

What are the volitional processes of the mind?

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◆ A human is a goal-processing system

- ◇ Creates goals, pursues goals
- ◇ Goal orientation examples: plans, ambitions, stress, frustrations, anger, depression
- ◇ Some goals are inherent in human nature — personal welfare, relational welfare
- ◇ Most goals are assimilated from family, friends, culture
- ◇ Goals give rise to values: a value is a means for achieving a goal

◆ Goals

- ◇ Goal tree
- ◇ Goal-tree video
- ◇ Subtree in execution — colored red

◆ Components of mind

- ◇ Automatic unit — unconscious activity
- ◇ Volitional unit — conscious activity
- ◇ Evidence for distinction: cognition is automatic; we have bladder control while sleeping

◆ Automatic unit

- ◇ Ongoing source of cognition, motivation, physiological regulation
- ◇ Automatically pursues goals of mind
- ◇ Source of preferences, biases, aptitudes, interests, propensities, memory
- ◇ Ex: speaking, understanding speech, misspeaking, missing typos
- ◇ Ex: cognitive exposure/immersion/ momentum, new perspectives, creative ideas
- ◇ Ex: distraction, emotionally charged distraction
- ◇ Ex: salivating dogs, food preferences; sexual arousal, sexual preferences
- ◇ Ex: priorities — health vs. eating pleasure, relations vs. sexual pleasure
- ◇ Ex: temptation — violating priorities

◆ Volitional unit

- ◇ Supervises/trains automatic unit so that it will develop skill in achieving goals of mind
- ◇ Character development/maturity: skill in achieving high-level goals, in resisting temptations

◆ Volitional processes

- ◇ Focusing attention
- ◇ Postponing decision to act
- ◇ Ex: focusing attention — choose info sources, exert willpower
- ◇ Ex: postponing decision to act — allow time for more info, resist temptation
- ◇ Ex: Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders (ADHDs)