

UFYB 249: Reality Is Made Up By Your Brain



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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Welcome to *Unf*ck Your Brain*, the only podcast that teaches you how to use psychology, feminism, and coaching, to rewire your brain and get what you want in life. And now here's your host, Harvard Law School grad, feminist rockstar, and master coach, Kara Loewentheil.

Hello my chickens. I have a kind of a peek behind the scenes for you today. And also, an episode that might hurt your brain but that's a good thing. Let it hurt your brain. So, one of the questions that I get asked all the time is kind of once people start thinking about thought work, thinking about subjectivity, thinking about the idea that all human thoughts are made up in our brains, sometimes they fall into this kind of worm hole that's like, well, is anything true or how do I know it's true?

And I answer that from a philosophical perspective on some of the podcast episodes and today I'm going to answer it kind of from a different direction. And the way that this is a sneak peek is this is actually one tiny piece of what I teach inside The Clutch. So, The Clutch is my monthly feminist coaching program. And we're not open right now so don't get too excited but you can join the waitlist that you find when we open up again for new members.

Text your email to +1 347 934 8861. That's +1 347 934 8861. You don't need any code word, you just text your email address. Or you can visit unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch, all one word, to join the waitlist. Anyway, inside The Clutch we have different courses on all different topics. And one of the topics that we have a new course on is called How to Believe New Things. This is something that comes up all the time when people start trying to manage their minds, think intentional thoughts, think more positively.

It's sort of like, well, but how do I even come up with what to think and how do I make myself believe what I come up with if I do come up with anything? So, we have a whole course called How To Believe New Things

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with a bunch of different lessons, and a workbook, and all that stuff. That's what we have for all of our courses.

And so today on the podcast I'm actually going to share one little bit of that course with you. So, I'm going to share one of the audios from the various audios in that course and by audio I mean lesson, I do my lessons as audio so you can listen while you're walking the dog, or driving, or whatever else and it is called Reality is an Hallucination. So, I'm excited for you to let your brain stretch and bend a little bit, think about what I'm teaching in this audio.

And if you like that and you think that you want more, you want to dive deeper into this topic or any other challenge in your life, remember you can join the waitlist to know when we open The Clutch up again, +1 347 934 8861. No code word, just text us your email. Or visit unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch where The Clutch is all one word. Alright, sit back, relax your mind, listen to this sneak peek from The Clutch.

So, listen up, I don't want to blow your mind or freak you out but right now you are actively hallucinating. Now, I am truly talking to you through this audio. You really are a member of The Clutch but your brain is hallucinating all the time. Reality is a hallucination. Now, what do I mean? I'm not saying that you have been dosed with mushrooms without your knowledge. What I'm saying is that your brain is making up everything around you. I don't mean objects don't exist in the world.

What I mean is that our sensory perception of the world are what we see, what we smell, what we hear, what we taste. And everything we think is all mediated by the brain. Our eyes are not a video camera that just capture the truth of what is out there. And that's true on multiple levels. First our perception is mediated by what we're even biologically capable of perceiving.

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Human eyes and the human optical part of the brain can only perceive a certain range of colors for instance. But we know that there are animals in the world that can perceive many more and some perceive many less colors than we do.

What you hear is only a reflection of what the human ear and your ear in particular can actually hear. We know there are noises that humans don't hear because they're too high or too low. And in fact, humans over time age out of hearing certain things even if you have only normal hearing, not even talking about people who have hearing loss in old age although many people do. But there are high pitched noises that only people in their teens and early 20s can hear, that everyone ages out of hearing.

So, on the first level is that we are only perceiving what we are even biologically able to perceive which means that there are already many things outside of us beyond our biological perception. Now, how far you want to take that, whether you want to make that a spiritual or religious belief, however you want to interpret it, it's true biologically. There are things happening around us that we cannot even perceive. Our brains are not all knowing and all seeing.

In addition, our brains are actively curating what information our senses give us. So, your eye is not just perceiving even a limited amount of things that it can perceive. In fact, your brain is editing constantly what it thinks you need to see. So, for instance if you look you probably don't see the nose on your face most of the time or any of the time. That's not because it's not in your field of vision. It's because your brain edits out your nose so that there isn't an object in the middle of your field of vision all the time.

Your brain literally takes the information from your eyes, light bounces off your nose like any other object goes into your eyes. But the part of your brain responsible for decoding the signals from your eyes and your optic nerve says we don't need to see that, just take that out. How many times

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have you looked for something and not really seen it? You were distracted. You looked at an area, you didn't see the thing, you come back, it's right there. Your brain had edited it out, it wasn't looking for it.

Your brain decides what you are literally going to see with your eyes. Think about looking at photos of yourself. Your thoughts about how you look actually influence what you see. Think about how often you have not noticed that somebody got a haircut, or is wearing glasses, or now they're wearing contacts, or something looks different about them. We can go forever not noticing these changes because our brain has created an image of what that person looks like and it's just using that image and not drawing our attention to any changes.

The same is true of your hearing. When you think that you are hearing a certain sound, that's what you're going to hear. When you have a preconception in your mind about let's say what someone's attitude towards you is. And that person sighs, you're going to hear that as a lover's sigh, or a frustrated sigh, or a sad sigh, depending on what your thoughts about the person are and what your thoughts about their thoughts about you are, what you believe that they think.

You're literally going to hear it differently and your brain's going to categorize it differently or your brain's going to completely ignore it. So, your brain is making everything up. It is making up how things smell, how they taste, what you see, what you hear, what it all means. Your brain is constantly assembling all of this information, sound waves, and vibrations, and light bouncing off of objects and going into the lens of your eye. And molecules of smell and what your taste buds experience, and what your fingers touch.

Your brain is taking all that sensory information and it is editing it, and evaluating it, and deciding if it makes sense or doesn't, and if it should show it to you or not. Your brain is making it all up. Your experience of the

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world is essentially one constant hallucination with your brain getting a bunch of sensory input and then creating images, and sounds, and scenes, and experiences for you. You are always hallucinating even when you're sleeping. That's what dreaming is.

So why am I telling you this? It is not to make you distrust your brain, although a little healthy skepticism of our brains is always a good idea. It's because you're making it all up anyway, so you might as well believe what you want. When you really start to take this work to the next level and you really start to be willing to admit how often your brain is already making up what you experience without your conscious direction. That's when you become willing to take the conscious direction, to tell your brain what to think and believe on purpose.

Your brain is already creating your experience of the world. It's not just observing it, it's not just filming it, it's not just hearing it objectively. Your brain is editing it all the time. It's already telling you what to pay attention to and what to not pay attention to, and what evidence to become cognizant of, and what evidence to ignore. It's just doing all of that below the surface unconsciously driven by your unconscious beliefs about what the world's supposed to be like, what you're supposed to experience, what you're supposed to hear, and see, and smell, and taste, and think.

And so thought work, yes, it's about uncovering that, what's going on under the surface but it's also about deciding what to believe on purpose. And there really is no limit to what you are allowed to believe. And when you frame it to yourself as, well, this is reality but I'm going to believe this other thing, you're setting yourself up to sort of try, you already have to overcome this idea that what you are already perceiving is reality. You frame it to yourself as though this is, okay, well, this is reality but I'm going to try to be delusional and believe this other thing.

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There is no reality that we all agree on and that we all perceive the same way. And the human brain is not even capable of actually perceiving true reality with no filter interpretation editing evaluation. Literally there are colors existing your brain will never see. There are sounds existing your brain will never hear. It's not even biologically capable, your body's not biologically capable of doing it. So already we're having an edited sense of the world and that's happening on the thought level also.

Think about your preprogrammed beliefs as being like that biological capacity to see only certain colors or hear only certain sounds. It's like the preset your brain came with but the difference is if your eyes don't have the cones to be able to see the certain color there's nothing we can do about that, it really is a biological limitation, or at least that's my belief. I could totally be wrong. Somebody could be inventing technology right now to solve that.

But what I do know is that your preprogrammed thought limitations about what it's possible for you, about who you are, about who you can be, about what the world is or can be like. Those are not biological. You did not come with those preset the way you did with your hearing and your sight potentially. You came to those beliefs through social programming, through what you learned from your family, your friends, society, the media or whatever. Those are all changeable.

So never frame it to yourself as, well, this is reality, this is the truth but I'm going to try to believe something different. I'm going to try to believe something better. The advanced level of this work is not legitimizing your existing beliefs and your existing perceptions as though they are a 100% objective and true because they're not. Your brain is hallucinating all the time. So, if you're going to be hallucinating you might as well hallucinate something positive on purpose that you want to believe. You may as well choose on purpose what to believe.

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Don't tell yourself that you currently objectively perceive reality and now you're going to try to believe something counter to reality. That's not true. Your brain is constantly making up what you call reality. Some psychological theories of the human mind are that we don't even have a consistent self over time at all, that we are constantly hallucinating a story to create an imagined self of sense over time and any given moment just because that makes us feel safe.

There is no true self over time, that we are just constantly creating one in our minds in every present moment to feel secure and integrated. So, your whole self may be an illusion which by the way is something that many spiritual traditions, particularly from eastern countries and meditation based traditions have taught the whole time, that the ego and the self is an illusion. So, this isn't new. We're just looking at how we can intervene in it consciously and deploy it to our advantage.

So, whatever you're going to choose to believe just understand that you're already making it all up. You're already making up everything you think, and feel, and smell, and hear, and taste, and see, so you might as well choose to direct that process on purpose.

If you're loving what you're learning in the podcast, you have got to come check out *The Clutch*. *The Clutch* is the podcast community for all things *Unf*ck Your Brain*. It's where you can get individual help applying the concepts to your own life.

It's where you can learn new coaching tools not shared on the podcast that will blow your mind even more. And it's where you can hang out and connect over all things thought work with other podcast chickens just like you and me. It's my favorite place on earth and it will change your life, I guarantee it. Come join us at www.unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch. That's www.unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch. I can't wait to see you there.

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