

# An in depth look into the unconscious mind

Psychology



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An In Depth Look into the Unconscious Mind The Unconscious Mind, Attitudes, Prejudice, and Groupthink 2012 Christine Vest Psychology 110 10/21/2012 An In Depth Look into the Unconscious Mind The Unconscious Mind, Attitudes, Prejudice, and Groupthink 2012 Christine Vest Psychology 110 10/21/2012 Do you believe that people have an unconscious mind? If so, how does it affect thoughts, feelings, and behavior? The whole idea of the unconscious is far deeper than our human minds can comprehend. Sometimes we look back on things and wonder why we did it, and maybe if our minds were in a different state of consciousness we would have performed better or reacted differently. Sigmund Freud defines this as a term for thoughts or motives that lie beyond a person's normal awareness but that can be made available through psychoanalysis (Carpenter, 2010, p. 448). I feel that there are numerous states of consciousness that range from the altered state of conscious (such as sleeping) to the highest level of consciousness (the total integration of one). Most people in their lifetime never achieve this state. I feel that it has something to do with finding yourself and your purpose in this life and fighting off whatever demons or negative energy you have surrounding yourself. Balance, whether it is good or evil, yin and yang, balancing your body and mind through meditation, or balancing your surroundings through feng shui; needs to happen in order for you to focus on your different states of consciousness. You, as the keeper of your being, needs to ensure this is done so you can be aware and focused of your surroundings and what's going on in life and in a way find peace within yourself. Whatever it is, our unconscious plays a part in the decisions we make and the lives we lead. Everything the unconscious represents, whether it is subliminal perceptions, thoughts, habits, fears, or phobias; can be seen <https://assignbuster.com/an-in-depth-look-into-the-unconscious-mind/>

as the source of dreams, automatic thoughts, and one's internal locus of knowledge. So when asked the question if I believe people have an unconscious mind? I say, yes, yes they do. The unconscious mind plays a big role in the way we live our life, like I stated earlier and it affects our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It affects our thoughts by taking in subliminal messages or whatever messages are around us and makes us reflect on those messages by interpreting it in some way that is unique to our personality. " In 2005 Tsuchiya invented a technique, continuous flash suppression, which renders a picture invisible, hiding it from your conscious sight. Yet some part of your brain has access to the image and influences your behavior in untold ways. The way it works is simple. Say Tsuchiya wants to camouflage a picture of an angry male face. With the help of a split computer screen, Tsuchiya projects a faint image of this snarling guy into your left eye. Your right eye sees a rapidly changing set of colored rectangles, one on top of another. If you keep both eyes open, all you see are the ever changing series of colored patches but no angry face. The constantly flickering colors attract your attention in a way that the static portrait does not. As soon as you close your right eye, the face becomes visible. But otherwise you have no inkling that the face is there, even though your left eye has been staring at it for many minutes. You simply do not see it (Koch, 2008)". It just goes to show that this brain activity remains unconscious but may influence your behavior or generate a subtle feeling of unease. The subject of how it affects our feelings is a little bit different than that of our thoughts. It takes the energies around us and makes us respond to them through our emotional state. For instance, if you have had a good day all day and suddenly you are in the presence of someone who has had a

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bad one, you can automatically become affected by it. Before you know it, all of a sudden you are starting to feel like you are in a bad mood. It's like that person's energy is rubbing off on you and even though you don't know why you feel this way your unconscious mind is taking all of that in and making you reflect on it. Behavior is just one of those things that sometimes we don't know why we do the things we do, we just do them. I feel that some of this reaction to our environment stems from some sort of internal force. On the other hand I feel a lot of it originates from influential forces. For instance, " subjects holding a cold drink rated others' personalities much colder than subjects holding a warm drink; African American students primed with racial stereotypes will perform worse on intellectual tests than those primed with examples of black achievement; and lastly, People ate 69% more jelly beans when all the colors were mixed together than when they were separated by colors. Also, presenting 10 colors of M&Ms instead of 7, increased consumption 43% (Mills, 2011). " So what does this say about influential forces and our unconscious mind? Basically, even if we don't realize it at the time, our unconscious is influenced by things around us and sometimes because we can't understand it we will deny that is happening or make excuses for it. Have you ever changed a strongly held attitude? What caused the change for you? Sometimes in life, we as people hold strongly to our beliefs about certain things. Occasionally, we change our views, whether it's because we lacked certain knowledge we previously didn't have or we grow out of it. I have to admit that I have felt victim to this at certain times in my life. An example of this from my own personal experiences is at a certain time in my life I felt like the world and everyone in it was against me. I didn't know what was going on with me and I felt like I had to find myself first.

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What changed this strongly held attitude was the process of me growing and finding whatever it was in my life that was making me feel this way and to change it. Sometimes you just have to change your environment and from time to time that means changing people, places, and things. All of my changing of perceptions had to do with me growing up and finding my role in this world and to stop blaming everyone else for my problems and living in denial. It's the process of growing up and doing whatever you feel it is that comes naturally to you. Some people never get it and go their whole lives without accomplishing anything and instead of spending their time doing something constructive they wind up fighting whatever demons it is that is preventing them from moving on and finding some sort of peace within themselves. Our text talks about saliency bias (" why people sometimes suggest that a raped woman in a short skirt was asking for it or that homeless beggars should get a job—a phenomenon also called " blaming the victim" (Carpenter, 2010, p. 404))" and also self-serving bias (is motivated by a desire to maintain positive self-esteem and a good public image) (Carpenter, 2010, p. 404)" and I feel that it all has to do with the way people carry themselves. These attitudes can be changed depending on the person's will to do so. If a person is so stubborn they can't see the truth for what it is, even if there is scientific proof of it, they are just in denial and if and when that person comes to be at peace with whatever it is that's possessing them from seeing clearly then they can start to change their perceptions on things. Until then they will be stuck with those negative thoughts or energies. Do you believe that you are free of prejudice? After reading this chapter, which of the many factors that cause prejudice do you think is most important to change? Prejudice has plagued this world since <https://assignbuster.com/an-in-depth-look-into-the-unconscious-mind/>

the beginning of time. I think it all has something to do with free will and one's innate ability to make decisions for themselves. As long as there is good and evil we will never be free from it, that includes myself. I believe that there is a way we can kind of put it on the back burner sort of speak, but I feel that it will always manipulate you in some way even if it's another person around you acting in that way or just some unconscious thought that your mind or conscience is throwing at you. It may be from some deeper unrealized assumption about something that you never really put the pieces together about or some subliminal message that is making you feel that way. Whatever it is, we have to all work on it together as one to eliminate it off of this world or else it is going to linger around in a dark corner somewhere waiting to attack. Our book discusses prejudice and all of the many factors that cause it. I feel that the most important factor we as people have to take into account in order to change prejudice all together is conformity. Conformity is the act of changing behavior as a result of real or imagined group pressure (Carpenter, 2010, p. 413). Human beings are influenced in some way or another at one time in their life. Some people fall victim to it more than others, it just depends on how strong their character and personality are. If leaders can influence their followers; religious figures can influence our spirits; and celebrities can influence our style, then why can't we take all of that influential force and use it for something positive, such as eliminating prejudice. It has to start somewhere, so starting with the people who have the strongest impact and working its way down the line is how it needs to happen. If all of the world's leaders were preaching and practicing the same thing then all of the rest would have to follow. Just like the old saying goes " if you can't beat em' join em'. " Have you ever done <https://assignbuster.com/an-in-depth-look-into-the-unconscious-mind/>

something in a group that you would not have done if you were alone? What happened? How did you feel? What have you learned from this chapter that might help you avoid this behavior in the future? Like I said earlier conformity, influence in all of its shapes and forms, and prejudice happen to us at one time or another and are both caused by internal and external forces. Sometimes we do things in a group that we would have never have done alone and all of the above and other reasons play a factor into that. I can remember a time when group activity influenced me. I was a teenager hanging out with friends. Someone comes around with some ecstasy and I kept telling them I didn't want to do it but when everyone else started taking the pills I felt like because they were all doing it then why shouldn't I? When the pills came into effect I got sick and started throwing up. After a while I felt better and I was ok but the next day after I woke up I felt terrible, sick to my stomach, light headed, and just didn't feel right. I knew I would've never have taken the drugs if they weren't doing it. It gave me a bad experience and I regretted doing it because of the way it made me feel, but it was the cool thing to do at the time. I can look back on it now and see how naïve I was and still can't really understand the concept behind a group's ability to influence a person. The term groupthink is referred to when describing this behavior (Carpenter, 2010, p. 426). The only way we can prevent this occurrence from happening in the future is to surround ourselves with positive influences, positive places, and positive activities or things. This gives us the ability to prevent the situation from happening in the first place. Our text talks about cooperation and subordinate goals as a way to prevent prejudices by creating strong feelings of in-group loyalty (Carpenter, 2010, p. 424). I feel that it is our responsibility as people to support our friends and

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family. That includes influencing our group to cooperate in tasks together in a positive manor. Whether it is creating group activities or going to church. This creates a stronger bond between you and doesn't separate you from the bigger picture. It also prevents others from getting bored in their surroundings and turning down a destructive path. Works Cited Carpenter, S. (2010). Visualizing Psychology, 2nd Edition. John Wiley & Sons. Koch, C. (2008, November 19). Scientific American. Retrieved from <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=how-unconscious-mechanisms> Mills, S. (2011, January 28). Rat Race Trap. Retrieved from <http://www.ratracetrapp.com/the-rat-race-trap/unconscious-influences-on-our-behavior.html>