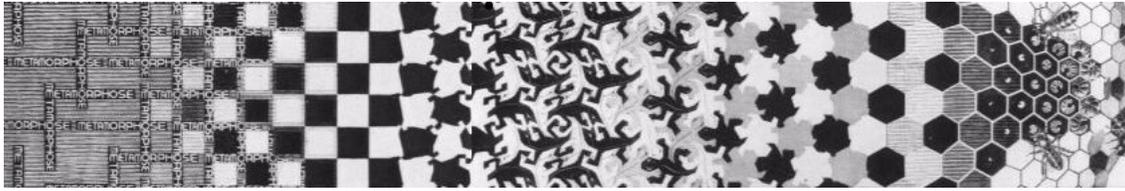


# Learn to Think



Lincoln Stoller, PhD, 2016.

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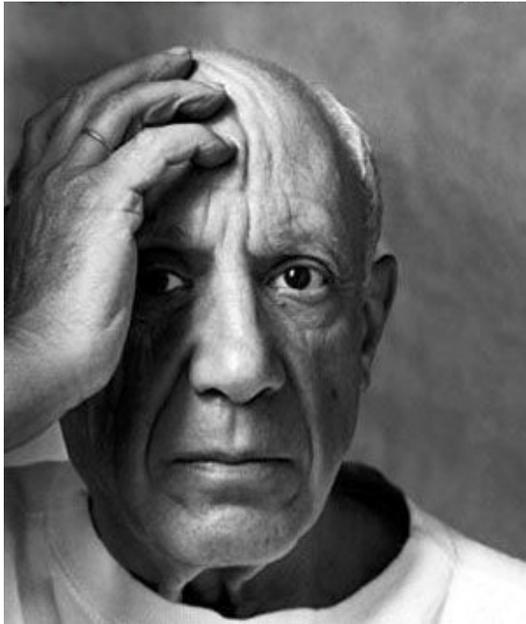
## Consciousness

This is going to be quick, so hold on. Before I define thinking, I need to define consciousness.

Consciousness is being aware of what comes up in your mind. That means thoughts, perceptions, and sensations. Consciousness is not the control of these things, it's awareness of them. Control happens elsewhere.

We are not conscious of decoding perceptions, filtering, and assembling pictures and ideas. We are not conscious of storing and retrieving memories. We are aware these things are happening but, for the most part, we're only conscious of the result. Awareness regulates attention, it doesn't **do** anything.

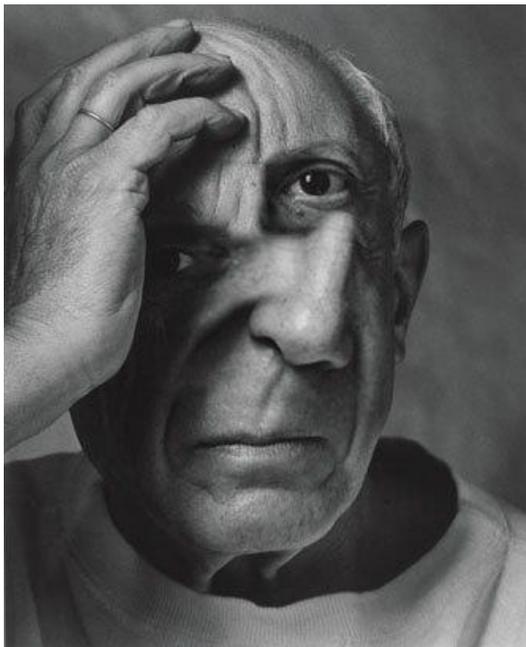
Our unconscious assembles thoughts by habit, wrote, pattern and repetition. Computers can do this, but this is not thinking. Our subconscious recognizes imperfect patterns and builds novelty using inference, metaphor, and emotion. This is thinking, and no machine does this.



## Thinking

Thinking -- the assembly of ideas -- happens in the subconscious, not the conscious mind. We delude ourselves if we believe that being aware of our thoughts means we control them. Awareness and control could not be more different. This does not mean that you do not think while you're conscious, it means that the thoughts come from a place outside your awareness.

Through awareness you gather information. If you process information in a regular fashion you develop habits. This is not thinking, it's automatic response. My son's 1st grade worksheets do not teach him thinking and, in general, people are not taught to think. Thinking involves novelty and emotion. Since focusing your awareness does not lead to thinking, how can you learn to think?

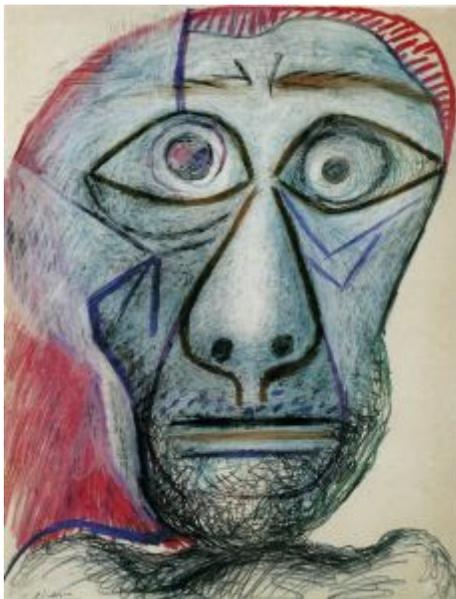


## Learning

Learning to think is a process of becoming aware of where, not how, new ideas are created, and then becoming part of the process. Learning to think is learning to let go of what you think you know.

Most of what goes on inside your head has nothing to do with thinking. Doing what you usually do does not require thinking. Listen to people talking and reflect on how much thinking is going on. Then listen to yourself and ask the same question. Talking is what grooming is for monkeys. You conduct these conversations in your sleep.

Thinking happens when you do something new, like jumping out of an airplane. If you don't happen to be in an airplane, then create the experience by imagining it: be in front of the open, roaring door of an airplane flying. Then participate in the experience: jump out the door. Do this and you lose familiar awareness of self and place. New ideas form when you experience emotions in new ways.



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## Learning Thinking

I would like to teach you how to think. I would like to take you in the airplane of your mind, open the door, and invite you to jump out. This cannot be done in your normal, conscious state of mind, the "watcher" state where everything is familiar and sensible. In this "normal state" everything happens "out there," while you are "here."

In a creative state you feel the door -- it's really there -- and the airplane is more than a metaphor. The door may look familiar, but what's on the other side is nowhere you've ever been. Here's how you do it.

First, reflect on a situation that is important to you. Focus on what is meaningful.

Next, drop into a deeper state and lose the conscious mind. I can help you accomplish this first jump to the open state.



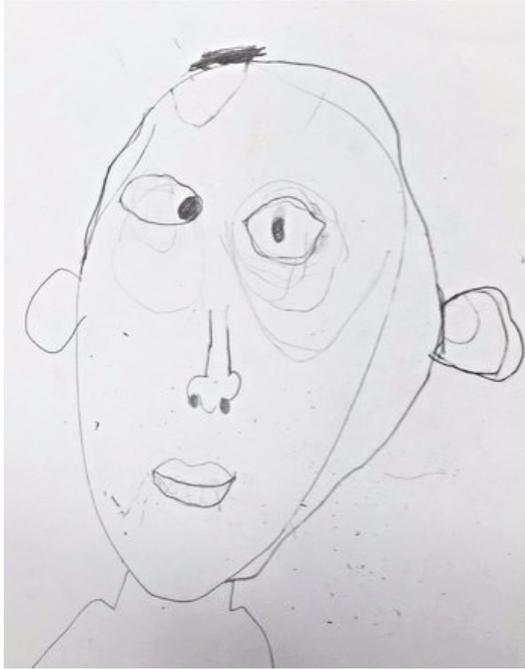
The open state is the the well spring of your imagination, the place where ideas form. Move closer to that place. Go off the rational path. Go to where the words form; where the thoughts are broken sentences. Confusion. In this dreamscape I find myself on a cliff pushing a handcart, swimming an endless ocean, driving a mountain without brakes. People need help here; it can be nightmarish.

Don't try, don't struggle. Give up and ask for help. You're in front of what you don't know... but something knows. That thing may not talk but it can hear.

Go to the edge and ask for help. Speak into the void of your mind. You can practice this. Asking for guidance is important. Don't expect a spoken response, expect shape shifting.

I was trying to choose between walking or crawling. Both seemed too risky ... the real solution is to trust and let go. As I do so, leaping into the beautiful sunrise sky, I am overwhelmed with feeling and awoken with tears of joy.

--- Stephen LaBerge, from "Varieties of Lucid Dreaming Experience"



"Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it."

- Henry Ford

## Conscious Thinking

The result of thinking is not thought, it is insight. You do not get answers until you digest this, and you might not get the answers you expect.

Do you recall the first time you mixed yellow with blue and got green? That's what thinking is like. You don't get out of it what you put into it, but something new.

Digesting meaningful messages is the final step in learning to think. It can take time, and I help people with this step as well. While colors mix immediately, spices take hours. Concrete takes days.

Don't expect a stroke of insight, and too much examination won't help. Oftentimes in impatience I simply make up answers that look like Cubist paintings: reflections of what I see but do not understand.

"I would rather live in a world where my life is surrounded by mystery than live in a world so small that my mind

could comprehend it."

- Harry Emerson Fosdick



The less said the better. Knowledge is not in words but feelings and relationships. Do not force knowing too soon, and never force words. I give encouragement and suggestions, confidence and patience. Learning to think is learning to see, it can be difficult, but it is life changing.

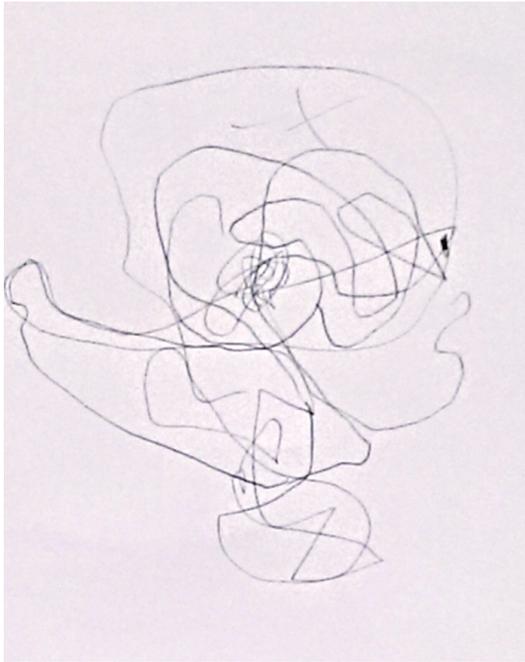
Many of our personal and inter-personal frustrations stem not from a lack of trying, but from our inability to think. Reflect for a moment on how you know that you can think at all. You don't know. You cannot even describe the process.

40 years ago I asked a celebrated psychologist where words came from. He didn't know and suggested I answer the question myself. This is my answer.

If you want me to teach you how to think, [email](#) or call me:

(845) 657 - 6411

Py Stoller Dieleman, age 5.



"... we give children answers to remember,  
rather than problems to solve."  
- Roger Lewin



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