

Three Modes of Awareness

Arnold Mindell describes three main modes of awareness (or levels of consciousness). They are parallel worlds, and each has a distinct quality and signal structure.

1. Consensus Reality (CR)

a) Definition:

The everyday, shared world of facts and measurable data. The generally agreed-upon idea of what is "real" within a given community.

b) Signal structure:

- Clear, stable, and measurable "objective" signals
- Observable by most people in the same way

c) Example:

Two people in a room agree there are two meters of distance between them

2. Dreamland

a) Definition:

Non-consensual, subjective experiences and perceptions

b) Signal structure:

- Subjective signals like images from dreams or metaphors for the subjective experiences of symptom
- Experienced differently by different people

c) Example:

Independent of the measurable two meters, one person feels the other is too close or lightyears away

3. Essence / Sentient Level

a) Definition:

A nondual, often disregarded and marginalized level of awareness, comparable to the aboriginal "dreamtime". A subtle, pre-verbal dimension of experience, often sensed as unity, spaciousness, or deep presence.

b) Signal structure:

- Flickering signals, very subtle and transient, fleeting, cannot be easily verbalized
- Often sensed as atmospheres, or as perceptions before words or images appear

c) Example:

In the same room, both people may feel something like a shared silence or deep connection, independent of physical distance.

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