

How to Hack Your Unconscious Mind and Untap Your Potential

The unconscious mind makes us- so why not gain power over it, so we can ultimately control our experience of ourselves and reality?

The unconscious mind is something of great interest and yet remains a mystery.

'The unconscious mind of man sees correctly even when conscious reason is blind and impotent.' —
Carl Jung

What does it consist of? Can it affect your thoughts? How can thoughts affect reality? Can you control your unconscious mind?

Although he was not the one who came up with it, Freud popularized the term 'unconscious mind.' He compared the mind to an iceberg with the conscious mind being on top and the unconscious mind being the most prominent part of the mind, under the surface.

We can easily access the conscious mind, but not the unconscious mind. However, they are connected to our conditioning.

Psychology Today says that:^[1]

'The conscious mind contains all the thoughts, feelings, cognitions, and memories we acknowledge, while the unconscious consists of deeper mental processes not readily available to the conscious mind.'

Why is the unconscious mind so important?

Because it drives most of what we do. But the point of it being 'unconscious' is that we are not always actively aware of why we are doing it.

As we delve deeper into the unconscious mind, what is underneath can also be the most problematic or painful for us. It can hold our feelings, our fears, our secrets, our repression, and our insecurities. And yet we can walk around not even knowing certain things about ourselves because it exists the way it does.

It can control our being and how we conduct ourselves; it can also help us unleash our potential once we learn how to tap into it.

The unconscious mind can come out in different ways. It can be the reason you are acting a certain way or how you make a decision. The unconscious can come out in what you say, showing true nature and desire such as through what we call a 'Freudian slip.'

We do not always know what motivates us initially, but there are ways to hack our unconscious mind and tap our potential.

How to Hack Your Conscious Mind and Tap Your Potential

There are five ways we can unlock our unconscious.

1. Understand How the Brain Works

In a study conducted by the Mind Science Foundation, researcher Heather Berlin describes how she seeks to understand how the brain creates subjective feelings when it is largely seen as an 'info processing machine.'^[2]

She asks: What is the neural basis of consciousness?

They tested people by showing stimuli very subtly so that they are not conscious of the stimuli. This serves to analyze subliminal processing versus conscious processing. Berlin seeks to track the neural basis of perception but without the brain analysis of how it makes meaning.

Berlin says that the 'consciousness has a limited capacity . . . the unconscious is virtually limitless. . . .' Most of what you do and why you do them come from the unconscious because if your conscious mind tracked it all, it would go into overload.

This is why the unconscious exists. If subliminal stimuli come to consciousness, there is whole-brain activation. Whereas, if stimuli remain in the unconscious, there is less brain activity.

There is also something called the PB3 signal which is 'evidence of complex, sustained, unconscious brain activity.'

She further explained that Freud, while not all his theories were correct, was correct on some things in regards to the unconscious brain. Namely, that the brain acts in a defense mechanism to unwanted stimuli through suppression (conscious defense), repression (unconscious defense) and even dissociation.

Consciousness has evolved to untangle the mess of motives made by the unconscious.

Consciousness Corrects the Unconscious

Neuroscientist Eliezer Sternberg's '. . . way of delineating brain activity suggests one reason we may have evolved consciousness: to shoot down illogical stories concocted by the unconscious – which he calls an 'egocentric storyteller' – that can get things wrong when the neural circuitry goes haywire.'^[3]

In other words, the conscious can correct the wrongs of the unconscious.

The conscious is there as a babysitter to bad behavior; a filter towards feelings and a way in which we can rewire the functioning of the unconscious. In this perception, the brain acts as a rewiring tool by constantly fixing our mental states or exasperating them. In this way, we can learn to choose our thoughts.

We learn to create associations with things that we give attention to. We learn more about ourselves. But that attention can be difficult to ignite when we are always balancing between the conscious and unconscious mind in an integrated web.

It all works together, so, we must pay attention to what affects us and why.

2. Address Troublesome Thoughts and Feelings First

To most people, the unconscious holds things we do not wish to think about. We judge these thoughts without any compassion for ourselves. But if we are compassionate towards ourselves, we can rewrite the traumatic memory or unpleasant thoughts with reassurances of safety and security.

We also are split between rationality versus emotional distress.

Emotional distress is your brain's way of telling you that something is unresolved, whether it be trauma, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or unpleasant thoughts or feelings. However, we can ease emotional distress by acknowledging it and comforting our mental state.

The two ways to do this are to gain awareness of your triggers (i.e. what causes memories flashbacks or unpleasant thoughts) and to utilize compassionate attention, which we seek from the earliest years of development including birth and do not always get.

The Unconscious Mind as an Adaptation

As human beings, we have evolved and adapted ways to survive. The unconscious mind is part of that adaptation – of repression and of what we do not want to deal with at the present.

However, if we want to survive, we have to heal the damage that these trauma or unpleasant thoughts and feelings have caused. If we do not, the unconscious mind can continue to control our actions and disrupt our lives.

Most of what the unconscious mind is doing is telling our brain to relive trauma or repressed memories for us to finally face them. This could easily come from simply not enough care when you were an infant, to a lack of emotional support as you grew to be an adult.

Once you know you are safe, however, you can start to heal the brain's urges to tell you over and over again that you are unsafe. What we experienced as a child lives on in our brains as adults. What we experience as adults we can learn to continually repress if never unlearn this cycle. Unlearning is why we focus on the unconscious mind and how we recover.

3. Use Free Association

Freud decided to use free association to reveal what lay within the unconscious mind. According to Very Well Mind, Freud 'asked patients to relax and say whatever came to mind without any consideration of how trivial, irrelevant, or embarrassing it might be.'^[4]

If it is repressed, then free association or stream of consciousness in therapy can help unlock troubled thoughts. You can ask a therapist to help you with this, or you can try blind dictation as Synecticsworld suggests.

The key is to find a safe space to release these thoughts. When it gets difficult, you can play it by 'challenge by choice' mentality. Free association is explored in many avenues, but ultimately, you can regain control over your thoughts when you understand them. Analyzing associations help you to do that.

Mindfulness Helps

You can also engage your unconscious mind and free association via mindfulness. Mindfulness leads to mind wandering and the surfacing of unconscious associations.

Frontiers in Psychology mentions that:

'It has been speculated that mind wandering facilitates creativity by stimulating unconscious associative processes that can lead to a sudden insight (Baird et al., 2012).'^[5]

This improves creativity and problem solving overall. It can help us regain control of our intent and actions. It can help us to figure out what is going on inside of us that needs attention. What drives or motivates us can come to the surface simply by observing thoughts.

It starts with shifting to noticing your thoughts as you focus on the present moment. Notice and practice acceptance of them, whether they are pleasant or not. Through taking an observer mentality towards one's thoughts, see what connections are made.

This is where the association starts to surface. See what comes up. This will link repression to the root of why you are struggling with being in control of your thoughts and behaviors.

4. Change Your Thoughts, Change Your Reality

While there are many theories on whether we can change reality with our thoughts, one thing is certain: You can change your EXPERIENCE of reality with your thoughts.

The brain fills in the gaps of perception, and we can unconsciously and consciously create meaning. However, the mind can get in the way of itself by doing so. That is why understanding what affects you and your unconscious mind is one way to challenge any distortions.

You may have heard the statement, 'Feelings are not facts' in many Psychology and self-help resources. It is because we do not always see reality for what it is.

Our feelings can alter our experience and acceptance of reality. When our perceptions are limited, we fall into patterns that affect our experience of reality. These patterns may be repeating the same mistakes or finding yourself in the same situations.

Quantum Mechanics Perspective on Reality

In quantum mechanics, few theories attempt to explain reality:^[6]

1. Copenhagen Interpretation: Some things exist because we observe it.

2. De Broglie-Bohm/Pilot Wave Interpretation: This is deterministic. Things exist whether we observe them to be or not
3. Many Worlds Theory: 'Every possibility is real and manifests across infinite universes.'
4. Ensemble Theory: 'All things are possible, but only one outcome shall manifest.'

Depending on what theory of reality you subscribe to, one thing is clear: our experience of reality can be subjective, can be changed, and can be examined. The brain filters these alterations in our perceptions, and our thoughts influence them through our associations with our unconscious minds.

When we think of something, do we ask ourselves why we think of it? Do we challenge it?

We can do this through therapies, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, where one challenges an irrational thought with a rational one and analyzes where it comes from.

Human Consciousness and Protons

Huffington Post compares human consciousness to a photon:

'The one difference between us and a photon is that we can think, we are conscious. As such, we can choose which of the possibilities before us to collapse our wave function. But more than that, since we are entangled with our environment we can affect that as well and influence randomness, just as it can influence us.'^[7]

This means that if we have consciousness, we can impact our surroundings. The higher our consciousness or the more we are self-aware, the bigger our impact.

It starts with you – with the thoughts you think. Think negatively and your experience of reality will be negative. Ignore the happenings of the unconscious mind, and your experience of reality will suffer.

Think positively, and you will find good things around you. Pull them into YOUR existence and your well-being will improve.

5. Untap Your Potential

You have potential, but how can you tap into it with your unconscious mind?

Your brain has evolved in many ways, but one way remains fundamental: survival. Your brain reacts and reassesses your survival all the time, largely through the unconscious mind.

What you think of creates your reality or your experience of it. When you react to something, the first thing your brain asks is 'Will I survive?' and acts accordingly.

This awareness changes your destiny. You can suddenly control how you think, which alters your experience of reality. This can unleash your potential.

When you are aware of what makes you tick, you stand taller. You feel more empowered to change your life.

Your unconscious may pull you back because it thinks of survival. It thinks of stopping you from acting on a good idea maybe because of bad past experiences. It is programmed to ensure you make it. So, even if you are not in danger, it will react as if you are due to the associations your brain makes with prior events.

But you can control this by reassessing your purpose and what you want to do. This allows you to evaluate how you can rise rather than continue to repress negative thoughts and emotions.

In a way, you are powering through it – teaching your brain to calm down. When you give it new information, you give yourself a new identity. Your identity is based on what you think about and how you respond to life. When you can control your thoughts, you can start to see a difference in the world around you. It sounds easy, but that is not always the case.

Behavioral Analysis

Emotional trauma can trick us into thinking that we are somebody who we are not. This is a hard thing to reverse, but it is possible.

It starts in behavioral analysis. When you do something that seems counterintuitive to you you are, make a log of those times and the triggers. Ask for input from a trusted professional. Note the times you have done free association and the trauma that is triggered.

What does it all mean? How does it all come together?

That is how you find the depths of you. You uncover what you are meant to be. And you learn that how you have responded in the past may not have been necessary.

You can do something even though you had failed at it before. You can open up again even if you have been ignored in the past. All these patterns can change.

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