

Searching for the Source of Consciousness

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Watching a movie, smelling the roses, feeling the warmth of the sun—these are seemingly simple things we experience all thanks to consciousness. Yet where exactly does consciousness come from? The brain—obviously—but for psychological scientist Geraint Rees that answer isn't good enough.

Rees studies consciousness and how it correlates with brain activity at the University College London Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience, UK. He and his team investigate how visual attention changes our perception of the world and affects visual awareness using fMRI, visual psychophysics, and transcranial magnetic stimulation. They also study how awareness is impacted by common neurological disorders such as stroke. "If we could understand at a very simple level the neural processes and the brain structures that are associated with that [consciousness]," says Rees, "we could not only understand that phenomenon but help people who have disorders of consciousness."

At the [24th APS Annual Convention](#) in Chicago, Illinois, Rees, will discuss *Political Attitudes and Brain Structure at the Invited Symposium* "[Political Ideology 'From the Bottom Up': Origins, Manifestations, Consequences.](#)" *Rees points out that when we pick up a sport, the skills we learn and experiences we have change our brain structure. The same holds true, he says, as we acquire our political beliefs.* "What we think underlies political attitudes," says Rees, "are some aspects of our basic dimensions of personality. We are starting explore how those relate political attitudes."

Rees spoke with APS about consciousness, his research, and his upcoming talk at the 24th APS Annual Convention. Watch the answers below:

Introduction:

Question 1: What will you be speaking on at the 24th APS Annual Convention?

Question 2: How did you become interested in psychological science?

Question 3: Why is it important to study human consciousness?

Question 4: What topics are you currently researching?

Question 5: Why is interdisciplinary collaboration important?

Question 6: What is the University College London Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience?