

## Learning To Respond To Past Memories

I want you to try to return to your cradle. Do you remember the time when you lay in the cradle kicking up your toes - and possibly kicking up a row at the same time? Do you remember the time when you were taking your first lesson in walking, and the floor seemed to wobble a good deal, and you tried to steady things by balancing yourself a little heavily on one leg and then on the other, and finally finished up by making a slight dent in the linoleum with the point of your poor little nose? Do you remember the time when you had an idea that anything and everything in this world existed simply and solely for your special purposes, and that all you had to do in order to obtain your desire at all times was to put out your hands for it? And if you did not get just what you put your hands out for, and have your wish immediately gratified, how you would yell with an extremely great lustiness, and keep up the din until you were practically exhausted? Do you remember the time when you first went to school, and some other little boy (or some other little girl) made faces at you, or threw mud at you, or did something else similarly mean, so that you had an overpowering realization that this is a wicked, wicked world indeed; and that there is only one place within the vast confines of this vale of woe where any God's child can ever expect to exist in peace and comfort, and this place was at your mother's knee - a place where by snuggling you could shut out the bad exterior world from your vision? Probably you do not remember any of these things; nevertheless, no memories are lost. The memories of every experience which we have undergone from the cradle are stored in the great unconscious mind; and many of these memories can be recalled under certain conditions and by certain procedures. By means of the analytic method we now know that our temperamental characteristics and general mental attitudes are what they are solely by reason of the influences of this vast deposit of buried memories. We know, also, that our conscious conduct is largely motivated by these buried memories. We know, in fact, that we think as we do, and feel as we do, wholly by reason of the existence of these stupendous unconscious influences. You have heard such terms as subconscious mind, unconscious mind, subliminal mind, and various other sorts of minds. Let us simplify things by considering the two very matter-of-fact terms conscious and unconscious. The conscious mind needs no special definition, for we will consider it in the ordinary sense in which the term is used - to mean the reasoning faculties. By the term unconscious, psychoanalysts mean anything and everything that is not conscious. Please don't think of the term unconscious as an adjective, however. When I use the term unconscious I do not mean an unconscious mental condition, but a mental place. Every memory that becomes stored in the unconscious has some intensifying or neutralizing influence on previously stored memories of similar complexion; and every time that you have held a thought in the consciousness in relation to a memory (thinking), you have produced a certain modification of some sort or other on this stored mental material. The thoughts that come up into the consciousness as a result of a stirring up by means of attention are therefore derived from these tremendous possibilities. The consciousness is only a very puny mental area in comparison with the vast extent of unconscious thought activities existing beneath it. Not a billionth part of the memories of past experiences is available for direct utilization; nevertheless they all influence the conscious conduct - directly or indirectly. In fact, these influences constitute the actual foundations of the personality. The results of conscious attention in liberating memories in the unconscious mental storehouse are governed wholly by what are in reality mechanical processes; nevertheless the nature and extent of these possibilities are fabulous. You can free your whole personality!

### About the Author

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