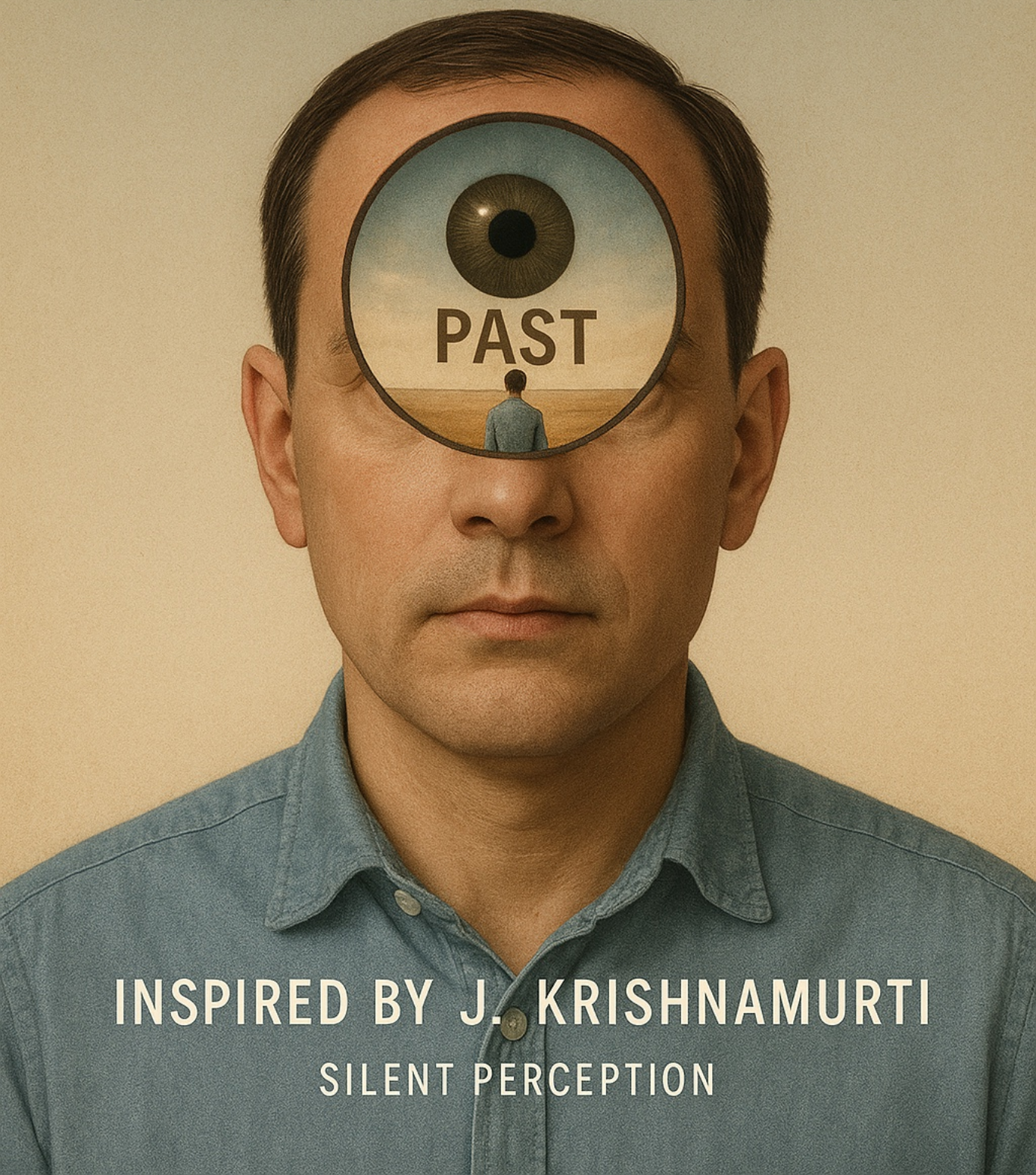


# THE ACTION OF THOUGHT

UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING



INSPIRED BY J. KRISHNAMURTI

SILENT PERCEPTION



# The Action of Thought

*Understanding and Responding*

**A meditative exploration of how thought interprets what it sees according to what it knows and then acts.**

Inspired by the teachings of **J. Krishnamurti** and the philosophical clarity of **David Bohm**.

**INSPIRED BY J. KRISHNAMURTI**

*Written by Silent Perception*

**“True knowledge generates coherent interpretations.” — *Silent Perception***

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## INTRODUCTION

In this series we discuss the action of thought as a process of understanding what one sees and responding to what one has understood. We state there to be two types of responses: physical and psychological. We direct our discussion towards the psychological responses, referring the reader to the activity of the imagination. We discuss the possibility for the imagination to be healthy, as demonstrated by successful people, and the possibility of the imagination to be unhealthy, as demonstrated by insane people. We state the requirement for healthy imagination to be a state where one is always aware that the imagination is imaginary. When that perceptive fact is maintained, the imagination operates within a boundary that sustains mental health.

We discuss how we experience the world through our interpretation of it, rather than directly as it is. We explore the implications of interpretation on human behaviour, the possibility of misinterpretation, and the subtlety with which the mind interprets perception and creates an experience of reality.

## STRUCTURE OF INQUIRY

This section provides a basic introduction to each chapter.

### Chapter 1: Understanding and Responding

In this chapter we discuss the action of thought as a process of understanding what one sees and responding to what one has understood.

### Chapter 2: The Process of Understanding

We state that understanding involves a process of recognition, whereby what we see is associated to what we know. The association produces an interpretation of what we see based on what we know. The interpretation is experienced as the meaning of the perception. We then respond to the perception based on the meaning the mind generates.

### Chapter 3: The Process of Responding

In this chapter we distinguish two types of responses:

**Physical responses** such as bodily movements, changes to one's heart rate, and changes to one's breathing pattern.

**Psychological Responses** such as the appearance of thoughts and feelings.

We focus our discussion on the psychological responses and state that the appearance of thought (in the form of words and pictures) is the expression of knowledge in the mind. The knowledge held in memory appears in the mind (as thought) in the form of images, thus, we refer to this as the imagination. The images that appear in the mind are superimposed upon perception, and become part of one's reality. We refer to the superimposition of knowledge on perception as 'the colouring of reality'.

### Chapter 4: Imagination

In this chapter we make reference to people who are sane and insane, and state the cause to be the imagination, specifically, the way the imagination is perceived by the mind.

#### Healthy Imagination

When the imagination is perceived to be imaginary, the imagination operates within a boundary that sustains mental health.

#### Unhealthy Imagination

When the imagination is **not** perceived to be imaginary, the imagination is experienced as a reality independent from oneself, and this nurtures an unhealthy relationship with one's thoughts and feelings (e.g. an imaginary friend).

### Chapter 5: The Existence of Interpretation

In this chapter we discuss reality, specifically, how thought creates the experience of what is real. We state that, when we are young, we believe we are seeing the world the way it actually is. It is only when we see other people responding differently to us, in the same situation, that we realise

we experience the world according to how we interpret it (according to how we colour it) and not according to the way it actually is.

### **Example: International Football**

The people of English nationality associate themselves to the English football team.

The people of German nationality associate themselves to the German football team.

The English and German people then sit in the same bar, watching the same game, on the same television, at the same time. Even though the physical situation is identical, the psychological association with a team generates a polarised experience.

### **The Polarised Experience**

When England scores a goal, all the English fans cheer, and all the German fans go silent.

When Germany scores a goal, all the German fans cheer, and all the English fans go silent.

## **Chapter 6: The Possibility of Misinterpretation**

In this chapter we discuss the possibility of misinterpretation. When the interpretation is incorrect, we refer to that as a misinterpretation. Interpretation is outcome the of two factors:

1. What we see
2. What we know

We discuss how misinterpretation can result from either an error in perception or knowledge.

## **Chapter 7: Coherent Behaviour**

In this chapter we discuss the requirement for behaving coherently.

To **behave coherently at an instance in time**, we must hold accurate knowledge about what we are perceiving to enable our interpretation of the moment to be correct.

We are able to respond adequately when our interpretation of the situation is coherent with the actuality of the situation. That means, there is no inconsistency between what we think is happening and what is actually happening.

To **behave coherently throughout our lives**, we must have the ability to identify inconsistencies in our knowledge and make the appropriate adjustments.

We can make the appropriate adjustments only when we understand that knowledge is limited, and prioritise truth over what we think, what we feel, and the unsettling implications truth may have on our current way of living. That means, we have an attitude that does not resist change or distort information for our own intellectual and emotional convenience.

## **Chapter 8: The Subtlety of Interpretation**

In this chapter we discuss the subtlety of interpretation. **Interpretation** is the **meaning** we give to **perception**, and that meaning is our experience of the present moment.

Thought is aware of some of the activities it does, but is not aware of all the activities it does. For instance, thought gives meaning to what we are perceiving **without** us being aware it has done it. To clarify this point, we give some examples of what thought is aware of and what thought is not aware of.

### **The Actions Thought is Aware Of**

Thought is aware that it is responsible for the creation of thoughts and feelings:

When I think something, I know the thought was produced by my mind.

When I feel something, I know the feeling was produced by my mind.

Thought is also aware that it is responsible for moving the body:

When I move my body, I know the movement was produced by my mind.

The reason I know the movement of my body was produced by my mind is because prior to, for instance, moving my arm, I perceived the intention to move my arm. The intention signals to me two things:

1. The arm will soon move
2. I am the one that moved the arm

When I see another person's arm move, I know I am not the one who moved the arm because I do not perceive an intention prior to witnessing the movement. That arises the notion that, any action that is not preceded by an intention, implies that I am not the one responsible for creating that action.

### **The Actions Thought is Not Aware Of**

When thought gives meaning to perception, there is no intention that signals to the mind that knowledge has entered perception. Thus, thought is able to colour reality, without us being aware that it is doing the colouring. We think we experience the world as it actually is, but we actually experience the world the way the mind interprets it.

Knowledge entering perception without any signal (intention) is the subtlety of interpretation.



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## CHAPTER 1

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# **UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING**

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WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

## UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING

Thought is one movement that is made up of two distinct activities:

1. The information flowing into the mind.
2. The action flowing out of the mind.

You can think of thought as the ocean, with its visible activity being the waves that crash on the shore. The waves come in, and the waves go out, but they always remain one with the ocean.

### **The Information Flowing Into The Mind**

The information flowing into the mind refers to the perceptions received by the mind, and how they are understood.

We refer to this as **The Process of Understanding**.

### **The Action Flowing Out Of The Mind**

The action flowing out of the mind refers to all the actions we express: the thoughts, feelings, physical movement, speech and so on.

We refer to this as **The Process of Responding**.

### **What is Understanding?**

Understanding is the interpretation of what we perceive.

#### **Example:**

When a person comes up to us and introduces themselves, we interpret their gestures, the tone of their voice, and many other factors. The interpretation of those factors produce an understanding. As a result, we either understand the person to be friendly or unfriendly.

### **What is Responding?**

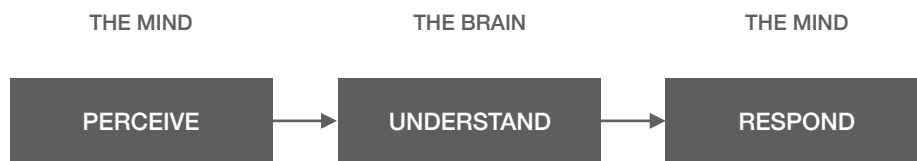
Responding relates to how we act in response to the understanding the mind generates.

#### **Example:**

Once we have understood the person who introduced themselves to be a friendly person, we respond to them in a friendly manner. However, should we have understood the person to be threatening, we would have responded in a defensive manner.

## The Unity Of Understanding And Responding

Understanding precedes responding: We first understand (what we are perceiving), then respond to it.



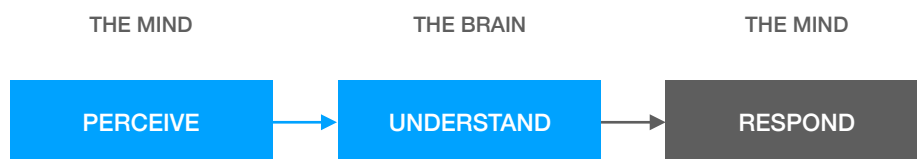
*figure 1. understanding and responding*

Take the example of listening to another speak.

### Example: Listening to another speak

#### Understanding

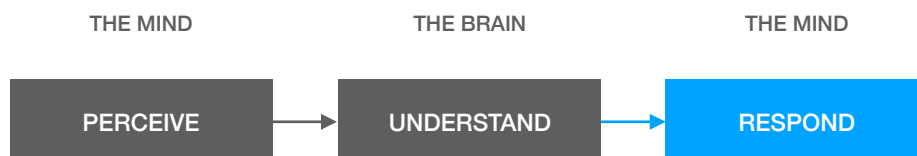
You listen to someone speaking. As you listen, you form an understanding of what they are saying.



*figure 2. understanding*

#### Responding

The understanding of what they other says prompts you to respond: you may say something out loud, think something to yourself, or move your body.



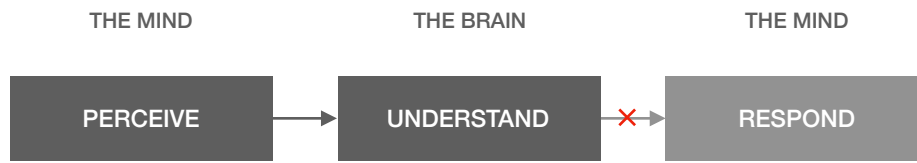
*figure 3. responding*

## Understanding Without The Need To Respond

Understanding precedes responding, but sometimes a response is not necessary. In this situation we understand but do not respond.

### Example: Understanding without responding

You listen to someone speaking and form an understanding of what they are saying. Following that understanding you do not say anything, think anything, or move. Thus, there is no response. You just listen.



*figure 4. understanding without responding*

## **Conclusion**

The action of thought comprises two distinct activities: understanding and responding.

Understanding is the interpretation of what we perceive.

Responding relates to how we act in response to the understanding the mind generates.

Understanding and responding are indivisible: understanding precedes responding. Not every understanding requires a response, so it is possible to understand without responding.

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## CHAPTER 2

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# THE PROCESS OF UNDERSTANDING

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WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

## THE PROCESS OF UNDERSTANDING

In this chapter we explore the process of understanding.

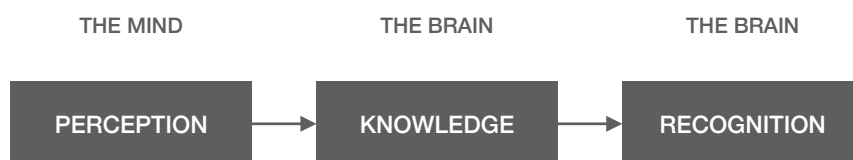
The present moment is unknown. Everything we see and hear is unknown until we understand it. The way we understand the world around us is by interpreting **what we see** according to **the knowledge we have**. The interpretation is the understanding. We interpret what we see through a process called recognition.

### Recognition

Recognition is a process of identification: **what we see** is matched to **what we know**.

When we identify that we know someone or something, we say '*we recognise it*'.

The term **recognise** is 're' 'cognise', literally meaning 'to know again'.



*figure 1. recognition*

### Interpretation

Once we have recognised something, **what we know** gives meaning to **what we have seen**. What we see is interpreted according to what we know, and that is how we understand the world.



*figure 2. interpretation*

### Knowledge

The determining factor of recognition is knowledge. To be able to recognise something we must possess knowledge about it.

When we hold knowledge about an object, we can recognise the object.

When we do not hold knowledge about an object, the object is unrecognisable.

Take the example of language. In the case of spoken language, the sound of the word is recognised and interpreted according to the knowledge you hold about the word. The interpretation forms an understanding of what the other is saying.



### **Example: Spoken Language**

You see interpretation happening when you listen to someone speaking a language you know.

#### **A Language You Know**

When someone speaks to you in a language you know, meaning accompanies the sound you hear.

##### **Explanation:**

Your mind is able to distinguish words in the sound, and attribute meaning to those words.

As you are listening, the mind is interpreting sound into meaning.

You see the absence of interpretation when listening to someone speaking a language you do not know.

#### **A Language You Don't Know**

When someone speaks to you in a language you don't know, no meaning accompanies the sound you hear.

##### **Explanation:**

Your mind is unable to distinguish words in the sound.

Your mind is unable to interpret the sound into meaning.

### **Conclusion**

**What we see** is **recognised** according to **what we know**. The recognition enables what we see to be interpreted according to what we know, and produce an understanding of what has been seen. The determining factor of recognition is knowledge.

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## CHAPTER 3

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# THE PROCESS OF RESPONDING

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## THE PROCESS OF RESPONDING

In this chapter we explore the process of responding.

In the last chapter we spoke about the process of understanding. Understanding is the process that takes place prior to our response because it is the understanding that we respond to.

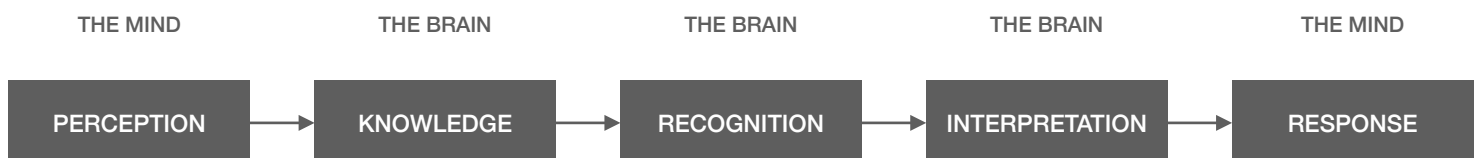
We do **not** respond **directly to the object**, we respond to **our understanding of the object**.

### Example:

When we are beginning to cross the road, and suddenly see a car rushing towards us, we immediately stop. We stop because the **perception** of the cars **movement** is **interpreted** as a **danger**.

When we see the same car parked by the side of the road later that day, it doesn't elicit the same freeze response in us. That is because a **parked** car is **interpreted differently** to a **car moving towards you**, and you **act differently** as a result of that **interpretation**.

We perceive, recognise, interpret and then respond. We can model this process, as follows:



*figure 1. responding to the interpretation*

### The Ways we Respond

There are two ways we respond:

1. Physically
2. Psychologically

### The Physical Responses

Examples of a physical response would be:

We say something.

We move the body.

The heart rate increases.

### The Psychological Responses

Examples of a psychological response would be:

We think something.

We feel something (emotion).

We can model the physical and psychological responses, as follows:

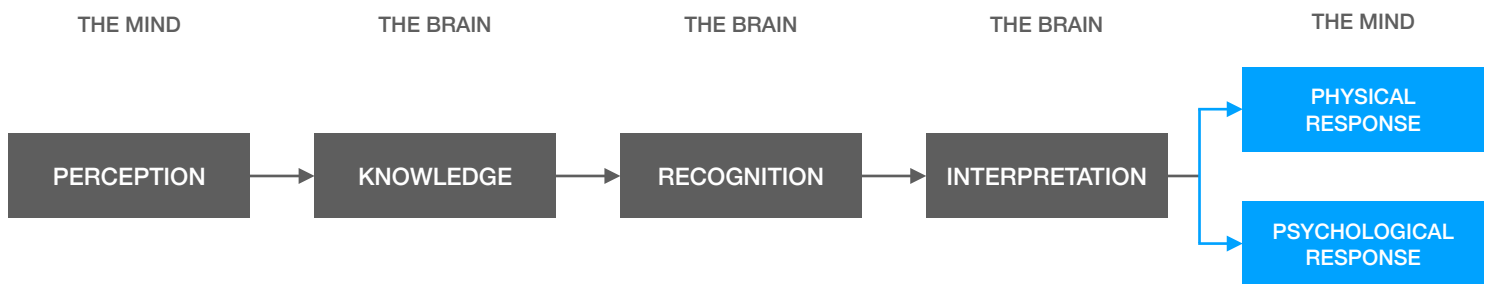


figure 2. physical and psychological responses

### The Feedback Effect

Whether the response is physical or psychological, the response is perceived, and becomes an input into the system of thought.

#### Example:

When we respond to thirst by picking up a glass and drinking from it, we perceive our arm move.

When we respond by thinking something in our head, we hear those thoughts.

In this way, the response creates a feedback effect: *the mind that created the response observes its own response*. We can model the feedback effect, as follows:

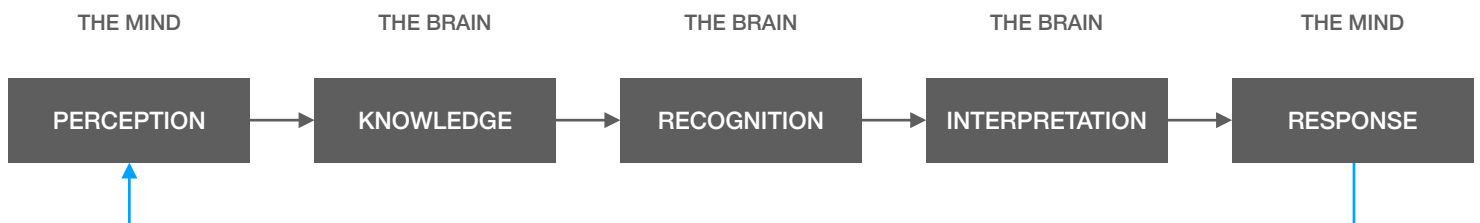


figure 3. the response is perceived

### Learning

Feedback is an essential part of the learning process. We act with the intention to bring about a certain result.

#### Example:

We are trying to throw a basketball through the hoop.

By observing our action, and the corresponding effect, we are able to refine our actions to enable us to get closer to achieving the outcome we want.

#### Example:

We may have to throw a basketball at the hoop many times before we get it in, but each time we throw it we learn more about how to throw it.

## **Conclusion**

We perceive, recognise, interpret, and then respond. The response can be physical or psychological. The response is perceived and becomes an input to the system of thought, this creates a feedback for our actions that enables us to learn.

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## CHAPTER 4

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# IMAGINATION

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## IMAGINATION

In the last chapter we spoke about responding to what we understand, and said we respond in two ways:

1. Physically
2. Psychologically

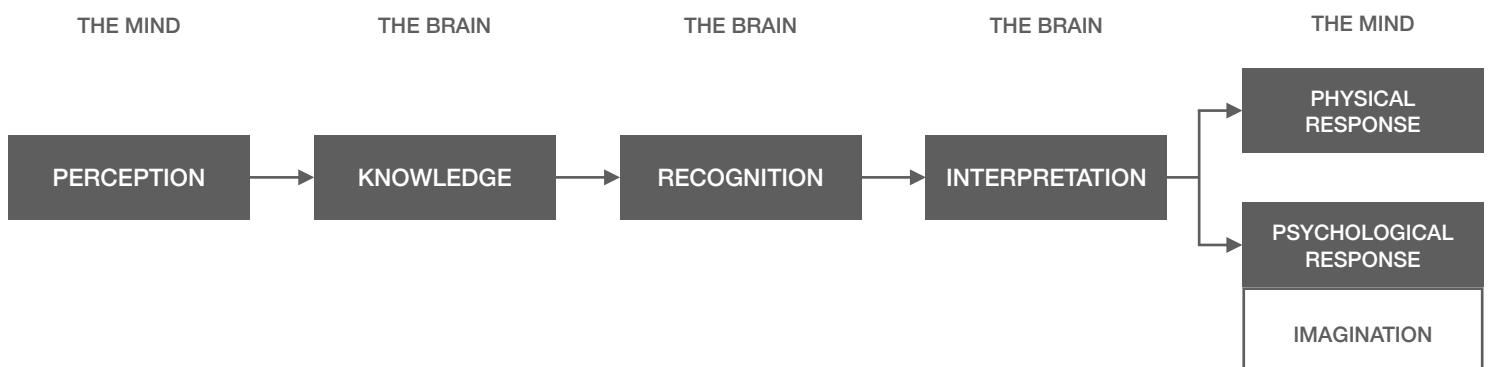
In this chapter we look specifically at the psychological response, which we said was:

When we think something.

When we feel something (emotion).

In this chapter, we use the example of thinking something because it is easier to describe than the emotional experience but, essentially, they both work the same.

When we respond psychologically by thinking something, that action is referred to as the imagination.



*figure 1. the psychological response of thinking something*

### What is the imagination?

The imagination is the appearance of an image in the mind. We call that image a thought. The thought can be verbal or pictorial.

#### Example:

You think by talking to yourself. That is an example of thinking in words.

You think by conjuring up pictures of objects, people, or whole scenarios. That is an example of thinking in pictures.

### The Image

The image that appears in the mind is always representative of something.

#### Example:

When you think about a friend, those thoughts are a representation of that person.

The image is built using the knowledge we have.

**Example:**

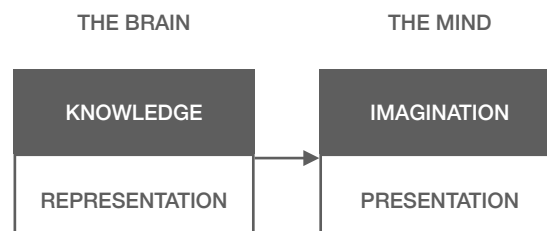
The thoughts we have about the friend are expressions of the knowledge we hold about the friend.

**Knowledge**

The knowledge we hold about an object has been gathered from past experience with it. That knowledge is not a complete understanding of the object, it is a representation of the object based on our limited experience with it.

Knowledge is a representation of an object.

Knowledge enters the mind, and we see an image. We call that a thought. In this way, knowledge is presented to the senses. The **representation** becomes the **presentation**.



*figure 2. the representation becomes the presentation*

**Reality**

**Reality** is **what we perceive**.

Imagination is superimposed on perception, and forms part of our reality. This means, imagination influences how we perceive the world, understand the present moment, and act.

**Conclusion**

We think through a process of imagination. The images that make up the imagination are expressions of the knowledge we hold. Knowledge is a representation of something that is presented to the mind. When imagination enters perception, there is an immediate change in our experience of reality.

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## CHAPTER 5

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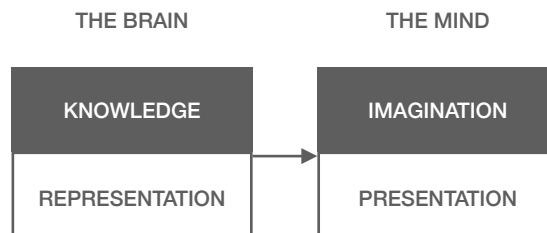
# **WHEN IMAGINATION BECOMES DELUSION**

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WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

## WHEN IMAGINATION BECOMES DELUSION

In the previous chapter on imagination, we said that the **representation** becomes the **presentation**, and **reality** is **what we perceive**.



*figure 1. the representation becomes the presentation*

Once knowledge is presented in the mind through the imagination, knowledge becomes a perceivable reality. We, then, interact with that imagination as if it was a real thing.

### The Imagination of a Friend

We imagine a friend. We interact with that imagination, and it responds to our actions.

#### Example:

We say a joke in our head, and imagine one of our friends laughing at it.

The imagination is not insanity, it has various use cases in life. The imagination must be 'kept on leash', however, otherwise it can become insane.

### Healthy Imagination

Imagination remains healthy so long as the mind is aware that the imagination is imaginary. When the mind remains with the fact that it is creating the imagination, the imagination acts within a boundary that maintains sanity.

#### Example: The Comedian

The comedian begins by telling jokes to himself to discover what he finds funny.

The comedian next **imagines** telling jokes to his friends to consider what they may find funny.

The comedian next **imagines** telling jokes to an audience to prepare himself for a live performance.

The comedian then performs in front of a live audience to ascertain how accurate his imaginations were.

All the ways the comedian used the imagination is healthy. The comedian is utilising the imagination to practice a skill. Should the comedian have lost sight of the fact that he was imagining the audience, he would have drifted into insanity and been liable to spend his time performing to an imaginary audience, rather than using it as a basis for attaining to the live performance.

Imagination remains healthy so long as the mind is aware that the imagination is imaginary. That means, the mind must remain aware that the imagination is coming from itself (knowledge).



figure 2. healthy imagination

## Unhealthy Imagination

When the mind ceases to perceive imagination as imaginary, the imagination is experienced as having a reality independent from oneself (knowledge). Here, the mind has begun to misinterpret the origin of the imagination: oneself.

### Example:

I once saw a woman, out of a coffee shop window, have a full blown argument with an imagination. She was speaking out loud, and pointing her finger, as if someone was standing in front of her, but no one was there. You saw her reacting as if someone was replying to what she was saying but, since no one was there, it was evident that the replies were being generated in her head. Perceptively, those replies were appearing to her as not coming from herself, but from something outside of herself.

When the imagination attains an independent reality, the imagination has become an illusion.

**Illusion:** *a misleading image presented to the vision.*

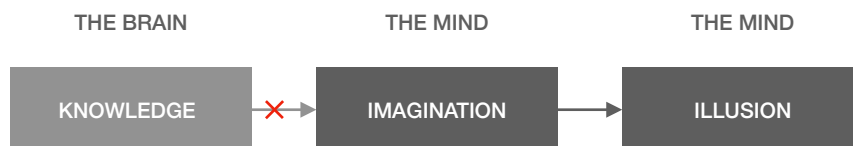


figure 3. unhealthy imagination

One then relates to that illusion as an independent reality, so the illusion becomes a delusion.

**Delusion:** *a false judgment about external reality.*

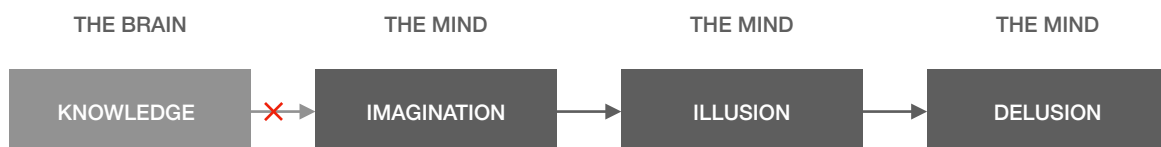


figure 4. delusion

## **Conclusion**

Imagination remains healthy so long as the mind perceives the imagination as originating from itself (knowledge). Imagination enters an illusory state when the mind perceives the imagination to have a reality independent from itself. Following this, the mind interacts with that imagination as if it was real, entering a state of delusion.



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## CHAPTER 6

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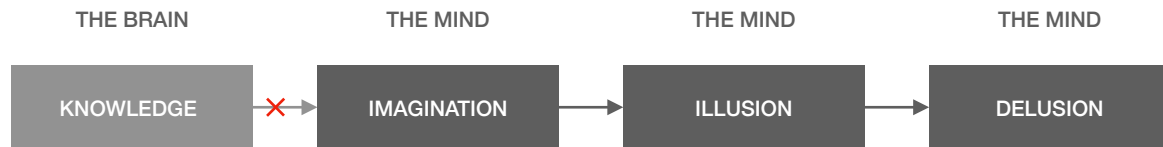
# **WHY IMAGINATION BECOMES DELUSION**

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WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

## WHY IMAGINATION BECOMES DELUSION

In the last chapter we stated that when the mind ceases to perceive imagination as imaginary, the imagination is experienced as having a reality independent from oneself. Here, the mind has begun to misinterpret the origin of the imagination: oneself. When the imagination attains an independent reality, the imagination has become an illusion. One then relates to that illusion as an independent reality, so the illusion becomes a delusion.



*figure 1. the delusion of imagination*

The imagination becomes an illusion when the mind perceives the imagination to have a reality independent of itself (knowledge). For people who are insane, this is the de facto way their mind operates, for others, they drift into and out of this state depending on the situation at the time.

### Interpreting The Origin of Imagination

The way we perceive the imagination is the result of an interpretation. The reason the mind interprets the imagination as being independent of itself is because either:

1. it **is conditioned** to see the imagination that way.
2. it **wants** to see the imagination that way.
3. it **is compelled** to see the imagination that way.

#### The person is conditioned to imagine that way

In the case of the woman having an imaginary argument outside the coffee shop, she has been talking to that imaginary person for years. The imaginary person is a daily experience of her life and a solution to her loneliness. She derives a lot of pleasure and companionship from her relationship with that imagination, so she never challenges whether the illusion is real or not.

To hold on to what one has, the mind deludes itself.

#### The person wants to see the imagination that way

Suppose I have lost a loved one and I miss them. In that state the mind suffers. I believe that if it could just talk to that person one last time I could settle some unfinished business, and it would help alleviate some of the pain. The mind makes an imagination of that person, and interacts with the imagination as if it were real for the purpose of finding some solace. To maintain a degree of sanity, the mind may only produce that imagination at certain times or in certain locations, e.g. at a gravestone on the family members birthday.

To escape from pain, the mind will delude itself.

The person is compelled to see the imagination that way

Suppose someone insults you. After the event, when you are by yourself, you feel insecure. The mind demands security, and to achieve this it either:

- A. imagines oneself, and portrays a scenario that bolsters the image of oneself.
- B. imagines the insulter, and portrays a scenario that diminishes the image of them.

We imagine ourselves to validate ourselves. We imagine the insulter to invalidate them. By invalidating the insulter as a person, we invalidate their opinions, dissipate the power of their words, and alleviate the pain of the hurt. The degree to which we successfully alleviate the hurt depends on the degree to which we believe our imagination to be true.

When we consider our imagination of the insulter to be a true representation of them, we successfully deceive ourselves and render the words of the insulter powerless.

When we consider our imagination of the insulter to be a fabrication, we unsuccessfully deceive ourselves and the impact the of the insulters words remain in effect.

The compulsion to alleviate hurt persuades the mind to deceive itself.

Out of the necessity for security, the mind will delude itself.

## **Delusion for Pleasure**

The mind also uses delusion to experience pleasure.

### **The Anticipation of Pleasure**

We meet a girl and invite her out on a date, and she agrees. Between that first meeting and the date, the mind imagines the girl:

#### **Examples:**

The mind imagines telling her stories and making her laugh.

The mind imagines having sexual experiences with her.

The mind imagines the intricacies of the girls personality.

Those imaginations form an image of the girl that we believe in or, at least, hope to be true. That gets us excited about the date.

The imaginations we have about the girl influence how we meet her, thus, the delusion distorts reality.

Today's delusion influences tomorrow's reality.

## **Conclusion**

An imagination is interpreted as an illusion because either one is conditioned to live in illusion, one wants to live in illusion, or one is compelled to enter a state of illusion.

The illusion is often representative of something, such a person or object. The relationship we have with the illusion effects how we interact with the person or object in the real world.

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## CHAPTER 7

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# THE EXISTENCE OF INTERPRETATION

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WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

## THE EXISTENCE OF INTERPRETATION

Initially, it seems like we observe the world the way it actually is. It is only when we see **other people responding differently**, and the **meaning of something dramatically change** in front of eyes, that we realise we are experiencing the world through our interpretation of it.

### People Responding Differently

International Football is a good example of people responding differently to the same event.

The people of English nationality associate themselves to the English football team.

The people of German nationality associate themselves to the German football team.

The English and German people then sit in the same bar, watching the same game, on the same television, at the same time. Even though the physical situation is identical, the psychological association with a team generates a polarised experience.

### The Polarised Experience

When England scores a goal, all the English fans cheer, and all the German fans go silent.

When Germany scores a goal, all the German fans cheer, and all the English fans go silent.

The representation of myself as an England supporter produces a polarised experience to another who represents themselves as a German supporter.

Attachment means 'to identify myself with something'. Identification with a side creates a division. The experiences that follow, then act to emphasise and validate that division.

### The Meaning of Something Dramatically Changing

I had an experience of the meaning of an object rapidly changing, as I was looking at it, when I was in the park one day.

### The Change of an Objects Meaning

I was walking through the park, and out of the corner of my eye I saw a dark object. My mind interpreted the object as a big bee flying towards me. My mind became alert and my body energetic, and I began to prepare to dodge the bee. My eyes were trained on the object and milliseconds later, my mind identified the object as a leaf falling to the ground, based on its movement. The alertness immediately subsided and the body relaxed.

Experiences such as this show us the role interpretation plays in our sense of reality, and how we respond to the reality an interpretation creates.

The object was never a bee, it was always a leaf. But, for a short time, my reality was that the leaf was a bee, and I responded to the leaf as if it was a bee.

There are many other experiences that are common to all of us that demonstrate the meaning of something changing before our eyes.

### Example 1: Walking Home at Night

You walk home late one night, and see something out of the corner of your eye. You immediately think it is a person, but after further inspection you identify it to be an inanimate object.

### **Example 2: A Friend becomes an Enemy**

You perceive someone as a friend until, one day, they intentionally mistreat you. The experience alters your interpretation of them, so you now perceive them as an enemy.

### **Conclusion**

The existence of interpretation is shown through variations in the way people respond to the same event, and the occasions when something undergoes a radical transformation in its meaning, right in front of our eyes.



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## CHAPTER 8

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# THE POSSIBILITY OF MISINTERPRETATION

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WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

## THE POSSIBILITY OF MISINTERPRETATION

We interpret **what we see** according to **what we know**. That means, interpretation is determined by two factors:

1. Perception
2. Knowledge

**What we see** and **what we know** influence the **interpretation**.



*figure 1. interpretation*

The interpretation can either be correct or incorrect. When the interpretation is incorrect, we call the interpretation a misinterpretation. When we misinterpret something, it signals that there is either an error in our perception or knowledge.

### Examples of Misinterpretation

#### An Error in Perception

When I perceive the object or experience partially, I am liable to misinterpret the situation.

#### An Error in Knowledge

When the knowledge I have is incorrect, I am liable to misinterpret the situation.

In the following two chapters, we look at how **what we see** and **what we know** are able to produce a misinterpretation.

### Conclusion

**What we see** and **what we know** influence the **interpretation**.

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## CHAPTER 9

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# **MISINTERPRETATION CAUSED BY PERCEPTION**

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WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

## MISINTERPRETATION CAUSED BY PERCEPTION

Misinterpretation is caused by perception when perception lacks sufficient information. A lack of information arises from two sources:

1. A limited perspective
2. A limited time-frame

### A Limited Perspective

When the perspective of a perception provides a limited view, the information we capture from the perception is limited. The limited information can produce an interpretation of the thing that is incorrect and inappropriate, yet we consider it to be correct and appropriate. Below, we demonstrate a few different examples to show the significance of the issue.

#### Example: A Circular Table

When you look at the table from the side, the shape of the table top appears as an ellipse.



*figure 1. the perspective of an ellipse*

When you look at the table from the top, the shape of the table top appears as a circle.



*figure 2. the perspective of a circle*

This is a simple demonstration to show how the perspective can influence our interpretation of an object. Considering a table to be elliptical or circular may appear to be a trivial matter, but its principles can be applied to how we interpret other people.

#### Example: Pleasant Person

When you meet someone on a good day (for the first time), you interpret them to be a pleasant person.

### **Example: Miserable Person**

When you meet someone on a bad day (for the first time), you interpret them to be a miserable person.

Your experience meeting someone for the first time acts like a perspective into the totality of that person.

You can extend the concept broader to the way you interpret whole groups of people, rather than specific individuals. Suppose a media outlet produces content related to people of a certain ethnicity, nationality or religion. After absorbing that media, you are liable to think of those groups in terms of **what you have been told**, and not in terms of **what they actually are**.

The limitation of a perspective also has significance in the mind when creating a sense of security.

### **The Illusion of Security**

The mind associates itself with a group to feel secure: a religion, a nation, etc. The mind then has experiences with its group, but is ignorant to what is going on in the other groups. The knowledge of the happenings in its group, and the absence of knowledge about the happenings in the other groups, makes the mind feel secure in its group. The security the mind feels is ill-founded, however, because its existence implies ignorance.

#### **Example: The Illusion of Gang Security**

I spend all day with a gang. We talk, we drink, we party and everything is great. That is my experience, and that is what I know. The gang makes me feel very safe.

What I don't know is that there is rival gang down the road that has just purchased a few new guns, has been drinking heavily all night, and is ready to ride into my area.

#### **Example: The Illusion of National Security**

The media publicises information that emphasises the strength of their country. They publicise a military march through the capital showing 10,000 tanks and a million soldiers. That is my experience, and that is what I know. The appearance of the army makes me feel very safe.

What I don't know is that across the water is another country's military which has 50,000 tanks and three millions soldiers.

A limited perspective creates an interpretation built on limited information. Limited information makes it possible to produce a misinterpretation that generates incorrect thoughts and feelings that I am not aware are incorrect.

### **A Limited Time-Frame**

Perception takes place not only from a perspective, but at a moment in time. The snapshot of a moment is, therefore, limited. Some things in life are simple and can be understood at a glance, others things are more complex and require multiple perspectives, over a period of time, to understand sufficiently.

#### **Example:**

You cannot see a whole movie instantly, it takes time for the story unfold.

You cannot read a book instantly, it takes time to let the story unfold.

You cannot know the intricacies of a person instantly, it takes time for their actions to unfold and give hints to their intentions.

Sometimes the information we acquire in the initial stages leads us interpret the thing in a certain way, and with a great degree of conviction. However, over time, as we acquire more information, the new perceptions loosen our conviction and change our opinion.

#### **Example: Co-Worker**

You may have had the experience where you start a new job, and you and a co-worker don't get along. You consider the co-worker to be a bad person. While you continue working at the company, you have experiences with the co-worker that change your mind, and you develop a friendship.

#### **Example: Story Book**

When you read the first few chapters of a book, you are convinced the lead character is evil but, by the time you get to the end of the book, you consider the lead character to be well-intentioned, and easily misunderstood.

Understanding things from numerable perspectives takes time. The more perspectives we have of a thing, the more accurately our knowledge can represent it, and the more profoundly we can understand it.

#### **Conclusion**

Misinterpretation is caused by perception when perception lacks sufficient information. A lack of information arises from either a **limited perspective** or a **limited time-frame**.

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## CHAPTER 10

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# **MISINTERPRETATION CAUSED BY KNOWLEDGE**

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WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

## MISINTERPRETATION CAUSED BY KNOWLEDGE

Whereas **perception provides the information the mind must interpret**, the **knowledge** the mind has determines **how the perception will be interpreted**. Any errors in that knowledge are liable to produce a misinterpretation without us being aware of it. Knowledge causes a misinterpretation when:

1. The knowledge we have is incorrect.
2. The knowledge we have is limited.
3. The knowledge we have purposefully distorts itself.
4. The knowledge we have resists change.

### **Incorrect Knowledge**

The knowledge we hold about something may be correct, incorrect or partially incorrect.

When the knowledge we hold about something is incorrect to some degree, the interpretation we make (about that thing) must be incorrect to some degree also.

#### **Example: Gossip**

A person tells you bad stories about a coworker. What you have been told makes you interpret the coworker as a bad person.

You later find out that the stories you heard were entirely untrue, and simply the result of a person having a vendetta against the coworker.

This is an example of incorrect knowledge producing an interpretation that is incorrect.

### **Limited Knowledge**

The knowledge we hold about something is always limited.

Sometimes limited knowledge is sufficient to meet a challenge.

#### **Example:**

I don't need to know how to make a pair of shoes to be able to tie my shoelaces.

Sometimes limited knowledge is insufficient and causes us to misinterpret a person, or situation.

#### **Example:**

I only know my husband through the way he treats me. He treats me well, so I interpret him as a caring man, and I trust him.

Actually, without me being aware of it, he has cheated on me with various women throughout our relationship.

This is an example of limited knowledge producing an interpretation that is incorrect.

### **Knowledge Distorting Itself**

The knowledge we hold can modify itself for its own intellectual and emotional convenience.

When someone insults you, you get hurt. To diminish the hurt you conjure two types of thoughts:



1. Thoughts that validate yourself.
2. Thoughts that invalidate the insulter.

By invalidating the insulter we reduce the power their words have over us. When those words lose power, the hurts accumulated in the past diminish, and we build resilience to being hurt by that person in the future. The mind does this as a self-protective response. The response conditions the mind to distort the interpretation of that person, always skewing them to the negative.

This is an example of knowledge distorting itself by prioritising psychological stability over truth.

## **Knowledge Resisting Change**

The knowledge we hold can resist modifying itself to retain the intellectual and emotional stability of its current understanding of life.

One invests their time and energy into certain things and is rewarded for their efforts.

### **Example:**

One studies to be a doctor for 10 years and, once they have passed their exams, they are able to get a high paying job.

Knowledge of the hardship one underwent in the past, the rewards one receives in the present, and the rewards one hopes to receive in the future, build an attachment and dependence that resists change.

### **Example: Resisting Change as a Professor**

A professor at a university earns a living teaching a specific theory. One day, a scientific study is released that disproves the theory. The immediate response of the lecturer is to resist the study because it threatens his future, and invalidates the meaning of his work in the past.

In order for self-deception to be successful, the mind has to refute the contradiction absolutely. When the self-deception is unsuccessful, yet we continue to resist change for fear of losing what we are attached to, the mind is relegated to living a lie.

### **Example: Resisting Change as a Psychiatrist**

A psychiatrist studies for 5 years and acquires a qualification that enables them to professionally help others. They originally got into psychiatry because they suffered with mental health problems. After 5 years study, they have still not been able to solve their own problems, and logically deduce they must be unable to solve their patients problems too. Unfortunately, they now have debt. A career in psychiatry is well paid and they have no other means of acquiring a similar salary. They practice psychiatry knowing deeply they cannot help others.

This is an example of knowledge resisting change to retain the psychological stability of its current structure.

## **Conclusion**

Knowledge is liable to cause a misinterpretation when it is incorrect or limited. In addition, how we intend to handle knowledge is responsible for misinterpretation:

When we demand to see another person as bad to make ourselves feel good, we will misinterpret the actions of the other person, and misrepresent them conceptually in our minds.

When we do not want to lose the comfort and security that originates from something we know, we intentionally misinterpret any information that contradicts what we think.

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## CHAPTER 11

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# COHERENT BEHAVIOUR

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WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

## COHERENT BEHAVIOUR

The way we respond is referred to as our behaviour.

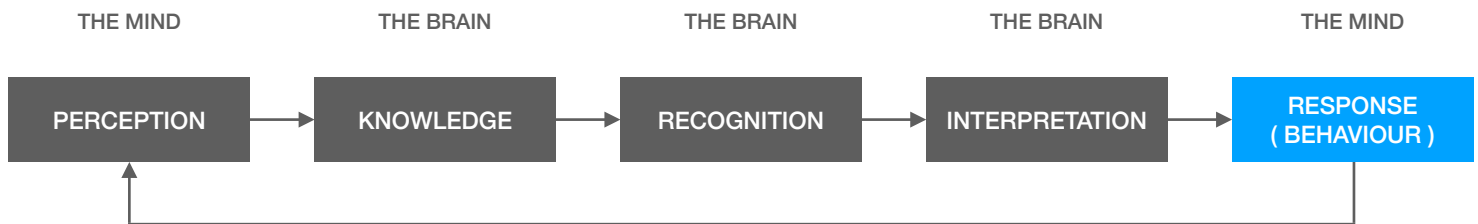
### Examples:

What we think is a form of behaviour.

What we feel is a form of behaviour.

How we move is a form of behaviour.

Like any response, behaviour results from the interpretations we form.



*figure 1. behaviour*

The goal of any behaviour is to respond adequately to the situation. We respond to the situation based on the meaning we give it. The interpretation is the meaning of the experience.

We are able to respond adequately when our **interpretation of the situation** is **coherent** with the **actuality of the situation**. That means, there is no inconsistency between **what we think is happening** and **what is actually happening**.

We can give the example of me briefly misinterpreting a leaf as a bee to clarify this point.

### The Leaf and the Bee

#### Incoherent Behaviour

When the interpretation is wrong, our behaviour in relation to that thing will be incoherent.

#### Example:

When the mind interpreted the leaf as a bee, it responded to the leaf as a bee. That was an incoherent response.

#### Coherent Behaviour

When the interpretation is right, our behaviour in relation to that thing will be coherent.

#### Example:

When the mind interpreted the leaf as a leaf, it responded to the leaf as a leaf. That was a coherent response.

When there is no misinterpretation, the inevitable outcome is coherent behaviour.

## The Requirements for Coherent Behaviour

Coherent behaviour moves harmoniously with the self-knowing that produces certain attitudes towards life.

### Attitude: The Refusal to Distort Information or Resist Change

In the chapter 'Misinterpretation caused by Knowledge', we stated that knowledge can distort itself, or resist change, for its own convenience. The willingness to distort knowledge, or resist change, comes from an attitude that prioritises one's immediate intellectual and emotional state over accepting what is true.

A mind that is capable of behaving coherently, must always adhere to truth, irrespective of what it makes one think, how it makes one feel, or the implications it has on one's life.

### Attitude: The Willingness to Learn

The observer is knowledge.

Knowledge is looking.

Knowledge is thinking.

Knowledge is feeling.

Knowledge is acting.

Knowledge is limited and, because knowledge is limited, it will inevitably cause us to respond incorrectly. That incorrect response can be said to be an incoherent response. However, when one has the ability to identify their response as incoherent, and make changes to their knowledge that enables a coherent response in the future, we can say that **one's response to their incoherent behaviour was a coherent response**.

*'Knowing you could be wrong, gives you an awareness that is capable of making things right.'*

In order to respond coherently at an instance of time, one must have sufficient knowledge to create an **interpretation of the situation** that is **coherent** with the **actuality of the situation**. So, there is no inconsistency between **what we think is happening** and **what is actually happening**.

In order to sustain one's ability to behave coherently through time, one must have an attitude that acknowledges their own limitation (the limitations of knowledge), and refuses to distort information or resist change for their own convenience.

## Conclusion

To behave coherently, perception and knowledge must be align with what is actually true to create a coherent interpretation.

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## CHAPTER 12

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# THE SUBTLETY OF THE INTERPRETATION

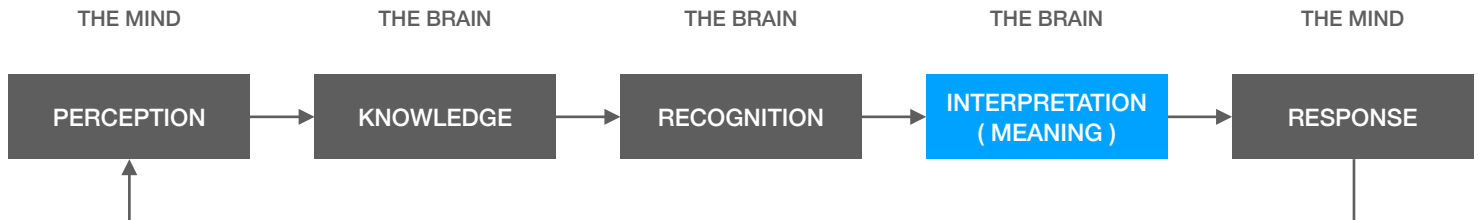
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WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

## THE SUBTLETY OF THE INTERPRETATION

We respond to perception based on the meaning we give it. The meaning we give perception is our interpretation of what we have perceived. The interpretation is determined by the knowledge we have.

The **interpretation** is the **meaning** of the **perception**.



*figure 1. interpretation generates meaning*

The meaning we give a situation influences the experience.

### **Example: Friends to Enemies**

You have likely had a situation where, for a time, you were friends with a person. You trusted that person and felt comfortable around them. You perceived that person as a friend.

**Your Experience:** The mind interprets the person as a friend.



*figure 2. interpretation of a friend*

One day, you became aware that the other person had acted selfishly to take something from you or do some harm to you. That experience changed your knowledge of the person, and you began to perceive that person as an enemy.

**Your Experience:** The mind interprets the person as a enemy.



*figure 3. interpretation of an enemy*

The experience you have of that person changed from a **friend** to an **enemy**.

The person had not changed, the way you interpret the person had changed, and that altered your experience of them.

### **The Subtlety of the Interpretation**

The inclusion of meaning in one's experience is so subtle that people rarely realise their own mind is continually colouring reality.

#### **Why is the interpretation subtle?**

Most of the time, when we act, we perceive an **intention**.

#### **Example: Awareness of an intention**

Prior to moving my arm, there is the intention to do so.



### **Example:**

An intention to move the arm arises in the mind. Out of that intention enfolds the action, and the arm moves.

The action (moving the arm) emerges out of the intention, but the intention has another feature. The intention gives me feedback: the intention tells me that **I am the one who has acted**. I am the one who moved the arm.

The intention is a signal that tells me that **I am** the source of the action.

The absence of an intention is, therefore, taken to mean that **I am not** the source of the action.

### **Example: The movement of another's arm**

When I move my arm, I see the intention to move the arm, then the arm moves.

When I observe another person move their arm, I do not see the intention to move the arm and, therefore, I understand that I am not the one that moved that arm.

The intention signals to us that we are the one that acted, but knowledge enters perception as meaning **without producing an intention**. This means, we colour our experience of reality without an awareness that we are doing so.

Our own minds give meaning to perception, thus influencing the experience, without us being aware that the meaning has come from us.

### **Example:**

The experience of Alfred changed from an appearance of safety to danger. Alfred did not change, the meaning we attribute to Alfred changed.

## **Thought is Not Aware of its Own Movement**

In many ways, thought **is** aware of its own movement.

When we think something, we know we generated that thought.

When we feel something, we know we generated that feeling.

When meaning appears in the mind, we are not aware that we generated that meaning, so we attribute the meaning of Object-X or Person-Y to come from them, not us.

When the mind misinterprets the origin of the meaning as coming from **without** rather than **within**, it implies that, in respect of meaning, thought is not aware of its own movement.

## **The Origin of Meaning**

When we are not aware that the meaning of the world has come from us, we inevitably experience the meaning of the world as coming from it.

## **The Power of Meaning**

When the knowledge we have presents meaning in a way that appears to come from outside of us rather than the inside of us, it gives the knowledge we have an exceptional power in the creation of reality.

### **Example:**

When we acquire knowledge that Jews are bad, suddenly we experience a world of bad Jews.

In addition to this, 'you know what you know, and you don't know what you don't know'.

The knowledge we have generates an interpretation that creates an experience of reality. The mind that created that reality is the same mind that perceives that reality. In this sense, the experience and the experiencer exist in a closed loop. Because the knowledge that created the reality is the same knowledge that perceives the reality, there is nothing to contradict what has been created.

*'The mind that judges the experience is the same mind that created the experience.'*

## **Personalised Meaning**

The knowledge we acquire is influenced by the fact that we experience the world as an individual.

### **Example: Insult**

Suppose Person-A insults us, and we get hurt. We record Person-A as a hurtful person.

We now have knowledge of Person-A as a hurtful person.

A third party (Person-B) observes the insult. They do not get hurt because the insult was not directed at them. In fact, they find it funny, and record Person-A as a funny person.

Person-B now has knowledge of Person-A as a funny person.

### The Experience of Person-A in the Future

Our knowledge of Person-A as a hurtful person generates an experience of Person-A as a hurtful person when we next see them.

Person-B's knowledge of Person-A as a funny person generates an experience of Person-A as a funny person when they next see them.

### Personalised Meaning

Knowledge influences reality through the interpretations it forms. Those interpretations are experienced as meaning that originates from outside of us. Because we acquire knowledge in a personalised way, the meaning imbued into reality is personalised.

## **Conclusion**

The subtlety of interpretation disguises the origin of the interpretation and gives knowledge an unrestricted power to create reality.