

Hypnosis and Conscious

By Larry Garrett

What is really inside this entity called the subconscious?

Almost every person learning about hypnosis, Self-Hypnosis or Hetero-Hypnosis, (meaning hypnotizing another) are taught about the subconscious. Or are we? We have heard the subconscious mind holds the answers, the subconscious mind has the problems, the subconscious mind needs to be communicated to through hypnosis. Is the subconscious mind really the core or is there more?

I could do some explorations and read of what others have discovered of the subconscious mind, however, I would like to share my views with you. I have become drawn to knowing the conscious, subconscious and unconscious mind extensively for my own development as well as those who sit next to me in my office. In the beginning of my career, I would listen to my clients speak and wonder why they had one story and were living another. They would say, I want to feel better, yet stay involved in feeling worse. Now, the first question I ask my client, "Why is it you don't want to get rid of this behavior?" Most look at me with shock and often will say, "Of course I do, this is why I am here. I reply," "Of course you don't this is why you are here!" I would say as most hypnotists and occasionally still do, "Oh, it must be a secondary gain!" So, is this saying everyone has an excuse for their inappropriate behavior because it is a secondary gain? Could the smoker be feeling a need to smoke because, they are addicted, a bad habit, they subconsciously have learned to relax by smoking or is there something deeper in their core?

My practice has been a very successful one. I share these words, not to boast, but to allow you to observe my experience. I began my practice in 1970. Since about 1980 I regularly seen between 30 to 40 clients a week. This is of about 30 years until we moved to my new office in 2000. When we moved to this new office we needed to organize our files (all on paper) and counted approximately 50,000 clients in 30 years. I share these number to allow you to realize my experience with clients. This in no way implies I know everything, only I have had a mountain of experience to draw from.

As I have evolved in my life, I have attempted to create an awareness of my own existence especially as well as my clients. If I know myself, then I will know my client. This is how I feel many hypnotists lack success, they avoid the evolvment of their own being. This implies Consciousness of Hypnosis. Who are you? Until you are aware of who you are, you will have challenges knowing your client. It doesn't mean you need to quit smoking or lose weight to be a great hypnotist I am implying you need to know what your behaviors are which block you from hearing your client. Judgements would be a great example. I have hypnotized, murderers, rapists, criminals, even the most hated man on earth, Uday Hussein with an openness of realizing everyone is on a journey. Including you. If a client sits in your office and says, "I killed

someone yesterday!" You are not allowed to exhibit any emotion other than empathy. Any other emotion will immediately block your success. Experience a time when you have been judged. What did you experience within your consciousness? Did you feel a tightening, a reaction of stepping back or a resistance of hearing or speaking to this individual any longer? Consciousness of Hypnosis to me encompasses many areas, beginning with you, the hypnotist. Are you attempting to keep your mind balanced during your pre talk and during your hypnosis induction? I am not implying perfection. I am suggesting knowing yourself. I often use the phrase to a client, "If I sold shoes, I would wear the best shoes in the store!" Are you wearing the best shoes you sell? Would you buy shoes from a sales person who has scuffed shoes? Your client is wise, your client knows who you are, be aware and learn to wear a consciousness of being in the moment and loving yourself the best you can and your success will improve tenfold.

I began to realize there was something beyond the subconscious mind. I exhibited too many behaviors in myself I was unaware of. I began my training in hypnosis at 26 years old. I was so excited to learn what I had never known. I learned I had a subconscious! How profound this revelation was. When you educate your client and explain the subconscious mind do you observe a surprise in them? "What we know is not what we feel, but what we feel is what runs our life!" This is a great phrase to teach your client of the subconscious mind. This was me. I was surprised to learn I knew nothing of what was going on within myself. I thought my conscious thinking was all of it. At this time, I thought I knew it all, however I had not even opened the first door of life at 26 years old. In my 40s, almost 20 years later I was beginning to realize some degree of consciousness. I am not an unaware person. I am always right on, even 40 years ago, but I was dealing with something invisible. I couldn't see it. I look back and realize I was in my infancy of conscious awareness. Are you aware of you? I wonder if I will ever understand my own consciousness fully. If we spend a lifetime searching for awareness I feel as we take our last breath we will say, "Ah, I think I have it!" Many speak about the Subconscious mind, but few of us have an idea of what it was or even aware when it comes out. In my pre-talks I attempt to be aware of movements and actions in my space. I realize every subconscious action within myself is a communication to my client of who I am. So, who am I? Oh, yes, we could read books and hear what others say and we could hear speakers telling us their views, but what was really lying below the surface of our consciousness.

I felt something was missing. I needed to learn more of why I was who I am. I had begun to take classes on Higher Consciousness and realized I lacked many areas of consciousness. I feel two main areas I learned in these classes which allowed me to know more of who I was, learning to live the moment and learning to love myself *Unconditionally!* I might still be on my journey, however each day I realize I am moving closer to knowing who I am. Prior to learning these two skills I realized I had not begun to understand who I was and what I was doing. I realized much of what I exhibited I didn't know why. Why did I feel tight if I were judged, why did I change my mind about something I really wanted to do. The list goes on of how unaware I began to realize I was. Are you aware of your behaviors! I sure wasn't. I recall a phrase of defining Psychotic and Neurotic. A simple definition was, Psychotic was behaving in a certain irrational way and not knowing who I was and why I was doing it and Neurotic was behaving in a certain way and

knowing who I was and why I was doing it and still doing it. Do we seem to know what we are doing and why? Why are we exhibiting a behavior we don't like. I recall creating a simple definition of Neurotic; A habit is just a habit until we attempt to stop and can't. Then it becomes a neurosis. I am not sure how valid these definitions are in psychology, but they are an interesting way of observing how often we are out of control. Often I am asked how I know something I may have shared. I reply with a smile, "I just made it up."

We all have behaviors we do in such an unconscious action we are not aware of the activity or the movements of this activity. I recall when I used to smoke cigarettes I would have a cigarette lit in my hand and never recall lighting it. Often I could recall lighting a cigarette and having one I had not finished sitting in the ashtray. Maybe you have never smoked, however can you relate to having a behavior or habit and acting upon it and not realizing you did? I feel we all can relate to something similar of subconscious behavior or even unconscious behavior.

This is Consciousness! This isn't just the subconscious, it is Consciousness! Consciousness is one, you! Consciousness is you! Oxford's definition says, "Consciousness is your individual awareness of your unique thoughts, memories, feelings, sensations and environments.

There is something much deeper than just the subconscious in action here. There is something which may go into the soul and even deeper. There is so much more and my goal has been to research the depths of this subconscious mind and beyond and this is how I came up with the topic of the Consciousness of Hypnosis. I have taken courses from Arche Meditation Center and my great friend and teacher of consciousness, Sandy Daliege once defined for me the difference of the subconscious and the soul. Her words were, "The subconscious looks at a beautiful painting on the wall and says with an emotional flair, "Oh, how beautiful!" The soul looks at the painting and exclaims with a profound exhale, "AH!" Words are not needed it is all within a depth we seldom are aware of.

As hypnotists we are taught induction techniques, deepening and before the 70s we were not even aware of secondary gains or resistance. I can't recall the topic of secondary gains being brought up in the 70s or 80s. I recall speaking at a conference in the late 70s of resistance and was met with conflict. My words were, "If hypnosis is so great why doesn't it always work?" I feel because of resistance. There was often a belief the client wasn't cooperating It wasn't the hypnotist being unaware of resistance on a subconscious level, lets blame the client! This is another awareness of Hypnosis and Consciousness, "Who is right and who is wrong?" It wasn't me says the hypnotist. I learned a great skill many years ago, "Listen to your client, they will tell you what they need." Resistance in my opinion is the mind opposing the suggestions because it has another idea of a way to do it. It has a behavior or habit consciously the client wants to remove, but has a stronger force for wanting to exist. In a simple explanation Secondary Gain is why the client has not removed the habit themselves. When a client comes to visit me and sits down with a goal, the first question I ask them is, "Why don't you want to remove this habit or behavior?" They look at me in shock and disbelief with this question. Usually, their reaction or comment may be, Of course I do, this is why I am here!" And I reply, "Of course you don't this is

why you're here." Try this, sometime they often know why. There is a stronger desire on a subconscious level or as you will learn an unconscious level to maintain the habit or behavior.

Allow us to explore the consciousness I speak of. This is what I feel is lacking in most hypnosis training. I learned many years ago when training with my first instructor Fred Schivo that students seem to follow the training of their original instructor. This is what they know and much like a subconscious habit, this is what they do. "When we always do what we have always done, we always get what we have always gotten!"

I recall an event with my friend Carm Blacconiere at the Boston airport coming home from a conference. We began a conversation with three new hypnotists all excited of what they had learned recently. This was their first conference and they felt they had learned everything they needed to know. The first one told us he learned the only way to have success with their client was to use direct suggestions, i.e., you will quit smoking those cigarettes because you will save money and they are bad for you. The second newly trained hypnotist was adamant her method was better and the only way was with indirect suggestions to avoid resistance. Her instructor told them, "No other technique would work!" The third stood firm to contradict the first two and told them he was taught, only regressions will remove the problem from the mind. This is a great story of what we may lack in establishing success with our clients or with self-hypnosis on ourself. We keep looking at the behavior first and the consciousness of the behavior is in my opinion more important than the behavior. Yes, we can say the subconscious mind is creating the issue. Maybe it may seem I am playing with semantics when I speak of the Subconscious and Consciousness, however I feel there is a distinct difference. Here is my view of the difference in the two and an attempt to have a language for consciousness as it may apply to hypnosis. This is where I feel the Consciousness of hypnosis can come into play.

The first level of consciousness is known as the conscious state. This refers to your immediate awareness, it is now! Even as you read my words. You activate your conscious mind when you take in input from your senses, analyze the information, and then make decisions based on this information. The conscious mind consists of what you are aware of at any given point in time. It includes the things that you are thinking about right now, whether it's in the front of your mind or the back. If you are aware of it, then it is in the conscious mind.

Robert Collier, famous author explained the conscious mind expertly when he said, "It is only through your conscious mind that you can reach the subconscious. Your conscious mind is the porter at the door, the watchman at the gate. It is to the conscious mind that the subconscious looks for all its impressions." Some of his great quotes were, "Visualize this thing you want," "Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out." Your chances of success in any undertaking can always be measured by your belief in yourself!"

The next level of consciousness, the subconscious is where dreams are made. This is the container of all remembered experiences Even though you are not aware of their existence and impressions left on the mind by such experiences, and tendencies that are awakened or reinforced by these impressions called anchors. Every experience you've ever had, every

thought, every impression, every breath you have taken lives in the subconscious mind and influences our patterns of thought and behavior far more than we realize.

The subconscious holds information that is just below the surface of awareness. An individual can retrieve such information with relative ease, and we usually refer to these as memories. For example, if someone asked you right now what your address is you would be able to recall it, or when your birthday is or recalling the last time it rained you would begin to reach in this storage container and withdraw your needs. The memories of past experiences live in what Freud referred to as the subconscious part of your mind, that you might not be aware of one moment, and then fully focused on the next. An instructor I never had the pleasure to know, Dave Dobson would call it, "Other than conscious!"

What you accomplish in your life, will usually be determined by the habits that you develop over time. As my favorite phrase comes into action, "We become what we think of all day!" this related to conscious or subconscious thoughts. We habitually put these thoughts into action. The practice of setting priorities and getting on with important day-to-day tasks is both a mental and physical skill. This habit is learnable through practice and repetition until it locks into your subconscious mind and becomes a permanent part of your behavior.

Buddhism has a sophisticated theory of mind but has undoubtedly contained the concepts of conscious and subconscious for over thousands of years.

For example, at this moment you may be consciously aware of the information you're reading, the sound of the music you're listening to, or a conversation you're having. All of the thoughts that pass through your mind, the sensations and perceptions from the outside world, and the memories that you bring into your awareness are all part of that conscious experience.

The last level of consciousness as we know it is known as the unconscious. This is made up of thoughts, memories, and primitive or instinctual desires that are buried deep within yourself, far below your conscious or subconscious awareness. They have a significant influence on your behavior. Even though you are not aware of their existence. This is when I begin to speak of the Consciousness of Hypnosis. The depth of consciousness far below the subconscious mind and yet powerful enough to influence you daily. I personally feel an animal such as a dog or cat exists on this level. Most of their behavior naturally is unconscious. Yes, we can teach them to sit, roll over or bark. The learning is subconscious. When you say to your animal, sit it is a programmed message much like a habit in the subconscious mind a person uses which they are attempting to remove. In time you may be able to remove or reduce this trained mechanism, but like your subconscious it is imbedded. Although your behaviors tend to indicate the unconscious forces driving them, you can't readily access the information which is stored in the unconscious mind. Throughout your childhood, you have gathered many different memories and experiences that formed the belief systems, fears and insecurities you carry each day; however, you cannot recall most of these memories in the unconscious as you could in the subconscious. They are unconscious forces that drive your behaviors. Here lies the skills of utilizing hypnosis to go a little more into depth. This is the Consciousness of hypnosis.

For example, things in your unconscious that might be forgotten include negative experiences from your past or a traumatic event that you pushed out of your subconscious. There might be some life experiences or thoughts that are too threatening for some people to fully acknowledge and are therefore mediated by the preconscious/subconscious part of the mind.

'Freud's Iceberg Theory' uses the imagery of an iceberg to separate these '3 levels of consciousness'. Similarly, we can use an iceberg as a helpful metaphor to understand how much of ourselves we choose to freely reveal to the other people whom we interact with on a day-to-day basis.

As an iceberg floats in the water, the vast mass of it remains below the surface. Only a small percentage of the whole is visible above the surface, and the largest and most influential part remains unseen below the surface.

In precisely the same way, each of us will often have a part of ourselves that we reveal to others, with the larger part of ourselves being deeply submerged that no-one ever gets to see, at times, even ourself.



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