

10 Ways to Become More Conscious

By Steve Pavlina

Previously I wrote about 14 Reasons to Become More Conscious. Now let's explore the how.

What does it mean to become more conscious? It is the progressive realization of conscious mastery over your mind.

The challenge is that it takes consciousness to grow consciousness. But you needn't worry about this because you already have the seed. Think of it like fire. You have a flame, and you want to turn that flame into a huge blaze. How do you do it? You add fuel. The following list includes examples of how you can add fuel to your flame of consciousness to become a raging inferno of consciousness. Well, OK, the analogy sort of falls apart there, but you get the idea.

So here are 10 ways to raise your consciousness:

1. Truth

Truth raises your consciousness. Falsehood lowers it.

First, accept the truth. Whatever you're afraid to know lowers your consciousness. Step on the scale to see how much you weigh. Have a long talk with your spouse about the status of your relationship. Take a deep look at your career. In every case accept the outcome. Don't just acknowledge the current status and dismiss it. Really accept it as the truth. Think about what it means for this to be true. Also accept your feelings about the truth, whether you like them or not.

Secondly, speak the truth. If honesty is a challenge for you, it's because you aren't being honest enough with yourself. Lies you tell others are shadowed by lies you tell yourself. Take note of those areas where you feel incapable of genuine honesty, and dig deep enough to find out why. You'll find that you uncover a part of yourself you've been unwilling to accept. You don't lie about the parts of yourself you accept 100%.

The more you're able to accept and speak the truth, the more conscious you become. Raise your consciousness by uncovering and dumping all traces of falsehood from your life. Allow this to be a gradual process. As your consciousness increases, genuine honesty will come more easily to you.

Yes, there may be consequences when you switch from lies and half-truths to the full truth, but highly conscious people know that crossing that bridge is well worth the effect. A short-term adjustment is nothing compared to the joys of living honestly and openly. It's so much easier and less stressful to be yourself and allow others to do the same. Not everyone will appreciate the real you, especially if they've grown accustomed to a false version, but that won't matter once you accept and appreciate yourself.

2. Courage

Courage raises your consciousness. Cowardice lowers it.

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Courage is the gatekeeper between unconscious growth and conscious growth. As long as you remain on the unconscious side, life will keep throwing problems at you until you step up and take charge. When you face your fear, the fear vanishes, and problems transform into opportunities. But when you run from your problems, your fear only grows.

A powerful guiding principle to adopt is, "Whatever I fear, I must face." The more fears you face down, the more conscious you become. As you master this lesson, eventually courage becomes less necessary. Once you develop the courage to face any fear life throws at you, you stop attracting so many fear-based experiences into your life. This is why courage is the dividing line between unconscious growth and conscious growth. The mastery of courage gives you the power to decide how you'll grow instead of being a victim of the whims of fate.

3. Compassion

Compassion raises your consciousness. Cruelty lowers it.

A great way to become more conscious is to search for signs of unconscious cruelty and disconnection in your life. This can be very difficult to do since it also requires courage. We naturally resist facing our own cruelty, but it's there just waiting to be uncovered.

Compassion is the root of unconditional love, a feeling of connectedness with everything that exists. Do you feel connected to yourself? To others? To animals? To all living things? To everything that exists? The more you develop this connection, the more conscious and aware you become.

4. Desire

Desire raises your consciousness. Apathy lowers it.

When you get clear about what you want, such as by setting a goal, you raise your consciousness. Clarity focuses your mind and gives you the power to think and act intelligently. You can feel this effect whenever you think about something you definitely want.

On the other hand, when your desire is unclear, your consciousness is muddled. Your thoughts lack focus and direction, and you merely spin your wheels.

Strive to become more clear about what you truly desire most, and your consciousness will expand.

5. Attention

Attention raises your consciousness. Distraction lowers it.

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Improving your ability to concentrate will make you more conscious. Pick up a rock and give it your full and complete attention, and notice what happens.

But allow your mind to be riddled with distractions, and your consciousness will sink. A distracted mind is a powerless mind.

Meditation is a great way to practice attention and concentration. Sit quietly, breathe deeply, and focus your mind as you do your best to tune out distracting thoughts. This is simple to learn, but it can take a lifetime to master.

6. Knowledge

Knowledge raises your consciousness. Ignorance lowers it.

First and foremost, know thyself. Think deeply about your life, and keep a journal to record your thoughts. Ask questions to which you don't know the answer, and then search for those answers.

Look around you as well, and soak up knowledge like a sponge. Interact with your environment with a sense of curiosity and wonder. Study it. Learn from it. Experiment with it.

Strive to understand reality, including your role in it, as accurately as possible. The more accurate your beliefs about reality are, the more conscious you become.

7. Reason

Reason raises your consciousness. Irrationality lowers it.

Logic is a powerful tool of consciousness when used correctly. It lends structure and substance to thought.

However, the great challenge of logic is the avoidance of false assumptions. A single false assumption can throw off a lifetime of otherwise logical conclusions. So challenge all of your beliefs, and never have too much certainty about those that rest on clouds.

8. Conscious people

Conscious people raise your consciousness. Unconscious people lower it.

Seek out others you perceive to be at a higher level of consciousness than you are. Talk to them, ask questions, and enjoy their presence. Allow their ideas and awareness to infect you, and you'll find yourself expanding in all directions. You'll become more honest, more courageous, more compassionate, and so on.

But spend time with people at a lower level of consciousness, and you'll gradually sink to their level. Their thoughts will infect you as well, causing you to become more dishonest, more fearful, more apathetic, etc.

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Strive to find a balance between spending time with those who raise your consciousness vs. spending time with those you can help. Learn from those who are a little more conscious, and help those who are a little less conscious than you. In this manner you serve the highest good of all, expanding consciousness everywhere.

9. Energy

Energy raises your consciousness. Disease lowers it.

Take care of your physical body, for it is your primary means of interacting with the world. Energy gives you an ongoing flow of vital life experiences. But without energy you starve your consciousness.

Eat with an awareness of what you're consuming. Exercise with an awareness of how you're affecting your body and mind. Before putting anything in your body, consider its effect on your energy, not just in the short term but in the long term as well. Always ask yourself, "Will this produce energy or disease?"

10. Intention

The intention to raise your consciousness raises it. The intention to lower your consciousness lowers it.

Consciousness has the capacity to self-expand or self-contract, just as you have the capacity to grow or to commit suicide. In any given moment, you have the freedom of choice.

By genuinely voicing the intention (or by offering the prayer), "I intend to become more conscious and aware," you will initiate the expansion of your consciousness. Holding the intention to improve in any of the previous nine areas will yield a similar effect.

Alternatively, you are perfectly free to lower your consciousness at any time. While it's unlikely you would choose to do so directly, you can achieve the same effect indirectly by lowering your performance in any of the previous nine areas. By choosing to lie, to succumb to fear, to commit acts of cruelty, to remain ignorant, and so on, you put out the intention to lower your consciousness. And in so doing, you initiate a process that will attract more falsehood, fear, cruelty, ignorance, etc. into your life.

Every thought you hold serves to either expand or contract your consciousness. There is no neutral. So choose wisely.