

Exploring the Unconscious Mind, part one

In today's webinar, we will explore meditation and the unconscious mind. It is important to understand the unconscious mind, because this stratum of the mind provides the raw material from which the personality and the Soul derive their substance. We will give additional information about this key topic in next week's webinar.

Meditation on the Unconscious Mind

When meditators contemplate an object of meditation that is in the unconscious mind, they will typically tap into different types of phenomena. What they experience depends on the sub-strata of the band of the unconscious mind they penetrate. These ten layers of the unconscious are commonly encountered in meditation

1. **Physical body referent** – this gives the experience of feeling that the content that you are contemplating is within the physical body. This is usually felt as physical discomfort, such as pain, swelling, or spasm of muscles; or inflammation and discomfort in an organ.
2. **Incident from memory**– this brings up memories that are stored in this slice through the unconscious.
3. **Images** – this evokes a cascade of images and pictures from your past experiences. Sometimes they are realistic, based on your actual experiences. Sometimes, they are imaginary, and you will behold a parade of fantasy images, which resemble the hypnagogic images that arise when you awaken during a dream.
4. **Locale** – this gives you the sense that you are in a particular location. This location may be a place that you have visited. It may be in a part of the world where you have never been. It may be an astral “world of dimension.”
5. **Etheric blockage** – when this perception arises, you will sense that a black substance is plugging an inner channel within you.

6. **Emotional process** – this releases stored emotions and traumatic experiences that are buried in the unconscious. In these encounters with the material of the unconscious, you are typically completely absorbed in re-experiencing these emotions.
7. **Form or archetype** – when these types of experience arise, you will behold the content of the unconscious as contained in a form; it may appear as an archetypal image, such as a god or goddess, or an angel.
8. **An entity that communicates with you** – in this scenario, you will encounter an intelligent entity or subpersonality that communicates with you. The content of this communication varies widely. This content may be complete gibberish. It may give you guidance. It may express your unfulfilled needs or desires. It may deliver ominous or prophetic utterances.
9. **An array of beliefs** – you will encounter the layers of belief that underlie your religious values, or that are behind your philosophical or metaphysical worldview.
10. **Karmic impressions** – Here you will see the samskaras or karmic impressions that make up the core of the various phenomena that you encounter in the unconscious. If you move to the origin of these impressions, you will find the karmic seed that manifests them. [When you burn away this seed through transformational meditation, all of these other phenomena of the unconscious dissipate, and this stratum of the unconscious becomes integrated into consciousness].

When you do meditation, where you are contemplating material in the zone of the unconscious that is beyond your cutting edge of consciousness, you will typically encounter these types of phenomena. By breathing into these focal points, you can shift into and move through different layers of these phenomena and ultimately uncover the karmic seed.

Understanding the Unconscious Mind

Excerpted from *Meditation for Therapy: Theory and Application*

The unconscious mind has been viewed from several different perspectives. It has been described as:

- Aspects of our behavior, perception of the environment, feelings, thoughts or wishes of which we are unaware
- Sub-cortical structures of the brain, which operate independently of the neo-cortex, yielding irrational belief and behavior
- The shadowed zone behind the band of lighted awareness
- Bound up instinctual drives, unfulfilled desires, and fantasies that are blocked by defense mechanisms
- A liminal band of awareness in which the mind uses fantasy, symbol, metaphor, and myth as a way of communicating meaning, instead of reason and problem solving
- The matrix of the mind out of which consciousness is formed by the transmutation of the Spirit
- The substrate of the mind in which karma is embedded

Psychotherapists, holistic practitioners, hypnotherapists, and psychiatrists encounter the unconscious mind of their clients; work with it, and attempt to control its manifestations.

Those who meditate also encounter the unconscious. Various techniques have been developed to make an individual aware of the unconscious, and to interact and control its unwanted expressions with it.

Psychotherapeutic and Hypnotic Modalities

- Free association
- Psychodrama
- Journaling
- Gestalt role play
- Hypnotic regression
- Process meditation
- Dialog with elements of the unconscious
- Focusing attention on buried feeling complexes
- Interaction with evocative symbols
- Finding metaphor to represent deeply-sensed issues

Meditational Modalities

- Unbroken gazing (Tratakam) at your image in a mirror
- Spontaneous utterance of unconscious material, by speaking in tongues (glossolalia) or uttering mantras
- Expression of raw, buried emotions through ventilation of deeply held feelings (catharsis) or 'primal' screaming
- Opening into the unconscious by sustained, hyperventilative breathing, so-called holonomic breathing or rebirthing
- Journeying across the unconscious with full awareness (Yoganidra)
- Opening into the unconscious through the movement of the spirit in the Nadamic channels (udgit).
- Manifestations that occur during the awakening of the kundalini shakti (emergence phenomena)

- Deep immersion in meditation bringing elements of the Subconscious, Metaconscious and Superconscious mind into awareness

The Encounter with the Unconscious in Meditation

Why is this information important to meditators? You will encounter the unconscious at its many levels and in its many manifestations. You will need to learn to deal with what bubbles up from it. You will need to understand its mysterious language. You will need to counter its devious methods and defenses to get to the truth.

As you begin to have encounters with the unconscious in your meditation, you will experience the unconscious directly. After this initial encounter, the next step will be the integration of these unconscious elements you encounter.

As you start to integrate this material, you will discern that there are several levels of integration.

First, you will determine what the cryptic language of the unconscious means, which will grant you insight.

Second, you will discern the need, desire, or motivation embodied by this unconscious element.

Third, if it is autonomously dictating behavior, you will be able to change that behavior or stop it.

Fourth, you will gain a synthesis, by which you will transcend the polarities, paradoxes, or dualities embodied by the element.

Fifth, through transformation and transmutation, you will either fully integrate the material, or you will dissolve it.

To begin to grapple with this dark side of your nature, it is important to learn to speak the language of the unconscious.

An **entity** of the unconscious may express in different ways.

- It may express through wordless feelings.
- It may present as an image.
- You may be able to dialog with it, as you recognize its unique voice.
- You may find that it uses metaphors, parables, similes or other analogies to reveal its truths.
- You may find that it is embedded in a complex matrix of associated elements that appear to work together to block your forward progress in one area of your life.
- You may find that each entity contains nested elements, which form a connecting point or nexus with which you can work out its issues.
- Finally, you may find beyond all of its encapsulated issues, it contains an essence that you can know and understand.

We point out to those interested in meditation that the unconscious is the repository of karma.

The ultimate goal of meditation is the transmutation of karma, which leads to transformation and unfoldment of the Soul's spiritual potentials.

This process of transmutation brings about *spiritual evolution*. Progressive spiritual evolution is called Initiation: this is the way the Soul goes back to God.

Experience of the Unconscious



To give you a sense of your own unconscious mind, try this experiential exercise. Sit in a comfortable upright pose. Close your eyes. Get a sense of the weight of your body, the sense of being seated. Now scan through your body using your attention, from your feet, legs, pelvis, torso, hands, arms, and head. Do this several times.

At some point you will notice an area that seems light, empty, spacious, and an area that seems heavy, dense, and solid. Focus your attention at the edge of the lighted area and hold it there. Feel the sense of peace and harmony in the area of light and spaciousness

Now move your attention over the borderline into the area of darkness and solidness. Notice what is there, any images, feelings, or thoughts that occur to you. This is the liminal band of your unconscious. Now bring your attention back into the lighted area. Return to your normal waking state again. Make contact with the environment.

Integration of Elements of the Unconscious

To shed some light on integration of the elements of the unconscious, we will detour for a moment and examine the somewhat broader concept of personal and spiritual growth. These factors contributing to growth in both spheres are listed below:

Growth (personal)

- Learning new behavior (behavioral skills)
- Learning new ways of speaking and listening (communication skills)
- Learning new ways of relating to others and dealing with reactive feelings (social skills)
- Learning new techniques for problem solving (cognitive skills)
- Learning new skills for employment (vocational skills)
- Gaining new insights about oneself (intuitive skills)
- Experience of a new sense of self as a result of the above

Growth (spiritual)

- Gaining new awareness of the inner vehicles and the Great Continuum of Consciousness (perceptual expansion)
- Gaining new abilities (expansion of powers)
- Gaining new understanding and discernment (expression of wisdom)
- Gaining new virtue, purity and love (expansion of spiritual essence)
- Transmutation of karma (expansion of Conscious, Metaconscious, and Superconscious mind potentials)
- Growth of love, wisdom, power aspects at all levels (expansion of noetic potentials)

- Unfolding of the ensouling entity's spiritual potentials (transformation and Initiation)

Much of **personal growth** can be seen as an overcoming of ignorance through learning and insight.

Here the unconscious takes the form of Avidya, ignorance. No matter how much you learn as a human being at the personal level, you never learn everything there is to learn about the world, other people, the society in which you live, and your self. The process of living and relating to others is a journey of nearly continuous learning of new skills and insights.

Transpersonal growth, which develops the spiritual aspect of your nature, similarly can be seen as an expansion of our potentials by transforming the matrix of darkness in which you dwell, and overcoming unawareness of our spiritual nature.

In the broader sphere of our deeper spiritual experience, we are engaged in the work of transmuting the elements of the unconscious, which are beyond our control and understanding, into elements of the Conscious, Subconscious, Metaconscious, and Superconscious mind, areas we can control and understand.

This involves the process of integration, bringing that which is not a part of you—that which is alien to you, or outside of you—into your character, knowledge, and ability.

This is not however a process of sudden implosion and collapse, but rather, a gentle osmosis. It occurs through gentle opening and absorption of that which is unconscious, into consciousness.

This process includes several steps

1. Awareness of an unconscious element
2. Gaining insight into its meaning, of how it expresses
3. Discernment of its need or desire
4. Control of its expression yielding behavioral, affective, and cognitive change
5. Finding a creative synthesis in which the unconscious element can become incorporated into conscious expression; achieving resolution of the basic conflict that keeps the element outside
6. Transforming the unconscious element into its Transpersonal essence
7. Re-identification, a new experience of self; Initiation, a new expanded experience of the ensouling entity



Control of the Unconscious Elements' Expression

Sometimes unconscious elements actively take over aspects of your behavior, your feelings, and your thoughts. You may find yourself unable to stop smoking. You may have lingering anxiety or irrational fears; you may have obsessive thoughts, or find that you can't let go of a past experience of loss, violation or trauma.

Unraveling these tangled patterns is largely the work of psychotherapy and hypnosis. We won't go into these methods in any great depth here. If you are dealing with these things, and they are really bothering you, you need to find a psychotherapist or hypnotherapist to assist you to resolve them. They can help you.

We can comment, however, generally on the corrective experiences that can help you overcome these things.

Finding a positive substitute	Doing deep breathing instead of snorting cocaine to stimulate the brain
Experiencing that a belief is false	Doing something that you feared would harm you, only to discover you are safe
Admitting you have been wrong and apologizing	Recognizing you have been in error and making a decision to not do it anymore
Completing the grieving process for a lost person or object	Letting yourself process the full gamut of emotions about a loss and to find meaning in the experience
Finding a successful way to get what you want to replace a dysfunctional means	Learning a new behavioral, cognitive, communication, social or vocational skills
Discovering ways to monitor, comfort and inwardly control yourself	Practicing techniques of self awareness, self soothing and self-control
Learning to accept yourself as you are	Recognizing that some things cannot be changed, and learning to accept them

We can point out also that sometimes as a byproduct of your meditation, you may spontaneously have some of these corrective experiences. You may gain certain insights that help you change, accept, detach, and forgive. You may not actively seek them out, but they occur as an organic part of your inward journey in meditation.

So sometimes meditators tell us that their desire to smoke just “fell away,” or they are no longer afraid of spiders, or the obsessive thoughts stopped and haven’t returned. But if these things don’t go away, please don’t wait 15 years to see if meditation will resolve them. Go to your psychotherapist or hypnotherapist and let them help you.

Working with Your Unconscious Mind

We teach several methods for working with the unconscious mind in the Mudrashram® Master Course in Meditation, as well as in the Accelerated Meditation Program.

You can also work with the coach on issues in your unconscious with a Meditation Consultation. [Please note, this is not psychotherapy!]

You will also benefit from reading our book, *Meditation and Therapy: Theory and Application*. This will give you the broader context to understand how meditation can be integrated into therapy, ways to work with the unconscious, and more.

Continuing Your Exploration of the Unconscious Mind

Next week, we will continue this exploration of the unconscious mind. We will cover

- Meditations that will help you tap the unconscious
- Identifying the different levels of the unconscious mind
- Learning how to understand the different ways the unconscious communicates with you
- Discovering the links between karma and the unconscious mind

We hope you will be able to join us next week for the sequel to today's journey into the unconscious mind.



Thank you for attending our webinar today!

