



Your Unconscious Creativity

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Have you ever wanted to, or been required to, “get creative”? Then, having decided that it was time to “be creative”, the more you thought about it and the more you tried, the harder and harder it became.

The solution might well reside in your “other” mind. Consider this ...

How easily can you remember one of those times when you had some task which seemed to require a great deal from your mind – your *conscious mind*?

Perhaps you were studying, late at night, for an exam the next day; perhaps working on completing a demanding assignment; perhaps rushing to finish a report at work; perhaps trying to generate a new, fresh approach to a familiar problem. Having reached your “limit” you decided that some activity was called for: a sleep, a walk, a shower, dinner. Then, some time later, just when you thought you weren’t thinking about the earlier task, you suddenly had some insight or realisation which was exciting because (1) it was unexpected, (2) it had all the impact of a completely fresh perspective or understanding, and (3) it was useful!

If you’ve noticed that you’ve had a number of these types of experiences throughout your life, you might well have asked a question along the lines: *Well, if I wasn’t “thinking” about it at the time, where **did** the answer come from?*

And, you might wonder how you could generate more of these rewarding, creative experiences.

Simply because you’re reading this article, it’s likely that you’ve been in a context where you have heard of that intriguing part of our minds that is referred to as the *Unconscious*. It’s also likely, then, that you have realised—in some way— that it is your Unconscious that was working away in the background in order to provide you with that exquisite moment when the fruits of its work were presented to your conscious mind.

Now, our Unconscious does amazing things for us. It helps with our daily coordination needed for useful tasks such as walking, eating, breathing, driving. It stores memories for us, it keeps a check on those things that are truly important to us (our values), it reminds us what we believe. Most of the time it does these things (and a myriad more) without us even having to consciously think about it – that’s why it’s called the Unconscious, by the way!

As already implied, it does something even more wonderful: it is able to sift and sort vast quantities of data (things we have seen, heard, said, felt, smelt, tasted) and recognise patterns and generate ways of responding. It sometimes does this in wonderfully creative ways.

Suppose we knew a person with these kinds of abilities. How interested would we be to meet them and invite them to apply their abilities and skills to our personal challenges, particularly when we need new, creative responses to the situations in our life? Well, it's time to make the acquaintance of this "person"-our very own Unconscious mind.

Imagine how special the means of communicating would be if we were communicating with someone we could not see, whom we rarely hear, who continuously performs remarkable tasks for us (quietly – well, mostly quietly) in the background, and who presents us with ideas.

By developing a means of communicating with our Unconscious we can nurture our relationship with our own neurological powerhouse and engage its cooperation in generating new, creative ways of being and behaving in our world.

By now, your Conscious mind is probably asking, "*Ok, so how?*" Your Unconscious almost certainly has some answers already, but because it communicates in different ways you are probably not yet aware of them.

So ... what do I do? Well, first: if what you're doing isn't working for you, STOP! Do something else. You know how easy it is to *really, really* try to create an answer or solution: you talk yourself through all sorts of ideas, you quicken your breathing, you keep your mind *very* busy, and you seem to go round in circles. This kind of *conscious* effort can go nowhere. It's no wonder that the results often come through when the conscious mind gives up.

Interestingly, a recent study of professional and *amateur* golfers showed that the amateur golfers had significantly *more conscious* activity when playing a shot than did the professionals.

If we think about this and the kinds of experiences recalled at the beginning of this article, we quickly realise that there could be a way to prepare our Unconscious and then allow it to do its work.

You ask again, ... *how?*

- Start by developing a relationship with your Unconscious mind.

You might like to consider that your conscious can fulfil two highly valuable roles.

First, as a *guardian* for your Unconscious. Start monitoring what suggestions you give to your Unconscious about the world, how you feel about it, what's right or wrong with it, and so on. If other people, offer ideas or suggestions examine whether they are, for you, helpful or not; then make a conscious decision to accept them or not.

The more supportive the “thought food” you give your Unconscious, the more enabled it will be to access resourceful, creative states.

Allow your conscious mind and unconscious mind to be *partners*. Start by recognising that each mind has processes that it is designed for and they complement each other. (Conversely, when the conscious tries to do the work of the unconscious it generally seems to stuff up, often quite monumentally.) For example, you need your conscious mind to engage with other people, to converse, to research, to monitor if what you’re doing at any time really is helping. Meanwhile, your Unconscious mind is checking on how you’re going, running the mind’s “software”, dealing with all the incoming information (what you see, hear, feel, smell, taste), sorting this information and patterning your behaviour. You can use your conscious mind to talk, literally, to your Unconscious mind: e.g. *OK my Unconscious, I’ll skim read these 8 books and then review the 3 most useful in more detail, and then I’ll give you a week to work on them; and in return I’ll make sure I reward us by having at least 2 really good sleep nights and one fun night out on the town.*

- Utilise your conscious mind to gather the material for the Unconscious to work on. If you have to be creative, use your conscious mind to research: read, ask questions. Use your conscious mind to ask yourself, *What other ways could I investigate information input?* For example, are you reading when it might be better to work with pictures (or vice versa); could you mindmap ideas rather than listing them; have you tried playing different music as you research and review.

By the way, if asking yourself doesn’t help ... ask someone else!

- When time permits, you might find it useful to intentionally **overload** your conscious mind. By “overload” we mean expose yourself to more information than you think and feel you can (consciously) handle. You’ll know when you’re overloaded because you’ll hear yourself thinking or feeling something like ... *I’ve got so much material here; how am I going to handle all this?; phew! this is way too much; now I’m really confused; anyone who could understand all this must be a genius!* What you are really doing here is providing useful, additional material – redundancy – for your Unconscious. More material than you would have thought necessary or useful. It doesn’t matter if it all gets used or not. (There were at least two pages discarded from the draft of this article, for example.)

Thinking about it this way will help you feel much calmer and more comfortable with the “overload” process: this is a much more effective – more resourceful – way to think.

Remember, you are using your conscious mind (1) as a research assistant and (2) as an input channel. Then, your conscious can relax about having more information to work with than it can. Why? Because sorting the information is not its job; that’s the role of the Unconscious!

Overloading your conscious mind can have a very useful effect. Once you get the sense that you really have reviewed sufficient information and that you really can't deal with it quickly in your conscious mind, that will help your conscious mind give up and get out of the way (which is what we want)

But, it is vital to ...

- Plan for, and allow, **time** for your Unconscious to process the information.
It will be part of your own investigation to determine how much time you need for the available material. Sometimes it might be a quick walk outside or a cup of tea; sometimes it might require a sleep or two (or twenty).

If you like procrastinating, then this part is perfect fun. For example, it takes a mere moment to make a decision. What takes the times is all the data gathering and then all the fussing back and forth between the available options. Try giving your Unconscious the information it needs (e.g. why you are making the decision, what the options are and their associated pros and cons, the criteria you want to use for knowing you have made a good decision, etc.) and then asking it to do all the processing and you will ask it later (an hour, a day, a week) for the result. This way, you get to avoid the stress, and enjoy putting off the decision until the time it is needed!

- Make the request of your Unconscious
Having provided the material for your Unconscious to work with, talk to it.

Yes, talk to it: either in your head or even out loud (but not in the street!)

- Explain the situation. (Yes, you know your conscious already knows this, but you are developing a *relationship* with your unconscious.)
- Explain why the decision / creative pattern / solution is required.
- Ensure that you request a new, creative response/pattern. Ask it something like this: *Unconscious, now that you have all this information I wonder how you will find (and I respectfully request this) some new way of looking at and thinking about all this which I'll be able to easily apply.* (It's not about doing an old pattern quicker – you can do that just by powering up your energy.)
- *Respectfully* ask your Unconscious to complete the work in a given time.
Be reasonable in the time frame you allocate. You *can* do an enormous amount in a short time, provided you have had the input into the Unconscious and it has had some time to work with it. If you've just loaded it up, you should ensure it has time to do its work!!
- Then, consciously LET GO and relax. Release it from your mind.

- Check in occasionally during the allotted time to gather signals on how the Unconscious is progressing. You can ask, quite literally, something like: *Ok Unconscious, how are we going with that project/material on [name the project/material]? Do we need additional information? Is the timing still ok?* Your Unconscious will send you signals (feelings, thoughts you “hear”, even images). With time you will learn to recognise your own unique signals and recognise their meaning. What you will notice is that they will be signals that only happen when you *allow* your Unconscious to produce them (i.e. you won’t be able to create them through conscious effort).
- At the end of the allocated time for Unconscious processing, allow time for the conscious mind to receive the results and make them manifest. That is, when you get the creative solution/idea, make sure you have time to do something with it (e.g. write the report, cook the new recipe, paint the new picture, experience the new exercise)
- THANK your Unconscious.
- As we want to master our new skills, check on how you can improve your experience next time:
How would you do it differently next time?
How could you set yourself up more effectively?
What worked in allowing yourself to access a state where you could consciously receive the results of your Unconscious work?
Are there ways in which you could more effectively support your unconscious and your conscious?

Ensure that you recognise the signs of creative response and creative output ... and celebrate!

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