

HEIDI SAWYER

Highly
Intuitive
People



7 Right-Brain Traits to Change the Lives
of Intuitive-Sensitive People

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Introduction

I've been working with Highly Intuitive People for more than 17 years, and I've discovered that other people have a radar for them. They seek their knowledge, beliefs and insight into all aspects of their lives – from relationships to career paths. For the Highly Intuitive Person though, this feels like a thankless task. Unless they offer something that the person asking wants to hear, their insight is ignored, even though it turns out to be correct. When it all goes wrong, they are the ones who are there to pick up the pieces and then go through it all again.

No-one hears them, no-one is there for their world; they provide the comfort, the missing pieces and the listening ear, yet they do not feel it for themselves. This book is for those unheard intuitive people.

When I started out, I never asked for intuitive ability – I didn't understand or want it. Like many Intuitive-Sensitives I felt lost in a sea of aloneness, surrounded by people who didn't seem to understand. We're labelled as the wise ones – we're perceptive, caring, emotionally generous with other people – but have little understanding of ourselves. We panic at the prospect of conflict and withdraw at the moment of overwhelm. This book contains the information I would have liked when I began – the instant answers I spent years searching for.

Some parts of the book will resonate with you more than others, but overall it will give you the healing tools for the Intuitive-Sensitive Person: a voice for your unheard world.

In the course of my work, people ask me these questions:

‘Why am I so sensitive, and how can I tone it down?’

‘Why is it I feel other people’s emotions as though they are my own?’

‘Why and how do I seem to see events in people’s lives before they occur?’

‘How do I get rid of overwhelm?’

Throughout my life I’ve had the opportunity to experience many extremes. They have taught me the richness of human faith, given me character strengths I never knew existed, and taught me the power of the intuitive journey to restore a passion for life.

What follows is your guidebook as an Intuitive-Sensitive Person: soul-seeker extraordinaire. It’ll give you the depth you’ve been searching for, the answers that have eluded you. It will help you heal, and provide the route map to connecting with your own kind.

The world is changing. We’ve seen more developments in the last 15 years than in the previous 100, because of huge advances in technology. Those changes are set to continue, and as a species we’re having to adapt faster than evolution allows. But no matter what technology demands of us tomorrow and no matter how advanced it becomes, it will never be able to truly understand human empathy.

The change has already begun – it’s happening now. Around the world, senior people in organizations are seeking employees with

a unique skill: one that can't be outsourced to countries with a cheaper labour force or automated. It's a skill that's natural to all Intuitive-Sensitives, and one that will be in huge demand, much sooner than any of us can predict. If you've ever voiced your concerns at work but had them dismissed, only to find that time proved you right and on the next occasion all heads turned to you (even though you may not be in a position of 'authority'), then this is set to continue.

True authority isn't handed down by those in power – it's given by the collective to those who deserve it. Intuitive-Sensitives are the secret leaders, and in perhaps only a few years from now, they will no longer be hidden, or silent.

Being thrust into the 'limelight' will be overwhelming, so I've written this book to help prepare you for this new demand on your nervous system. You can thrive in this new world. If I can do it, then so can you.

Part I

Understanding Yourself as an Intuitive- Sensitive Person





Chapter 1

The Surgeon's Prayer

'And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become; everything else is secondary.'

STEVE JOBS

'Back off, leave her alone – she's had enough.' Finally, someone had noticed I was finding the whole process more than a little overwhelming. Childbirth is the end of one's personal dignity at the best of times, but in my experience as an extreme Sensitive, it had become the choice point between life and death.

I lay clutching the side of the hospital trolley, trying not to cry. I was surrounded by 16 people – it's amazing how you can still manage to count when you're stressed – with what felt like fence post wires poking out of my femoral arteries. I looked around for the surgeon – a very nice woman whom I'd met numerous times in the build-up to this situation – hoping for some reassurance. She was standing in the corner with her hands covering her face, and she was moving into something much like the prayer position.

It was at that point that I had a blast of realization – the reason the surgeon wouldn't look me in the eye was nothing to do with whether she liked me or not, it was because she didn't want to be

haunted for years to come by the eyes of the mother she couldn't be sure of saving.

I lay back onto the trolley, my white-knuckled hands letting go of the sides, and said nothing. As I looked up at the ceiling more and more excited faces appeared above me, all introducing themselves. Apparently what I was about to go through was a once-in-a-lifetime, not-to-be-missed learning opportunity for any obstetric medicine intern.

In that moment of faith I had the most incredible experience of feeling. I had zero options – no choices at all. I knew that, if it came to the crunch, the surgeon would save the baby and let me go. She was aware that I had another son, and a husband, but there was only one option.

I can still hear myself saying the words 'What will be, will be' as I relaxed into feeling. I let the anaesthetist begin his job of injecting the drugs as I quietly mumbled the countdown to blackness.

Faith, trust, feeling and letting go

The true essence and power of 'letting go' is spoken of in many spiritual contexts – from experiencing or allowing 'God', to feeling completely at one with ourselves. We're all in search of some form of peace. For the sensitive person this is very obvious, and for the purely linear thinker, it's a subtle or distant thought only present when something uncomfortable happens.

My experience on the surgeon's table taught me what it really means to *feel*. Most of us spend our lives doing the opposite: we do anything possible to avoid feeling. Even for Highly Sensitive individuals, feelings are distant while emotions are forever

present. We over-experience the world of other people; we take on their emotions as though they are our own. But we don't – as I discovered as I awaited my fate – properly access how we actually feel.

In my work I speak to many troubled people. They experience trouble with work, with relationships, with their finances – I've met trouble in its many forms. In my experience, people repeat their patterns in life – no matter how they wish to change it – unless they tackle one fundamental area: their relationship with faith.

The dictionary definition of faith says it's a 'complete trust or confidence in someone or something, or a strong belief in God or the doctrines of a religion'. My understanding of faith, in the context of deep personal development, has little to do with any set doctrines or values, and everything to do with building an inner level of connection to what is a deep faith in the *self*. This is a faith built on the firm foundations of feeling, trust and letting go.

For the sensitive person, the building of feeling, trust and letting go, in order to experience self-faith, eventually becomes a necessity rather than a luxury. Without it, we continue to experience the world as overwhelming, emotionally painful and at times soul-destroying, as our sensitivity directs us to hide, reject and yet at the same time desire deep, meaningful connection.

Deep faith and intuitive download

As I returned from the blackness, I found myself gazing around what I soon recognized as the hospital's recovery room. A nurse sprang to life when she realized I was returning to the world. It's funny what you observe during moments of deep stress: I remember the anaesthetist's kindness as he gently squeezed my

hand to reassure me that I'd returned to the physical world; I remember his joke; and then I remember the pain. It's true what they say – tremendous pain does make it impossible to speak.

I'd just gone through surgery for a complete placenta previa and placenta accreta. Individually these are severe pregnancy complications, but together they could have resulted in my death. My body had held on for as long as it could, with my immune system under severe pressure from other complications, and it had been time to remove my son from the womb.

I'd known since the second scan that there was an issue; in fact I'd known for seven years. People ask me why there's a seven-year gap between my two children. This is the reason. It took me that long to build up the courage to do it again.

So how did I know I'd have the most severe complication they see in obstetric medicine? I knew because the intuitive self told me. It told me at the birth of my first son, when my blood pressure crashed and my face turned lily white, my lips blue. It told me his birth would complicate that of my second child. It said: 'You'll have to be careful with the next one; one false move and it'll kill you.' And sure enough, that's exactly what happened.

I was told to prepare myself for the worst, to put my affairs in order before the operation; to expect intensive care for weeks, if I survived. My blood was matched, prepared and ready, along with the forms to sign my womb away. The obstetrician, pen in hand and form under my nose, said: 'If you ever get pregnant again Heidi, it will kill you. We won't be able to save you.' Familiar words.

Some would say, with such clear insight, why would you have another child? Well, I had a very strong intuition that my second son was to come into the world. I can't put it into words, other

than to say it was a deep intuition – one that wouldn't leave me alone. I finally plucked up the courage just before it was getting too late in life.

Throughout the process a very deep intuition followed that I would be okay. It was a strong feeling of faith – a knowing that all was well. It seems that an intense state of long-term stress brings a serene awareness: perhaps a deeper connection to a different part of ourselves.

I didn't have the tunnel of light or an out-of-body experience – just a deep internal knowing that worry is futile. This went on for months. Indeed it largely remains with me now. A few days after the surgery, the surgeon sat on the end of my bed in the hospital. She said quietly: 'Some kind of miracle happened in there, Heidi. So much so, that I can't believe it. I'm sorry, but I had to open you up again to check.'

She told me she'd had some kind of powerful experience – of serenity and calmness – as she'd made the incision for the surgery. She explained how the room and everyone in it had become incredibly peaceful: it was like nothing she'd known in her 30-year career. But she couldn't help adding that my situation had put 20 years on her!

Miraculously, even though she'd made sure it was now useless, the surgeon had managed to save my womb. I was grateful, as I wasn't yet ready to give it up. I did do so a year later, along with my ovaries, but I needed the time – as any woman does, perhaps – to think about going through that particular surgery at a young age. It was the time I needed to grieve the letting go of what I believed was my womanhood.

The whole process taught me that intuition is a deep faith and trust in our inner world. I learned that day to appreciate that the over-working and over-pleasing part of the intuitive nature doesn't have to stay that way: it can settle into perspective. With continual inner training, Intuitive-Sensitivity can be a *blessing* rather than a painful part of our deepest nature, something we should try to eliminate in order to make us 'normal'. Without it, I wouldn't be alive today.

That day, Halloween 2011, brought into the world a lovely little boy, for whom I'm deeply grateful. He's a gentle soul with, of course, a sensitive nature.



Chapter 2

What is an Intuitive-Sensitive Person?

*'Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development,
invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears.'*

EDGAR ALLAN POE

The term 'Highly Sensitive People' was coined by Dr Elaine Aron, an American clinical and research scientist, and it refers to a personality trait found in a section of society – an estimated 15–20 per cent of the population.¹ The basis of Dr Aron's theory – which has attracted quite extensive scientific research in recent years – is that Highly Sensitive People have a nervous system that's more aware of life's subtleties because their brains process and reflect information more deeply.²

Biologists have found that this Highly Sensitive trait exists in at least 100 species, and it's considered a survival strategy. The Highly Sensitive animal or human is *extra aware*: it can see more vividly than others do, but at the same time it's easily overwhelmed.³ If we look at this in terms of a herd of animals, we'll see a portion who are extra observant – they *feel* where the best land is and where the sources of water are located, and generally know when it's time to move on. That skill is subtle – it's directive yet cautious.

The rest of the herd will find themselves following the actions of these sensitive protectors, who are observant enough to know when to move and when to keep still. In humans this Highly Sensitive trait has been largely overlooked and sidelined, and as a result, the people who possess it feel there's something wrong with them – and their sensitivity impacts their self-esteem.

Intuitive-Sensitivity: a form of High Sensitivity

After 17 years of interacting with thousands of people who defined themselves as both Highly Sensitive and Intuitive-Sensitive, I've come to realize that while all Intuitive-Sensitive People are Sensitive, not all Sensitive are Intuitive.

An Intuitive-Sensitive Person shows as a refined, exaggerated type of Highly Sensitive Person. My view of Intuitive-Sensitivity comes from working with people who describe themselves as deeply intuitive – something they often find confusing and somewhat worrying. They're concerned about what others might – or already do – think of their apparently finely tuned instincts: their ability to see situations for what they are, rather than what the world would like to see them as, as well as their inherent sensitivity.

Intuitive-Sensitive People tend to be the Highly Sensitive individuals who want to explore their sensitivity for the good of themselves and others. They want to know what their intuition is about, how to use it properly and why they have it.

In my experience, Intuitive-Sensitivity seems to come from an issue linked to nurturance in our early lives, which is either consciously part of our world, or a part of our unconscious heritage – we'll be looking at this in depth, later in the book.

Intuitive-Sensitives have, in the majority of cases, developed an additional component to their sensitivity as a layer of emotional self-protection. This ‘extra’ part is an extra-sensory skill over and above the normal senses.

I’ve also discovered that Intuitive-Sensitivity is a *hidden* trait, one that Intuitive-Sensitives keep quiet from their outer world. Numerous professional people have confessed to me their extra-sensory skills: I’ve had doctors, barristers, CEOs, even a university law professor tell me about their secret psychic world. But Intuitive-Sensitivity impacts or ‘happens’ to people from all walks of life: the homemaker, the accountant, the man who’s afraid to tell his wife that he has extra-sensory experiences.

Extra-sensory skills and intuitive instincts

The one thing these people have in common though, is that their skills and instincts were not asked for – they just appeared. They often began early in childhood, before promptly disappearing for a big chunk of the person’s life and then returning around the same time that other types of sensory overload became apparent. Intuitive-Sensitive skills show in several formats. They usually follow a process, but generally the following aspects are present:

Premonitions

Firstly, there’s a general feeling of seeing or knowing things before they occur. For some this feeling is extremely obvious and psychic in nature: they see these things in their sleep state, and they have a relaxed insight into people’s lives – an ability to see outcomes beyond ‘You’ll meet a tall, dark, handsome stranger’ and predicting lottery numbers.

It's more to do with an insight into other people and how they feel. This will often relate to relationships, work scenarios and anything to do with danger. The insight often occurs in a spontaneous manner – many Intuitive-Sensitives have very vivid experiences of feeling another's energy, their life situation and the outcome to what may be creating upset. Sometimes this insight isn't popular with their nearest and dearest, who see it as 'doom thinking' or meddling. Therefore I see quite a few upset Intuitive-Sensitives who can't get through to the people they love.

In the early days, Intuitive-Sensitives find this inability to get through very distressing because they feel it's their job to help solve or rescue. This sensitivity to seeing things in their dream or waking state before they manifest in reality, causes many a moral dilemma; they ask themselves: 'Should I or shouldn't I speak up?'

Often, it's a thankless task, mentioning things that someone hasn't asked for, and this starts to impact the Intuitive-Sensitives self-esteem. Their insights are often ignored or discounted, but then they discover, months later, that what they predicted has in fact happened. But *how* did they know it? Is it some kind of magical ability? Is it really possible to predict an outcome when you have little to no information?

Many theorize that intuitive instincts beyond the norms of human behaviour are a fallacy of the deluded. This belief upsets and confuses the true Intuitive-Sensitive because their deepest nature, something they can't help or stop themselves from being part of, is marginalized and made unacceptable.

They go on to question whether their perceptive instincts are indeed the result of an over-productive imagination or even a serious mental health issue. I always reassure those who question their sanity that insane people don't notice they're not quite

right. They tend to believe there's nothing wrong with them – it's everyone else.

The Intuitive-Sensitive, however, believes that everyone else is right and there's something wrong with *them*. As they're very sensitive to energy, they see things before they occur, are very perceptive when it comes to other people, don't suffer fools, are hyper-vigilant and can't be bothered with polite conversations about the weather – they want to get to the juicy stuff or not bother at all.

Intuitive-Sensitives take two seconds flat to decide if they like or dislike someone. That decision isn't based on looks, how someone appears, or the persona they present, it's placed on what they 'feel'. All of which does appear, on the surface, to put them in the land of la-la – hence the reason they sometimes question their sanity.

This is especially difficult because our social programming has trained us to be polite, to put others first and never to express how we really feel. This builds an enormous pressure in the Intuitive-Sensitive, especially as most have a paralyzing fear of confrontation. This isn't usually because they're scared or nervous people – although as it affects people from all walks of life, some are – it's because confrontation actually physically *hurts* them.

They have to deal with their own sensory information around the confrontation and also process the emotions of the *other* person. If that emotion is anger, it'll cut into something deep in their stomach region, way beyond 'butterflies'. If it's hurt, then they feel enormous guilt for bringing it up and upsetting the other person. For the Intuitive-Sensitive, confrontation is about bracing yourself, preparing for the energetic onslaught.

Sensory overload

In seminar presentations, when I explain why an Intuitive-Sensitive Person will do a ‘perfume dash’ through a department store, or why, when visiting a restaurant, they’d rather leave than have to sit at a table with their back to the door, or how, at a dinner party they’ll hang around to make sure they get the end seat on a rectangular table, but don’t mind where they sit on a round table, there’s always a deep chuckle of recognition.

But why do they do these things? The answer is: information overload. To an Intuitive-Sensitive the perfume counter smells like a chemical factory, designed to give them a headache. When people dine out in a restaurant they expect to be able to relax and enjoy their meal, but for the Intuitive-Sensitive who finds themselves seated with their back to the door, it’s anything but relaxing. The diners coming into the restaurant have questions in their minds: where will they sit? Where are the friends they’re due to meet? And then there are the nervous ones on a first date....

All this information is picked up by the Intuitive-Sensitive’s awareness, although they haven’t even *seen* these people. It makes them feel vulnerable, exposed to others’ emotions when they don’t want to be. They want to eat in peace. They aren’t aware of this in the early days – then all they know is that their general feelings switch every few minutes while they’re eating. When they can seat themselves *facing* the door, though, it seems they’re more in control of how they feel – not so caught unawares.

And why the rectangular table? Intuitive-Sensitives discover that the people in a group who like to be in control, or who are particularly nervous, will head towards a central seat. Those people will be worrying about what they’ll order and how the bill will be

split, and the Intuitive-Sensitive doesn't want to be processing all of that. They've gone out to interact with their friends, not to be in the unconscious firing line of a stranger's mind.

They feel so much better sitting at the end of the table, with just one person on one side whose energy they have to deal with and, usually, the other sensitive person opposite them. They have plenty to discuss with these people, beyond the weather and polite chitchat. The conversation turns to deeper matters in a short space of time, while the socially anxious are desperate to clamber to the central seats, to have competitive conversations with plenty of nervous laughter. They avoid the 'deep' people at the end, whom they often initially mistake as shy.

Intuitive-Sensitivity and wisdom

Strongly perceptive wisdom is a part of the Intuitive-Sensitive's make-up, and it's often been present since their early years. Often mistaken as shy in childhood, the Intuitive-Sensitive Person was busy working out how others view the world, and it wasn't long before they realized others don't seem to share their values.

For some, this led to a feeling of emotional isolation, as their overly responsible nature sought to look after others before they were mature enough to do so. Many were called 'mini adults' or 'wise babies', but without the precocious attitude. There is a quiet, subtle level of natural wisdom. Later in life, as the Intuitive-Sensitive tries to shrug off this wisdom, they often have to make compromised decisions in order to fit in. This is part of their tendency to want to 'save' others; to avoid like the plague any kind of judgement; and to feel safe and loved.

This compromised self survives into adulthood, especially if they've come from a background that taught them to value what

others think over and above their own perceptions. It's not until the shame, guilt and sense of duty is really *felt* that the intuitive sense starts to really knock on their inner door.

The question is, why do Intuitive-Sensitives suddenly become aware of their deeper senses? I believe the brain triggers this awareness as a strong survival instinct, so the already Intuitive-Sensitive Person who has stepped up a gear once too often can protect themselves from an emotional breakdown when their overwhelmed senses become too much to bear. The 'switch' happens when the Intuitive-Sensitive has had enough of feeling pushed from pillar to post. It's an unconscious trigger that gradually becomes conscious.

Stress and the Intuitive-Sensitive

Stress is a normal, everyday occurrence for an Intuitive-Sensitive, just as it is for most people. The difference is that many Intuitive-Sensitives are great in a crisis – they're the ones who don't panic, the ones who seem to know almost instantly what to do. Their nervous system doesn't shut down when difficulty strikes – in fact, it comes to life. To them, this kind of external stress is almost a pleasurable relief from the internal stress they live with constantly.

There are many aspects of the Highly Sensitive Person that cross into the Intuitive-Sensitive Person. The Intuitive-Sensitive swims in the pool of life like everyone else, but while others respond with a gentle breaststroke in warm, sometimes cool waters, they find themselves flapping at a manic pace with all kinds of stuff wrapped around their feet. Sometimes it's seaweed, sometimes it's an unusual fish trying to nibble their feet; at other times they see the shark coming while everyone else is oblivious or slow to react.

The trouble is that Intuitive-Sensitives have a vivid mind. Every one I've ever met had a very alert, elaborate memory. They remember fine detail, usually associated with emotional impact. On the one hand this is incredibly useful, but on the other it means they don't forget. Their entire nervous system is run by ongoing memory. It pipes up, *Don't put your foot there. Remember the last time you did that? We got covered in seaweed for weeks. Oh, and remember that shift in the feel of things... before the shark came? Watch what you do there, and dodge the spot where it was icy cold last time.*

This kind of ongoing internal pressure would turn most people into a neurotic mess. The Intuitive-Sensitive, however, has learned how to negotiate their internal minefield, so it often appears completely 'handled' in their external world. That's not to say they put on a performance; in fact, it's usually the complete opposite – they need honesty. Why? Well, it's tough enough looking out for everything in the pool of life without having to deal with others' denial and panic over the seaweed they've never experienced before.

A lack of honesty is what really creates a deep stress in the Intuitive-Sensitive. This is because their empathetic nature feels highly responsible for the emotions others cannot access. Their refined senses mean they're constantly interpreting energy – they just can't help it. They walk into a situation and live out the energy of it – they feel it in work environments, within a room, even in a new house purchase.

Yet although they experience a continuous sensory overload, Intuitive-Sensitives aren't emotional heaps who are unable to function in life. They are made of tough stuff – they get up, dust themselves down and carry on. They can do this because of the development of faith.

This faith appears through an internal instinct rather than being triggered by an external event or interest. I believe it's an emotional survival drive for the Intuitive-Sensitive to feel they want to develop their intuitive instincts – to help them successfully weave through the fires of life, with only the occasional burn. It may have taken a while for them to become aware they have these intuitive skills, as they regard them as normal and believe that everyone has them. Their interest returns to them later in life, despite the fact they tried to abandon it in childhood.

The feeling of 'going home'

Every Intuitive-Sensitive I've come across has had a feeling inside of 'wanting to go home'. When I've discussed this observation with an audience, tears stream down people's faces, they fidget and they look around. They're not quite sure what to do with themselves. The reason for this is that they thought this sense of 'wanting to go home' was something quiet, a feeling no-one else acknowledged; they believed it was only them who felt it.

For Intuitive-Sensitives, home doesn't have a name. It isn't a place they understand – it's not a house or a location to move to. It's a feeling they recognize somewhere deep inside. They've had some kind of experience that has given them a glimpse of this feeling, and it's one they are keen to return to.

To an Intuitive-Sensitive, the feeling of 'home' is a strong motivator in life. In fact, I'd say it's their main focus. They want and are willing to create the feeling in their life experience; they want to live rather than to exist. Their sensory perceptions, their intuition-based focus, is something they want to use positively in the physical world. Their desire for meaning, purpose and acceptance is strong enough to drive them to make a real difference, even if they're scared.

They need and want though, to let go of worrying about what others think – they need to figure out how to manage risk and neutralize their own misjudgements or wishful thinking. The feeling of ‘home’ offers this safety from the fear of criticism and a release from the pressure of perfection, although it’s their perfectionist nature that contributes to their empathetic gentleness.

In a world where logic is valued more highly than emotion, the feeling of ‘home’, however briefly felt at some point in an Intuitive-Sensitive’s life, has a strong foundation in their intuitive nature. The word ‘intuition’ comes from a Latin verb meaning ‘to look inside’: to internalize contemplation. To the Intuitive-Sensitive, the experience of returning ‘home’ is a feeling where the world of the personality (logic) collides with the world of emotion.

The true self

Intuition generally provides views or judgements that cannot be empirically verified, and this makes ‘proving’ intuitional processes very difficult, especially here in the West, where ‘logic is king’. The Intuitive-Sensitive Person worries whether their intuitive self is true, rather than just a figment of their over-productive imagination, and most importantly, they are concerned that it’s not the basis of making them somehow ‘fake’. This internalized pressure creates an emotional division between the logical self and the basis of the ‘soul’s process’, which is based on an honesty of emotion: a component of what’s often referred to as the ‘true self’.

So what is the ‘true self’? Has anyone ever seen this elusive creature? Are we not simply made up of our brain’s function and isn’t the true self some fluffy, made-up concept? There’s

plenty of very convincing evidence to suggest that the former is true. However, I believe, even if we're simply our brain, the intelligence that tells us how to proceed, how to make the brain work, must and does come from a universal intelligence.

That universal intelligence is based in intuition – it's the link to the unconfined, the untrainable: the level of energy that has a mind and intelligence of its own. It won't be controlled or manipulated. The true self therefore is free flowing – it has a mind of its own and it enjoys its freedom. We experience ourselves as the true self the moment we let go of trying to control outcomes. What the Intuitive-Sensitive wants in life is to find a level of self-acceptance.



Chapter 3

‘You’re Too Sensitive’

‘You go through spells where you feel that maybe you’re too sensitive for this world. I certainly felt that.’

WINONA RYDER

Andrea arrived home from work, kicked off her shoes and headed straight for the fridge. She opened the door and looked longingly inside for the remains of the chocolate bar she’d carefully hidden in the fridge door the previous night. She’d had a bad day – a colleague had joked about the quality of her work because she’d made a minor mistake. She never made mistakes, and her colleague had been quick to point this one out. She was sure he hadn’t meant any harm, but even so, the comment had hurt her.

Andrea peeled off what was left of the wrapper, and breaking one of the last four squares with her teeth, slobbered the silky smooth chocolate around her mouth. Instantly she felt calm. She then switched on the TV and sat quietly, mindlessly gazing at the screen as she enjoyed her few moments of peace before anyone else came home.

Intuitive-Sensitive People strongly question things – they question the meaning of life, right down to where they fit

in, and this is something they've experienced for a very long time. They can't cope with the mundane – it's painful for them, and they want to be part of something with meaning. More importantly, they want deep connection.

When others joke about them or criticize them, the energy of such things cuts a very deep wound. They may take it lightly on the surface, but underneath, they're plotting to leave that situation as quickly as they possibly can. I'm sure most people have a sensitivity to criticism; after all, we want to be liked and we don't like to offend others – we prefer to keep the peace. In this way, many events in life are overlooked and ignored: people just don't want to get involved.

But the Intuitive-Sensitive is caught in a world where criticism is a distinct fear. They will go to great lengths to avoid it, unless the situation involves someone who means a lot to them, in which case they'll defend themselves to the hilt, but always try hard to make sure their response is fair and just. The way that they deal with criticism keeps them awake at night. Should they or shouldn't they do it? How do they approach it? What will be the consequences?

The chocolate-criticism connection

For the Intuitive-Sensitive, criticism brings up such a feeling of deep anxiety it not only impacts their feelings, it also impacts how they interact with food. In my experience, those individuals who've had a particularly powerful early life experience around criticism – an overly critical parent, for example – will be strongly attracted to chocolate.

Why chocolate? Serotonin, the happy brain chemical that lowers the stress response, has long been a partner with chocolate. On

occasion, I've experimented with groups of intuitive people during workshops, dividing them into groups according to their favourite sugar item – for some it's cakes, others biscuits, and of course, for many it's chocolate.

I've found that certain emotions are a strong match in these groups. For the chocolate people, it's criticism. They eat chocolate in a secretive manner; they try to make sure that people (even themselves) don't notice how much of it they eat. The group, when presented with copious amounts of chocolate and the permission to eat it, politely refuse. Some break off four squares, nibble them, then neatly fold the top and go no further. The others won't even touch the chocolate, claiming they don't want or need it.

In public, their emotions wouldn't allow them to eat chocolate or even to acknowledge that they wanted it. Their story was very different when I then took the chocolate away, putting it straight into a waste sack. Then they were scrabbling to try to save it, angry that it was going to waste. It was at this point that their true emotions emerged.

They were secretive because they feared criticism for eating the chocolate, yet a strong anger and enraged rebellion made them want to eat it in private. When I asked these people about their behaviour afterwards, each one said that they had indeed had at least one highly critical parent.

This isn't to say that all chocoholics have a critical parent. However, every Intuitive-Sensitive Person I've met whose favourite source of sugar is chocolate has experienced this, and there's too much evidence, from thousands of people, to dismiss this. These individuals' Highly Intuitive instincts have emerged as some form of defence or protection mechanism. It's become

an ability to protect and ward-off criticism by being able to accurately pre-judge or even accurately pre-see situations.

Attachment and an inherited fear of criticism

Humiliation, worrying about what others think and displays of anger or shouting are areas of deep concern for the Intuitive-Sensitive Person working out their level of sensitivity. It also impacts in terms of their deepest fear: humiliation. These things hold back the Intuitive-Sensitive in all areas of their life. They prevent them from speaking up, engaging in certain activities or voicing their irritation before the point of outrage.

As we learned in the last chapter, there's a strong indication that natural sensitivity is a trait you're born with.¹ It isn't dependent on being intuitive, although Sensitives do notice more; in fact, some would say 'noticing more' is the only basis of intuitive instinct. But I believe Intuitive-Sensitives have something deeper. This depth, the link to spiritual matters – for some it's the link to God, to others it's to spiritual experiences, healing, psychic insight, interpreting energy or Buddhist principles – comes from a subconscious need to experience a deeper connection to love.

Attachment theory is a psychological theory that has gained enormous ground over the last few decades. Originating from the work of psychoanalyst John Bowlby, it's centred on the emotional bonds between people, and it suggests that the earliest of these bonds, or lack of them, can leave a lasting impression on our lives. It says that humans need to form a deep relationship with their primary caregiver in early life for successful social and emotional development to take place. This relationship, or bond, is also believed to be crucial for our ability to self-regulate our feelings.

Personally, I've noticed a big change in how this area is approached around childbirth. When my eldest son was born in 2004, the maternity department strongly encouraged us new mothers to make skin-to-skin contact as soon as it was safely possible, even after as complicated a delivery as mine had been. By 2011, when my youngest was born, the skin-to-skin contact was obligatory, even though on that occasion I was barely functioning!

The reason given was the need to build the baby's immune system, but really attachment is a lot more than that. Anyone born in many parts of the Western world during the 1960s, 70s, and perhaps part of the 80s, was separated from their mother and placed in a nursery shortly after birth. Having been safe and comfortable swimming around in the womb, life was suddenly sprung upon us.

We were separated from our original source of comfort: the scent of our mother; the sound of her voice; our familiar, albeit muffled, surroundings during our nine months in the womb. These all abruptly concluded with no contact with mum, set feeding times and the sound of other screaming babies.

During these decades, little thought was given to the baby and its developing brain, and as products of the 'children should be seen and not heard' era, those of us born in this era have quietly accepted this very early level of compromise.

Perhaps one of the reasons why so many children born today are more bold and forthcoming in their views and confidence is because they arrived during a time when immediate human contact after birth was encouraged, thus ensuring their nervous systems had a firmer foundation.

If we go back further, those born in Europe and elsewhere during the 1940s and 50s have the remnants of World War II as part of their psyche. And the generations before them were born into a time of deep stress: the horrors of World War I and its aftermath. In those eras infant attachment and early foundations were not top of the agenda.

This energy has filtered down through the generations: certainly in the UK we still have that wartime ‘keep calm and carry on’ mentality. This isn’t helpful to the Intuitive-Sensitive individual, who feels the undertones of others’ feelings as though they are their own, yet on the surface will deny their emotions as though their life depends on it. The denial of emotions lead to insecurity hidden as power, and when this happens, it comes out in another person as criticism.

Intuitive-Sensitive People who were heavily criticized by a parent (or parents) weren’t able to brush off that criticism: it cut very deeply, more so than was intended. Also, if they didn’t form a strong early bond with that parent, if the attachment wasn’t deep enough, it left an emotional space – one that they later filled with the unconscious belief that *in order to be loved (attached) I must be criticized*. That belief can filter into their adult relationships – they’ll always be waiting, with trepidation, to be criticized. If this doesn’t show in their outer relationships it’ll certainly show internally: with the self. They will become their own worst critic.

If an Intuitive-Sensitive *has* experienced a critical parent, it’s often the case that the parent had a tough start in life themselves: there may have been attachment issues during their formative years – perhaps their parents abandoned them emotionally – and this may have led them to believe that their sensitive child needs to ‘toughen up’. Perhaps presenting them with the ‘cold, hard facts of life’ – which they, too, had to face – will do the job?

For the Intuitive-Sensitive, then, along with criticism, emotional abandonment also becomes strongly associated with love. There's often an unconscious belief that they need to remain emotionally distant and be incredibly self-sufficient, even though they're sensitive, because at some point the people they become close to will leave them. There's a point in time when the Sensitive mind wants to evolve beyond defining the self as someone who deserves criticism. It appears that this unconscious desire triggers the unfolding of the intuitive process. The person begins to switch into seeing life through the eyes of intuition and a deeper connection with the self.

Why does this happen? Seemingly, it's the stage at which the psyche – the unconscious world of the person – wants to have a connection to unconditional love. This is a love that the person has never felt from another. It's a 'soul love' – something beyond words – but it's deeply connected. It somehow replaces the 'lost' love of insecure attachment.

This is often the beginning of switching from being Sensitive into becoming an Intuitive-Sensitive. For some, the connection to unconditional love begins with an attraction or belief in angels; for others it's an experience of psychic insight through dreams or feeling guided. Whatever the experience, the opening of intuitive insight and consciously working with it develops a sense of security and relief from what is for some, depressed feelings or anxiety.

This isn't to say that all Highly Intuitive People have experienced parental criticism or emotional abandonment – your own parents may have been ultra kind to compensate for what they lacked in their early life. However, it's likely that you've come from generations of them, or at the very least, from the era of infant

emotional abandonment. The cool facts are that this poor early start has impacted generations going forwards, and it suggests why you were born so sensitive.

Intuitive-Sensitives and autoimmune disease

Recently I conducted a survey among a group of people who define themselves as Highly Intuitive to see if there was a possible connection between that and the incidence of autoimmune disease. (I did this mostly out of interest, because I wanted to see if the link was my imagination or a definable trait.) I enlisted the help of a medical doctor, and more than 2,000 Highly Intuitive People completed the survey. The results were analysed, and they showed a rate of autoimmune-related health issues 30 per cent higher than the UK national average. But the question is: why?

Clinical research shows that chronic stress can impair the body's immunity. Studies have shown that attachment insecurity – characterized by difficulty trusting others, worrying about being abandoned and feeling uncomfortable with emotional intimacy – can impact the 'killer' cells that defend our body against illness. This suggests that early attachment issues can impact adult attachment issues (how we relate/trust in romantic relationships, especially once we've been hurt) and can go on to impact our health.

Childhood trauma has been linked to a heightened risk of serious disease, including autoimmune disorders.¹ In some circumstances, people with autoimmune disease have an abnormal range of cortisol levels. Cortisol is a hormone made in the cortex of the adrenal glands, then released into the blood. Almost every cell in the body contains receptors for cortisol, including those that control the body's blood sugar levels and

therefore the regulation of our metabolism. Cortisol acts as an anti-inflammatory; it influences our memory; and it controls our body's water and salt levels. In addition, it's responsible for the way the body deals with stress.

Many Intuitive-Sensitives, regardless of whether or not they have autoimmune issues, state that they have symptoms associated with stressed adrenal glands – the adrenals having become tired from the pressure of producing high levels of cortisol. They have a heavy interest in sugar, central abdominal fat (even if they're generally slim), intense fatigue and signs of inflammation. Many of these symptoms are also called stress! Given that in order to be intuitive you have a higher than average nervous system response to stimuli, stress will be your middle name.

For some Intuitive-Sensitives, the extra pressure on their system may result in an autoimmune condition called Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. I've seen that for many of these people, the stress response of Chronic Fatigue is a part of their internal world – perhaps even the inner child calling out for nurturance.

At an unconscious level, the child self feels that the emotional world is too overwhelming for them to process. The resulting stress means the cortisol receptors in the body flood and stop working properly because this 'overwhelm' is too strong for them.

This process is a little like the conveyor belt at the end of a supermarket checkout. How frustrated we get if the person operating the till is in too much of a hurry to turn the belt off and give us a chance to pack our shopping before it gets crushed. With Chronic Fatigue, the cortisol receptors become so overwhelmed by the metaphorical conveyor belt, that everything

gets squashed and stuck to the extent that it no longer works properly and the 'system' collapses.

The conveyor belt stops working altogether, and this shows in the body as what feels like a system failure. Nothing appears to work properly, and the tiredness becomes extreme. In an effort to protect itself, the body continues with its shut-down: the Chronic Fatigue appearing as something 'unexplained', often put down to an 'emotional' condition.

Cortisol neurones are grown in babyhood as a response to the mother's nurturing. The mother feels safe in the world, and as a result, so does the baby; this is achieved through the mother's feeding and touch.² The baby is protected from stress, and as a result, its brain grows more cortisol neurones. And more cortisol neurones means the body has a greater propensity to deal with the stress response.

Within the survey results I collected, there did appear to be a close connection between some aspects of autoimmune conditions, the way in which stress is processed in Intuitive-Sensitive People, and a gap in aspects of early development associated with nurturing. Many of those who took part in the survey said they'd had early life problems they'd learned to deal with. Some had had emotionally or physically unavailable parent(s), and others commented on how they were aware that, although their parents had been kind and loving, their grandparents had been unavailable to their own children.

Among the survey participants there was an unusually high incidence of rheumatoid arthritis, Hashimoto's disease (a thyroid condition) and chronic long-term autoimmune issues. There were also common reports of uncommon conditions. I've lost

count of the number of Intuitive-Sensitives I've met who have been diagnosed with endocrine conditions, such as Addison's Disease and lesions on the pituitary gland.

The medical professional I explored the survey with was surprised by the unusually high incidence of autoimmune conditions in a single group of individuals. We concluded that the main area of consistency seemed to be around early life influences involving some form of emotional trauma. The Intuitive-Sensitives with no trauma in their backgrounds seemed to be the ones who were free of autoimmune issues.

Cortisol, stress and right-brain preference

The brain is split into two halves: the left and right hemispheres, also known as the left-brain and right-brain. It's a popular perception that the left-brain represents logical thinking, and the right creative thinking, although neuroscience has discovered that the whole brain is involved in our thinking, with neither hemisphere dominating. However, the 'left-brain/right-brain' idea remains an ideal way of describing a concept.

Neuroscience does agree though, that the right hemisphere has more connections to the nervous system. There's an argument that those who are sensitive to their environment – hyper-vigilant, intuitive and therefore sensitive – have a right-brain preference that is thought to be the basis of heightened sensitivity. This means that in order for a person to be a Sensitive, there has to have been some form of stress within the womb to create a right-brain preference.

In addition, high cortisol levels are associated with a highly active right-brain and a less active left-brain.³ This would possibly account for the fact that Highly Intuitive People often

have elevated cortisol levels: they have more connectors to the nervous system and thus a higher propensity to create cortisol.

The majority of people have a more active left- than right-brain.⁴ This would potentially make them calmer, and less susceptible to stressors. They would therefore be linked more to what would be termed an extroverted outlook, and be less aware or impacted by environments.

Sensitive and certainly Highly Intuitive People are likely to have a more active right-brain, making them more 'jumpy' in their environment. Their sensitivity makes them take what some would see as a 'joke' as personal criticism.

In many instances jokes are indeed that – they're a criticism or a way to devalue a person, but those who have a more active left-brain are better able to shrug it off.

If the Highly Intuitive Person has continually experienced stress throughout their life – whether due to their natural predisposition to it or as a result of a stressful early life – their cortisol levels will be higher than normal. Susan Gerhardt, a pioneering psychotherapist in child observation, suggests that a child who's continually devalued and criticized will accept a lower social status within the family in order to survive.

This may well explain why many Highly Intuitive People have to work at healing their desire to people-please, rather than properly accessing their own needs. Even though a Highly Intuitive Person has an apparent challenge over and above the norm around criticism, early nurturing and the management of stress, I've seen how many have the ability to heal, *over and above* the norm. They are incredibly easy people to work with –

their intuitive skills allow them an easily balanced access to their internal world, with a strong willingness to change.

Over the years I've seen Highly Intuitive People make their way positively, despite some extraordinary levels of emotional abandonment. Different to others who have experienced abusive foundations, they do their best to bounce through it, healing the unpleasantness in their early background. Some have been on the receiving end of pathological narcissism, alcoholism in the family, emotional and sometimes physical violence, yet they seek their way to heal these experiences.

Why Intuitive-Sensitive People have a kind heart

In my experience, Intuitive-Sensitive People are as consciously unselfish as they can possibly be. They consistently seek to help others, and want to contribute in life and put their naturally caring skills to good use. They are highly perceptive, relate well to other people, and feel overly emotionally responsible for their wellbeing. Even when they've been through some form of physical hardship, they want to engage with something that might again put their body or emotions through overload.

But why would they do this? It's because they have a level of empathy that absorbs like a sponge. They feel completely emotionally responsible for their environment, including a need to fix anger for other people. They are extremely uneasy with anger – a person doesn't have to show anger outwardly for them to feel very uncomfortable.

Often this anger is either unconscious or semi-conscious for the person experiencing it, yet the Intuitive-Sensitive can feel the undertone. They can feel the energetic pressure in the person's

mind and body. This, on occasion, will be expressed through the Intuitive: they'll suddenly have angry thoughts or feelings when previously they felt fine.

This happens in the company of other people, which is why an Intuitive-Sensitive will often feel completely exhausted when there's an unconscious anger happening in a situation. This isn't to say they are in any way emotionally awkward – often it's the opposite – but they are emotionally hugely connected and enjoy engagement with others. However, they'll come away totally drained if they have to lighten up a scenario by processing through their own emotions the unhappy thoughts of another.

In many situations the Intuitive-Sensitive Person will try their very best with people. They'll find solutions to problems when others have failed; they'll take care of a person's needs as if they were their own; and they'll sacrifice their own life as a selfless act for another.

Much of the time, though, these efforts go unrewarded. They ask for little from others, while pre-empting their needs. They start to develop an uncanny ability to predict what's needed next – to the point of intuiting others' lives or their healing requirements.

When they get to the point of feeling emotionally overwhelmed, though, they withdraw completely – into their own world, and away from others. This is the point at which every Sensitive individual needs recovery time. Their nervous system is now in overload, and they need to withdraw into the background in order to gather both their thoughts and their physical health. Without this withdrawal, the Intuitive-Sensitive will find that their health starts to become compromised.

This is the point at which, if they are of 'service' to an individual, especially a co-dependent one, the Intuitive-Sensitive will be on the receiving end of their anger. The other person will disapprove of their withdrawal, saying they are 'too sensitive', or they'll criticize whatever new interest they've found in order to cope with the overload. For many Intuitive-Sensitives, their new interest will be the development of their intuitive skills or healing.

This cycle puts the Intuitive-Sensitive in a difficult position. In order to avoid a system 'shut-down' they need to recover from the stimulation overload, yet they are faced with their biggest fear in another person – anger. They feel emotionally responsible for others and don't want an argument, yet feel they need to 'solve' anger in another person. And if they can't fix it, they will leave: they can only compromise themselves for so long before a survival mechanism directed towards self-preservation kicks in.

This is why many, before they become conscious of their sensitivity, go through relationships that are dogged by significant communication and boundary issues. Once the Intuitive-Sensitive feels they aren't the only one who experiences their emotional world through their hyper-sensitive senses, finding that they have a strong desire to discover their healing and intuitive interests, they develop the ability to relax. They do this because they have a new source of love, and this love is unconditional: it's not hard work and it doesn't involve other people and having to process their emotional world.

This new love is the beginning of the development of unconditional kindness, and the simplest form of this to find but the hardest to achieve is unconditional kindness *towards the self*. This is achieved through the natural intuitive opening that the

Intuitive-Sensitive begins to trigger in their life, mixed with a strong desire to heal.

Gina's story

When I first met Gina she was a timid, shy person. When she spoke I could hardly hear her because her voice was so quiet. She was keen to find out about her sensitivity, but she didn't want to be intrusive, so she asked almost apologetically. Deeper into our conversation I discovered that she'd been through Chronic Fatigue that had wiped her out for five years. She'd brought up two sons and now wanted to explore a role that would involve helping others.

When I looked into Gina's life I could see that if she followed this particular career path imminently she'd very quickly burn out. I told her that she had quite a lot to work through in her inner world before she could process the emotions of others without taking them on personally. I believed she had 'lost her voice' early in life due to an emotionally violent relationship and needed to recover it. I saw that her boundaries with one son were particularly clouded; I could feel his frustration but it was not with Gina, it was with his father, Gina's ex-husband.

Gina told me that she had indeed come from a very emotionally violent background, with a mother who had consistently humiliated her. When Gina was 11 years old, her mother became an alcoholic after her father died. Gina hadn't thought her childhood was 'that bad' until she had children herself. Her love for her own children had felt very different from what she'd experienced growing up. She then told me that, as I'd seen, she did have a troublesome relationship with one of her sons.

On reflection Gina could see that she'd over-compensated for her ex-husband's moods and aggressive behaviour. And she admitted that she did 'people-please' in order to make others feel okay, over and above her own needs. In order to proceed with her chosen career she'd undertaken numerous training courses, but then decided she needed further qualifications. She now felt she was in a place of stagnation, yet she still had a strong desire to fulfil a sense of purpose.

When we began to explore the origins of the deep anger that Gina couldn't feel, I could sense forming in my mind several images in the area of Gina's chest – they were of white sugar and bread. Gina then told me that when she was growing up in Ireland, sugar sandwiches were often eaten as a meal and she was regularly given them. She then recalled how her angry mother would throw the plate in front of her, demanding she eat the sandwiches. Gina re-experienced the sickness she'd felt back then: not only because of the taste of the sandwiches, but because of the processing of her mother's wrath at the same time.

Gina deduced that her mother must have had a number of emotions going on: a guilt that showed as anger at the fact she was giving her child food of little nutritional value. Gina felt a compassion for her own feelings – the child who was too afraid to speak, too uncertain about expressing her own views in case there was a punishment she felt too uncomfortable to process.

This was translating in Gina's adult life in a similar way, and her sensitive emotions had taken it to a different level with her own son. She decided she had been afraid to define a boundary with him, in case it was translated as being overly strict or aggressive. I suggested she use the intuitive's approach: instead of confronting issues with him, she could

instead say, 'Ouch that hurt', when he said or did something inappropriate.

Within a short amount of time Gina's son realized how he'd impacted on her Sensitive nature and he decided to address her differently. They now have a much better understanding of each other. This change of persona had a knock-on effect on the rest of Gina's life.

Today, Gina has a happy relationship with her partner; she has a decent level of communication with him and has learned her own boundaries without having to withdraw from her emotion of anger. After years of stagnating and collecting qualifications, she engaged with working for herself in the holistic field and is now a successful complementary therapist.

Intuitive-Sensitives have a brain advantage

In the course of my work I've seen many different layers of Intuitive-Sensitivity. I've seen it from the earlier stages of psychic fascination through to the engagement of a clearly soul-related healing process (see chapter 9). Throughout, there's always a powerful sense of purpose in resolving past issues and family history, particularly in those whom I would term as Intuitive-Sensitive. There's a strong desire to correct a process where others have either failed or haven't even tried.

Many recognize their own relatives as Sensitive individuals; they can see how their nearest and dearest have similar traits to themselves. But there's a fundamental difference: those relatives haven't engaged their sensitivity – they've either ignored it or hidden it as something to be hopelessly afraid or ashamed of.

The fundamental difference in the Highly Intuitive is intelligence. However, many wouldn't describe themselves as intelligent – in fact, most would say they're the opposite. I wouldn't necessarily define this intelligence as an academic advantage – it's more emotional.

The cerebral cortex is the largest part of the human brain that has developed through evolution. It's the part that distinguishes humans from other animals. It has grown over thousands of years through an increase in neurones and their connections: the number of neurones in the cerebral cortex is therefore a good indicator of intelligence. This evolutionary increase in brain size has improved our information-processing ability and the ways we negotiate relationships within the group.⁵

FMRI scans (Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging) have shown that Sensitives, when faced with social situations, have more activity in the anterior insula,⁶ a part of the cerebral cortex largely associated with empathy, consciousness, self-awareness and emotion.

Meditation is known to have a positive impact on the pre-frontal cortex (part of the cerebral cortex), but I believe the access to it, at a higher level, is through the active development of *intuition*, which is, after all, an exaggeration of the emotions.

I believe there's a trigger within the brain to continue to develop this part of the self, which starts with a need/desire to replace what has been lacking around love. Love, especially for the self, enables us to feel calm, centred and peaceful. Meditation helps us to feel a deeper connection within the self, and therefore a better connection around love for other people. The building of the intuitive process helps us to develop stronger bonds with others because developing intuition leads to a stronger bond with the self.

Having the sense that our intuition is reliable makes us more confident and able to manoeuvre through life's more fast-moving aspects. The rapid pace of modern life has been greatly exaggerated by the advent of technologies such as the internet and social media. Never before have we seen a process develop so quickly, and our minds are having to work harder to keep up. This is therefore pushing for an ever more social brain – one of empathy and emotions, things that come very easily to the Highly Intuitive.

There is, however, an issue: that of the Highly Intuitive Person's past, and their lack of self-worth or self-esteem. As I explained earlier, I believe that these tendencies must have developed at some stage within the earliest foundations, inside the womb and during the formative years of life. They are born, without doubt, from neural stresses at a very early stage of a Highly Intuitive Person's development.

Therefore, in order to feel the calmness and centredness that results from developing their intuitive instincts further, Highly Intuitive People must actively evolve out of their self-esteem issues and into their true feeling of authenticity and personal power, which is as follows:

- ∞ A move towards balancing their deepest emotions, and the capability of seeing clearly the processes of others.
- ∞ To observe peacefully the interactions of others' emotions, without the belief that they have to process everyone else's world for them, or compensate for other people's anger.
- ∞ To accept their levels of empathy as a deep, universal capability that cannot be learned, it can only 'be'.

True feeling and empathy are not skills to be learned: they are natural states only achievable within people who have them. We can learn the essence of an empathetic nature, but we cannot be truly empathetic without an inherent capability for it. In today's world, empathy, conscious connection and human decency are all we have left as unique in a world of instantaneous gratification.

Intuitive-Sensitive People have a unique view of the world

Intuitive-Sensitives can see not only from the emotional world but also from a world of consciousness. There's still a lot of debate about whether consciousness is purely a brain activity or an understanding of something that's wider than human experience is able to comprehend. What I do know, and have certainly seen over the years, is that our inner world shows us what needs healing. It often does this through elaborate symbolism. Sometimes this comes in dreams, and other times it's through events in life.

For example, people often have birds pecking at their window or come across a strangely tame wild bird when they are grieving or need to deal with something particularly emotional. The symbolism here is about having the courage to 'fly'. Or, following a dream, a person can wake up feeling emotional or exhausted, having found themselves revisiting something they haven't thought of in years. It's the psyche's way of showing you what you need to solve now – either the same thing or something that's coming up in life that's very similar.

Once, during a retreat I was teaching, we played a game that involved finding what the group needed to heal by using the words of songs. We did this by letting our minds go blank and quiet, and then asking, in our minds, for a song title to reflect the

healing needed. Whoever ‘received’ a song title first would then Google it, and when the lyrics were viewed, they matched the internal feelings perfectly – in some instances they were spookily accurate. How were they sourced? By asking the internal self to show the symbolism. It never ceases to amaze me how clever our unconscious world is.

The Intuitive-Sensitive’s purpose is to evolve beyond their own shadow – to heal aspects of their inherited past and to evolve the best characteristics they can. This, I believe, begins as a spontaneous process; I’ve never met an Intuitive-Sensitive who consciously chose how they entered the world of their deepest intuition.

As we’ll see in the next chapter, the balance of deep emotion (associated with the right-brain) with the logical process (left-brain) will achieve a very peaceful, loving balance in life. All of this is possible, regardless of the Intuitive-Sensitive’s early life.

The ability to see around
corners is a gift,
not a curse



-Heidi Sawyer
Highly Intuitive People

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