

Conscious and Subconscious thinking

In order to appreciate the best way to get the most from your mind, it is useful to understand how it works. One way to do this is to think of your mind as an iceberg. The piece of the iceberg that is above the water is your conscious, the part of your thinking that you are aware of and the hidden part below the water is your subconscious, the part of your thinking that you are unaware of.

There are many tasks that our subconscious carries out for us each day without our conscious needing to regulate it, for instance, if you had to focus your mind on breathing all day then you would never get anything done!

The conscious part of you is the bit that focuses your attention. It acts as an instructor and provides commands to the subconscious. It also tells the subconscious when to trawl for a piece of stored information. Have you ever had the situation where you cannot remember a name, date or other small piece of information? It seems that the more you try and think of it the further away it gets, then suddenly you will be thinking of something entirely different and you remember what it is you were trying to think of. This is your subconscious receiving a command and then working on it tirelessly until it is complete.

Another example of this is when you decide to buy a new car. Have you ever noticed that once you see a car that you like, you start to see many more of them on the road? This is because your subconscious has been nudged into considering this car and so it says "Ah! So you're interested in that are you? I'll provide you with some examples."

What we know is that our conscious mind can focus on 7.9 chunks of info at any one time whereas our subconscious can deal with 2 million! If our conscious could not rely on our subconscious to take care of these things then we simply would not be able to survive. There are a multitude of tasks that our subconscious is coping with all the time without our conscious ever being aware of it.

A good analogy to help us understand the relationship between our conscious and subconscious is that of a ship.

If we are a ship then our conscious is the captain and our subconscious is the crew. In other words our conscious is the part of us that makes decisions our subconscious can only act on the information provided.

This becomes interesting when we consider that it is our subconscious that controls our emotions, feelings, beliefs and drivers. If our subconscious takes care of these for too long without direction, we could call this 'conditioning'.

Positively Negative

One issue that our subconscious has is that it cannot process negative thoughts. In other words if I were to say to you now...

“Don’t think of a blue duck”

What do you think of? That’s right...



We commonly make this very mistake with children. Let’s say they have a glass of milk and we say, “Don’t spill that milk.” What happens next?

Of course, in order to think of not spilling the milk they have to first think of spilling it. That’s the exact same time that your carpet gets ruined!

If one small statement like this can have an impact, imagine what happens when we have months or even years of conditioning. Once we realise that our subconscious cannot differentiate between a negative and positive statement it becomes clear why we tend to fail with the goals we set ourselves.

Picture the person that decides to lose weight, every time they look in the mirror they think ‘fat, fat, fat’. Each time they open the fridge they think ‘don’t eat this, don’t eat that.’ Their subconscious is only hearing fat, fat, fat as if that is the way things should be and if it’s receiving a message of ‘don’t eat’ and it can’t process negative thoughts, what is the message it’s getting?

...Eat, exactly. So with this one typical example we realise how our desire to get fit can become an exercise in getting bigger.

You may not even realise it when you use negatives words and phrases. Regardless, if you use them enough, they can condition you to think negatively, too. Before you know it, little negatives will clutter up your mind, as well as your conversation.

You now know that our subconscious needs positives to work on and if you want positive outcomes, then you must...

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU WANT