

The Conscious and Subconscious Mind

You can ride a bicycle without thinking of balance. You can write words without thinking about the formation of each individual letter. You can tie your shoelaces without wondering which end goes where.

These behaviours, and millions of others, are automatic. But it wasn't always this way. You first had to learn the behaviour. You had to analyse, reason, try, test and retry many times to get the behaviour correct, and then you had to repeat this correct behaviour many times to make it automatic.

When you analyse, reason, interpret or think about the appropriate behaviour for any given situation, you rely on your conscious mind. When the behaviour becomes learned, when it becomes automatic, you can then rely on your subconscious mind.

So the subconscious becomes a storehouse of learned behaviour. It is fed these behaviours from the conscious mind and whatever conscious behaviour is most repeated becomes accepted by the subconscious as the most appropriate. It becomes a habit. But it's not just our physical behaviours (actions) which become automatic. Our emotional behaviours — our attitudes and beliefs — also become automatic.

When you experience something, your subconscious mind searches its memory banks for what it has "learned" to be the most appropriate response. If it has none, it will refer the experience back to the conscious mind, along with any information, attitudes and beliefs which the conscious mind can use to interpret the new experience and work out the most appropriate behaviour in response. As your storehouse of physical and emotional responses builds up, you find you rarely need to analyse incoming information before acting upon it. You simply follow the path of least resistance, the automatic response.

So in one sense the subconscious is like a computer. It is almost totally mechanical (it doesn't reason) and simply responds consistently with the programme fed into it by the conscious mind. It doesn't question. It doesn't see right or wrong. In itself it has no concept of positive or negative. It simply does what it's programmed to do.

In the same way that you can watch a movie, unaware that every scene, every action, every word is controlled by a film director just out of sight of the cameras, you can also watch your own life unfolding, unaware of the powerful director within your subconscious mind controlling many of your behaviours.

Just note for now that if you want to take control of the actions in your life, your responses to the things around you, you can't do it by fighting against your subconscious mind. You do it by changing its programme to Suit yourself.

If you want to be more motivated in certain areas of your life, you can't just decide to be more motivated. You have to change that part of the programme which controls your motivation.