

Rethinking the Cognitive-Centered Paradigm

The widespread assumption that changing one's thoughts will naturally lead to different feelings has become a defining feature of modern psychology. Yet this idea rests on a limited scientific foundation and reflects a particular historical and cultural orientation rather than an established law of human functioning.

Among the many scientifically recognized models of behavior, only a small minority place conscious thought at the origin of emotional change. A broad range of other approaches—spanning phenomenology, affective neuroscience, developmental psychology, and somatic models—point in a different direction. They suggest that lived bodily sensations and affective states arise prior to conscious interpretation, and that thoughts tend to organize, rationalize, or react to what is already being felt within.

This view aligns closely with everyday experience. Before a person can name, analyze, or reinterpret a situation, something is already happening in the body: tension, contraction, warmth, agitation, or collapse. These felt states shape perception, bias attention, and set the stage upon which thoughts appear. Cognition, in this sense, is less a prime mover than a secondary process emerging from underlying affective and physiological conditions.

The prominence of cognition-focused psychology is therefore not purely scientific. It also reflects a broader societal shift toward secular, individualistic, and materialist understandings of human nature. As traditional, spiritually grounded views emphasizing embodiment, meaning, and relational depth receded, they were replaced by models that framed suffering as a problem of internal reasoning to be corrected by mental strategies. This shift proved practical and scalable, but it also narrowed the understanding of emotional life.

A more comprehensive psychology recognizes that enduring change does not begin with persuasion of the mind, but with transformation at

the level of lived experience. When the felt inner landscape shifts, perception reorganizes, thoughts follow new pathways, and behavior adjusts accordingly. From this perspective, cognition is not dismissed, but repositioned—as an outcome and integrator of deeper emotional processes rather than their source.

Resources supporting the above claims:

National Institutes of Health (PMC): This study confirms that affective (emotional) experience is fundamentally tied to interoceptive pathways that are distinct from cognitive reasoning. [The Neurobiology of Interoception and Affect](#)

PubMed (Scientific Review): This study validates Somatic Hypnotherapy's distinction between "feelings" and cognitive "emotions" by identifying how the brain interprets raw bodily signals to construct emotional states. [How Interoceptive Awareness Interacts with the Subjective Experience of Emotion](#)

Stanford Medicine: Research by Dr. David Spiegel shows that hypnosis increases connectivity between the brain's executive control and the insula (the body-sensing center), supporting the "state of access" model. [Study Identifies Brain Areas Altered During Hypnotic Trances](#)

ScienceDaily / University of Turku: Validates that the hypnotic state allows for more independent processing of information, which facilitates the direct engagement with somatic roots, this approach describe. [Hypnosis Changes the Way Our Brain Processes Information](#)