

Engineering Belief

excerpted from the book *Choices and Illusions* by Eldon Taylor, Ph.D.

Imagine what you might do if you learned that faith the size of a mustard seed could move mountains. Just assume for a moment that somehow you discovered this old statement to be based on your belief—your belief in yourself—and that simply believing you could be successful at your goal, whatever it might be, would somehow make that goal attainable. What would you do to cultivate the power of self-belief?

I have spent the greater part of my life studying the mind and consciousness. My investigations have run the gamut from examining evidence for life after death to studying the actions of the mind from a distance. I have developed tools that have assisted people in believing in their own miraculous healing powers and have seen many terminal cancers disappear. I have reported on multiple-personality patients who in one personality have blue eyes, and, at the snap of your fingers, their personality changes along with their eye color—from blue to brown, for example. What has happened here is simply a shift in belief. Think of it this way: in one moment there is Jane, a real stick in the mud, but in the next she becomes Judy, who loves to party and have fun. That change in “memory” of who we are is capable of altering such things as eye color and blood-sugar levels, and even removing tumors from the body as rapidly as the personality changes.

I have written about the many nuances to our mechanistic nature, including psychological characteristics that make us vulnerable to those who plumb the unconscious (such as neuro-marketers and salespeople). I have lectured and shown how the *nucleus accumbens* (a small part of the brain, also sometimes



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called the “pleasure center”) makes roughly 90 percent of our decisions. Now, please understand, that this decision-making machine is a part of our unconscious, so I am saying that 90 percent of our choices are made by our unconscious mind. Indeed, by using fMRI technology, a technician can watch the brain in action as it makes decisions; and what’s more, the very same technician will know what you will decide as much as ten seconds in advance of your consciously making the decision. Think on that one!

The unconscious has all manner of mechanisms—such as our response to compliance principles, biases, context-bound definitions, defense strategies, and so forth—plus it makes almost all of our decisions for us. Now I like to

ask at this point in a lecture, “What was your last original thought? Truly original?” and usually I get the same answer: *silence*.

Dr. Andrew G. Hodges (a forensic psychiatrist) tells the story of Jason Padgett. After a head injury in 2002, Jason became a mathematical prodigy—a genius. A blow to the head, and his brain’s overcompensation for this resulted in Padgett becoming an acquired savant with regard to mathematical ability. Hodges explains how this excited many mathematicians and physicists, because Padgett suddenly had the ability to see every curve, every line, every minute detail of the Pythagorean theorem. As a result, he is the only person today who can draw fractals freehand—others must use the computer. Hodges continues, “One scientist called him ‘superhuman.’ But really Padgett is an accidental genius who has tapped into the phenomenal potential in the human mind.”

Today the mind has much more to it than the typically defined, so-called conscious, preconscious, subconscious, unconscious, collective unconscious, and/or derivatives thereof. Indeed, we have what Sigmund Freud called the thinking unconscious evidenced; what Malcolm Gladwell identified in his book, *Blink* as the “accidental genius” and who, as pointed out by Hodges, has tapped into the genius of the human mind; and what forensic profilers now refer to as the super intelligence. The super intelligence is that part of our mind/brain that must tell the truth, and therefore is an outcropping, I suppose, of what Freud thought of as the superego. Ultimately, this is behind the well-known Freudian slips. The “dazzling new unconscious” is that aspect that is



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closest to what we generally think of as intuition, but is also much more than that. For example, Gladwell offers as one of his many examples the story of the fire chief who, on joining his men on the floor of a fire, immediately recognizes something he cannot articulate but which informs him of an urgent danger, and he suddenly orders everyone off the floor immediately. Seconds later the entire floor collapses.

Most people have been lulled into thinking about their lives, their minds, the real power within them, as shallow and limited in ways that simply are false to facts. Still, even those who have come to understand that the limitations are largely self-imposed do nothing more than parrot those words. So, what if you learned of the true power of your belief and discovered that it was invested incorrectly? Instead of believing in yourself, you believed in the swell of mis- and disinformation that abounds everywhere, including in our sciences, and that this was the cause of many of the difficulties you have experienced in life. What if you also learned that you could reprogram that subconscious programming—actually changing the information in the subconscious so that it was more consistent with your genuine desires? Would you want to do so? Well, the truth is that you can.

In the computer sciences is an old acronym, GIGO—meaning garbage in, garbage out. The way to end self-destructive patterns, overcome doubt and fear, maintain health and optimism, and so much more rests in the subconscious programming. So the question is simple. If you could really take control, find that mustard seed within, would you?

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