing, thinking, and intuition. Carl Jung adds a fourth, feeling. Please describe to me your normal way of making large, complex decisions in your life? Do you use meditation in this process, and if so, how?
23. How do you know you've made the correct decision?
24. How do you know you've made a bad decision?
25. Have you ever ignored your intuition? What were the results?
26. How can you tell real intuitive guidance from false guidance?
27. Tell me about a situation where you made a decision using your intuition that did not turn out the way you had hoped or expected it to come out? Why do you think that it did not come out the way?
28. What is intuition?

29. Many people think that intuition comes from deep experience, the brain's ability to process information very rapidly, or the result of pattern recognition on the subconscious level. Where do you think it come from?
30. Do you have any techniques that you use to access your intuition?
31. Have you noticed any change in your intuitive abilities over the years? To what do you attribute this changes?
32. Have you ever experienced God's presence in meditation? Did you receive any guidance or illumination?

APPENDIX G

PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE CONFIDENTIALITY FORM



## APPENDIX H

## INTERVIEWEE DECISION-MAKING CHARACTERISTICS

| Person  | Primary Decision-Making Style | Decision-making Process   | When Receive Guidance            | Type of Guidance             | Confirm Decision              | HSC outside Med | Med Object | Type Decision |
|---------|-------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|------------|---------------|
| Alexis  | Intuitive<br>Rational         | 1. Problem<br>2. Analyze Problem<br>3. HSC<br>4. Ask for guidance<br>5. Intuition<br>6. Analyze options<br>7. Act | Inside and outside of meditation | Step by step and big picture | Internal feeling and External | Yes             | God        | All           |
| Corrine | Intuitive                     | 1. Problem<br>2. Analyze Problem<br>3. HSC<br>4. Ask for Guidance<br>5. Intuition<br>6. Act                       | Outside only                     | Step by step and big picture | Internal and External         | Yes             | God        | All           |

## APPENDIX H (CONTINUED)

| Person | Primary Decision-Making Style | Decision-making Process  | When Receive Guidance           | Type of Guidance                         | Confirm Decision                        | HSC outside Med | Med Object | Type Decision |
|--------|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--|---|-----------------|------------|---------------|
| David  | Rational Intuitive            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Problem</li> <li>2. Analyze Problem</li> <li>3. HSC</li> <li>4. Ask for guidance</li> <li>5. Get intuition outside meditation</li> <li>6. Act, checking intuitively at each step if going correct way</li> </ol> | Inside and outside meditation   | Usually step by step, rarely big picture | Internal and External                   | Yes             | God        | All           |
| Edward | Rational Intuitive            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Problem</li> <li>2. Analyze</li> <li>3. HSC</li> <li>4. Intuition to feel options energetic in body</li> <li>5. Act</li> </ol>   | Outside<br><br>Will use I Ching | Step by step and big picture             | Energetic through feelings and External | Yes             | God        | All           |

## APPENDIX H (CONTINUED)

| Person  | Primary Decision-Making Style | Decision-making Process  | When Receive Guidance          | Type of Guidance             | Confirm Decision                     | HSC outside Med | Med Object | Type Decision |
|---------|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|---------------|
| Emily   | Intuitive<br>Rational         | 1. Problem<br>2. HSC<br>3. Ask<br>4. Intuition<br>5. Analyze<br>6. Act | Inside and outside             |                              | Voice, visual, feelings              | Yes             | God        | All           |
| Jeffrey | Intuitive<br>Rational         | 1. Problem<br>2. Analyze<br>3. HSC<br>4. Ask<br>5. Intuition<br>6. Act | Inside and outside meditation. | Step by step and big picture | Feelings of peace, joy, and calmness | Yes             | God        | All           |
| Jeremy  | Intuitive                     | 1. Problem<br>2. Analyze<br>3. HSC<br>4. Ask<br>5. Intuition<br>6. Act | Inside and outside meditation  | Step by step and big picture | Feelings, Aural, thoughts            | Yes             | God        | All           |



## APPENDIX H (CONTINUED)

| Person  | Primary Decision-Making Style | Decision-making Process  | When Receive Guidance         | Type of Guidance             | Confirm Decision                      | HSC outside Med | Med Object | Type Decision |
|---------|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|---------------|
| Joshua  | Intuitive                     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Problem</li> <li>2. HSC</li> <li>3. Ask</li> <li>4. Intuition</li> <li>5. Act</li> </ol>   | Inside and outside meditation | Step by step                 | Feelings, thoughts                    | Yes             | God        | All           |
| Kristin | Intuitive Rational            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Problem</li> <li>2. Analyze</li> <li>3. HSC</li> <li>4. Ask</li> <li>5. Intuition-Feel energy of situation</li> <li>6. Act</li> </ol>            | Inside and outside meditation | Step by step and big picture | Feeling energy of situation, thoughts | Yes             | God        | All           |
| Mary    | Intuitive                     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Problem</li> <li>2. HSC</li> <li>3. Ask</li> <li>4. Intuition</li> <li>5. Act, intuitively checking at each step if going correct way</li> </ol> | Inside and outside meditation | Step by step and big picture | Visual, thoughts, feelings            | Yes             | God        | All           |

## APPENDIX H (CONTINUED)

| Person | Primary Decision-Making Style | Decision-making Process   | When Receive Guidance              | Type of Guidance             | Confirm Decision           | HSC outside Med | Med Object           | Type Decisions |
|--------|-------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Rachel | Intuitive                     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Problem</li> <li>2. HSC</li> <li>3. Ask</li> <li>4. Intuition</li> <li>5. Act</li> </ol>  | Outside meditation                 | Step by step and big picture | Feeling, thoughts          | Yes             | God                  | All            |
| Samuel | Rational Intuitive            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Problem</li> <li>2. Analyze</li> <li>3. HSC</li> <li>4. Ask</li> <li>5. Intuition</li> <li>6. Look at impact</li> <li>7. Act</li> </ol> | Both inside and outside meditation | Step by step                 | Feelings, thoughts, visual | Yes             | Both God and problem | All            |
| Scott  | Intuitive Rational            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Problem</li> <li>2. Analyze</li> <li>3. Ask</li> <li>4. HSC</li> <li>5. Ask</li> <li>6. Intuition</li> <li>7. Act</li> </ol>            | Both inside and outside meditation | Step by step and big picture | Feelings, thoughts         | Yes             | God                  | All            |

## APPENDIX H (CONTINUED)

| Person  | Primary Decision-Making Style | Decision-making Process  | When Receive Guidance                 | Type of Guidance             | Confirm Decision           | HSC outside Med | Med Object | Type Decisions |
|---------|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|------------|----------------|
| Walter  | Intuitive                     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Problem</li> <li>2. HSC</li> <li>3. Ask</li> <li>4. Intuition</li> <li>5. Act</li> </ol>                     | Both inside and outside of meditation | Step by step and big picture | Feelings, thoughts, visual | Yes             | God        | All            |
| William | Intuitive Rational            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Problem</li> <li>2. Analyze</li> <li>3. HSC</li> <li>4. Ask</li> <li>5. Intuition</li> <li>6. Act</li> </ol> | Both inside and outside of meditation | Step by step and big picture | Feelings, thoughts, visual | Yes             | God        | All            |