

## A Book Proposal

*Deep Perception: Cultivating the Art of Seeing* elegantly illuminates the vast potential of vision and explores the means and methods of increasing perceptual awareness in an inspiring and accessible manner. The fundamental premise is that most people take the act of seeing for granted, that they are largely unaware of the deeper potentials of human vision, and that seeing is a learned capacity that can be developed through initiative and effort.

Featuring extensive tools and exercises designed to open the senses, *Deep Perception* is about learning to see. The author promotes the development of a “seeing practice”—using the gift of vision to increase our connection with the world, ourselves, and each other. It is a thorough commentary on human perception, designed to inspire, instruct, and inform readers on the miraculous function of sight.

By David Ulrich  
Author of *The Widening  
Stream: the Seven Stages  
of Creativity* (Beyond  
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## DEEP PERCEPTION

*Cultivating the Art of Seeing*



by  
David Ulrich

# *Deep Perception: Cultivating the Art of Seeing*

A Book Proposal

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## Overview

Seeing is fundamental to our lives. It informs our awareness and plays a crucial role in most of our daily activities. But do we know how to see . . . really?

*Deep Perception* provides guidance for the general reader on achieving a state of heightened awareness and developing the gift of observation. The book is intended for every individual who sees, who questions the nature of seeing, and who wants to understand more about this mysterious and unexplored capacity. It functions as a catalyst to stimulate the growth of our perceptual capabilities and has a definite slant toward the relationship between vision and creativity. The gift of observation, of the inner and outer worlds and their profound relationship, can be cultivated—indeed, must be—if we wish to live full and authentic lives.

What can we gain through cultivating awareness? If we could truly open the windows of perception, our lives would be infinitely richer, finer, truer to the possibilities of the soul. We would become considerably wiser, in understanding and in action. We could occupy the moment more fully, and employ more of our latent capacities. We might begin to genuinely respond to life and to others, not just react. And our lives would not fleetingly descend in a slumbering stupor of hazy half-awareness from birth to the moment of death.

The senses would become instruments of delight and discovery, the feelings would become a refined way of knowing: weighing, evaluating, tasting the nature and substance of what stands before us. And the mind would be immeasurably enriched through the

questions raised and the material gleaned through direct perception. The energies of life could pass through us, transformed by a resonant awareness into effortless action and generous kindness.

We could approach truth, not our subjective notions based on verbal concepts and mere opinions, but an unclouded apprehension of the always radiant and sometimes sobering facts of existence. States of heightened awareness, non-ordinary perception, where we directly perceive the energies behind phenomenal manifestation, could be voluntarily induced and may well become a consistent feature of our experience. We could simultaneously develop the capacity for sight that we share with all others and discover our own perceptual gifts, unique to our individuality.

We would deeply experience the outer flow of life through the senses, and we could directly observe the myriad and changing states of our inner world through the mind's witness. Our strengths and limitations, our sympathies and antipathies, our potential wholeness as well as our many contradictions would emerge under the lamp of impartial insight, engendering a humility that in its wake breeds compassion and empathy. We would gain a relational awareness, where we could perceive directly the interdependent unity, the one taste of life. The moment would slow down, its inherent magnificence would be revealed in a single glance, and the world would be seen as different branches of the same stream, the everflowing infusion of spirit into form.

If we wish to make sense of the world we inhabit, if we wish to assist in meeting the collective challenges of the modern world, if we wish to be responsible toward ourselves and each other, and if we wish to attain the great aim of self-knowledge, then we must develop the courage to see what is, ignoring neither its intrinsic complexity or its radiant beauty. The voice of conscience often reveals that the world and others need our deepest attention and care—our real seeing—as well as the actions that arise genuinely through moments of direct observation.





## *Features and Benefits*

**F**our basic concepts are introduced and fully explored within the pages of *Deep Perception*:

### *1. Cultivating the gift of observation of both the inner and outer worlds*

Readers will learn to use their vision to perceive the world more clearly and with greater attention, enriching their lives and making better choices. Our perception determines the ways we act and react, and prefigures our path of action. Through awakening the power of sight, readers can function more effectively in their homes, careers, and lives. Through making a conscious choice to enhance their observational skills, readers can learn to enjoy life more fully, take advantage of each and every moment, deeply appreciate their surroundings, and reclaim the natural wisdom of the senses.

### *2. Opening to “direct” perception and an expanded consciousness*

Readers are given the tools to see the world fresh, in an unfiltered way, holding in abeyance their usual judgments, verbal concepts, and emotional reactions. A moment of heightened awareness is a natural high, bringing renewal, a sense of joy and awakening, and the magical quality of direct perception. When awake, we see the world with infinite compassion and kindness, as a reflection of its inherent divinity. But, *Deep Perception*

explains, there are two ends to this stick. Seeing the world as it really is also brings us into contact with suffering, inequality, and the conditions inherent in our world, not all of which are life-enhancing and affirming. Can our planet, and all of its residents, continue with the distorted perceptions of reality stemming from our lack of real seeing, and by extension, real caring? Any genuine, positive change, in one's life or in the world itself, grows from the recognition of what is.

### *3. The cultural constructs of vision: how our conditioning and education affect the nature of perception*

This might be stating the obvious, but we see what we want to see. What we call “seeing” is generally a reflection of our inner dialogue, which is constant and unceasing. Our inner dialogue tends to support our particular world view, our image of ourselves, and our subjective beliefs. *Deep Perception* explores the many factors that influence our perception, including our opinions and beliefs, our education which focuses chiefly on the mind, our emotional nature, our psychological complexes, and our cultural background. Readers are given the means to increase their self knowledge, to explore and overcome the limitations imposed by these numerous and often unconscious filters that stand between them and the object of their attention.

### *4. States of non-ordinary perception. Discovering one's unique perceptual gifts*

Through following the tools and exercises outlined in *Deep Perception*, readers are encouraged to discover and develop their own individual capabilities, which often lie dormant and unknown. Some have the gift for listening, hearing beyond words; some may be able to perceive large chunks of history or social dynamics in a single glance; others may be capable of witnessing the energies that lie beneath surface manifestation; while others may be highly sensitive to the wisdom gained by touch. Feats of perception, in some form, are within the reach of everyone.

Most of us have experienced moments of inner accord in which, by chance or intentional effort, we are open, sensitive, and wholly present. The first step on the Buddhist eightfold path is “right seeing,” which serves as a fitting foundation for our journey. “Right seeing” implies not only a positive, life-affirming attitude, but also a genuine effort toward direct, conscious perception.

Featuring extensive tools and exercises designed to open the senses, *Deep Perception* teaches the development of a “seeing practice”—in which we use the gift of vision to increase our connection with the world, ourselves, and each other. It is a thorough commentary on human perception, designed to inspire, instruct, and inform readers on the miraculous function of sight.



## *Complementary Titles*

**D***eeep Perception* is unique. Surprisingly, few reliable texts are available on seeing and perception—the essential tools used to navigate through our lives and understand our world—that are not drug-related or inexorably connected to the medical/therapeutic aspects of vision.

Years ago, Aldous Huxley wrote *The Doors of Perception* (Harper & Row, 1963). Carlos Castaneda began his apprenticeship with don Juan, who taught the methods of seeing in *A Separate Reality* (Simon and Schuster, 1971). In these books, awareness is explored primarily through the use of hallucinogens.

Psychologists and philosophers have written weighty volumes on the scientific nature of visual perception. These titles are geared toward professional researchers in psychology and human consciousness, and are not generally accessible to the average reader. Rudolph Arnheim (*Art & Visual Perception*, University of California Press, 1983) and Richard L. Gregory (*The Eye and the Brain* (5th ed., Princeton University Press, 1997) explore the physiological basis of seeing.

Recently, Robert-Michael Kaplan offers an integrated view of vision therapy—still connected to the physical mechanics of vision—in three books: *The Power Behind Your Eyes* (Healing Arts, 1995), *Seeing Without Glasses* (Beyond Words, 1994), and *Conscious Seeing* (Beyond Words, 2001). Books by the deconstructionist philosophers, Berger (*About Looking*, Vintage, 1992, *Ways of Seeing*, Viking 1995), Barthes, Foucault, et al, assert the cultural influences of vision in extremely complex and rigorously

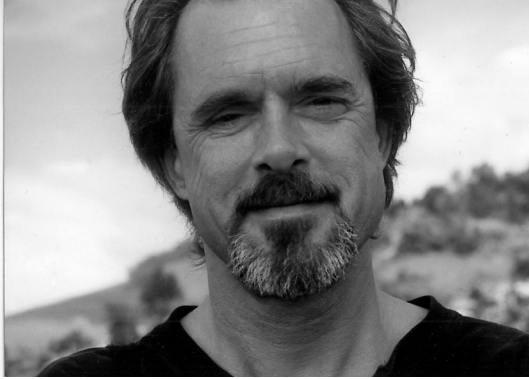
academic arguments. All of these works arise from highly specific modes of inquiry. For the average, educated individual, little information exists on the nature of human perception and the growth of one's capacity to see.

Two recent books begin to fill this gap: Ken Wilber's *Eye of the Spirit: An Integrated Vision for a World Gone Slightly Mad* (Shambhala, 1998), written from the standpoint of transpersonal psychology, and Laura Sewall's *Sight and Sensibility: The Ecopsychology of Perception* (Tarcher/Putnam 1999). Both of these books are well-researched, well-written, and very useful—though they too are geared to fairly specific academic disciplines.

*Seeing with the Mind's Eye*, an excellent workbook on visualization by Michael and Nancy Samuels, was first published in the 70's by Random House, sold nearly 200,000 copies and is currently out-of-print.

*Deep Perception* differs from the above books through relating visual perception to creativity and human consciousness. Building on the perennial wisdom advanced by such authors as Henry David Thoreau, Aldous Huxley, and Carlos Castaneda, *Deep Perception* is about learning to see. It does NOT advocate drugs as a means toward heightening awareness and extends well beyond the physical mechanics of vision. In reality, *Deep Perception* explores the senses primarily to simultaneously employ and transcend them into the realm of an expanded consciousness. Further, it substantially complements the above-mentioned books, offers original research on the relationship between vision and the creative process, regards seeing as a spiritual discipline, and is geared toward the general reader.





## *About the Author*

David Ulrich has investigated vision and creativity for 30 years. As a photographer and writer, his work has been published in numerous books and journals including *Aperture*, *Parabola*, *MANOA*, and Sierra Club publications. Ulrich's photographs have been exhibited internationally in over seventy-five one-person and group exhibitions in museums, galleries, and universities.

David Ulrich is a Professor and Chair of the Art Department at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle. He has taught hundreds of classes and workshops on photography, creativity, and visual perception in colleges, art schools, and workshop centers nationwide. His teaching incorporates key elements of the creative process, assisting individuals of all walks of life, ages, and cultural backgrounds. For fifteen years, he served as Associate Professor and Chair of the Photography Department of The Art Institute of Boston. He earned a BFA degree from The Museum School of Fine Arts in Boston, an MFA degree from Rhode Island School of Design, and is currently listed in *Who's Who in American Art*.

David Ulrich is uniquely qualified to address the themes found in *Deep Perception*. The genesis for the book took place over twenty-five years ago when the author assisted the renowned photographer Minor White in editing *The Visualization Manual*, an

unpublished manuscript that details White's teaching methods derived from over forty years of teaching photography and visual perception. Other circumstances have forcefully intervened in the author's life as well, not the least of which was the loss of his right, dominant eye in an impact injury at the age of thirty-three. He writes: "Fearing the loss of my capacity to see and photograph, and with all hope to the contrary, this blow helped to awaken my own awareness. Losing an eye and facing the resulting need to learn to see again, this time as an adult, assisted the growth and development of my perceptual capacities—and helped me better understand the function and process of sight. Above all, I learned to not take vision for granted. It was a profound learning experience, one that continues to this day. The experience was traumatic and painful—like nothing else I have ever experienced—and a great privilege."

Recently, Ulrich was a photographer and state-wide coordinator for the ambitious and highly successful *America 24/7* project, resulting in a best-selling national book in 2003 and 50 individual state books in 2004.

In 2002, Ulrich published the first in a trilogy of three books, *The Widening Stream: the Seven Stages of Creativity* (Beyond Words ). All three books may be viewed on his website: [www.creativeguide.com](http://www.creativeguide.com). The author is an experienced lecturer, teacher, and workshop leader. He is willing to promote the book through his frequent speaking engagements, classes and workshops.



## *Promotion*

**D***eeep Perception* will appeal to a large and varied audience comprised of educated individuals seeking to realize their human potential and to achieve greater success and fulfillment in their personal and professional lives. The book was written with two target audiences in mind: the mainstream mind/body/spirit market and the college/university classroom. Between overly complex works written by psychologists or philosophers and limited, idealistic, over-simplified treatments of the theme lie a broad region of need. For example, there is not a single general book on creativity or visual perception that is widely used in college classes in art, creative writing, or new media studies. Nor is there a single book, designed for the general reader, on learning to see and cultivating the deeper potentials of human perception. The author hopes to fill these gaps.

The chief value of *Deep Perception* lies in the author's dual goals: to present the material to the general reader in an accessible manner, and to provide sufficient depth of content to warrant its use by students and professionals in the arts and humanities.

In concert with the publisher's marketing department, the author intends to promote *Deep Perception* in the following ways:

- Use the book as a text in his frequent classes and workshops. For fifteen years, the author has taught several classes and workshops in both colleges and workshop centers with the titles: Perception and Creativity, and Perception and Photography.

- Develop and promote a flexible seminar/workshop format, using slides and visual material, on the content of seeing and visual perception. Options include one-day, weekend, and five-day workshops that will be marketed to colleges and universities, workshop centers & retreats, and conferences.

- Similar to his popular slide lecture on *The Widening Stream: the Seven Stages of Creativity*, the author intends to create an illustrated lecture on seeing and perception, using examples drawn from the history of art and media. The author is an inspiring speaker, and gives frequent presentations at conferences, corporate retreats, colleges and universities, workshop facilities, and art centers.

- Distribute a flyer or postcard announcement of *Deep Perception* at the annual conference of the following professional organizations, and send the flyer or promotional copies of the book (when available) to selected individual and institutional members:

- College Art Association, consisting of 13,000 individual members and 2000 institutional memberships; mostly college faculty and art departments.

- Society for Photographic Education, consisting of 1711 photographic educators divided between nine national regions. Each of these faculty members have close access to the much larger audience of students and individuals interested in photography and visual communication.

- Photographic Resource Center (PRC) consisting of photographers and educators dominantly located in New England. PRC reaches an audience of 2300 members derived from the over 200 colleges and universities located in Greater Boston.

- Send sample copies to workshop centers and educational programs devoted to the creative arts, the human potential movement, and consciousness studies: Esalen, Omega Institute, Anderson Ranch Arts Center, Maine Photographic Workshops,

California Institute for Integral Studies, New York Open Center, Naropa Institute, Penland School, Haystack, and others. Propose workshops and lectures to these centers to take advantage of the publicity generated through their extensive annual mailing. Several of these workshop centers send fully illustrated annual catalogs to mailing lists of over 50,000 individuals.

- With the publisher, and following the release of the book, schedule a book tour consisting of signings, lectures and workshops. The author has substantial media experience and can provide radio and TV interviews as well as offer visiting lectures in colleges and universities. Develop a media kit to send to major markets.

- Promote *Deep Perception* through developing contacts with bookshops devoted to human potential and the arts, as well as gift shops found in major museums, art centers and photography-related centers, such as ICP in New York. Large bookshops are found in most major museums and many workshop centers.



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## *Chapter Outlines*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The introduction states the fundamental premise of the book: that most people take the act of seeing for granted; that they are largely unaware of the deeper potentials of human vision; and that seeing is a learned capacity, one that can be developed through initiative and effort. Seeing can be cultivated, indeed must be, if we wish to live full and productive lives, sensitively receiving and richly giving to ourselves and others.

The final section describes the experiences, over a twenty-five year period, which led the author to write the book including the loss of his right, dominant eye in an impact injury at the age of thirty-three.

### **Chapter I: ON PERCEPTION**

Opening the theme, the chapter addresses the vast potential found in human perception and outlines the developmental steps of increasing awareness. The author describes three stages of human consciousness in an accessible and inspiring manner.

1. Simple consciousness, or an awareness of our instinctive and basic emotional functions, as is found in all animals, including humans.

2. Self consciousness, or the capacity to be aware of oneself and one's identity.

This stage includes the higher forms of emotion and thought, as well as sensation and instinct. The chapter argues that, in an evolutionary sense, human beings

stand only on the threshold of this form of consciousness.

3. Objective or “cosmic” consciousness, or an experiential awareness of the world and its underlying unity.

## Chapter II: **AGAINST THE POLLUTION OF THE I**

The title derives from an essay by French writer Jacques Lusseyran and examines the discordant conditions of modern life—and the need to leave space within the mind for seeing. Lusseyran, blinded in a schoolyard accident at age eight, has the remarkable ability to teach sighted people to see. This chapter, which sets the stage for the rest of the book, identifies contemporary conditions that impede the development of seeing and awareness, and opens the possibility of a new quality of perception, where one may be transparent and fully receive the impressions of the outer world.

## Chapter III: **TWO WORLDS: THE DUAL NATURE OF SEEING**

The eyes receive and the eyes reveal. The world within, and the world without — perception takes place at the intersection of these two worlds. Seeing implies an awareness of both, and the chapter addresses the techniques of “including oneself” in the passage of energies between the world and one’s inner life. It outlines the internal conditions—the state of one’s mind, body, feelings—that affect one’s seeing and examines the difference between a reaction and a true response.

From the chapter: “Moments of self awareness contain a distinctive flavor and a definite force—and are memorable, due to their relative rarity. I am here—in this moment, in this time, in this place. Perceptions are vivid; the world is three dimensional; colors, shapes, light and space are alive and vibrating with a unique intensity.”

## Chapter IV: **THE ROLE OF THE BODY**

The chapter highlights the wisdom and natural intelligence of the body and

feelings. It offers guidance on cultivating a full and enveloping awareness, which includes a direct relationship with the physical body and a deepening connection to the senses. The author challenges the predominance of the mind in Western culture.

The first section demonstrates the relationship of sensation with the discovery of an “active empathy” toward the object of our attention. This “sensing” of energy is a subtle, yet profound, way of knowing and responding to the world and others, and brings us closer to the essential experience of *I am*. The final section emphasizes the active effort required by this form of perception, beginning with a quote from Gregory Palamas of the eleventh century: “It is imperative that those who wish to belong to themselves ... should lead the mind inside the body and hold it there. It is not out of place to teach even beginners to keep attention in themselves.”

#### Chapter V: **THE CREATIVE RESPONSE**

The chapter expands the theme and relates the extensive teachings on awareness, visual perception, and consciousness advanced by the photographer Minor White, founder of *Aperture* publications. This chapter grows out of the author’s work with White on *The Visualization Manual*, an unpublished manuscript completed during the final year of White’s life that summarized his insights derived from over forty years of teaching.

Toward the end of his life, White distilled his teaching methods into two primary experiential tools, borrowed from other teachings and traditions, but effectively re-worked for use by photographers, artists, and all creative individuals. These methods formed the core of his mature teaching, and became known as “creative audience” and “heightened awareness.” The chapter offers a full description of these tools.

#### Chapter VI: **HEIGHTENED AWARENESS: A WORKING METHOD**

At the heart of the book, the author presents the core techniques taught by White and other researchers into creativity and perception, leading to a state of heightened

awareness. The chapter delivers a comprehensive method of developing attention and gives an exercise in sustained concentration. Five sequential steps are described in detail which lead toward an increased sensitivity and a heightened awareness of oneself and the surrounding world.

1. Relaxation
2. Gathering of energy
3. Focus of attention
4. Work with the image or object of our attention
5. Release, or withdrawal.

The author has worked extensively with various forms of this exercise since 1970. The chapter includes several vignettes of his own experiences, describes some of the benefits derived, and briefly notes alternate forms of the exercise.

#### **Chapter VII: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES**

The author provides a series of perceptual and creative exercises to assist readers in the growth of their awareness and is divided into three sections: 1.) Voluntary Concentration 2.) The Eye and the Brain 3.) Observation.

Readers are encouraged to work with the exercises in their own way and at their own pace. No right answer is to be found. The tools represent working methods—designed to open the mind, awaken the heart, and fine-tune the senses—and are to be approached in this manner. Each experience is valid, and each individual will make their own unique discoveries.

#### **Chapter VIII: THE QUIET OF THE MIND: METHODS OF DIRECT OBSERVATION**

The chapter details the means of direct, unmediated observation of the outer world in the present moment, and reveals the many benefits to one's personal and professional life. Written after the body of the manuscript, it promotes positive steps towards increasing

one's attention to the world itself and others—and offers an antidote to the rapidly growing digital information overload of the modern age.

**Chapter IX: THE COURAGE TO SEE**

The chapter explores self-observation and observation of the world-at-large, underscoring the need for a greater objectivity: to see what is — not how one wants things to be, thinks they should be, or hopes they might be. The author offers readers advice on uncovering the voice of conscience and explores recent developments in modern physics emphasizing the interconnectedness of all things. These discoveries, accessible to the lay reader, serve to break down the subject/object split common in western modes of perception.

The author defines the action of seeing as a tool, one which alternately serves our own evolution and is indispensable in addressing the many challenges facing our world today. The author explains that seeing the truth of any situation is the first step toward mastery of it. In one's way of seeing, lies one's way of action.

**Chapter IX: LEARNING TO SEE: VISION AND THE CREATIVE PROCESS**

Learning to See explores the relationship between observation and the creative process. Anecdotes and short quotes from artists and writers enhance the text. The author gives guidance toward the development of a heightened capacity for observation.

The chapter asserts that, while there are many forms of seeing as previously outlined, observation is what we normally think of as vision. The ability to see and feel the world deeply is a learned capacity. Artists have traditionally served as beacons, guiding the way for this form of vision. Over the centuries, their insightful observations have informed us, delighted us, moved us to joy or tears, and , at times, called us to passionate action.



## *Manuscript Details and Delivery*

**D***eeep Perception* is a completed manuscript. Sample chapters or the entire manuscript are available for review. Upon execution of a contract, *Deep Perception* can be delivered immediately.

### Summary Details:

82,000 words, approximately 280 pages

Eight B&W illustrations.

Bibliography of approximately 90 books that are cited or used as reference.

A fully illustrated version is also available, using examples drawn from the history of art and photography.

Quotations from artists, writers, and thinkers enhance the theme and are interspersed throughout the text. Several exceed fair use guidelines and permissions will need to be obtained by the author.