

# The Workbook for Living with Your Subconscious Mind

By Mike Bundrant & iNLP Center



***In this workbook, your subconscious mind is going to reach up and give you a cold, refreshing slap in the face. The results could be dramatic!***

*If you're ready, you might discover the massive role the subconscious mind plays in your life. This awakening may leave you in awe... but the insights will soon fall into place, leaving you with a new way of thinking. **This is a good thing!***



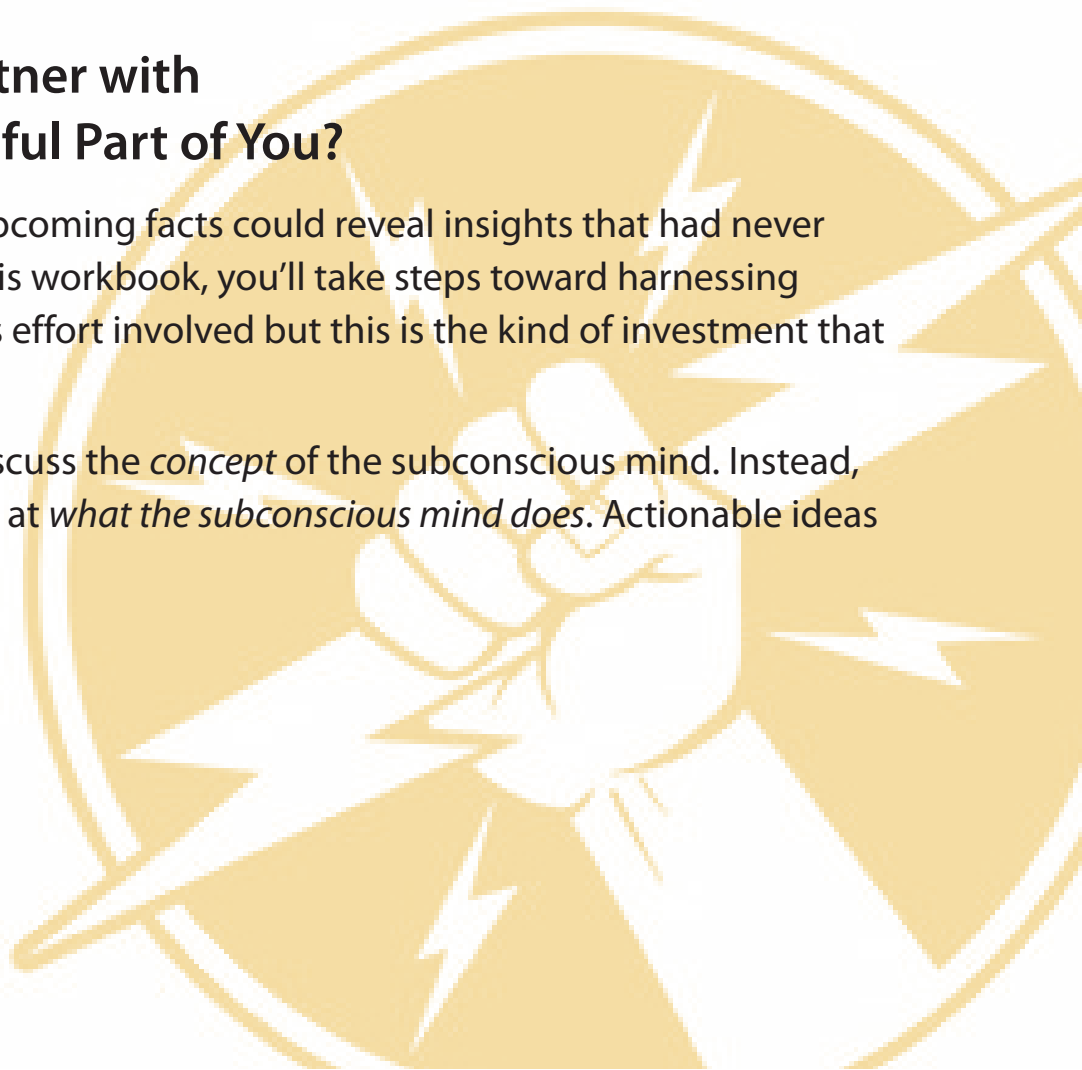
**Here is what you are about to discover :**

- 9 facts and strategies about your subconscious mind
- Special and specific processes that enable inner equilibrium
- How to respond when your mind swamps you with negativity

## **Is It Time to Partner with the Most Powerful Part of You?**

Understanding the upcoming facts could reveal insights that had never occurred to you. In this workbook, you'll take steps toward harnessing those insights. There's effort involved but this is the kind of investment that pays off.

We're not going to discuss the *concept* of the subconscious mind. Instead, we'll take a close look at *what the subconscious mind does*. Actionable ideas will flow from there.



# Here is our first group of facts:

The first group of facts reflect research on the activity of the subconscious mind. As you read, you may feel inspired to learn more and more about your own subconscious mind. In fact, I can almost guarantee it!



This fact is to prime the pump – a warm up for your conscious mind.

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The subconscious mind controls all involuntary bodily functions like breathing, salivating, circulation and digestion but you already knew that. You don't consciously choose to digest your food. It just happens because subconscious processes are working.

If nothing else, allow the magnitude of your brain's computing power– *a billion-billion operations per second<sup>1</sup> to impress you!* How many of those operations do you consciously control?

Contrast subconscious computing power with the conscious mind's ability to track a mere *seven — plus or minus two — chunks of information* (Miller's Law<sup>2</sup>) at a time. Are you starting to see the limitation of conscious awareness?

## Workbook Activity

Are you content to allow your subconscious mind to be as powerful as it is, or do you believe you (consciously) should be in greater control of all your thoughts and feelings?

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Can you imagine letting go of control and allowing yourself to be content with responding in a healthy way to your subconscious mind?

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The subconscious mind plays a complex, pervasive role in how you perceive the world. You'll find specific evidence below, but take a second and just think about these questions:

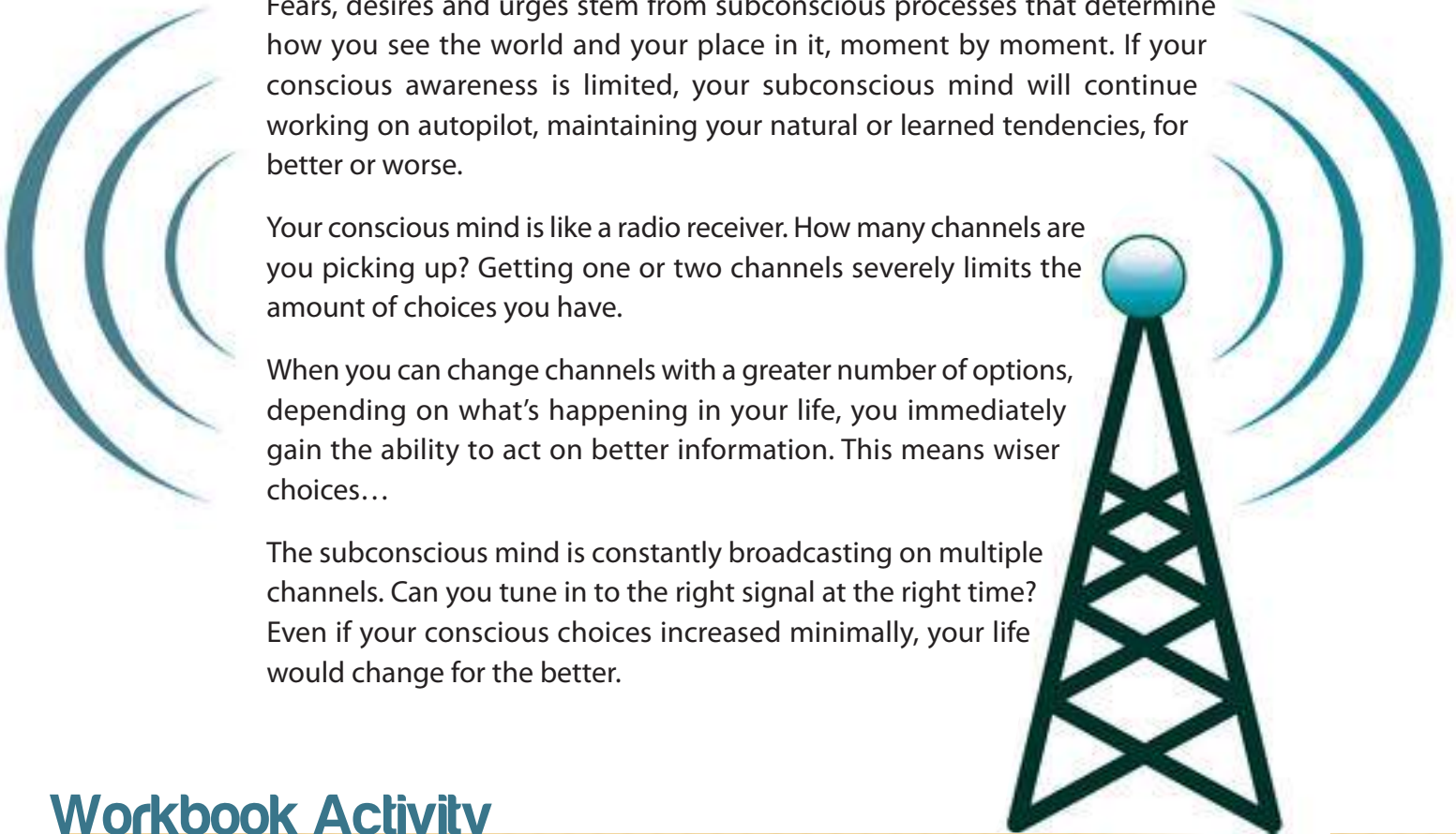
Do you get anxious? Depressed? Do you procrastinate?  
Do you nurture habits that aren't good for you?

Fears, desires and urges stem from subconscious processes that determine how you see the world and your place in it, moment by moment. If your conscious awareness is limited, your subconscious mind will continue working on autopilot, maintaining your natural or learned tendencies, for better or worse.

Your conscious mind is like a radio receiver. How many channels are you picking up? Getting one or two channels severely limits the amount of choices you have.

When you can change channels with a greater number of options, depending on what's happening in your life, you immediately gain the ability to act on better information. This means wiser choices...

The subconscious mind is constantly broadcasting on multiple channels. Can you tune in to the right signal at the right time? Even if your conscious choices increased minimally, your life would change for the better.



## Workbook Activity

Start by realizing the way you perceive relationships, goals, problems and various situations is determined subconsciously. What does that mean to you?

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(more questions on next page...)

Right now, identify one current issue in your life: a goal, habit, relationship, personal problem, or specific situation. Describe it below.

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Assuming subconscious motives and filters are in play in the above issues, **identify one "autopilot" behavior or reaction you commonly have in that situation.** Describe your behavior or reaction below.

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Considering the behavior or reaction you identified above, consider what kind of perception is in play. Are you seeing the situation positively or negatively? Describe your point of view. What seems true for you?

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How does your perception lead to the behavior or reaction you listed above? (If the perception you identified does not logically lead to the behavior, then you haven't identified the right perception).

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## Here are more specific facts that apply:

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The subconscious mind is the file cabinet of all your memories. Through those memories, your subconscious mind determines how you respond to life and make decisions.

**The Kicker** Some of your memories can remain completely hidden from your conscious mind.<sup>3</sup> Even so, your memories actively influence you in any given moment. Imagine it, specific memories control so many of your reactions, your level of motivation, your natural responses to other people and your responses in any situation. Even memories outside your awareness determine all those aspects of your day-to-day life.

Each time I turn a doorknob and cross a threshold, memories of how to open doors are active, determining my every move. Of course, I don't remember when I learned to turn a doorknob but if all my memories of how to open a door were erased from my subconscious mind, I'd stand in front of the door, clueless. Memories dictate my behavior on autopilot. I only know how to turn a doorknob because I remember, subconsciously.

The same phenomenon applies in every situation. We know what to do based on what we've learned to do in the past, whether we recall the lessons we learned. Think about it, my doorknob lessons go back to early childhood. What if I were behaving toward my wife based on lessons learned with my girlfriend in the third grade? Or with my mother when I was a two-year-old? It happens. It's not always good!



Why not get curious about which memories are calling the shots in the sticking points of your life?

Would that enable you to reevaluate where necessary?

**Yes!**

## Workbook Activity

List three “sticking points” or stuck places in our life right now. What you choose is between you and yourself, so don’t hold back. Brainstorm – **and don’t edit your thoughts**. Now, list as many memories as you can that may play a part in those sticking points. Relax and scribble down the memories that come to mind. Don’t analyze. Allow your mind to drift and write.

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The conscious mind may only become aware of decisions after they are made.<sup>4</sup> A student in a recent iNLP Center NLP practitioner training class gave an example of how his subconscious decisions created procrastination:

His scenario went something like this: *I came home from work, grabbed a bite to eat, then sat on the couch to chill out for a few minutes. The thought crossed my mind that I should head into my office to work on my book – just a passing thought. The next thing I knew, an hour had passed. I was still on the couch, immersed in a game on my phone.*

A lot of processing went into that decision. Weighing options, considering consequences and priorities, assessing goals and so forth. A choice was made. He just wasn’t consciously aware of the factors involved. Consciously, he simply obeyed the decision and lost track of time.

Research at Cornell University suggests people make 35,000 decisions every day, with over 200 decisions related to food alone. Accounting for eight hours of sleep, that boils down to a decision every 1.5 seconds. How many of those choices are made with conscious awareness of the process?

Thank goodness we have a subconscious mind to guide us through the day. And like most things, subconscious decision-making can be a two-edged sword. We shouldn’t even try to take charge of every decision we make. However, when we’re making poor choices, wouldn’t it be useful to slow down and discover what’s going on?



## Workbook Activity

List any decisions you may have made subconsciously in recent days.

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Identify any of the listed decisions you anticipate making again, so that you can prevent them from happening on autopilot.

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**Your subconscious mind pursues goals with or without your awareness. At first blush, achieving goals unconsciously sounds great. Yet, what if those goals are influenced by bad memories and subconscious habits that aren't good for you?**

We can all identify with that bad habit, old familiar feeling, or taboo that won't go away. Those are all examples of the subconscious mind doing its thing, free from conscious influence. The default goal of your subconscious mind is to recapture and repeat what you've become accustomed to, even though you may not consciously approve.

### Bottom Line

If your subconscious mind has to operate on poor experiences and sub-par perceptions, it will provide you with poor decisions, unwise behaviors and may even lead you toward unhealthy goals. Consciously, you may be none the wiser. If you consciously thought about that, it would seem senseless to pursue goals that make you miserable. You would never do that consciously, right?

The key to a happy, well-adjusted life is to stop blindly resisting subconscious tendencies and begin to understand them. Only then can you ultimately influence your subconscious autopilot. That kind of understanding is invaluable if your autopilot isn't taking you where you want to be.



The primary obstacles to personal growth are, **ignorance and resistance of the subconscious realities you experience.**

Ignorance is simple to fix. The *motivation* to resist bizarre and frustrating subconscious manifestations is more complicated. That's what most of us do, however. When negative or uncomfortable thoughts and feelings break through to consciousness, we immediately freak out and strive to squelch them.

## **Fight or flight!**

Make it go away.

Get rid of those negative thoughts

Put it out of your mind.

Stop freaking out!

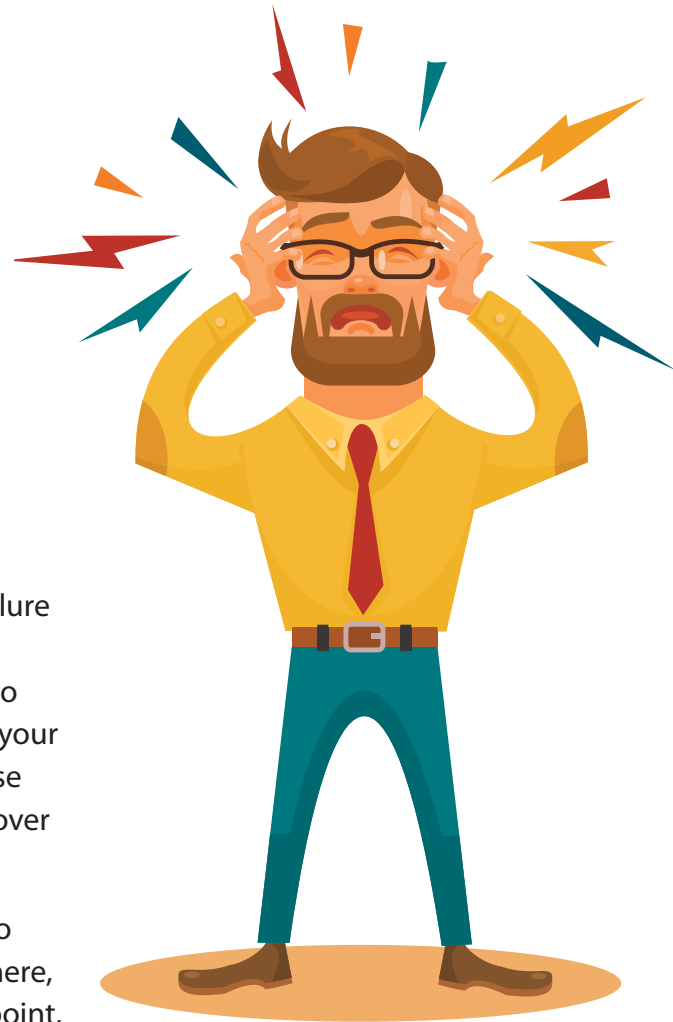
Think positively, damn it!

## **So, chill. Take a deep breath.**

Running from self-criticism and thoughts that predict failure is actually a harmful kind of avoidance. Resisting what's happening right now guarantees you'll have no chance to consciously influence the outcome. You need to change your mindset. Not dealing with such thoughts or wishing those feelings would just disappear are only indirect ways to cover up (and thus protect) the negativity.

Imagine this: there's a mess in your den that you refuse to acknowledge; instead, you avoid the den! You've been there, right? How's the mess going to get cleaned up? At that point, you don't want to acknowledge and accept the mess, which is a necessary step in making the mess go away. Ignoring messes will soon lead to more messes, until you're drowning in chaos.

Say you'd prefer fighting with the mess. You march into that den and start throwing stuff around because you feel like the mess *shouldn't be there* in the first place. It's not just a mess, but a burden to bear. Why the hell should you have to deal with it? Sure. That helps.



**There's a saying, "What you resist, persists."**

**I say, "What you resist, grows!"**

## Workbook Activity

Which of your problems do you believe “shouldn’t” be there, but is there? Describe it below:

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What do you tell yourself when trying to avoid the problem above?

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How does telling yourself the above things prevent your from dealing with the problem?

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What can you say to yourself instead to help you deal with the problem constructively?

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**Ignorance of what the subconscious mind does is the reason we have such a hard time with troublesome thoughts and feelings.**

Recently, my family and I had the opportunity to kayak very near to a freshly calved iceberg at the Mendenhall Glacier near Juneau, Alaska.

I wanted to paddle right up and touch it but the guide wouldn't allow it.

We could only get so close because you never know what an iceberg is going to do. What's visible is only 10% of that glacier; 90% is hidden beneath the surface. What if a hidden chunk were to break loose and rush to the surface right under your boat?

Unwitting kayakers have been killed by chunks of ice breaking off and falling on them from above or looming up and toppling boats from below. Imagine, you're innocently admiring the grandeur of a glacier when a 2000-square-foot chunk of ice breaks free above you. It happens. Do you want to be within range when something the size of a house falls from the sky?

Not understanding what a glacier (including its hidden elements) does can really ruin your day! When you do understand, you know what to expect and how to keep yourself safe.

That could very well sum up your relationship with your subconscious mind. You could be fearing unwisely and resisting what you don't understand – or worse - *what you think you understand, but don't.*



## Workbook Activity

You may deny, resist, or try to avoid your thoughts and feelings because you believe they're not acceptable, but this doesn't necessarily help. However, if you accept all your thoughts and feelings as 100% normal and stop resisting, you put yourself in a position to work with them. Can you accept this idea? Why or why not? If this seems difficult to do, explain why.

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Getting closer to the hidden part of your mind isn't dangerous. Living with greater awareness of your subconscious mind is the healthiest thing you can do.

Most people live with the disruptive subconscious ice chunks of perilous thoughts, feelings, doubts and criticisms, as they come to mind. But most people but don't see them coming. If you don't see a chunk of a huge glacier coming, you won't know how to react productively. Subconscious icebergs don't need to be a huge problem. They only cause problems when we are ignorant of their nature. Like real icebergs, subconscious icebergs are safe, as long as you know how to behave in their presence.

This next group of facts comes from 25 years of experience working with clients. I'm confident that if you follow these strategies (Warning: they're counterintuitive) you'll be safe in your own mind. Alas, fate has determined our nearly-universal tendency to act like defiant toddlers and do the opposite.

## Use the following strategies to live in harmony with your subconscious mind.

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**Act naturally. Stop thinking your negative thoughts and feelings shouldn't be there. Believing what's happening shouldn't happen is one of those mind-boggling attempts at denial, a frustrating self-flagellation. They shouldn't be there? They ARE there.**

It's 100% normal and natural to carry negativity. There is nothing wrong with you. Everyone has it. You are not immune. You will never be negativity-proof. And you shouldn't want to be.

Negativity can be valuable. Have you ever heard of a safety engineer? They save lives based on a productive, pessimistic point of view, habitually predicting what could go wrong. Imagine if safety engineers were Pollyanna positivity buffs. Their clients would die. *Oh, don't worry about the slick floor in that high traffic area. People won't fall. I believe in people! Let's just think positively.*

Broken limbs and lawsuits ensue.

## Here's the thing...

When negative points of view appear, there they are. Negativity is just a mindset...*a mindset*, one among many. The real trouble begins when you believe you shouldn't be in that mindset at all, or that it is somehow an unfair burden. That's when you start making a mess.



## Workbook Activity

Do your reactions to negative thinking suggest you believe it is wrong or that you shouldn't think that way?

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If you stopped resisting negative thinking, do you fear it would go out of control?

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If you replied "Yes" to the above, consider that resisting negative thinking is what makes it so hard to deal with in the first place. Also, consider that your negative thinking may already be out of control. Write your thoughts below.

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**8** Slow down. All this bad stuff tends to happen on autopilot. We don't make a conscious choice to be miserable. Imagine: Ok, now I am going to tell myself that I'm a total loser so that I can feel worthless and inept. Nope, it just happens, originating outside of conscious control.

When your subconscious mind is shitting on you, slow down and be with it. That doesn't mean *sing and dance about the shit*. It means don't avoid it because if you do avoid it, you remain helpless to do anything about it. I'm using swear words to make a point:

**It's difficult and counter-intuitive to "slow down and be with it" when you feel trapped under a shit machine.** But, you're not actually trapped.

You're shitting on yourself, so don't freak out and sprint to the nearest open space. Alas, the shit machine goes with you! It will be wherever you are, ready to dump some more crap on your head. Trust me. I've done my share of running...

Don't worry, there's no shit machine, not really.

## Workbook Activity

Do you think you can escape negative thoughts and feelings by running from them, pretending they don't exist or distracting yourself?

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What would happen if you slowed down to deeply understand and consider your negative thoughts and feelings?

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**Take it at face value. You were only under a shit machine because you saw it that way. Someone told you negativity was bad. You were indoctrinated to focus only on the positive and negativity didn't vanish when you tried to do that.**

So, negativity became shit to you and your subconscious mind a shit machine, an enemy of success. But it's not shit when you understand how to work with it. So, it's safe to slow down and think



things through. Take the fears and concerns of your subconscious mind seriously. Address them. *They are your concerns whether you consciously acknowledge them or not.*

## This reminds me of a story...

A participant in a mastermind group I'm involved in confessed her fear of failure. I responded by suggesting she take the concern at face value.

The moderator asked a question of the group: **What are the most common reasons (hmm, excuses?) you tell yourself about why your business ideas aren't ready to be tested?**

**Participant's answer:** *It's always about wasting money. In particular someone else's money. "What if I fail? Then it's all gone and I will have disappointed/let down my investors.*

**My reply:** *Thanks for outing your fear of failure. I tend to favor counter-intuitive approaches, so when I ask myself that question and get stuck in it, I like to step back and take the question at face value.*

*I find my initial response to self-doubting questions is to react in fear and try to put them out of my head - avoid them. Or argue with myself - "I'm not going to fail!" Or criticize myself for being negative - "Stop focusing on failure!" And so forth. None of this has been helpful.)*

*Now, when I have my wits about me, I take the question seriously. "Ok. What if I actually fail?"*

*It's a rational question if you ask it without a helpless (or sinister) tone. Knowing the likely, real-world (not catastrophic fantasy) answer to this question might allow you to stop asking it and throw all your energy into succeeding.*

*One thing is for sure - answering the question does not increase the likelihood of failure. It does the opposite.*

*There is another rational reason to take the question at face value. What if the reasonable, real-world result of possible failure is untenable? What if, given your estimated chances of success, possible failure would mean something that just isn't an option, like homelessness or the end of a precious friendship?*

*Why shouldn't we take those questions at face value, without the sense of foreboding? We can't predict everything, but we can take a wide-eyed look at the upsides and the downsides.*





*If I were borrowing money from anyone to start a business, I'd have a conversation that went something like this: "I so appreciate your faith in me and I want you to know I'm 100% committed to making this a success. And... I also need to understand what happens if things don't pan out. Are we going to be OK? What happens if you lose money and we aren't sure when you're going to get it back?"*

*Just try to be real and address the concern, which is obviously present, as opposed to allow self-doubt to run wild and free.*

## Workbook Activity

Identify a negative thought, take it at face value and address the concerns.

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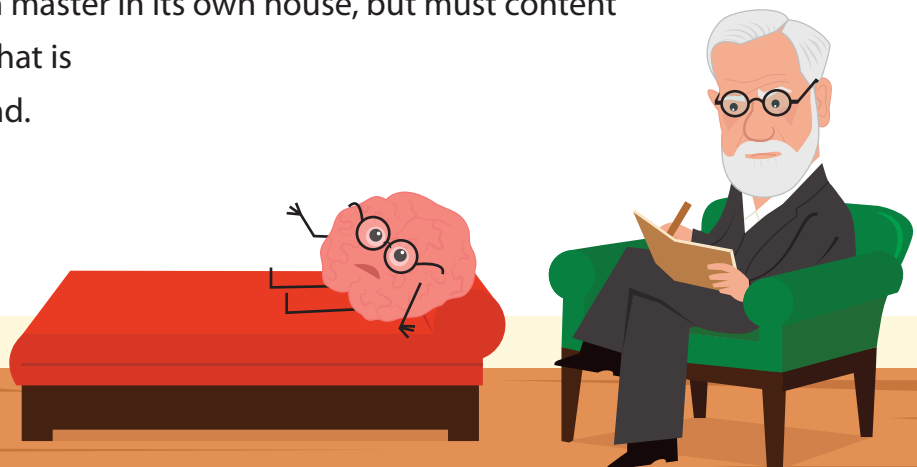
## Can you handle the truth?

All of the above could pave the way to a new relationship with the subconscious mind; one that recognizes the massive role it plays. Can we handle this?

Freud, who popularized the existence of the subconscious mind, also recognized the threat it posed to humanity's self-love.

"...human megalomania will have suffered its [third and] most wounding blow from the psychological research of the present time which seeks to prove to the ego that it is not even master in its own house, but must content itself with scanty information of what is going on unconsciously in the mind.

~ Sigmund Freud





# Thank you for using our workbook!

We hope you've found some value in it and will share it with friends, family and colleagues.

The iNLP Center, co-founded by Mike and Hope Bundrant, offers virtual education for counselors, life coaches, consultants, as well as other professionals and lay people who want to grow and help others do the same.



We offer unique training in life coaching, neuro-linguistic programming, hypnosis and personal development. You can view our catalog of courses on our website.

<http://inlpcenter.org/>

You might also be interested in reading other articles and ebooks, such as:

**Your Achilles Eel: Discover and Overcome the Hidden Cause of Negative Emotions, Bad Decisions and Self-Sabotage**

<http://inlpcenter.org/your-achilles-eel/>

**Watch our free video on how self-sabotage works and how to stop it:**

<http://inlpcenter.org/aha-process-self-sabotage/>

**Psychological Attachments: Why you Don't Just Do What Makes you Happy**

<http://inlpcenter.org/psychological-attachments/>

**Self-Awareness Test – Discover Your Hidden Opportunity for Growth and Success**

<http://inlpcenter.org/self-awareness-test/>

**How to Stop Self-Critical Thoughts with this NLP Mindset**

<http://inlpcenter.org/stop-self-critical-thoughts-nlp-mindset/>

## End Notes

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**<sup>1</sup> Check out Science ABC's report, comparing the human brain's computing power in "exaflops" to the world's man-made supercomputers:**

<https://www.scienceabc.com/humans/the-human-brain-vs-supercomputers-which-one-wins.html>

**<sup>2</sup> Miller's Law is said to be one of the most cited reference in psychology:**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Magical\\_Number\\_Seven,\\_Plus\\_or\\_Minus\\_Two](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Magical_Number_Seven,_Plus_or_Minus_Two)

**<sup>3</sup> Read the compelling research done by Northwestern University and reported by Psychology Today:**

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-athletes-way/201508/unconscious-memories-hide-in-the-brain-can-be-retrieved>

**<sup>4</sup> Yale psychology professor John Bargh wrote a piece for Scientific American in 2014 that has too many insights about this to mention:**

[http://acmelab.yale.edu/sites/default/files/our\\_unconscious\\_mind.pdf](http://acmelab.yale.edu/sites/default/files/our_unconscious_mind.pdf)