

# Why Did You Do That? Understanding Your Success Mechanism

By Paul J. Meyer

You might occasionally remark aloud to yourself, “Now why did I do that?” We often find our actions mysterious, but there is a reason why you do what you do. The fact is that from the moment of your birth, your mind began to be *programmed* by your environment and by the people who were around you, mainly your parents. Certain things were observed by you and said to you that formed the self-image you have of yourself today.

Regrettably, most of us received some very negative input early in life and, as a result, are walking around with a rather low and inaccurate opinion of ourselves. You may have been told you were not very smart or talented or attractive and, as a result, you believed this to be true. I’ve met people who were incredibly smart, talented, and attractive who believed they were a total mess, a complete failure. The *subconscious* part of their mind, the part that functions under the radar of our awareness, had simply accepted the information it received during childhood as being true and recorded it as fact.

So in answer to that initial question, “Why did I do that?” the answer becomes quite clear. You were pre-programmed to react to that person or situation automatically. You were conditioned to respond in that exact manner without any thought or evaluation.

## Your subconscious mind is in charge!

If you have had the experience of setting some ambitious and exciting goals, but found you were unable to bring them to fruition, the programming your subconscious mind received is most assuredly the problem.

Your subconscious mind is, in fact, a *goal-seeking mechanism* that works on information it receives from your environment, your thoughts, feelings, and past conditioning. Its job is to carry out the instructions or programming it has received and to *make sure* that everything you attempt to do lines up with the data that is stored there. In other words, if deep down you believe yourself to be a failure, your subconscious mind will “help” you continue to fail.

## Your inner self versus your self-image

The real truth is that you have a unique *inner self* that is good and beautiful and makes up the core of your being; here reside your needs, desires, values, and emotions. In contrast, your *self-image* is merely a picture you hold in your mind of yourself based on all the pre-programming you received.

In essence every person is made up of three different people:

- The me I am; the real and creative inner self
- The me I think I am; the self image based on pre-programming
- The me I wish I were; the person you desire to be

If your *inner self* and your *self-image* are closely aligned, you will be extremely creative and capable while pursuing your goals and will become the person you desire. However, if your inner self and your self-image are far apart, your view is distorted and you will be unable to accomplish worthy goals. A distorted self-image will interpret any negative feedback it receives as failure instead of seeing it as useful information to be used to alter your course in order to assist you in reaching success.

## Putting yourself in charge!

Before you get discouraged, let me assure you there is a way out of this dilemma. You can take the steps needed to put yourself in charge, to change the direction of your life. The answer is in the use of *affirmations* and *visualization*.

An affirmation is a statement that describes your condition as it will be when you have reached your goal, even though you have not yet begun the process. As you have learned, your mind accepts whatever it hears as truth and records it as a fact. So when you say aloud using the present tense, “I am enjoying my new job promotion and the increased salary it brings” your mind assumes you have already arrived. Affirmations must be tailor made for your specific goals and then written down and *repeated often and consistently* for them to be effective.

Visualization is the process of closing your eyes and creating pictures in your mind, almost like a movie, that show you enjoying and having already accomplished your dreams and goals. Just as with affirmations, you must do visualizations often for them to be effective.

In time, if you are persistent, your mind will believe both your affirmations and your visualizations as fact. The new data you continue to send to your subconscious will override your previous negative programming and allow you to move forward in a positive, pro-active way toward realizing your goals. Why not get started today!

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**Paul J. Meyer**, best-selling *New York Times* author and founder of the Success Motivation Institute has written two dozen full-length programs plus numerous books on attitude, motivation, goal setting, management, leadership, and time management. In his inspirational and instructive CD, *Your Success Mechanism* available at [www.pauljmeyer.com](http://www.pauljmeyer.com), Paul shares the principles of becoming the success he is today. Get your copy today!

