What does it mean to be part of a greater whole? How does our worldview, or model of reality, impact what we understand about who we are and how we relate to others? And how can we become more aware of all the ways we are part of an interrelated, global community?

Recently my colleagues and I explored these questions in a report titled “Worldview Transformation and the Development of Social Consciousness” for the Journal of Consciousness Studies. Based on decades of research on consciousness transformation, IONS researchers have developed a theoretical framework for understanding social consciousness. In this way, we have sought to understand the ways in which people are both conscious and unconscious about the world around them. More importantly, we seek to understand the powers and potentials of individual consciousness to move toward collective well-being.

It’s clear that we are social beings from the very beginning of our lives. Social relations impact every aspect of our being. Of course, there is developmental variability in the extent to which each of us is aware of culture’s impact on us. It takes a level of perceptual acuity, for example, to realize how all the car commercials we’re constantly exposed to impact what we drive and how we feel about it.
Cultivating Social Consciousness

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