



Module #4 of 10—*Short Version*

UK Extension's
Universe of
Possibilities™

SKILLS FOR CREATING HAPPINESS AND BLESSING OTHERS

Heart Intelligence

Throughout the ages and across cultures, the heart has been considered a primary source of emotion, courage, and wisdom. In the scriptures of all religions, the word “heart” appears consistently and extensively. Not only is heart a central concept in the world’s great cultural and spiritual traditions, physiologically our hearts are in the center of our bodies. The beat of the heart is synonymous with life itself, and heart “dis-ease” is our nation’s No.1 killer.

With its own complex network of neurons and neurotransmitters, the heart has at least a basic ability to learn, remember, sense, and feel. Far more than most of us realize, the heart and brain work in tandem, each communicating with and influencing the other.

From a mechanical viewpoint alone, the human heart is a miracle, beating 2.5 billion times in an average life. In just one year, your heart pumps approximately a half-million gallons of blood through some 60,000 miles of blood vessels.

In addition to being a world-class pump, the heart is the body’s central electrical power station, generating an electromagnetic field that is far more powerful than that of any other organ. In fact, the electromagnetic signals from the heart of a person very near to you can actually influence your brain rhythms.

Target of Life. Look at the Target of Life symbol that appears at the upper left side of this page. Put yourself on the Target in the center of the heart. Notice that the heart of the Target is clear, unobstructed, full of light. From there, you see clearly and make choices that are good for you and those around you. You feel peaceful, energetic, creative. Your reflexes are sharp, your immune system strong. You stumble and fall less often, and you handle life’s inevitable challenges with more confidence and skill. You are naturally more sensitive to others—more patient, generous, and understanding. The more deeply centered you are in the heart of the Target of Life, the more love you feel and share. You are at your best—physically, mentally, and spiritually.

However, when difficulties arise and things don’t go your way, you’re likely to be pulled off center into the darker areas of the Target. You say and do things you regret. Your immune system weakens and your productivity declines. You lose touch with what’s really important to you. Unhealthy stress increases and your sensitivity toward others decreases. And the further away from the center you move, the worse it gets! You experience more heaviness and darkness, more fear and negativity. That’s why it’s so important to catch early signs of stress and to use all of your creativity to stay as centered as possible.



7 Core Principles



- 1 As science is helping us discover, the physical heart is truly amazing; and even more wondrous is the closely associated intuitive or spiritual heart, which gives us a wealth of subtle information and guides us in making optimal decisions.
- 2 A keen, intuitive sense is at the very heart of creativity, inner strength, spiritual attunement, and both personal and interpersonal effectiveness.
- 3 Tuning into your heartfelt intuitive guidance demands a degree of inner calmness and attention as well as sensitivity and openness.
- 4 Gathering important factual information and seeking wise advice plays a vital role in helping you intelligently follow your heart's guidance.
- 5 A powerful step in becoming attuned to your heart's intelligence is simply to be aware of the entire area in the center of your chest—called the heart area—where you may gradually begin to sense a gentle and soothing warmth.
- 6 By keeping a portion of your awareness in your heart area, and by sensing your inner guidance in all that you do, you will gradually become skilled in following the steadfast wisdom of your heart's intelligence.
- 7 Remember, the more centered you are on the Target of Life, the greater your well-being, the wiser your choices, and the more effective you are in everything you do.

During recent years, the term, “Heart Intelligence,” has been used frequently by the Institute of HeartMath, whose research articles and books undergird portions of this publication and are referenced at the end of the full-length version of this publication. Understanding the importance of being attuned to the wisdom of our hearts, however, is far from new. Around 500 B.C.E., the Chinese sage Confucius explained, “To put the world in right order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; and to cultivate our personal life, we must first set our hearts right.”

In a nutshell, that's the premise of this publication: By taking greater individual

responsibility for intelligently saying yes to the promptings of our heartfelt intuitive guidance, we can make major progress in creating a more loving and healthier world.

Go into thy bosom, knock there, and ask what your heart doth know.

Shakespeare

HEART INTELLIGENCE DEFINED

Although this intelligence of the heart refers to an intuitive or spiritual type of understanding, it is often connected with sensations felt in the center of the chest, in the general area around the physical heart. Not only does Heart Intelligence respond to

information from our bodies, it also functions seamlessly with our minds and tunes in with our emotions and helpful advice from others. If you are a person of religious faith, you may find it helpful to think of Heart Intelligence as the guidance of God or a higher power consistent with your beliefs.

According to Webster, intuition is an immediate knowing or learning of something without the conscious use of reasoning. Heart Intelligence often shows up as an instinctive feeling, hunch, or flash.

Heart Intelligence is astonishing: It draws simultaneously on a wide range of information sources and instantly synthesizes this complex data into a simple and reliable form of inner guidance that is specifically tailored to your moment-to-moment needs.

Heart Intelligence is your intuitive sense of what is true or what is best to do. It's a universal force of loving guidance. It's a type of knowing, often instantaneous, that represents an instinctual and harmonious interplay of body, mind, and spirit. Heart Intelligence cuts through needless complexity and confusion, like a flashlight beam that illuminates the darkness, allowing you to see what's really important.

Your intuition functions best when you remain open-minded and receptive, even when you are involved in intense activity. ***The more centered you are in the heart of the Target of Life, the more keenly attuned you will be to your intuition.***

Heart Intelligence is no kin to impulsive responses triggered by whim or by our hopes and fears. We must learn to tell the difference. This is a trial-and-error process that involves making mistakes and learning from them. A fledgling intuition can fool you, so proceed with caution as you strengthen your attunement to your Heart Intelligence and learn to respond to its signals.

HARMONY AND WISE DECISION-MAKING

Scientists at the Institute of HeartMath have discovered that when an individual is deeply attuned to his or her Heart Intelligence, that person experiences heightened psychophysiological coherence—a state associated with reduced stress, increased emotional stability, high performance, and a range of health benefits.

Far from producing chaos, as we each more astutely begin tuning into our own Heart Intelligence, a harmony emerges. This synergistic harmony may be seen most easily in small groups, but it also manifests itself in larger units of society.

Every time you don't follow your inner guidance, you feel a loss of energy, a loss of power, a sense of spiritual deadness.

Shakti Gawain

Too often we ignore, repress, or treat lightly those intuitive recognitions we have about a person, a situation, or an idea. If we are going to be in charge of our lives, we have to stop smothering our Heart Intelligence!

THE LOVE CONNECTION

Neither Heart Intelligence nor love can thrive in the presence of fear. Fear often arises when you step away from the now into the past or future. Stay fully in the present moment and your fear will dissolve. Think about this: *Now* is enough; *now* is all you have; and *now* is just what you need.

As fear dissipates and love grows, we gradually awaken to the fact that we are not separate from our brothers and sisters. We realize that whatever we do to others we also do to ourselves.

As love wells up within our hearts, it is impossible to contain. By its nature it expands and has to express itself. Love must be put into action, and that action is service—service to family and friends, service through your work, service to your community and environment, service to all who appreciate what you have to give.

Love is the solution; love is the way; love never fails. Love is the goal that every heart craves.

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen, or even touched; they must be felt with the heart.

Helen Keller

Your Heart's Way

Whether you are responding to a stressful situation, seeking creative inspiration, or wondering how best to use your free time, this simple four-step skill builder can guide you in making optimal choices. You can apply **Your Heart's Way** in almost any place at any time, and it takes only a minute or less to use.

1. **Pause with Confidence.** Mentally say to yourself, "I am calm, I am confident." If you are spiritually inclined, you may instead wish to mentally utter a very short prayer and/or visualize yourself surrounded by radiant light.
2. **Breathe Slowly.** Allow your breath to become deep, quiet, and regular as your belly expands with each in-breath and contracts with each out-breath. Imagine that you are breathing in and out through the heart area in the center of your chest.
3. **Feel Your Heart.** Take about seven seconds (perhaps longer when possible) and gently focus on your heart area—the central portion of your chest. While you do this, be inwardly quiet and receptive.
4. **Sense Your Guidance.** As you concentrate on the sensations in your heart area, intuit what your heart is communicating. Your heart's guidance may be quite subtle, showing itself in a feeling, thought, image, or inner knowing.

As you practice, you will sense your heart's guidance more easily and quickly. With continued practice, **Your Heart's Way** will become habitual. You may even become so attuned to your heart and its guidance that you will live almost every aspect of your life from that beautiful place of love. Keeping a portion of your consciousness constantly attuned to the gentle warmth in your heart area will not interfere with the performance of your daily activities. In fact, it will increase your effectiveness, creativity, and kindness.



Sam Quick, Ph.D., Extension Specialist in Human Development and Family Relations, and **Alex Lesueur, Jr., M.S.L.S.**, Staff Support Associate. (References and background reading can be found in the eight-page version of this publication.) A hearty thank you to the many professionals who reviewed and helped edit these publications. They are acknowledged on the Possibilities website noted below.

10 Educational Modules

UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities™: Skills for Creating Happiness and Blessing Others is an educational series containing 10 modules. Each module is accompanied by a Macromedia Flash® movie, a PowerPoint® presentation, and other teaching tools. All these resources, along with a Facilitator's Guide, are available free-of-charge in camera-ready format at the following website: www.ca.uky.edu/fcs/possibilities.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your Vision Map 2. Making the Growth Choice 3. The Way of Peace 4. Heart Intelligence 5. The Freedom of Self-Discipline | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Embracing This Present Moment 7. Accepting and Loving Your Body 8. Healthy Relationships 9. Unleashing Your Creativity 10. Gifts of Gratitude and Blessing |
|---|--|--|

Copyright © 2004 for materials developed by the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. These publications may be reproduced in portions or their entirety for educational or nonprofit purposes only. Permitted users shall give credit to the author(s) and include this copyright notice. Educational programs of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.