

# THE SCIENCE OF INTUITION

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*The Rosicrucian Order's scientific research into mystical and transpersonal experiences began with H. Spencer Lewis in the early 1900s. It continued with the establishment of the International Research Council (IRC) in 1934 with a very active team of experts in various related fields who researched and taught at Rose Croix University International (RCUI) at Rosicrucian Park.*

*In the 1970s and 1980s, a series of reports from the IRC was published in the Rosicrucian Digest under the title "Mindquest." The following article, from that series, was written by George Buletza, PhD, FRC, Director of the IRC at that time.*

*AMORC's IRC is still very active in scientific investigations around the world today. Some of the researchers' findings are published as books, others as papers in the [Rose+Croix Journal](http://www.rosecroixjournal.org) ([www.rosecroixjournal.org](http://www.rosecroixjournal.org)), and others as presentations – in person and online.*



## Introduction

Through the study of intuition the Rosicrucian reaches the frontier of intellectual and spiritual power. Rosicrucians learn that all great progress in people's lives depends on the release and use of intuitive powers. No significant discovery, insight, or creative production has come about solely as a result of objective mental activity. Laboratory experiments as well as scores of interviews with scientists, writers, composers, and artists attest to the fact that solutions to problems are achieved only after they have been released to the subconscious or intuitive faculty of the mind.

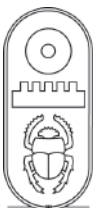
Claude M. Bristol and Harold Sherman, in their book *T.N.T. or the Creative Power Within*, tell about Thomas Alva Edison's practice of taking multiple cat-naps as he worked on an invention. When he felt blocked, after exerting himself to the utmost, Edison would lie down on his couch and fall asleep. He claims to have always received some additional light on his problem.

German psychiatrist, Herbert Silberer experimented with this process by putting himself into a borderline state and trying

to think through complicated problems he had been unable to solve in the normal waking state. He found that the complicated problem he was considering would disappear from awareness and would be replaced by a meaningful form of symbolic imagery. One problem Silberer contemplated was: "If intuition is universal, why do some people intuit to do one thing, while others intuit to do something else?"

Silberer wrote:

In a state of drowsiness I contemplate an abstract topic such as the nature of judgments valid for all people. A struggle between active thinking and drowsiness sets in. The drowsiness becomes strong enough to disrupt normal thinking and to allow, in the twilight state so produced, the appearance of an auto-symbolic phenomenon. The content of my thought presents itself immediately in the form of a perceptual picture (for an instant apparently real); I see a big circle (or transparent sphere) in the air with people around it whose heads reach into the circle. This symbol expresses practically everything I was thinking of. The [universal] judgment



is valid for all people without exception; the circle includes all the heads. The validity must have its grounds in commonality: the heads all belong in the same homogeneous sphere. Not all judgments are [universal]: the body and the limbs of the people are outside (below) the sphere as they stand on the ground as independent individuals. What had happened? In my drowsiness my abstract ideas were, without conscious interference, replaced by a perceptual picture, by a symbol. (See Figure 1.)

Silberer goes on to say that he found this picture-thinking an easier form of thought than rational logic. Conducting extensive experiments in this borderline state, he considered complex abstract thought and waited attentively for symbolic images to appear. He found that his thoughts in this state always gave rise to images, thus demonstrating to him that the mind automatically transforms verbal information into unifying picture-symbols.

Another example Silberer gave is as follows: “My thought is: I am to improve a halting passage in an essay. Symbol: I see myself planning a piece of wood.” He therefore proceeded to “shave” words from the essay.

In terms of our Rosicrucian principles, what Silberer did was to put himself in a receptive, borderline state; he introduced a problem he had already analyzed, and looked for an answer to appear as a visualization. The results of his experiments demonstrated that problem-solving visualizations are often symbolic.

Imaginative images or symbols that spontaneously come to our awareness arrive from beyond our objective consciousness. They come to us from an inner center, from an intuitive faculty of mind. They do so in an attempt to join inner and outer worlds, spiritual with material,



Figure 1. Silberer’s symbolic conception of human judgments is valid for everyone. Silberer studied in great detail the psychology of intuition.

invisible with visible, macrocosm with microcosm, imagination with objectivity, actuality with reality. They bring about a marriage of the mind.

Symbolism is the art of thinking in images rather than words. An image is expressed as a symbol to communicate a meaning beyond the obvious, beyond the grasp of reason. Because there are innumerable things beyond the range of objective human understanding, we constantly use symbolic terms to represent concepts (such as infinity  $\infty$ ) that we cannot define or fully comprehend.

The symbol then, is a mechanism for understanding. It forms a bridge between a metaphysical world in which the Divine Mind encompasses All and the physical world of the brain and the senses in which All can never be perfectly known. In the physical world, no matter how powerful a telescope or microscope humans build, there always remains matter that cannot be seen even with the aided eye. Our physical senses, as complex and marvelous as they are, are limited in what they can perceive. Therefore, knowledge gained through our physical senses can never be perfect.

### Intuition and Reason

Contrary to popular belief, the scientific method combines intuition with em-

irical observation to acquire new knowledge. New ideas come from intuition, without which the information we gather through random observation would be a meaningless train of facts. Intuition and reason bring the random observations together into a meaningful relationship and an ordered system. Experimentation and empirical observation are methods of then verifying and validating the new ideas already hypothesized by the intuition, thus adding these ideas into the realm of new knowledge.

In scientific research the key is to possess the insight that will enable one to ask the right question. The accurate answer is implicit in the right question. This can only be arrived at by transcending the physical senses. And it is the symbol, the instrument of understanding, that allows us to transcend the limits of the physical senses. Goethe said: "In the symbol, the particular represents the general... as a living and momentary revelation of the inscrutable."

Intuitive symbols can reveal the essence of great truths that cannot be comprehended by the intellect alone. Symbols, by their nature, can resolve paradoxes and create order from disorder. In flashes of insight, they provide knowledge that joins dispersed, disparate fragments into a unitary vision. We see, if only for a moment, the great scheme of things, the unity of the universe, and our place in it. We see unity in terms of concrete images from the objective world around us, the only things that are "seeable," but we see these concrete images in a novel, non-ordinary light.

Intuitive cognition is apt to be unreliable unless preceded by an energetic effort to gain information, and unless followed by application and scientific evaluation of the idea. The symbolized model or hypothesis must be evaluated by experience in the objective world. Thus, while symbolic models and intuitive hypotheses can be derived by producing stepwise through

the Rosicrucian process of concentration-contemplation-meditation, we must return to the objective state of concentration in order to verify the validity of the intuitive symbol.

The Rosicrucian thought-process is an ascending spiral: in returning to concentration, more details are again observed; a return to contemplation reveals more about the operation of the idea being considered; while a return to the border-line or meditative state may demonstrate that our original intuitive symbol can explain more and give meaning and significance to more aspects of the objective world than we originally realized.

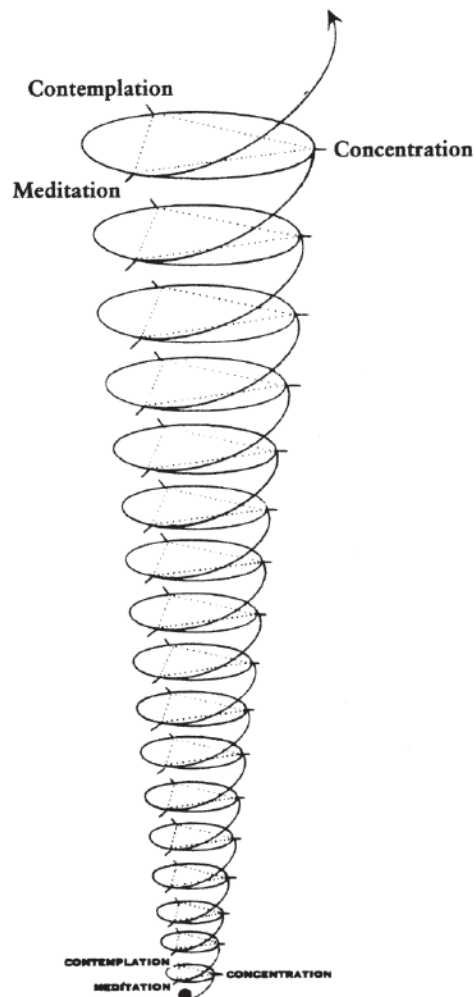
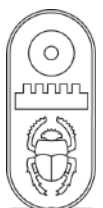


Figure 2. (Contemplation, concentration, meditation). A model of spiraling planes of consciousness in which realities are continually transformed by the repeated process of concentrative-contemplative-meditative experience.



A return to the meditative state may also bring about a transformation of the original realization into a more powerful symbol or model. The transformed symbol is more powerful in the sense that it has the capacity to explain and predict more about nature. (See Figures 2 and 3).

When the human mind approaches a basic problem such as the nature of matter, its observations provide only raw data with which to begin. The observations themselves do not contain the concepts with which the data can be given form and meaning. For example, a stone or a solid block of wood does not suggest the moving particles of matter in terms of which the atom is conceived. The conception of the atomic theory does not lie in the wood but in the mind of the person who interprets it. It is an image brought forth from the intuition, proving its value by its usefulness in the fruitful interpretation of raw data.

Ultimately, the test of the image lies in facts of observation, as the image of the universe contained in Einstein's general theory of relativity required an eclipse to validate its insight.

Even when a symbolic image, as a theory, is verified in a specific case by external evidence, it still remains a working symbol whose "truth" is not absolute but relative and metaphorical.

A symbol is a reality and not an actuality. It is defined by the symbolic terms of the governing image, as the conception of the atom. This is the sense in which Einstein says: "Physics is an attempt conceptually to grasp reality as it is thought independent of its being observed." The consequence of this approach followed by physics is a self-consistent version of reality marked off by the framework of the symbols it is using. At certain points this version of reality is tested by external observation but its essence lies in the inner logic of

its symbolic system. "In this sense," Einstein wrote, "we speak of physical reality."

Physical reality, as Einstein defines the term, is not the common-sense reality of the physical world. It is not the stone we stub our toe on. Physical reality is rather the self-consistent body of knowledge implied by the symbol structure of modern physics. It is a reality defined by its framework of imagery. No claim is made that the image's portrait of "truth" is more than relative and partial; but it nonetheless greatly extends human knowledge and wisdom. By means of symbols a Rosicrucian learns to direct the forces of nature.

Just as atomic physics opened access to a dimension of reality that had not been experienced before and made tremendous amounts of new energy available to people, the growth and evolution of our personal realities and symbolic conceptions make contact with the new sources of personal strength and release great new powers of personality.

To the Rosicrucian, each and every shape, color, object, and action in the world is a visible form of a vibrational level of a primal thought existing beyond the sensate mind. These visible forms of vibrational levels, like symbols, are capable of infinite combination and rearrangement, giving rise to the innumerable nuances of knowledge. If we view the world of our senses in this way, we become sensible to all similar or corresponding moments within our experience. We transcend the limitations of the physical world and enter the world of the Absolute.

The true basis of intuitive symbolism then, is the correspondence linking together all orders of reality, binding them one to the other and consequently extending from the natural order as a whole to a Cosmic Order. By virtue of this correspondence, the whole of nature is but a symbol. The true significance of nature

becomes apparent only when it is seen as a pointer that can make us aware of Cosmic Truth.

The parallel between physics and Rosicrucian philosophy of mind is that both use symbolic concepts to set energy free; but there our parallel ends. The quality of their application is different. Each leads

to a body of knowledge regarding its special segment of reality but the Rosicrucian conception of a mind and psychic reality leads to more intellectual knowledge. It leads to our Rosicrucian disciplines for developing larger personal capacities for experience and fuller participation in dimensions of reality that reach beyond the individual.

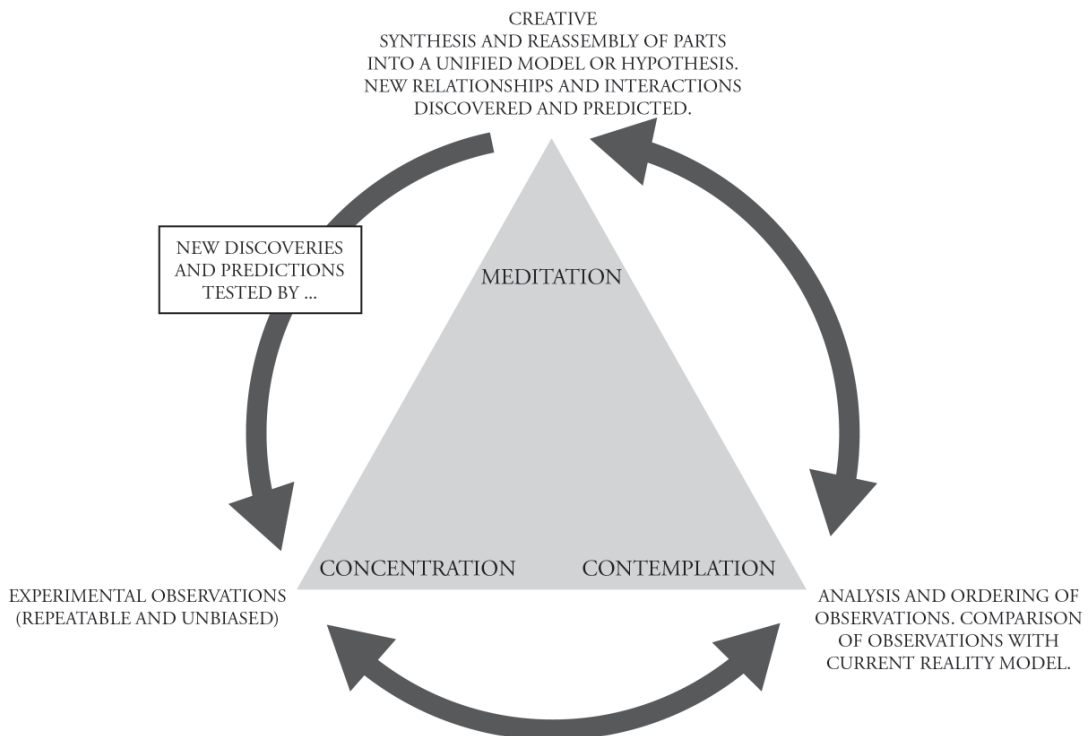


Figure 3. Correspondence of the methodologies of science and Rosicrucian mysticism. One of the basic tenets of both methodologies is the rejection of authority and dogma, the refusal to accept a statement just because someone says it is true. Rather, by keeping an open mind toward new realities and by using the process of concentration-contemplation-meditation, individuals come to self knowledge and knowledge of self.

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**For further reading:**

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