

The Magic of Mindfulness – Seeing Things as They Really Are

When the mindfulness of a samurai swordsman fails, he loses his life. When we lose mindfulness in daily life, something similar happens. We become so entangled in our own thoughts and emotions that we lose contact with the bigger picture. Our perspective narrows, we lose our way, and we end up doing and saying things that bring suffering and regret. On the other hand, being mindful allows us to recognize our options, choose our responses, and take control over the direction of our lives. It also gives us the power to alter our past conditioning and become the person we want to be. And, most importantly, mindfulness also leads to Insight, Wisdom and Awakening.

But what is mindfulness? “Mindfulness” is an unfortunate translation of the Pali word *sati* – unfortunate in that it suggests attentiveness or remembering to pay attention. This fails to capture the full meaning and importance of *sati*. We are always paying attention to something, even without *sati*, but *sati* means, among other things, paying attention to the right things in a skillful way. A more appropriate but clumsy phrase might be “powerfully conscious awareness” or “fully conscious awareness”. I use the term mindfulness because people are familiar with it. But as you will see, mindfulness means increasing the overall conscious power of the mind, and optimizing the interaction between attention and awareness.

To really understand mindfulness, we need to know what attention and peripheral awareness normally do and how they work together. This will also help us to see how ordinary attention and peripheral awareness can become mindfulness, and how to apply skills learned on the cushion in daily life.

ATTENTION AND PERIPHERAL AWARENESS

Conscious experience takes two different forms – attention and peripheral awareness. The focus of attention dominates conscious experience while peripheral awareness includes everything else you are conscious of.

If you compare conscious awareness to vision, the relationship between attention and peripheral awareness is like visual focus and peripheral vision. Fix your eyes on an external object. Notice how your peripheral vision takes in other information at the same time you are focused on the object. Now think about your experience of attention and peripheral awareness in daily life. You pay attention to some things while remaining peripherally aware of others. For example, you may be paying attention to something someone is saying. At the same time you are peripherally aware of the flavor of the tea you’re drinking, traffic noises in the background, feelings of comfort, and so forth. Just as with vision, you are conscious of many objects in peripheral awareness while being more fully conscious of specific objects in the focus of attention. When you shift your visual focus to an object in peripheral vision, as it becomes the new focus, what was at the focus before can still be seen in the periphery. As attention moves from one object to another – from the conversation to the mug of the tea – you become more fully conscious of each object in turn while remaining peripherally aware of others.

In almost every waking moment you are responding to some external or internal event through your emotions, thoughts, speech or actions. Most of the time your actual response consists of one out of several possible alternatives, whether or not you are aware of having made

a choice. Attention and peripheral awareness are two different ways of “knowing”, each with its own distinctive characteristics and functions, and both provide information crucial to producing an appropriate response: Attention singles certain things out from everything else so they can be analyzed and interpreted. An especially important function of attention is discriminating between conflicting pieces of information. Once identified and evaluated, any object of attention may then be further investigated, thought about, judged and responded to. So that this can happen quickly and effectively, attention immediately converts an object that isn’t already a concept or an abstract idea into one. Peripheral awareness, on the other, hand is holistic, open and inclusive. It is only minimally conceptual, and is concerned with the *relationships* of objects – to each other and to the whole. The role of peripheral awareness in determining your response to events is to provide important information about the background and context – where you are, what else is happening around you, what you are doing and why.

Attention and peripheral awareness work hand in hand, one performing its analytical function the other a contextual function. *Less than adequate performance by either attention or peripheral awareness, or an inadequate interaction between the two, can lead you to respond to events with inappropriate emotions, poor decisions and regrettable actions.*

If you are hiking a mountain trail and take a tumble or get bitten by a snake, peripheral awareness has failed. If you take a wrong turn and lose the trail, your attention has failed. If you’ve ever mistaken sarcasm for praise (or vice versa), had a salesman’s enthusiasm cause you to overlook a serious problem, or become angry with someone who was trying to help you, you’ve experienced a failure of both.

All new sensory stimuli, thoughts, and feelings appear first in peripheral awareness where a preliminary evaluation determines which, if any of them, will actually become a focus of attention.¹ Filtering out irrelevant information is one of the main functions of peripheral awareness, and attention depends upon peripheral awareness for the selection of appropriate objects. This is why specific objects often seem to “pop out” of peripheral awareness to become objects of attention. And attention often “browses” the contents of peripheral awareness in search of something relevant or important to focus on as well. Also, whenever your attention is honing in on something, peripheral awareness serves as a watchful alert system to detect anything new or unusual. If some rare or unexpected event is detected, peripheral awareness can disengage and reorient attention. *Peripheral awareness allows you to use attention with maximum effectiveness. Without it, attention moves blindly, without guidance and oblivious to the unexpected.*

Say, for example, you’re walking and talking with a friend, immersed in a conversation. You might notice a shape moving toward the two of you from the corner of your eye. Peripheral awareness alerts attention, which rapidly processes the information – “we are walking in the bike lane and a biker is coming toward us!” – so you grab your friend and step out of the way.

Fortunately, not everything that happens needs to be analyzed, otherwise attention would quickly become overwhelmed. Many things, like brushing a fly away from your face, are dealt with entirely in peripheral awareness. And while attention is thorough, it’s also rather slow. Because information processing is not as extensive, peripheral awareness can respond much

¹ Peripheral awareness involves very large numbers of serial processes occurring simultaneously in multiple sensory streams, what is called massively parallel processing. The purpose of this processing is assembling context and searching for salience, monitoring for flagged issues of importance, and initiating automatic motor responses.

more quickly.² In situations that demand a swift reaction, such as a child running into the street in front of a car, peripheral awareness initiates rapid, automatic responses for which attention would be inadequate. *If peripheral awareness fails, attention can't take over these functions so these events are reacted to in a completely automatic way, without the benefit of conscious processing, or not at all.*

Attention is usually associated with a strong concern for “self”. This makes sense considering attention’s role in evaluating the potential significance of things. But it also means that the perception of objects by attention can easily be distorted by desire, fear, aversion, and other emotions. Much of the time, attention not only isolates things based on self-interest, it also identifies with external objects -- “my” car -- or mental states and emotions -- “I am” angry, happy, sad, etc. Peripheral awareness, on the other hand, is not so “personal” and perceives things more “as they actually are”. And when peripheral awareness is strongly present, attention can also be objective, seeing things more “as they are in themselves”. This illustrates how attention and awareness balance each other when both are present. *When peripheral awareness fades, perception becomes self-centered and distorted.*

Peripheral awareness doesn't usually incorporate a distinct sense of self. Take a moment to notice how your physical body is perceived in peripheral awareness. Rather than being something separate, it is experienced as an integral part of and embedded within a continuous field of sensory experience. Likewise, feeling states and mental activities appear in peripheral awareness as part of a bigger picture instead of being identified with. You may be peripherally aware, for example, that some annoyance is arising. This is very different from having the thought, “I am annoyed”.

Finally, conscious experience can be extrospective, looking outward toward objects external to the mind (i.e. the body and things known by the physical senses) or introspective, looking inward to observe thoughts, feelings, intentions and the state and activities of the mind. Both attention and peripheral awareness can be applied to all external and *most* internal objects. *But only peripheral awareness can observe the overall state of the mind and what the mind is doing while it is actually doing it.* This introspective awareness in which the mind watches itself, “standing back” to observe its own state and activities, is **metacognitive awareness**.³

Activities of the mind include things like thinking, listening, remembering, etc. Because movements of attention *are* an activity of the mind, when attention is directed introspectively, that movement replaces all other activity and so it's all you find. Likewise for overall states of the mind. Mental states are global phenomena, things like agitation, peacefulness, irritation, joy, etc. Attention always isolates some aspect of conscious awareness from the rest, so attention can't observe mental states directly. Try directing your attention to observe your mental state. Either you won't be able to find anything, or else you will find a memory trace from peripheral awareness of what your mental state was before you looked. If attention finds the memory trace of a gross mental state like annoyance, it is immediately conceptualized as the thought, “I am annoyed”.

² The very extensive information processing in attention is performed by a relatively small number of mental processes at any one time, therefore is predominantly serial. This is another important factor affecting the difference in speed between peripheral awareness compared and attention.

³ As a part of the training in mindfulness, you cultivate both extrospective and introspective forms of peripheral awareness but, at the higher Stages, you focus exclusively on introspective awareness.

MINDFULNESS DEFINED

From this brief overview, you can appreciate how interdependent attention and peripheral awareness really are. Mindfulness can be defined as an *optimal interaction* between, and even a merging together of attention and peripheral awareness. More specifically, mindfulness involves a conscious experience that is more powerful, with the result that peripheral awareness is clearer and attention gets used in a more appropriate way: purposefully, in the present moment, and without becoming mired in judgment and projection.

Since it is important that attention and awareness work together optimally, let's give some thought to what might keep this from happening and how mindfulness might be improved. First, peripheral awareness is stimulus driven, arising automatically in response to internal and external stimuli, and so it isn't really under your control the way attention is. *This means it's easy to neglect peripheral awareness in favor of attention.* However, attention and peripheral awareness function together, interact with each other, and respond reciprocally to each other. So attention influences peripheral awareness, and you can affect it indirectly through intentional activities. For example, by repeatedly engaging with particular objects or topics of interest, attention shapes the selection process in peripheral awareness. *And by simply intending to be aware, peripheral awareness is strengthened.*

The other problem is that conscious awareness is a limited resource, so there will always be tradeoffs between attention and peripheral awareness. In a relaxed state, awareness tends to open and the intensity of attention dissipates. Relax even more and attention increasingly fades, eventually leading to dullness. On the other hand, when attention focuses intensely on an object, peripheral awareness of the background fades. Intensify your focus enough, and the context and guidance provided by peripheral awareness disappears completely.

Situations that command all of your attention – a fight with your partner, an urgent problem, falling in love – usurp all of your conscious capacity. You also lose awareness when multi-tasking because attention is rapidly shifting back and forth between objects.⁴ *Mindfulness will always fail in these circumstances – unless you learn to increase the total power of conscious awareness available for both attention and awareness.* Even though conscious awareness is a limited resource, fortunately it is also an expandable resource! Cultivating mindfulness means working with both peripheral awareness and attention in a way that increases the overall power of conscious awareness. This increase makes tradeoffs less of a problem.

When you cultivate mindfulness, attention plays a more appropriate role within the larger context of a broad and powerful awareness. Experience becomes richer, fuller, more satisfying and less personal. You are more fully present, happier and more at ease, not so easily caught up in life's stories and the mind's melodramas. When the investigative powers of your attention are more appropriately and effectively utilized, when you gain greater objectivity and clarity, and

⁴ Earlier we compared the relationship between attention and awareness to that between visual focus and peripheral vision. Notice that if your eyes are constantly moving from object to object, you lose peripheral vision. When attention is shifting rapidly, the holistic and relational perspective of awareness is replaced by a stream of highly subjective impressions and projections. Since peripheral awareness is required for mindfulness, you can never develop mindfulness without also cultivating stability of attention. And so long as attention is alternating between the meditation object and subtle distractions, you won't be able to achieve powerful metacognitive introspective awareness in meditation either.

when you have an enhanced awareness of the whole, *Insight*⁵ arises.

CULTIVATING MINDFULNESS

Throughout the Stages of meditation, you are systematically training attention and peripheral awareness in order to develop a powerful mindfulness. This cultivation of mindfulness involves two skills. First is sustaining peripheral awareness while focusing attention closely. At first (Stage 2) this means keeping your attention on the meditation object, but not becoming so focused that you lose peripheral awareness of body sensations and external stimuli. But as you progress (Stage 3 onwards) it means sustaining peripheral awareness even though you are focusing more and more closely on the meditation object all the time. The second skill is becoming more introspectively aware of everything happening in the mind. Introspective awareness allows you to overcome the distraction and dullness that are major obstacles in Stages 4 through 6.⁶ By the end of Stage 6 you will have perfected metacognitive introspective awareness, the mind watching the mind.⁷

The third part to mindfulness training is increasing the power of your conscious awareness, which is not some mysterious or extraordinary process. Like strengthening a muscle, it simply involves enhancing a natural capacity, which you do by observing in a way that emphasizes *both* attention and awareness *simultaneously*. The fully alert conscious awareness experienced in a life-threatening situation gives an idea of what is possible.

Reflect on how the acuity of your conscious experience fluctuates on any given day. Sometimes you're alert and clear, other times drowsy and dull. A life-threatening situation provides an extreme example of fully alert conscious awareness. Time slows down, you become acutely aware of every minute detail – every color, shape, sound and sensation stands out with an unusual vividness. You may also have the feeling of being an outside observer witnessing events. Athletes refer to this hyper-aware state as being “in the zone”. A lack of mental energy and subsequent dullness of attention and awareness characterizes the other end of the continuum. With a lethargic mind and diminished perception you miss what's happening around you and often misinterpret what you do perceive. Severe fatigue or alcohol can induce extreme dullness. Deep sleep characterizes the ultimate state of dullness. These experiences demonstrate the range of conscious capabilities of the human mind. If you compare your normal level of conscious awareness with the heightened intensity of an athlete in the zone or a life-threatening experience, you realize daily life consists mostly of varying degrees of dullness. As you progress through each Stage in this practice, *you move steadily away from dullness and toward enhanced states of consciousness.*

⁵ *Insight*, or *vipassana* in Pali, refers to a profound, intuitive understanding, different from intellectual knowledge. Insight arises from direct experience of the true nature of reality, from penetrating the veil of appearances and seeing things as they really are.

⁶ Just as it is impossible to develop mindfulness without stability of attention, you can't achieve truly stable attention without mindfulness in the form of introspective awareness.

⁷ With metacognitive awareness comes direct and immediate knowledge of what is happening in the mind, the causes and potential purposes behind what is happening, and its appropriateness in terms of your values, intentions, and objectives. *Sati* (mindfulness) in combination with *sampajañña* (clear knowing) is the “right mindfulness” that fulfills the purpose of meditation by bringing about Insight and Awakening. Metacognitive introspective awareness is *sati-sampajañña*.

You begin to increase the power of conscious awareness at Stage 3 when you push vividness and intensity of attention as far as you can without losing peripheral awareness. At Stage 5 you increase the power of conscious awareness by vigorously trying to detect very subtle sensations at the focus of attention without losing peripheral awareness. In Stage 6 you dramatically expand the scope of attention to include the entire body while still focusing on extremely subtle sensations. In each of these Stages the mind is “forced” to supply more energy to both awareness and attention. In Stage 7 you go the opposite way and narrow the scope of attention intensely, honing in on the constantly changing details of sensations.⁸ Because you’ve mastered introspective awareness in the previous Stage, you can focus powerfully without losing awareness. The power of conscious awareness reaches its fullest development in the 7th Stage and the culmination of mindfulness occurs in Stage 8.

In summary, mindfulness training improves the *quality* of both peripheral awareness and attention, transforming the interaction between them in a number of important ways:

- Peripheral awareness doesn’t fade when attention is focused intensely on something.
- With more access to the total processing power of the mind, peripheral awareness performs its holistic and contextual functions more effectively.
- With the capacity to process information more extensively, peripheral awareness performs its selective function more effectively.
- Attention becomes more effective because it is more consistently focused on the objects of greatest importance.
- The intensity and clarity that attention gains contributes further to its increased effectiveness.
- Attention is less mired in subjectivity and projection, exhibiting greater objectivity, and more of the “seeing things as they are” quality of awareness because it is combined a more powerful peripheral awareness

This is mindfulness!

HOW MINDFULNESS WORKS – AND THE MAGIC OF MINDFULNESS

Now that you know what it is, you can probably see why mindfulness is worth cultivating. Over and over again, dullness, emotional stress, becoming overly focused on something, or having your attention scattered in too many directions causes you to lose mindfulness. For example, if someone says something that pushes one of your buttons – your partner, boss, a neighbor or a stranger – feelings of annoyance, anger and frustration arise. Without mindfulness, you react out of emotion instead of responding rationally and intentionally, often creating more problems for yourself. At the very least, you suffer the unpleasantness of these feelings, and that can sometimes spoil your mood and reduce your ability to function for hours. But if you can remain mindful, attentive to your feelings, aware of the situation and the potential consequences of your actions, you can moderate your behavior in positive ways. Simply being aware that the unpleasantness you are experiencing has more to do with your emotional reaction than the triggering event allows you to let go of those emotions more easily. *Mindfully acknowledging your emotions and taking responsibility for your reactions allows you to recognize more options, choose better responses, and take control of your actions.*

However, responding to life situations in a healthier way is just the result of attention and awareness working together properly. And as beneficial as that is, the “magic” of mindfulness is

⁸ This frequently leads to a direct experience of and *Insight* into the impermanence and emptiness of phenomena.

something else entirely, something with far more profound effects. Mindfulness training is being used in the management of a variety of psychological and behavioral problems such as stress, anger, anxiety, phobias, compulsive behaviors, eating disorders, addiction, and depression. People who have cultivated mindfulness are more attuned and less reactive. They demonstrate increased self-regulation and self-awareness, enhanced quality of communication and relationships, heightened clarity of thinking and intentions, and increased resilience to change. How does mindfulness work this type of magic? The short answer is mindfulness reprograms deep habit patterns of the unconscious mind. Before giving a fuller explanation, let's examine the nature of these unconscious habits that create so many problems.

The cumulative effects of your past have shaped and conditioned the person you are today. The imprints left by those experiences exert a powerful influence on your emotional reactions, speech and behavior – usually without your being aware of it. Unconscious conditioning is like a set of invisible programs. These programs were created by actual events, and your reaction to these experiences may have been appropriate at the time. But they have become programmed patterns, submerged in the unconscious. They are divorced from conscious experience in real time, except when certain experiences trigger them. Over and over, certain situations trigger strong emotions that drive behavior in particular directions. When that happens, you usually become so focused on the triggering event and your emotions that no new information reaches these unconscious programs, and so they never change.

Think about how much of daily life actually consists of mindless, automatic behaviors driven by unconscious conditioning. These are intermingled with intentional actions, of course. You have to consciously decide what to do or say if an automatic response isn't immediately available. (And especially when you are trying to cope with the consequences of previous conditioned behaviors!) But even these conscious choices are strongly influenced by conditioned mental states, feelings, and what are sometimes called "intuitions." (These intuitions are deeply held views about other people, ourselves, the world, moral values, and the very nature of reality. They serve as powerful but completely unconscious influences guiding conscious decision making processes in unseen ways.)

Mindfulness works its magic by giving unconscious processes new, real time information. A non-reactive mindfulness allows awareness and attention to inform the unconscious program that the reaction it produces is not appropriate to the current situation, that the results of those programmed behaviors are harmful rather than helpful. Then reprogramming in response to this new information can happen at the deep, unconscious levels of the mind. The longer you can apply mindfulness to a particular situation, the more new information becomes available and the more reprogramming takes place. And every time you evoke mindfulness in a similar situation, still more reprogramming happens. Ultimately, it is mindfulness that will determine whether you live your life reactively, out of past conditioning and unseen programming, or overcome that programming and live with wisdom.

MINDFULNESS IN DAILY LIFE

Opportunities to apply mindfulness to unconscious conditioning arise every time some life event triggers one of these programs. In the example above where someone did something to make you angry, mindfulness may have helped you to respond to the situation in a better way, but the most important result of being mindful is that it changes your programming; it alters the way you are likely to react in the future. The emotions you experience next time something

similar happens will not be as strong, and it will be even easier to let go of them. You will be more likely to respond wisely and less likely to react mindlessly, and that eventually will become your new conditioning.

But what if your past conditioning and your emotions were so strong that you didn't succeed in moderating your behavior at all? That's all right, because to the degree that you were able to remain mindful, new information became available to unconscious processes, reprogramming occurred, and you will be more successful next time. Even if you lose mindfulness completely in the heat of the situation, afterwards when mindfulness has returned you can reflect on what happened, your reactions, and the effects they had on you and others. If you recall the events vividly, examining them honestly and non-judgmentally, it will begin the process of reprogramming and make it easier to stay mindful in the future. This is most definitely not what usually happens. Typically, you either want to avoid remembering what happened because of regret or embarrassment, or else you rationalize and justify what happened, putting the responsibility somewhere else. It's also not the same as immersing yourself in guilt, blame, and self-recrimination. When that happens, you've just been caught in another bit of unwholesome programming.

Most systems of mindfulness training assume that if you spend enough time every day practicing mindfulness on the cushion, some of that mindfulness is naturally going to spill over into your daily life. And this does happen. But it's much more effective if you intentionally practice being mindful off the cushion. It will be hardest to stay mindful in the kind of challenging situations when it matters the most. Your best hope of being mindful on those occasions is to practice mindfulness the rest of the time, when it's much easier.

MINDFULNESS ON THE CUSHION

Daily life is not the only arena in which increased mindfulness can radically transform the conditioning that drives us. Mindfulness can bring about a powerful reprogramming of the mind during meditation that isn't dependent upon specific triggering events. Few of us make life's journey without accumulating psychologically traumatic experiences. Most of us have a "backlog" of emotionally charged events never fully reconciled with the person we've since become. These unresolved pieces of personal history remain deeply buried in the psyche, too painful or too laden with inner conflict to be confronted and resolved directly. Although they may be long forgotten and their current influence goes unrecognized, they participate in a wide range of conditioned actions and reactions. To a large extent, these conditioned behaviors and reactions define who we are, our "personality." If you are like most of us, many of these so-called personality characteristics don't serve you particularly well. The calmness of the mind in Stage 4 creates an opportunity for these emotionally charged contents of the subconscious to make their way into consciousness.

Take, for example, someone with a naturally rambunctious temperament whose second grade teacher had little patience and frequently sent them to the principal's office. This might have left them with a lifetime tendency to resent and fear authority, mixed with feelings of guilt and personal inadequacy. These emotions might surface in meditation, seemingly from nowhere. If the emotions are met with acceptance and observed with mindfulness, memories of the childhood events may come up as well.

As mundane distractions and mental "noise" fade away, memories, emotions, thoughts, and images that drive unconscious programs come to the surface where they are exposed to the illuminating power of mindfulness. As a result, deep unconscious processes are made "aware"

you are no longer in the original situation – the circumstances that created them no longer exist. The emotions and reactions they produce only cause harm to yourself and others. Even the person they are happening to has changed. Reprogramming occurs at a very fundamental level and has a profound and far reaching impact, transforming the very structure of your personality. As a result of this reprogramming by mindfulness, the unconscious no longer generates once appropriate but now problematic emotional reactions and behaviors.

Difficult past experiences are not the only source of unwholesome conditioning that afflicts us. Many of us have also internalized dysfunctional or conflicting belief systems due to our cultural or religious conditioning. Examples are certain notions of sin, moral judgments, and racist or sexist views. These inner conflicts can manifest in both daily life and meditation as feelings of guilt, fear, animosity, doubt or restless discomfort. When this happens in meditation, the emotions are often followed by explicit recognition of the conditioned behaviors and inner conflicts these views have generated. Mindfulness can then work its “magic” on them as well.

The purification process that happens in meditation rapidly accomplishes more than the piecemeal process of confronting individual instances of conditioning in daily life ever can. The unconscious conditioning emerges in meditation is much more fundamental, therefore mindfulness in meditation can radically transform the way you think, act and feel. You become less susceptible to destructive emotions like anxiety, fear, anger, aggression, despair, guilt, shame, worry, envy, avarice, lust, doubt, insecurity and so forth.

MINDFULNESS, INSIGHT, AND THE END OF SUFFERING

In case this isn't already enough to make you appreciate the value of cultivating mindfulness, here is what the Buddha had to say:

“There is a way to be purified, to overcome sorrows and grief, to release suffering, to secure the right path to realize nirvana. This is to be mindful.”

Unquestionably, the most valuable result of mindfulness is the radical reprogramming of our most deeply held intuitive views -- of who and what we are, and the very nature of reality. Our deepest intuition of reality is that we are a separate self in a world of other beings and objects, and that our happiness and suffering are entirely dependent upon that world. This universally held view is the result of an *innate* programming that is continually reinforced by social and cultural conditioning. But it is a misperception⁹ of reality. The unavoidable consequence of this misperception is the compulsion, also inherent, to pursue objects and experiences that are pleasurable, and to avoid those that are painful. As paradoxical as it may seem, this craving is the actual cause of suffering, and it is also what makes us do things that contribute to the suffering of others.

This isn't the place to elaborate on this last point. But, meditation leads to a series of profound experiences that reveal that the external world is not the source of our happiness and suffering. The relationship between ourselves and others is radically different than we think. And we ourselves and world around us are not what they appear to be. When the illuminating power of mindfulness is applied to these meditation experiences, the resulting Insights reprogram our intuitive view of reality at the most profound level. This is how mindfulness overcomes sorrow and grief and brings release from suffering.

⁹ *Avijjā* in Pali and *avidyā* in Sanskrit, often translated as "ignorance" but more accurately as "delusion", refers to a deluded understanding of how things really are, i.e. a misperception, rather than a lack of information.