

Conscious Awareness

Conscious awareness is commonly defined as the individual's attention to and focus on the events and situations currently happening, and it is described as a state of awareness that positively affects psychological health (Brown and Ryan, 2003: 830). At the same time, conscious awareness enables individuals to become aware of their automatic thoughts, unhealthy habits, and dysfunctional behavioral patterns, thus enhancing psychological health by facilitating behavioral regulation (Ryan and Deci, 2000:74). It is understood that conscious awareness involves experiencing attention and awareness in the present moment, while inattention, distraction, and indifference indicate a relative lack of conscious awareness, meaning that the individual does not pay attention to or accept a thought, feeling, impulse, or perceived objection (Brown and Ryan, 2003:824).

According to Germer (2005), conscious awareness moments share some common characteristics:

- Purposeful: Conscious awareness always requires attention directed towards a specific direction. The aim is to focus attention on the present moment and to maintain conscious awareness continuously.
- Non-conceptual: It is an awareness that exists without going through the filter of thought processes.
- Non-verbal: Conscious awareness is not dominated by words and speech because the state of awareness emerges before words are formed in the mind.
- Non-judgmental: If we want the experience we are having to be different from what it is now and we are judging that moment, conscious awareness cannot easily occur.
- Requires participatory observation: Conscious awareness is not about observing in a detached manner; it requires witnessing the present moment. Therefore, it is to experience the body and mind more closely.
- Liberating: Each moment of conscious awareness allows liberation from constantly thought of, accepted pain.

- Based on exploration: Conscious awareness is always about exploring and discovering the levels of perception and understanding that are difficult and subtle.
- Focused on the present moment: Conscious awareness is always about the present moment and our thoughts about the experience of that moment come after that moment.

Conscious awareness is an easy way for individuals to relate to all experiences that reduce their pain and to initiate positive personal development and change (Siegel, Germer, and Olendzki, 2009).

Conscious awareness is of great importance in terms of separating individuals from automatic thoughts, habits, and unhealthy behavioral patterns, thus helping individuals regulate their own behavior and positively affecting their psychological well-being (Brown and Ryan, 2003:824; Ryan and Deci, 2003:254).

It is known that conscious awareness has five characteristics named as observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging, and non-reactivity (Baer et al., 2006:28).

- Observing; means noticing and paying attention to internal and external experiences such as sensations, cognition, emotions, sight, hearing, and smell.
- Describing, expressing one's internal experiences in words,
- Acting with awareness, focusing on one's current activities and preventing mechanical movement by focusing on something else (usually in automatic pilot mode),
- Non-judging internal experiences, not judging one's thoughts and feelings,
- Non-reactivity to internal experiences is defined as allowing thoughts and feelings to come and go without getting caught up or carried away by them.

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