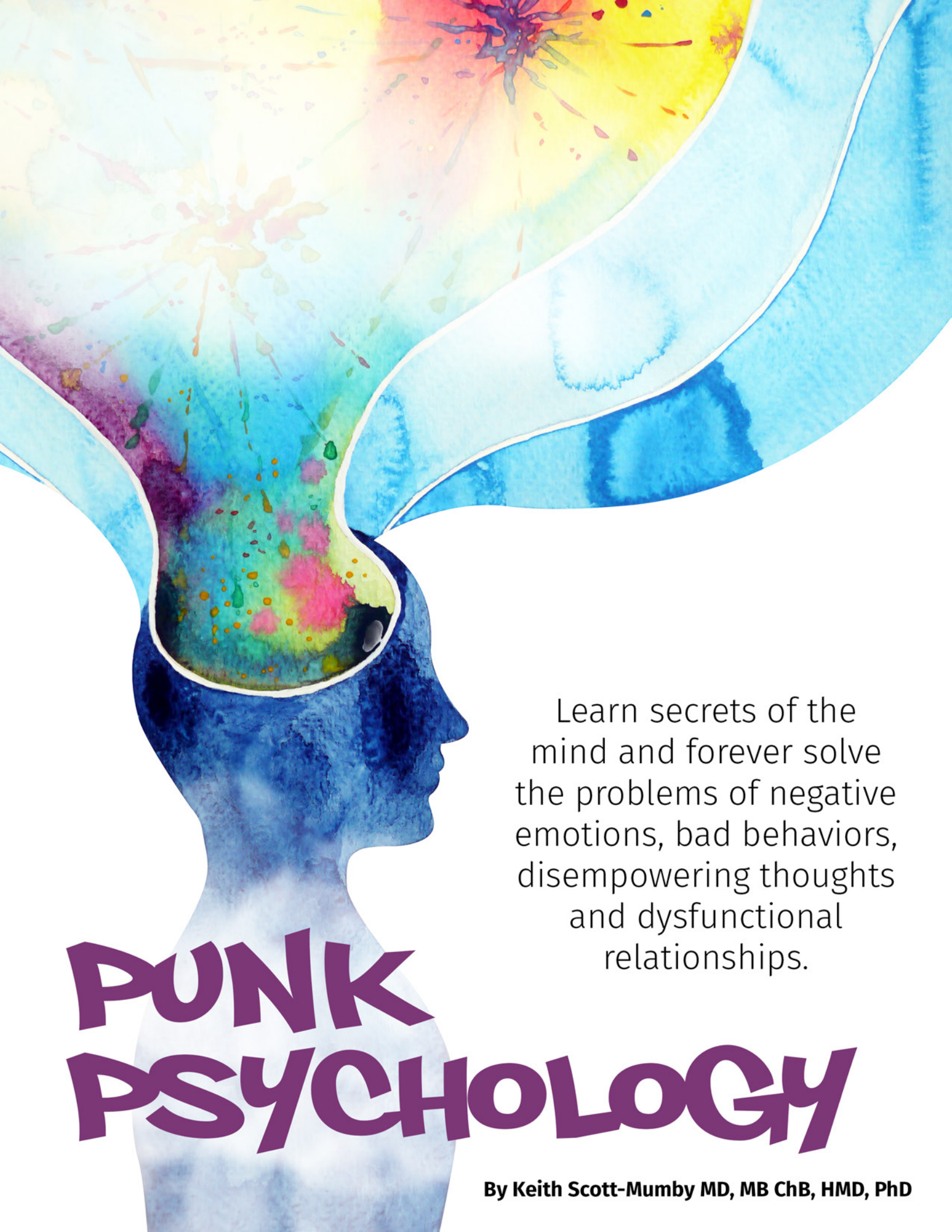


Learn secrets of the mind and forever solve the problems of negative emotions, bad behaviors, disempowering thoughts and dysfunctional relationships.

PUNK PSYCHOLOGY

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CHAPTER 3
WHAT IS A MIND?

We might start with asking a very punky question: *what is a mind?* I doubt that any psychiatrist or psychologist could give a definition that has much meaning or practical value. The mind tends to be something of a mystery.

We all have a mind (well, except politicians). So you would think there is a common understanding of what a mind is and what it's supposed to do. This knowledge I find singularly lacking.

In fact we should maybe ask a more basic question first: *is there such a thing as a mind?* Or is it what B F Skinner, the great American behavioral psychologist, described as an "explanatory fiction"?

He said we're all robots, which just throw out behaviors, only behaviors, and that thoughts, feelings, intentions, dreams and motivations are all illusions. We only think we have intentionality. That really we are no more "there" and in control of our lives than a robot programmed to respond unthinkingly to stimuli input.

This is called behaviorism. Because all you can see is the behavior, therefore that's all there is! I doubt Skinner thought this of himself, when he was sitting down to dinner with a family. But who knows?

Things have progressed little today. We have a science that thinks everything is brain; that actions are predetermined and that thoughts follow actions, or follow light up signals in the brain. It can't be the other way round, they say, since we can see the electrical signals light up a split second before the person even has the thought.

But that's silly. There is preparatory thought, before that which is consciously grasped and verbalized. We see that all the time using our eMind Sensor™ (GSR meter). End of problem.

See, Skinner was talking about people—masses—populations. He wasn't looking inwardly; he was *observing other people,* outwardly. We as individuals know that we have a mind and we have thoughts, feelings, intentions and so forth. We choose what we know and what we do. That's not to say we are not influenced by hidden factors within, but we still have choices, awareness and what they call "agency", meaning we do it for ourselves; we are not pre-programmed automatons (even though at times we look as if we are).

So let's start from there.

Even with this supposition, we have some big questions. I have already disposed of the argument that the mind *must be* located in the brain. But we can see that *part of* mental functioning is controlled by brain activity.

The brain is our powerful "bio-computer", if you like. But like all computers, it needs an operator at the interface, to work the controls. These days I have even started to add the rhetorical question: is a smart phone a part of our mind? It has memory and output. That's isn't so different from some of our mental computations, like remembering stuff and having the power to know where we are (as with the phone's GPS functions).

Computers and the Mind

Perhaps we can widen the consideration to the possibility that all computer storage, computation and retrieval devices are part of our "extended mind". We dip in and out of the data banks, to recover information, much as we do when we are trying to mentally recall something we learned.

Some people, as you know, are even predicting that computers will eventually rival the human mind. These are the so-called "strong" artificial intelligence (AI) proponents.

But this runs out of steam very quickly. Computers, at this time, are pretty simple, even if vast in scale: if A and B, then C type calculations; or if A and NOT B, then D, type logic. The human mind is far more complex than this.

It's true, computers have moved on to fuzzy logic and "soft" computing, which more closely matches the workings of the mind, abandoning the yes-no logic in favor of something greyer and more reasonable.

But no computer to date has come even close to the capabilities of the human mind. Consider:

We have almost infinite capacity to remember. We don't use it all in everyday thinking but research makes it very clear that everything we experience is recorded as some level or other, even if we selectively choose to not remember it all, or at least we select not be consciously aware of, most of it.

I couldn't give any accurate figures but the amount of data storage we would use up before we even became adults would probably be in the region of squi-

llions of gigabytes of data. No machine can do that, though I accept they can get better and better at storage.

Computers are, of course, famous for accuracy and speed. But the human mind, I believe (with reason), also makes 100% accurate calculations *based on the data it is fed*. When we behave badly, do stupid things or get inappropriate emotions, that's just because the mind is working on faulty input.

In other words, given what the calculation is based on, the mind is accurate to perfection. To get better outcomes from your thoughts and behavior, all you have to do is tune up the data and work only with good data. I'll be talking more about that later. But let me just say that that's what Hypnoetics™ is all about.

The human mind is self-correcting. It's true; computers are learning these skills to a degree. But a computer cannot go through its past history and re-write everything in the light of new experiences or new evaluations. The human mind does this all the time.

Indeed, we would not be human if it didn't. We can investigate past experience, decide we were wrong and rewrite our entire data banks in the light of the new perspective. That's what we do, routinely, with Hypnoetics™ mastery.

The big difference between a computer and the mind is that the mind needs no external programmer; computers have not reached that stage. Computers which program themselves have been programmed to program themselves! That's nowhere near comparable in magnitude to what the mind does.

The mind can not only program itself but it can take its programming intention from the circumstances it finds itself in. Further, the mind can determine what determinants to judge by (values) and so choose what would be the most optimum outcomes in a given situation and so organize action towards that chosen end.

But then it could decide against that same chosen end, pick another one, and then re-program the entire mind to proceed in the new direction. And it can do this, make everything change, in less than a second.

There's another big difference between us and current computers: a busted computer needs a human to fix it. Don't tell me the latest and greatest will be able to do that for itself. Where is it going to buy (yes, buy) the cables and chips it needs to effect a repair?

The human mind has the capacity to take in remote information and evaluate its worth. It can accept input as visual (photo, video), audio (sound recordings) and text analysis (reading). Computers can accept this kind of input, of course. But they cannot yet evaluate such input. A computer is not aware of what it receives as video, for example, even though a computer can be programmed to at least partially understand and respond to visual (cameras).

So a computer could replicate a picture of a naked woman, say. But it cannot think "dirty whore", or "She's beautiful, I think I'm in love!" In the same way, a computer does not have the consciousness to think, "I'm lonely, I wish there were another computer around here I could link up with."

Now strong-AI supporters think it is only a matter of time before this happens. Strong-AI thinks that everything in the human mind is just algorithms. That's a fancy word meaning a series of steps, with several stages of input; a manipulation which transforms those things; and comes out with a relevant output (input, step 1, step 2, step 3, output), kind of progression.

THE TURING TEST

The question is: can computers ever simulate human thought processes. What do you think?

Men have been trying to design a computer smart enough to mimic human thought for over half a century. It's called the Turing test, after British mathematician Alan Turing (made famous in the code breaker movie *The Imitation Game*, starring Benedict Cumberbatch). There's a prize for the first person to come up with a computer that can simulate being human. As of the time of writing this, nobody has succeeded, though there are claims from time to time (the 2014 claim for a program called Eugene Goostman is widely considered not credible).

The rules are pretty tough: a computer is set up in competition with a human being; each gives its replies in an identical format (usually digital type on the screen); an investigator asks questions and has to guess from the replies whether he or she is dealing with a machine or a real live human [Turing, A.M. (1950). Computing machinery and intelligence. *Mind*, 59, 433-460].

It's conceivable that some day a machine will pass this test. You could put it in terms that a computer can "think". It still doesn't mean that a computer is con-

scious. A sufficiently complex computer, with algorithms and complex movements, could even be designed one day, to behave like a human being.

That still doesn't mean the computer is conscious.

But here's the killer:

To be able to compete with a human mind, a computer is also going to have to have imagination. This faculty does not just mean the ability to create visionary futures. Even the crudest computers can do that. What is really meant by imagination is the ability to create something out of nothing, meaning; *totally unrelated to anything which has ever existed before.*

No Newtonian computer is going to come up with the Theory of Relativity, because the leap into a completely new reality is beyond a machine, which only knows one existing reality. Imagination is the main point at which computers fall down.

Throw in things like out-of-body experiences and previous incarnations and the notion of conscious self-aware computers become just a dud concept. These phenomena, unfortunately for the AI enthusiasts (and psychologists), seem to be real. At least they occur over and over to normal, intelligent, rationally functioning human beings. Not everyone who experiences this degree of self-awareness is deluded, believe me.

Awareness of Being Aware

There is a famous problem in philosophy and consciousness studies; it's called "The Zombie Problem". The discussion is about theoretical zombies, so don't worry: you won't have to go digging up corpses and reviving them to learn about this aspect of theory!

But a zombie, for this discussion, is somebody walking around, talking and eating, like you and me, but isn't conscious. Or at least, is not self-aware.

This is not a crazy idea; a robotic kind of flesh zombie would know to eat, not to get wet when it rained, would like one food more than another and (probably) would try sex, although it might be a bit rough on the partner!

The zombie would *seem* to be behaving like you and me; but is walking around in an unknowing dream. A somnambulist trance, in other words. How could

you tell it was conscious or not? Kick it and it screams is not enough: any animal, and maybe even plants, react negatively to pain stimuli.

Talk to it and get the right answer doesn't prove anything either.

The amusing point is, a lot of people are going around as if they are zombies. At least they make few or no self-aware comments, like "I think I am..." or "I see myself doing..."

Most people don't get above "I love burgers..." or "I *hate* Paris Hilton..." or "My feet ache..."

Some of you might at least suspect, humans seem to be having a psychical relationship with their electronic toys, such as the way people interact with their iPhone etc. It's like nobody is home. You see people with their phone clamped to their ear (often while driving), as if they don't even see themselves existing, unless somebody wants to talk to them. They seem to need the comfort of something going in their ears, to reassure themselves they are alive in some way! It's all rather weird.

Anyway, the point about the zombie problem is that there really is no easy way to tell if a person is conscious or not. Ask one if it likes pop music, the taste of hot dogs...

You'll get yes and no responses, the same as you would with an aware, self-aware human being. There is nothing in most human interactions that would tell you that a zombie understands why they like some thing or not others, or where their opinions come from.

A computer could pass the Turing Test and yet still remain nothing more than an electronic zombie.

Conscious vs. Unconscious Processing

Having said all that, let me say this: part of our thought processes clearly go on at an algorithmic level. I think it's fair to say that the unconscious mind works algorithmically. I agree with Roger Penrose, who says that it may go on at a complicated high level, which is monstrously difficult to disentangle in detail. But it does seem a computer-like automaticity. The unconscious mind, or subconscious, is an automaton.

But again, he says that conscious thought can also be algorithmic, but at a very different level of organization. He doesn't say so but isn't that what we mean by "logic": accurate algorithmic processing but in the full light of consciousness?

It's good because logic is one of our very powerful faculties. Intuition and magic are fine, in their way. But it's logical thought that got us down from the trees, building cars, computers and space rockets!

And this still leaves a large part of consciousness capacity that isn't explained. The riddle comes from the fact that *thinking is not the same consciousness*. They co-exist but are not to be confused.

THE REAL YOU

No, let's roll on towards a working definition of the mind, which is the real purpose of this chapter. This is what I used to teach; it's still true—but it's not true enough, as we shall see!

The important thing about observing yourself is that the observer is the real you. What you are observing is not you. You are the watcher, the observer, the entity in the driving seat.

We call that entity our consciousness or self. It's the faculty of being aware and being aware of being aware. Beyond that, nobody has a clue what consciousness actually is or how it arises in the first place.

I use the metaphor of *the knife which cannot cut itself*: consciousness cannot examine itself. It just is!

Now there is a slight complication here, which is that there are really multiple "selves". The idea of a single conscious unity or just a single "You" is untenable today. It's pretty obvious that we have parts. I could go on to mention psychic "entities" out there but let's keep this simple for now.

So, how am I going to sum up what a mind is? That was my promise from the title, after all.

The mind is a functional interface between consciousness and exterior reality. Now I say "exterior reality" not meaning that to be confined only to the physical universe. There are other possible universes; lots of them. Or I should say

other realities, because the word “universe” means “everything that is”, so by definition there cannot be more than one universe; only variations in reality and appearance.

Even fuddy-duddy science today is taking about multiple universes, so there is nothing new or spooky about that.

There is still mystery in this, like how perceptions from physical organs, such as eyes and ears, reach consciousness. And also how something immaterial like consciousness can affect material things, like brain cells and neural pathways, to make them perform as they do.

There is this very important question of perception. Nothing is more disappointing than the way modern scientists, like Daniel Dennett, equate consciousness with perception. It’s nuts! The zombie perceives but, as we have already seen, doesn’t necessarily know it perceives, or what the perceptions really mean.

Studying how perceptions take place completely side-steps the big question raised by Bishop George Berkeley in the 18th century: *how can we be sure there is any universe out there at all?* Surely, all we know about is what our senses tell us? We are jumping to unjustified conclusions to suppose that our senses are based on something that’s out there. Maybe there is nothing; just senses and perceptions; or just ideas about something out there?

This position was shared by John Hulme and a fellow doctor called John Locke. He was among philosophers called the “British Empiricists” because they all came to the same conclusion: we can’t know much about the world “out there” (if there is one) because the only way we can access it is via sensory perceptions, which are a function of the brain, not a function of what’s “out there”.

So our “world” is not a world but composite perceptions of a world! That’s what they were saying. And, you know what? In two centuries, this has never been refuted; just argued about.

I don’t want to bog down in this side-road of philosophy but the confusion between issues of perception and matters of true consciousness remains the biggest roadblock in the modern study of real consciousness.

The Mind's Number One Algorithm

So, if the mind is our interface, between us and reality, what does it DO exactly?

Actually, I think I can sum up the primary algorithm of the mind in one full sentence. The mind works with perceptions to scan the present time environment, to assess what is happening, which is then compared to past learning and experience, and from that future estimations are made, decisions formed, and appropriate action taken to proceed towards an optimum re-positioning, or what we would term an outcome.

You will see this is not the *reactive* mind of the physiologist or psychologist. This is the *proactive* mind at work. There is something beyond the mere stimulus-response level; a creativity, design and intention that takes us out of the merely animal and protoplasm level.

In our conscious life, we don't just react to things; we have our own little activities, games, plans and purposes. We don't just want to "survive" or stick around. We want better. The highest purpose in the universe, in my opinion, is benign self-fulfillment (benign, of course, because we don't want to harm others).

Now that is far from selfish gains for self. Writing elsewhere I have described our 12 Channels Of Being. That thought structure says that you cannot enhance one Channel at the expense of all others and expect a good result. It says that what is good for you is good for everyone and everything. The best you, is the best that this present reality could have.

It is also referred to as Enlightened Self-Interest.

The fullest concept of self-enhancement includes comprehensive positive activity and gratification in all 12 Channels Of Being. That's a very big concept and would fit only a super hero or living fireball, one who was capable of immense influence and activity. I'm talking about taking responsibility for all of creation and one's personal engagement with the totality of What-IS!

I'm talking about using your mind as a powerhouse to get not just anything you want but everything you can imagine. The power of the human mind has bare-

ly been explored. There are tantalizing clues as what the possibilities are; but it's obvious that most of us are living way below our full potential.

That's where Hypnoetics™ comes in: it's a path to formidable mental expansion. It is already pushing back the boundaries of thought, knowledge and successful behaviors.

It's what the world needs today... it's what we all need, desperately.

PUNK POINTS:

- The mind is not a computer, though there are similarities, which make comparisons useful.
- Behaviorism is not enough. Behavior demands an explanation.
- The mind is continuously scanning the NOW, comparing it to learning and experience (memory), to predict what will happen next and so make favorable adaptations.
- Consciousness just IS. We can't really see it or inspect it.