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4 Key Steps of Discernment – Advanced Truth-Seeking Tools

32-40 minutes

([Justin Deschamps](#)) We've all heard how important discernment is. In an age of deception, seeking the truth with wisdom is essential—it's a survival skill. The pros use established methods of discerning that we would greatly benefit from understanding, marrying logic with intuition to form a coherent toolset for meeting the challenges of belief that life has to offer. I'll show you 4 key steps that are extremely effective when

it comes to discerning a claim, belief, or experience. We'll also discuss some pitfalls to avoid.

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by [Justin Deschamps](#), **September 20th, 2018**

What Discernment Is Not

Before we talk about what discernment is, we should discuss some misconceptions.

Discernment isn't about confirming something you hope or want to be true. And it's not about making you feel better about what you already believe.

Discernment requires honest truth-seeking. You have to want to know the truth, even if

it means letting go of a belief you've had for a long time.

Be willing to be wrong, so you can learn how to be right.

Secondly, discernment is more about the process than the result.

I know we want a definitive answer, “yes this claim is true, or no it is not.” But rarely does a discernment process give us such clear results. Instead, discernment is more about using a personal investigation process that first and foremost gives you personal knowledge and understanding—you actually learn something that expands your compliment of truth.

Getting to the answer of true or false shouldn't be your focus, that's more a side effect of honest and complete investigation.

If you find yourself leaning toward an answer but you don't understand why it's true, then you've missed out on what discernment should provide you, which is understanding. If you seek for understanding, instead of an answer, then a conclusion related to the question of "is this true or false?" naturally presents itself.

What is Discernment?

Discernment is defined as the act of judging well—but what are we judging?

No matter what it is you're trying to discern, the same basic factors are at play: a claim, reality, and comparison.

Whether you're trying to see if someone told you the truth, attempting to determine if a personal experience and resulting

meanings are accurate, or you're delving deep into highly abstract concepts like the ultimate nature and purpose of existence, discernment is one of the tools you'll use.

Why is it important?

Because *true knowledge is the master key to unlocking all our potentials*—the ultimate problem solver is a mind guided by the truth. We need true knowledge to do things correctly in the world. To play music properly, you need wisdom, the accumulation of true musical knowledge. To run a successful business, you need true knowledge of the business. The more true knowledge you accumulate, the more you can understand the past, master the present, and work to realize a self-directed satisfying future.

Role of Consciousness

Consciousness is the foundation for all subjective (personal) experience. The mind is the tool we use to gather data about our experience, whether internal feelings, insights, and intuitions or external observations and sensations. The body provides the setting for experiencing what the mind records, which includes feelings as well as intellectual data points or nuggets of information.

Stated another way, the mind is the tool we use to recognize patterns—patterns recorded in the mind are *representations* of reality, not reality itself.

Consciousness is the dynamic exploration and experience of patterns recorded by the mind. Emotions are the overall holistic impression we feel in response to what is recorded in our mind, polarized in either a

negative or positive expression dependent on our values, desires, and pre-existing knowledge. All these factors work together giving us what we experience every day.

Consciousness is the laboratory where we conduct research and investigation to determine if a claim is true or not.

Book [The Man Who Tapped the Secrets of the Universe — Walter Russell](#)

The Territory and Our Map of Knowledge

Your mind as the ultimate recording device. Even though you are only consciously aware of a small fraction of what's happening at any given moment, your subconscious records everything.

The mind is essentially a map maker, a cartographer. It takes all the pieces of your experience—like the chair your sitting in

right now or the time of day based on ambient light—and records each element as a unique data point, which is a symbol on your map of knowledge.

The thing you observe is the territory (raw or primary reality) while your mind records these observations as thought forms, ideas, or memories—maps of knowledge.

Psychologically, you don't actually interact directly with the world—there's too much information buzzing around for you to do that. Instead, your mind creates maps of knowledge or a kind of biological virtual reality environment where the individual components of experience can be “seen” in the mind's eye—decisions are made from there. In this sense, it's as if the part of us that makes choices, exercises free will, is hovering over a desk with maps on it. This

is very similar to the Pixar film *Inside Out*.

The right brain works to harmonize or make a single picture of what you experience at any given moment, hence it plays a role in generating emotional charge. The left brain works to break up your experience into threads.

For example, imagine yourself watching a sunset overlooking a mountain valley, filled with streams, grass, trees, singing birds, buzzing bees, and wildlife. Your emotional or right brain aspect of [consciousness](#) sees the whole picture, a singular experience.

And it's the intellectual and left brain aspect that sees each of these things in the territory as separate discrete objects.

The only reason you can remember a single element of an experience is because

the intellectual pattern recognition aspect of your mind identifies things abstractly. That is, a single tree in a beautiful sunset scene is abstract or exists as a thought or idea but not in physical reality because the tree and the landscape can't really be separated from each other. It's only in our consciousness, in our minds, that we can separate the tree from the ground from which it springs forth.

It's this left brain aspect that we use the most when discerning information from an intellectual perspective.

Key Point: All discernment works by comparing a map of knowledge to reality in some way. A claim, belief or theory, is itself a map of knowledge, whether it's a personal claim you just intuited or deduced, or a claim coming from someone else, like

a friend, a news agency, a scientific organization, or a government.

Book [Pactum De Singularis Caelum \(Covenant of One Heaven\): Sol \(Solar System\) Version \[A Repository of Divine, Natural, and Positive Law for A Golden Age Society\]](#)

Step 1: Absorbing the Claim (Making A Personal Copy)

The first thing we need to do is record what a claim is saying in our own minds.

This can sometimes be the hardest step because we can be tempted to jump the gun, trying to get to the end before we've even taken stock of what's going on. We have to absorb the claim accurately and completely. We can't pick and choose

things about the claim we like or don't like—that comes later—we have to take it as is, no matter how much it might not resonate with our personal sensibilities. Exercising emotional detachment and clarity of mind helps here.

We have properly seen a claim and internalized it—we have to make an accurate copy of the map *for ourselves*. Once we have our own personal copy now we can proceed with the discernment process.

For example, if a friend runs up to you and says: “Oh my God! I was just teleported to Venus by a group of highly advanced [extraterrestrials!](#)” we need to sit down and carefully review as much of this story as possible so we can clearly comprehend what our friend is saying they experienced.

If you hear “[extraterrestrials](#)” and immediately dismiss the whole claim as bogus, you’ve skipped the first step; dismissal without investigation is prejudice based on personal incredulity, not true discernment.

You need to know the claim well enough to recount it accurately. ***This is critically important.***

Avoid This: A Straw Man fallacy is when you improperly reconstruct a claim in your mind. If your friend said they were taken to Venus, but you thought they said Mars, you misunderstood their claim, you created a “straw man.” It’s easy to make this mistake. This is why being patient, humble, and open-minded is so important, we have to be willing to entertain things that might not feel true so we can form an accurate picture.

Most of the problems people encounter with discernment are due to misconception or not properly reproducing a claim in their own mind. Don't rush this step, it takes time and dedication, you need to be able to recognize when you've made a mistake and go back to fix it.

Sometimes our instincts flare up and try to convince us that we can skip ahead. "The mainstream media are liars! I don't have to understand what they're saying to know it's a lie!" This is *not* true discernment. Liars sometimes tell the truth.

If we only focus on a partial picture, it completely changes the meaning of what someone is saying or claiming...





How the Media can manipulate our viewpoint

Focusing on the partial image in the above photo demonstrates how easily incomplete concepts distort interpretation, and therefore, the meaning of what it is we're trying to discern.

Types of Claims

Since there are a great many claims we could itemize, we'll focus instead on an analogy that sums them all up.

Think of a claim like a story in a book. You can't really understand the story unless you've read it carefully. This means it takes time, persistence and dedication. If you skip around while reading, if you're mind

wonders if you don't like what it has to say and avoid a section, you're not getting a complete picture of the story, which means your opinion about it won't be very accurate.

Step 2: Understanding the Claim

After we've absorbed the claim, creating an accurate copy in our minds, now we have to make sure we understand each element completely.

We need the separating power of the left brain to slice the claim up into chunks we can use during the understanding and research portion of discernment.

Grab a pen and paper. Write down the claim itemizing all the factors, be detailed, be specific, make sure you're weaving all

the elements together properly—just like recounting a story. Of course, you don't need to actually write this out, but it is very helpful to do so. Writing allows us to dissociate from an experience, which helps us gain clarity on the individual threads that make up a claim.

Understanding the claim involves just that—we need to look at what the claim says and see if we can comprehend each element properly. If we don't understand an element of a claim, we have to take extra time to research that so that when we begin comparing the claim to reality, we can interpret things correctly.

For example, if a newscaster says that a fire raged in a downtown apartment in New York City—do we know what each of those elements are? Do we know where New

York City is? Do we know what an apartment fire is? This might seem silly for this example but making sure we understand each component of a claim is extremely important. If we don't know what fire is, how can we possibly discern if an apartment really burned?

Scope and Context

A claim, just like a story, has certain components we need to understand.

There's a spatial location (a place), a temporal location (a time), and things interacting with each other. The scope is the subject matter, what happened. The context is where and when.

Sometimes the scope is divorced from time and space, like discerning the question: "Are human beings inherently good or evil?"

This type of claim is abstract, a meta-claim about the nature of reality itself, which can still be discerned, but requires great skills in abstract thinking. The more discernment you practice and knowledge you gain the easier it is to discern abstractions.

For example, if someone claimed at 11:34 pm in downtown L.A. they saw a bigfoot buying a six pack of beer at a 7 Eleven, we need to understand where this happened, when it happened, and what occurred so we can investigate properly. Perhaps the store had a camera rolling during the event, but if we're looking at 7 Elevens in Pittsburg, clearly, we're not going to get very far in discerning the claim.

Scope and context are fairly easy when we're dealing with real-world events. But it's harder to pin down when we're discussing

abstractions, like whether or not the bigfoot had the right to pay for the six-pack with riverstones—the money bigfoots use. The currency question opens up a whole other venue of scope and context examination—what is the lawful basis of the riverstone currency? Does the Sasquatch nation that uses riverstones have a treaty with the USA to use this in a foreign jurisdiction? It's a silly example (no, there really isn't a riverstone bigfoot currency) but it drives in the point that the more abstract the claim we're trying to discern, the more research and understanding we need regarding the scope and context.

Key Point: Ideally, you should understand every element of a claim completely. If it relates to the rate at which ionized water vapor moves through a storm cell, and you

don't know anything about these things, you should spend some time learning about them. This means that the more knowledge you have about a great many things the more accurately you can understand a claim and thus, you'll be better at discernment in general.

Book [The 7 Hermetic Laws & Tesla's 3, 6, 9 Magnetic Array](#)

Step 3: Comparison (Research) of The Claim

Once we've created an accurate copy of a claim and taken the time to understand each element as much as reasonably possible, now we can actually do the comparison and research work.

Remember, **all discernment is the act of**

taking a representation of reality (a claim) and comparing it to reality itself —we’re comparing a map of knowledge to the territory.

When the claim is less abstract and the territory is available to us, this is often a very easy step.

For example, if your boss runs into your office at work and says “It’s raining toads outside!” all you need to do is walk over to a window to see if it’s actually happening. Toads raining from the sky is the scope, the context is the current time and present location. You understand what a toad is, what rain is, and that this miraculous event is transpiring right now outside your office. As it turns out, your boss was still a little high from an ayahuasca journey the night before, and it isn’t actually raining toads

outside.

The act of *looking* is the comparison moment. It's also the research moment.

Discernment is an *internal* process of making a copy of a claim and then an *external* process of investigation and research. If the claim isn't something we can directly observe ourselves, if it is non-concurrent, we have to rely more on research and external data sources than our personal experience.



Non-Concurrency Discernment

When a claim is concurrent with your actual location in space and time—when you're physically capable of observing the phenomenon a claim describes—it's pretty easy to compare it to reality to see if it is true.

But what if the claim discusses a past event, like how many soldiers died at the Battle of Gettysburg during the Civil War? Even if you understand the claim, you can't just pop into a time machine to observe the battle directly. You need to compare aspects of the claim to other bodies of knowledge to get an assessment of how likely it is to be true, based on available data. You might decide to go to Gettysburg with an excavation team, dig up a plot, and see how much evidence you find. You might decide to go to a Civil War expert and ask

them for their opinion, along with any evidence they can provide you to substantiate or support this opinion. All this data will help you evaluate if the claim is valid based on certain lines of inquiry. But since we can't know directly via first-hand experience how many soldiers actually died, we need to rely on probability measures instead.

Key Point: When we can't directly observe the territory or the phenomenon a claim describes, we can't produce a definitive answer. We have to rely on likelihoods instead. No matter how much you might *feel* like a claim is accurate, proper discernment never assumes a definitive answer. If you try to force an answer, you'll end up blinding yourself to greater truth beyond the limited scope of that answer.

For example, it might feel to you like your friend just doesn't like you anymore because they stopped calling you, but unless you courageously ask them what's going on, you won't know for sure—they might have lost service on their phone.

Possibility and Probability

Possibility says if something could happen. Generally speaking, almost any claim you can think of *could be* true—it's possible. But how likely is it? That's where probability comes in.

Using the example above, if the number of soldiers that died at the Battle of Gettysburg was claimed to be 300 million—far more than the number of soldiers that fought in the entire Civil War—then while it's *possible* the claim could be true (because we can't know directly via

firsthand knowledge), it's highly *improbable* using a historical assessment because the total population of the USA during the Civil War was only [31 million people](#). By researching aspects of the claim within existing bodies of knowledge, which could include personal investigation, we can come up with an assessment of how probable or likely an aspect of the claim is, based on a specific perspective or dimension of analysis. In this case, the data about population suggests the claim is invalid but this is only one viewpoint. In most cases, assessing how likely a possibility is of being true is the primary method of assessing a claim since only some claims can be directly observed. **This is why understanding the claim is so important.** If we don't understand what

a component of a claim means, in this case, what a Civil War soldier is, we don't know where to look for evidence. This is true for any claim.

Proper understanding leads to proper inquiry.

We have to be OK with uncertainty—we have to keep an open mind.

Just because a historical assessment suggests an aspect of the claim might be invalid doesn't mean it actually is. Thus, discernment is much like juggling, we spend time gathering data that gives us different inferences about certain probabilities. During the final step, we consider all the probabilities, weigh them, and make a tentative conclusion.

Key Point: Multidimensional thinking is

extremely useful—we have to avoid dualistic black and white mindsets.

Discernment rarely gives us clear answers of true or false. Discernment often gives us a host of possibilities that could be true, based on some body of evidence, assessed as a probability of likelihood via supportive evidence gathered during research.

Consider the idea of a spherical earth. To most people, the earth appears flat. Go outside, look around, it looks flat—we can't perceive the curvature of the earth with the naked eye from the ground. Several hundred years ago, the Roman Catholic Church declared the earth was flat and that claim seemed true to almost everyone. And since no one could actually lift off the ground and see the roundness of the earth

directly, such believers in flat earth committed a discernment fallacy based on a partial perspective—they failed to comprehend the limits of their knowledge! Thus, *when you can't know with verifiable certainty if something is true or false, you have to accept probability in its place.*

Step 4: Discernment of The Claim

This is the part we all want to get to. Is a claim true or false?!

We've got a clear picture of the claim, we understand its parts, and we conducted research that provided probabilities about likely each element is of being true. Now we assess each of those probabilities together (right brain thinking) and come up with a conclusion that reflects our research.

For example, if we're trying to discern if the weather prediction for tomorrow will be accurate, based on the accuracy of past weather reports on the local news, we might tabulate 6 months' worth of predictions. If the predictions turned out to be accurate 70% of the time, we can make a substantive guess, a tentative conclusion, that the weather report for tomorrow is *probably* going to be accurate.

But what if we have an intuition that conflicts with our logical research? No problem! The beauty of [consciousness](#) is that we can hold multiple conclusions at once. But, eventually, we have to make a choice to act in the world—more on this later.

The Uncertainty Problem

The pros of discernment, epistemologists,

have been grappling with the uncertainty problem for almost all of human history. How can you know *for sure* that you're really reading these words right now? How can you know *for sure* that you're not a brain in a jar somewhere, hooked up to a supercomputer projecting a Matrix-like reality into your synapses? Granted this is a pretty extreme level of skepticism, but it highlights a very important point: *we have to comprehend the limits of our knowledge.*

You might want something to be true, because it came from a trustworthy source, or your research seemed really good, but the truth is we aren't absolutely certain because our knowledge is limited. Don't make the mistake of thinking your process is perfect and your conclusions are absolutely certain.

Book [How Do We Know?: An Introduction to Epistemology](#)

Strategic Discernment: The Judgement Call

The bottom line is, we could investigate a claim for all time, especially if it's rather hard to pin down. And to be sure, the search for truth never really ends, but we have formed a conclusion as a placeholder in the process.

For example, if you're in a restaurant and a waiter comes running out of the kitchen screaming "they poisoned all the food!" you might not have the time to gather samples, take them to a toxicology lab, and assess each dish for possible contamination. You need to be strategic, assessing what the risks of the claim are as it relates to your values and time available to investigate

—hence understanding the claim is so important. Clearly, since you value your life over a tasty meal, you’ll probably decide to go to another restaurant.

Making a judgment call about a claim involves taking stock of all the research and comparison work you did to come up with a *tentative* answer of true or false—an educated guess.

Do you really know if that bigfoot went into a 7 Eleven in downtown L.A.? If you saw CCTV footage, you could say “yes it’s probably true” but even here you’d have to entertain the possibility that the film could have been tampered with. Hence, your best guess could still be wrong and this is why staying open is essential.

Operational Conclusions and Choice Point

An operational conclusion is when we judge something as either true or false, acting ***as if*** our discernment process was accurate.

When you decided to leave the restaurant because the waiter screamed all the food was poisoned, you acted on an operational conclusion, your best guess at the time.

Recalling the map and territory analogy, you have to eventually stop making your map and actually get out into the territory to do something.

The choice point comes in when we can't research anymore and need to act on what

we do know. This is actually another form of investigation because action based on a conclusion produces information that we can use to understand how correct we were. In epistemology, this would be a pragmatic assessment. If your conclusion is right, you should be able to direct your behavior in accordance with it to produce expected outcomes—pragmatism. For example, we can't prove with objective evidence that free will exists, but acting like it does is extremely useful.

Book [Writing Down Your Soul: How to Activate and Listen to the Extraordinary Voice Within](#)

We're done!

At this point, we've gone through the 4 steps of discernment. With these tools in

hand, time, and dedication, you can begin becoming a master at discernment. The more you practice it the better you'll get.

Exploration of Possibilities and Multiple Conclusions

It's a common misconception to think that we can't explore a claim for what it might mean unless we know for sure it's true. Or that we can't think about many different possible conclusions at once.

But this isn't really the case. All contemplation expands the mind's capacity to recognize patterns, which is an essential aspect of developing knowledge. We can learn even by exploring clearly false and fictional ideas. Consider a myth or fable. The events aren't real, the characters are made up, but the story tells us something about life itself, and with the power of our

philosophic mind, we can gain true insights that improve our knowledge.

Discernment Limitations

Discernment gives us an assessment of how likely something is to be true.

Discernment doesn't tell us what something means nor does it tell us if a meaning, even if coming from a false claim, is valuable.

These are questions only philosophy can answer.

Life requires both truth and value arguments. A truth argument assert something *could be* true, but it doesn't say what value this truth might have to us.

Emotional Discernment

Discernment is a lot of work. It takes time, focus, proper interpretation, willingness to learn new things and be wrong about our

first impressions, to formulate progressively accurate judgments. Sometimes, we don't have time to do this. Sometimes the claim is so abstract, so far removed from what we can investigate, we have to rely more on intuition and feeling.

Emotional discernment is something a great many people employ. It's built-in to animal level thinking (emotions) and cognition, passed down to us from our animal ancestors. Intellectual discernment only emerges as we begin to gain mastery of the logical mind. Emotional information when combined with logic and reason, evolve beyond the mere animal to the human level.

Emotional discernment is the act of using emotional resonance to get a quick assessment of how true a claim is based on

feeling. These feelings themselves come from several sources.

Source 1: The unconscious mind stores all experience. The subconscious mind interacts with the conscious mind to create emotions via the interplay of present and past memories. If we are considering a claim, like toads raining from the sky, and we've never seen that before, the claim will *feel* untrue. In this case, if a claim doesn't *feel* true it's because we don't have any pre-existing data (memories) that match the current experience, hence it doesn't resonate.

Source 2: Another aspect of emotional resonance is more akin to extrasensory perception. Our bodies and minds are connected directly to flowing streams of energy and information buzzing all around

us via electromagnetic resonance. Remote Viewers, for example, can tap into this field of information by stilling their mind and using a coordinate to focus on an anchor in consciousness to evaluate a body of information they can't access directly with their physical senses. Extrasensory information gathering is very real and has been used by the DIA and CIA. Yet, it requires advanced levels of mental discipline to form accurate pictures using these methods. Occasionally, almost everyone has an insight or intuition that turned out to be true, but you wouldn't know it unless you compare that insight with reality. This is why both emotional and logical processes used together gives us the best results.

Limitations to Emotional Resonance

Emotional resonance can sometimes be justified as a replacement for the more intellectual process outlined above. But the problem with this is that you don't have conscious knowledge of how and why the claim resonates—it either does or it doesn't—e.g. the black box problem in psychology. Understanding requires more than just believing something blindly based on feeling. To be sure, emotional discernment is useful as a guide, but it

doesn't impart intrinsic understanding.

The other limitation is that you can't share your emotional resonance with others. Your intuition might be right all the time, but other people have to take your word for it. You can't transfer this data to another person telepathically—at least not yet. It's like having a book in a unique language only you can read, no one else can read the pages for themselves to see what the story is about.

Given these limitations to emotional discernment, *it's important to use this capacity in tandem or partnership with the intellectual process.*

Some of the most accomplished scientists and inventors of the modern age spoke highly of this combined process. Nikola Tesla used his intuition and careful logical

investigations to produce some of his most fantastic inventions and discoveries of the modern age. By using both, you can guide yourself into avenues of research and investigation while carefully assessing the fruit of such inquiry with the logical mind.

Book [12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos by Dr. Jordan Peterson](#)

Final Thoughts

We could talk a lot more about discernment, like how we assess abstract claims such as spiritual concepts. But for now, these tools are a great start.

We need accurate maps of knowledge to navigate the unknowns of the world carefully. The better we can do this, the more likely we are to live productive fulfilling lives.

Discernment is a science and an art. We use the science of logic and reason to gather accurate data and consider probabilities while using intuition and our creative aspects to form operational conclusions to take actions in the world.

The challenge with all discernment is to avoid personal dogma—that our conclusions *must be true* and shouldn't be questioned.

Discernment **never** provides absolutely certain answers—for that requires absolute knowledge and awareness.

Exercising discernment properly teaches us humility because we become increasingly aware of how little we truly know with concrete certainty. It also teaches us to be more careful with others so that we understand what they are saying, instead of

jumping to conclusions about what we think they said.

And as one begins to explore the grand mysteries of existence, the need for wise discernment becomes ever increasing. With this, we can open the cup of mind so that the whole of the infinite truth can flow forever in.

– Justin

Check out Justin's work [here](#).

About The Author

[Justin Deschamps](#) has been a truth seeker all his life, studying physics, psychology, law, philosophy, and spirituality, and working to weave these seemingly separate bodies of information into a holistic tapestry of ever expanding knowledge. Justin is a student of all and a teacher to some,

sharing what he has discovered with those who are ready and willing to take responsibility for making the world a better place. The goal of his work is to help himself and others become better truth-seekers, and in doing so, form a community of holistically minded individuals capable of creating world healing projects for the benefit of all life—what has been called The Great Work. Check out his project [Stillness in the Storm](#) to find some of his work. [Follow on Twitter @justinstillness](#), [Follow on Parler](#), [Facebook Stillness in the Storm](#), and [minds.com](#).

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December 3rd 2018: Minor grammar

corrections were made to this article.

December 14th 2018: Additional grammar corrections were made to this article.

May 27th 2020: Minor grammar corrections were made to this article.

Source:

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