



# How Raw Reality Becomes Conscious Awareness: Mapping the Hidden Flow of Human Cognition

By John Deacon

*What transforms the chaotic flood of photons, vibrations, and pressures hitting your nervous system every millisecond into the coherent, meaningful experience you call “reality”? This is perhaps the most fundamental mystery of human existence, and the one neuroscience still struggles to map. While we can pinpoint where memory lives and identify decision-making circuits, the bridges that weave these isolated functions into unified consciousness remain largely invisible. This research trace reveals the hidden architecture of that transformation.*

This is a research trace, not a manifesto, an invitation to investigate together how the overwhelming static of reality becomes the coherent signal of lived awareness. Neuroscience maps the territories beautifully: perception here, memory there, decision-making over there. But the bridges connecting them into a single navigable continent? Those remain largely invisible.

The Core Alignment Model offers a structural overlay for tracing this flow, not replacing existing maps, but making the process of cognitive integration visible and testable.

## Mission: Where Reality Meets System

*Every conscious moment begins with an existential collision: raw world meets organized mind.*

Every cognitive system begins with an existential collision: raw world meets organized mind. In human cognition, this is the non-negotiable starting point.

**Stimulus Capture** arrives first, photons, vibrations, pressures pressing against our sensory boundaries. This is reality-as-given, the foundational process marker that everything else must reckon with.



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**Perceptual Encoding** follows immediately: the system translates raw energy into its internal language. Neural signals representing edges, tones, textures. The overwhelming becomes manageable, but still meaningless without the next layer.

This represents Mission in cognitive flow, the constant “what is” that anchors the entire system to something beyond itself.

### Vision: The Projective Overlay

*The mind doesn't passively receive reality, it actively projects meaning onto the chaos.*

Raw data is useless without active interpretation. The cognitive system doesn't passively receive reality; it projects potential meaning onto it. This is where Vision operates, imagination shaping perception from the top down.

**Integration and Interpretation** is the recognition field in action. Incoming signals meet memory, get filtered by attention, align with existing patterns. We see constellations in random stars, recognize faces in distant blurs.

This is third-order cybernetics: the system actively transforms its own perceptual framework, projecting possible futures and deeper meanings onto the present moment. Vision provides the semantic anchor that lets us navigate ambiguity and construct coherence from fragments.

### Strategy: The Interpretive Core

*Between “what is” and “what could be” sits the crucial alignment process, the interpretive loop that makes meaning from fragments.*

Between raw “what is” and projected “what could be” sits the crucial alignment process. Strategy is the interpretive loop operating in working memory's space, second-order cybernetics as self-regulation.

**Memory Comparison and Contextualization** runs continuously: “Given my anchor and



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my projection, what does this signal mean *now*?” Hearing a muffled word, we instantly complete it using sentence context. This is strategic alignment, rapid, adaptive matching of input with current context.

This layer maintains the framework loop ensuring internal coherence. It bridges high-level intent with low-level processing, constantly adjusting filters to preserve a stable but flexible identity.

### **Tactics: Where Cognition Becomes Observable**

*Internal processing becomes real through embodied action, each movement an experiment testing our inner model against the world.*

Internal processing becomes real through Tactics, embodied action and response. This is first-order cybernetics: direct sensorimotor feedback.

**Action and Response** solidifies interpretation into decision, manifesting as observable behavior: turning toward sound, speaking words, shifting attention. Each tactic is an experiment, altering the system-environment relationship and generating new input that feeds back to Mission.

This tactical output tests the validity of our internal model. Does action produce expected outcome? If not, the entire stack adjusts.

### **Conscious Awareness: The Emergent Field**

*Consciousness isn't mysterious emergence, it's architectural achievement.*

Conscious Awareness isn't the final step, it's the meta-layer where all functions cohere into unified experience. The lived realization “I see a tree” represents successful alignment of Mission (photons), Vision (tree pattern), Strategy (recognition filtering), and Tactics (eye focusing).

It's the trace of the entire process becoming self-aware, the resonance band where cognitive flow achieves coherence.



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This mapping reveals something critical: consciousness isn't mysterious emergence, but architectural achievement. CAM provides a living pattern for engaging that architecture deliberately.

The threshold question becomes not just "How does the brain work?" but "How do we consciously architect the flow of our own awareness?" The structure is visible. The experiment continues. If this exploration resonates with your own investigation into the nature of mind and meaning, I invite you to follow along as we continue mapping the hidden territories of human consciousness.

[ADD LINK]