



What You Don't Know You Know: Our Hidden Motives in Life, Business, and Everything Else

By Ken Eisold

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The unconscious sprang to the attention of the West a hundred years ago, and we are still struggling to absorb its full impact. It was one thing to understand the concept, to see it and believe it, but another to live with it, to take in fully its challenge to our deepest cultural assumptions. Today, as we expand our understanding of its reach, we are still coming to grips with what it means. This “new unconscious” is driven by the identities we assume, the groups we belong to, the ideas we inherit, the languages we use—all the elements that provide meaning and structure to our world.

What You Don't Know You Know is about this emergent understanding, and how it forces us to rethink our relationships with each other as well as our beliefs about what it means to be a person, to have a self. It is for all those who want a better understanding of the complexity of human motivation, whether as an executive faced with employees resisting change, an elected official trying to forge agreements among competing interests, a consultant brought in to restructure an ailing corporation, or individuals struggling to understand their relationships and why they do the things they do. All too often, our actions do not conform to our explicit intentions or to common sense. We are more constricted than we think, but sometimes we are also smarter.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Ken Eisold is one of the few analysts who have offered both a meaningful analysis of our profession's difficulties and a vision for a more vibrant future...Eisold has offered a clear-eyed critique of our profession's shortcomings while also identifying its strengths and opportunities." —Steven D. Axelrod, PhD, *Psychoanalytic Psychology*

"Eisold has nailed the never-more-important topic of the role of the unconscious in our thoroughly modern lives. He not only shows us how we avoid taking a deeper look inwards at our own peril, but he throws a life raft to the psychoanalytic profession along the way. It's a must-read for anyone who believes that there's more to our world than meets the eye, and who wishes to understand it. Eisold's work is the culmination of an extraordinary career helping individuals and organizations know themselves, and we're better off as a result of his efforts. This gem of a book is a tour-de-force."—Kerry J. Sulkowicz, MD

"*What You Don't Know You Know* makes the eye-opening case that the unconscious is everywhere. It underpins every moment of our existence, just as much in the social arena as in individual life. Citing myriad compelling contemporary examples, Kenneth Eisold urges us to see that, if we intend to preserve our freedom--our freedom to think and feel, yes, but also our political and economic freedom--we must acknowledge the power and ubiquity of what we don't know we know. I'm convinced that he's right. His book is a must-read."—Donnel B. Stern, Ph.D., author of *Unformulated Experience* and *Partners in Thought*

"Ken Eisold's book is a bold undertaking. He takes the unconscious, which for too long has been relegated to the couch, and shows how it permeates language, cognition, organizational life and politics. This rediscovered unconscious will increasingly shape our day-to-day experience as the speed of change, and the unpredictable evolution of our own institutions, increase both felt risks as well as opportunities. This book is the beginning of our collective study of what Ken calls the "new unconscious." Read it!"—Larry Hirschhorn, Ph.D. and Principal, CFAR, Inc.

"Ken Eisold provides a nicely written account of the many ways unconscious processes appear in our lives. An especially attractive feature in his telling is that unconscious material can be friendly as well as fearful. Make friends with your unconscious, and it can serve you well."—Clayton P. Alderfer, Ph.D.

"In this fascinating and wide ranging book Eisold takes us on a tour of leading edge developments in the exploration of the role of unconscious processes in everyday life. Deftly roaming across fields such as psychology, politics, organizational dynamics, public policy and conflict resolution, Eisold provides us with an exciting glimpse of this emerging interdisciplinary understanding of the unconscious that leads to a radical revisioning of human motivation as well as the nature of the relationship between the self and others."—Jeremy D. Safran, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, New School for Social Research

About the Author

Ken Eisold, PhD, is a practicing psychoanalyst and organizational consultant. He has served as president of the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations and as a director of the Organizational Program at the William Alanson White Institute, which he helped to found. For several years he directed the A. K. Rice Institute's National Conference on Leadership and Authority. He lives and works in New York City.

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More and more sophisticated services are being developed to respond to our increasingly complex awareness of the layers and the depth of human behavior. And while they increase, new problems and new tragedies leap to the front page, reminding us of how much we still do not understand. What drives some schoolchildren to massacre their schoolmates, and what keeps their classmates often unable to speak what they know? How can corporate executives collude in illegal schemes that obviously cannot be sustained, that are doomed to be uncovered or to fail? How can experienced government officials with access to sophisticated intelligence ignore key information and make disastrous decisions? Why are advertisers, media specialists, and spin-doctors more influential in our politics than policy makers? What drives a sect to commit mass suicide?

Many psychoanalysts are working to understand such questions. Trained to probe into the murky realms of half-knowledge and denial, the unwanted truths and disclaimed perceptions that form the unconscious layers of human motivation, they see opportunities to expand the scope of their work. Others have trained themselves to work with organizations and schools, government agencies, executives, boards of directors, and others, and they struggle to grasp the paradoxical and self-defeating human behaviors they encounter.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ruth Mahan:

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Patricia Rhee:

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Dan Flood:

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you, still dripping wet every ideas and writing skill only for eliminate your personal hunger then you still doubt What You Don't Know You Know: Our Hidden Motives in Life, Business, and Everything Else as good book not simply by the cover but also with the content. This is one book that can break don't judge book by its protect, so do you still needing an additional sixth sense to pick this specific!? Oh come on your examining sixth sense already said so why you have to listening to yet another sixth sense.

Aaron Thomsen:

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