

Episode 5 – Firewall of the Mind

John: We welcome you to Episode 5 of MindSolvers, where we will once again, the subconscious willing, dig deeper into its existence and its very purpose for being.

Verl: Yes, John, I think that's a good idea. There are some questions I have about it as well. For one, what is the conscious mind's job? It almost seems like it works against the subconscious sometimes.

John: The conscious mind, which is what we're accessing right now as we discuss these things, is responsible for methodical and critical thinking, resolve, and short-term memory. It works actively to solve problems, make decisions, and focus attention to things. It is crucial to our survival, but it doesn't have direct access to passions, memories, emotions, the long-term memory of the subconscious, and so many other vital, unconscious processes.

Verl: Now again you use “subconscious” and “unconscious.” Just what's the difference?

John: In our last episode, I mentioned the concussion I had. I was knocked unconscious for a period of time, but I was still breathing, swallowing, and my heart was still beating (so, I obviously had no conscious control over those things). The “unconscious” mind can be thought of as the regulator of the autonomic nervous system functions, including the immune system. These are all involuntary functions controlled in the brain by the hypothalamus but can be strongly affected by our conscious decisions and actions, or even by subconscious emotions and survival instincts.

Verl: So the unconscious really just keeps up the basic life functions and maintenance of the body. Kind of like the gas and electric utilities in a home? We don't really know it's there unless something goes wrong with it. But what is the purpose of the subconscious—because as we've seen, it's kind of hidden, too—we're not really aware of it.

John: That's right, but before we dig into the subconscious, we need to talk about another part of the mind known as the Critical Faculty. This, in fact, is a part of the mind that we do our very best to bypass in order to work directly with the subconscious mind.

Verl: Wow! Another part of the mind! So in these sessions, you've worked to relax the conscious mind in order to get to the subconscious mind, yet there's still this other layer we've been bypassing.

John: Yes, we have, and here's why. You see, the Critical Faculty works very much like a computer's firewall that filters out or prevents unwanted information coming through from the Internet. In the mind, however, we can think of it as the judgement center, distinguishing between such concepts as light and dark, that the Sun shines in the day and not at night, and that water is wet, and all these things in defense of our model of reality.

Verl: So if I told you something like, “Wow, look at the Sun! It's shining so brightly tonight!” that would get this Critical Faculty all upset?

John: Danger, Will Robinson! (I hope this reference to Lost In Space isn't wasted on the younger generation.) So, even if you could prove it, the assumption would be that you were in the middle of a weird and horrible dream and needed to wake up. So, just like the computer firewall, it compares incoming information and either accepts those ideas that support our reality or rejects those that are incongruent with our model based on all the data accrued in our formative years of life's experience.

Verl: So again like when a computer firewall sometimes stops things that we want to come in, the Critical Faculty rejects things that could be beneficial to us because of what it decided years ago is safer for us.

John: Yes, and that same model of reality often rejects positive affirmations and the most desirable ideas that we consciously want to accept, and it will continue to reinforce old or familiar habit patterns regardless of how unwanted they may be.

Verl: So, John, looking back at a couple of experiences we've talked about earlier—the woman who got so nervous driving a car, and my wife, who was terrified by water—their firewall was basing these fears on experiences in childhood that it seized on as reality of life and was trying to protect them?

John: It's important, here, to remember that the subconscious has no rational or objective understanding of what's good or bad for us...that's the Firewall. Even in relatively healthy individuals it usually creates and reinforces many of the beliefs and habit patterns that are obviously undesirable. So, until alternate information reaches the subconscious mind by some other means, the Critical Faculty will do its darndest to keep things consistent with whatever we've been doing all along.

Verl: Well I think at least some of our listeners are going to want to know what causes the firewall to appear—and is the subconscious mind around before the firewall is in place? I'm still unclear about the relationship between our firewall and our subconscious.

John: Excellent question. As I studied Neuropsychology (the study of the relationship between the physical brain and our behaviors), I learned that the part of the brain that deals with higher mental functions, like judgement, is found in the Frontal Lobes of the Cerebral Cortex that don't even start to develop until the age of seven or eight, and many would suggest that it's not fully matured until somewhere around 25 years of age. So in early childhood, this firewall isn't present, at all, leaving these impressionable, infant minds wide open for consumption of whatever is experienced that will ultimately determine who we will become and how we'll succeed in life!

Verl: Well I have heard that what happens in the first 5 years or so of life can set the course of a child's life. That's pretty scary, actually. And, besides, I thought that was the role of the subconscious, not the firewall.

John: Well, Verl, that's why we're spending an extra episode digging deeper into the subconscious. It's the subconscious that stores whatever makes it through the firewall, all our experiences, emotional associations, permanent memory, and those programs that give rise to self-preservation instincts, which also gives rise to our beliefs and habit patterns.

Verl: Mmm well, that makes more sense. So how have we been bypassing the firewall?

John: Ah, through the imagination! Think about when you're watching a movie, you usually let yourself "pretend" that the movie is real, right? You know it's not, but in order to enjoy it more, you allow yourself to think of the characters as real people and the situations as real situations.

Verl: Yes, I like the expression—suspending disbelief. And for me if it's a good movie, and doesn't have any plot holes that make it too difficult to ignore what isn't real, I'll enjoy the movie more—as long as it lives by its own rules. But it seems like some people go deeper into that suspension of disbelief. I remember reading that when the movie Avatar came out, there were some people who got so immersed in that world it created, that they actually suffered depression when they came out of the movie and realized that the wonderful planet Pandora didn't exist. And I don't know what it is about the movies James Cameron directs, but I remember that there were people—mostly young Asian girls—who were so obsessed with the movie Titanic that they would watch it hundreds of times. So they must have immersed themselves into it more than other people would. Does this mean there are different levels of the subconscious, or maybe the firewall? Or both?

John: Yeah, isn't that fascinating? It would appear that depending on how much we give way to the imagination, the less the Firewall is engaged, and the more we accept ideas and suggestions, good or bad, which is why advertisers like to expose you to their commercials during TV shows; and you better believe that they know exactly what they're doing!

Verl: Okay, John, you're saying that people are in this other world of the TV show, so to speak, and they are more open to suggestions to buy things. Hmm a little sneaky, but smart! So that's why you've been having us use our imaginations to pretend that we're reliving old memories or going places to relax.

John: Exactly! And the deeper into that relaxed state you are, the more we have direct access to the subconscious in order to help reprogram some of those unwanted behaviors we unwittingly carry around with us. And with each person I started working with back in those early hypnotherapy days, after getting the finger reaction from our oldest daughter, I would ask for help from the subconscious to achieve this (you can re-listen to Episode 2, BTW, if you haven't heard or want a refresher).

Verl: Yes, of course, you've used that with a lot of others since then. And podcast listeners if you missed that first episode, or would like to listen to any episodes again, remember that all of them can always be found on our website, MindSolvers.com.

John: And you'll also find on our website, along with the podcast episodes, a copy of just the relaxation sessions from each of the episodes, as well as the episode transcripts, which you won't be found on iTunes or Google Play or any of the other podcast servers.

Verl: So, John, remind us how exactly you got help from the subconscious.

John: I would simply suggest that for the next little while the subconscious mind use the specific fingers that I touched to indicate a positive or a negative response to my questions or suggestions. Then I would always follow up with, "If this is alright, simply move the "yes" finger up and down so that I'll know."

Verl: And how did you know if it was from the conscious or subconscious—or even the firewall?

John: Well, there's a distinct difference between conscious and subconscious movements. In fact, listeners, try it for yourself. If I ask you right now to move your right index finger up and down, consciously, what does it look and feel like?

Verl: Yeah, it's more direct; a flow of motion, and you said the subconscious motion is jerky and sporadic.

John: For most people, I would see a slight, ever so perceptible, jerky movement in the specified "yes" finger that would slowly rise to a level that I could tell a definite willingness to communicate.

Verl: Yeah, I remember working through some issues at that time. But there is a difference. But what did you learn about the subconscious from these sessions.

John: This part of the mind has some distinct characteristics that can be very easily recognized. The first is that it knows of its own existence and its purpose and that it is separate from the conscious mind. Its main purpose is one of protection—protecting the conscious mind from such feelings and emotions as experienced with guilt or abuse. It's there to help us deal with such things and in some cases, many cases, cover, hide, even bury some of the worst episodes in our lives for the intent to protect the fragile psyche.

Verl: But now that you've brought up the firewall—the Critical Faculty—it almost seems like the firewall itself is trying to protect the conscious mind as well. Is this the source of the neuroses that we've been working on?

John: Interesting question, Verl. That's why I describe it as being on the border of the conscious and subconscious and not strictly a part of either. And with this in mind, and desiring a satisfying resolution to whatever neurosis is being worked on, you can now ask what brought it about in the first place, and then get its help with the change that needs to take place.

Verl: Well, John, this discussion has helped me understand more about how these sessions work with solving some of the conflicts we have inside ourselves. But I'm guessing we're going to take another journey into the mind? And if so, as always, I remind you, Podcast Listeners, be sure you are right now in a quiet place, a comfortable position, sitting or lying down and ready to close your eyes and relax...

John: Now, if you haven't already, let your eyes gently close, as you take a few deep, cleansing breaths, and bring back to your mind the word, or phrase, that you were given at the end of our last episode with the help of the subconscious. Bring it to your conscious awareness either in your thoughts or by saying it out loud to yourself, even now. This word, or phrase, will help you begin to quickly and easily relax, bringing back into your mind all the wonderful feelings of peace, safety, and security, as you begin even now to return to the warm, sunny beach that we visited last time we were together. And now I'd like to suggest that you say it, once again, aloud or to yourself as all the incredible sensations come flooding back into your mind, all the now familiar sights and sounds, tastes and smells, and the feelings of deep and calming relaxation that are very much a part of this beautifully calming scenic vision. And one last time, as you say it aloud or to yourself, you find yourself there, relaxing in the warmth of the sun rays, feeling the cool ocean breeze on your skin, listening to the waves rhythmically rushing to the shore, and smell the salty aroma of the green, blue sea as you take in a deep, deep breath and relax. I'd like to suggest that you take full advantage of the soothing rest and deepening relaxation as you enjoy each moment in this peaceful serenity.

To help you relax even deeper, I'd like to suggest, if you're not already, stand up in the warm sand and let your feet sink down deep into the cool, wetness below the surface of the sand and enjoy how good that feels between your toes.

Now, I'd like to introduce you to one of the many powers that you have in this special place of yours and hope that you'll come back often to discover all that is here for your to fully experience. As you stand with your feet buried in the sand, as an anchor to the beach, feel your body, arms and legs and torso stretching slowly and gently upwards into the sky. It's a very odd feeling, to be sure, but so calming and relaxing, as you look down and see the beach, the vegetation, and palm trees below you gradually becoming smaller and smaller and you see more and more of the ocean's horizon in front of you and a mountainous volcano behind you. The ocean breeze is just a bit stronger up this high, but it feels great on your skin as the sun rays seem much warmer up here. You notice off to your right in the distance an orchard of your favorite fruit trees and can feel your arm stretching, reaching out and taking hold of one in the palm of your hand and you feel its distinctive texture, as you pluck it and bring it back in front of you. You hold it to your lips and smell the fresh aroma as you take a big bite and taste the intense flavor as the nectars fill the inside of your mouth and you feel the cool juices sliding down your throat. What a powerful, deepening sensation. And your relaxation doubles.

Just off to your left you see a stream of puffy, white, billowy clouds coming your way and float slowly by just beneath your waste. You feel how soft and incredibly solid they are, as you uproot your feet from the sandy anchor and lie down into this amazingly soft bed and find yourself completely supported and your body returns to its normal size. You literally float on air, and the

unmistakable sensation of slow, gentle, swaying motion deepens your relaxation to its lowest levels yet.

Now while you continue to enjoy this deeply relaxed state of mind, I'd like to ask the subconscious to help us prepare for our next episode by searching out in the vast collection of buried memories, and gather together several noteworthy occurrences, especially ones that the conscious mind would not easily have access to, of putting off significant duties or responsibilities that we never quite got around to starting or finishing. Truly, our lives are filled with such occasions. And over the coming week, I'd like to suggest that you, the subconscious, will deliver these memories in profound and vivid dreams, so that next time, as we meet, with your help, we can discover the root cause and make steps to overcome this apparent natural tendency within us.

And now, let me suggest that you begin to bring yourself back to reality, slowly and gently.

Verl: And until you rejoin us in the next episode of MindSolvers, we want you every day to sleep well, awake refreshed and alert, with a feeling of energy and rejuvenation and power, even the ability to take on any and all issues, problems, or situations that there may be with the help of the subconscious mind, and especially enjoy completely all good times you encounter in your life.

John: And when you're ready, simply open your eyes, now.