

## **ABT Mod 01.02 – Theory of Mind**

To begin our discussion of making change at the unconscious level, I want to build on your understanding of how the mind works and to go into more in depth than I did in Train Your Brain.

The first area of the mind I want to talk about is the Primitive Area – when we are born, this part of the mind is already wired and functioning. This is the area responsible for the fight or flight response. What I mean by the fight or flight response is that if it feels like we're being threatened or if we become overloaded or if we have high anxiety or fear, then this is the body's response.

This can be in a very literal, physical sense such as primitive man walking across a savannah and seeing a lion. He will then have to make a decision to either fight the lion or run (flight.)

However, the term is also used when talking about stress response or brain overload. People may respond with “fight” by becoming angry or exploding or “flight” by zoning out or checking out.

In recent year, the “fight or flight” response has been amended to include “freeze” as an additional response to fear, anxiety, or stress. We'll talk more about fight, flight, or freeze later in this training.

Over time we associate and learn about the world around us – we have positive experiences and negative experiences. These are personal experiences for each of us. For example, I may have positive experience with dogs and someone else may have a negative experience with dogs.

These experiences or “associations” become our “knowns”. They are stored in the Unconscious Mind. The Unconscious Mind loves knowns and it doesn't matter whether they are positive knowns or negative knowns.

You can say that “knowns” are what the Unconscious Mind knows to be “true.” And remember this quote unquote “truth” can be different for each of us. I could believe “dogs are great” as my “truth” and someone else could believe “dogs are terrible” as their “truth.”

The Unconscious Mind loves “knowns.” We discussed this somewhat on Train Your Brain. The unconscious doesn't like “unknowns.” It doesn't matter is a certain belief

makes sense or doesn't make sense or is even harmful for us, in the Unconscious Mind it's "known" and that's all that matters. "Known" equals safe and wonderful and all that is good . . . even if our conscious mind, our "thinking" mind would disagree.

As we go through life and continue to have these positive and negative experiences, and they are stored in the Unconscious Mind and so they become unconscious to us and now we start to do what's known as Identification + Association = Response.

This means we identify something, we immediately associate with something else, and then we have an automatic response.

For example, you might identify a song, associate it with a long lost love, and immediately have a sad response.

Music often brings us right back to a place or time, as does our sense of smell. We're using our senses all day every day to identify things in our outside world picture.

In our dog example, you might identify a dog, associate it with being bitten, and have a fear response.

And remember all of this happens automatically and unconsciously. This is one of the reasons honing your chops with the Train Your Brain material is so useful because you can start to become more conscious of your responses, which helps you to work backwards to discover the association and so on.

The primitive area of the mind, combined with these "knowns" or you may call them beliefs or "truths", account for about 88% of the mind. This is the unconscious part of the mind.

At around age 8 or 9 we develop our critical minds. This part of the mind is meant to protect us. A young child is very open and accepts everything at face value. We start to develop our critical thinking around 8 or 9. When we're young we haven't matured enough to critically analyze information. I'm talking about logic, reason, decision, or will power. This all starts to happen at around age 8 or 9.

Then of course there is the Conscious Mind of which you are all very familiar because of the Train Your Brain material. The critical mind and the Conscious Mind form the other 12% of the mind.

One important note about the Critical Mind is that it's thought to be half conscious and half unconscious.

So let's talk about how information enters our awareness on a daily basis . . .

You might remember we have information coming at us every millisecond. In my hypnotherapy training they called this information, message units. Message units are coming at us from these four areas – the Environment, the Body, the Conscious Mind, and the Unconscious Mind.

Let me give examples of each of those types of stimuli or information or message units . . .

The Environment – This is the world outside of us and includes everything we see, hear, smell, taste, and touch.

The Body – You may have a message unit from your body that tells you your knee hurts or that you have a headache.

The Conscious Mind – These are the thoughts you are thinking.

The Unconscious Mind – These are the automatic responses we just referenced when talking about identification plus association equals response. You may have an automatic response based on your beliefs. In addition, the Unconscious Mind also takes care of bodily functions and so you may become aware of a message unit telling you that you're hungry or that you need to go to the bathroom.

So this information is coming into our awareness and with our critical mind, we're analyzing it and agreeing with it or disagreeing with it and then ultimately some of it makes it into the long-term Unconscious Mind.

Now do you remember in Train Your Brain when we talked about the Reticular Activating System and how when working with the Hippocampus, it acts like a filter for the information everything around us. Well, the Critical Mind is also kind of a filter. It's a filter agreeing or disagreeing with information. It's the filter of our own reason and logic.

This is an outline of your brain at work and remember all the while, we are still operating under the principle of Identification plus Association equals Response. In the next

section we'll take this framework and explain how hypnotherapists use this information to access the Unconscious Mind directly.