

Pursuing Non-Conscious Goals

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You're at dinner with your date's family and you're already feeling slightly nervous, anxious and wondering what type of an impression you will make. All of a sudden, your date's little nephew comes running up to you and hands you bits of food from his mouth. How disgusted would you feel?

In a new article to be published in an upcoming issue of *Psychological Science*, a journal of the Association for Psychological Science, authors Ran Hassin and Daniella Shidlovski from The Hebrew University suggest that if you subconsciously want to impress the family, and taking the food would help you do so, you will be less disgusted than if you didn't have such non-conscious motivation.

To test the effect of non-conscious goal pursuits on how we experience emotions, the authors increased female participants non-conscious wish to become mothers, and assessed their disgust from goal-relevant pictures of dirty diapers or runny noses, that evoked feelings of mild disgust, and goal-irrelevant pictures, which included pictures from various categories, like food.

According to Hassin, "we found that when you unconsciously want to pursue motherhood, you're less disgusted by pictures of runny noses and dirty diapers", he continues to say, "this only happens if you can really become a mother, or during the days in the month in which you can become pregnant." According to Hassin, this is the first scientific data to show that our conscious feelings are determined by non-conscious motivations and goals.

"This research paves the way for a different understanding and more investigations for how feelings come about", he concludes.