

Perception Model 2: Childhood

In the 2nd Stage of our model of the route from Perception to Meaning, we look at the dominant elements of perception in our childhood, from 6 – 10 years. **The years Freud called 'latency,'** perhaps to suggest a period of latent, not fully developed potential.

I am not an expert in research with children but I know they have pretty much all the components of their mind and psychic mechanisms by six years, but we tend to see them as schoolchildren, focusing on their thoughts and learning, character and feelings. Of course children have memories and personal concerns too – but these are faded out in my drawing as they don't seem dominant in many individuals during these latency years. Even if they are in some kids, they are not the things that the adult world focuses on. This is also true for the realm of Identity; most of us have not decided upon our true nature or even upon the person we will present to the rest of the world in our childhood years. During our adult years this self we present will undergo frequent modification.

As our emotional life becomes central in adolescence many of us will become more astute at interoception, or sensitivity to information rising from our bodies through the brain stem. This information, reaching sub-cortical levels often leads instantly to a reaction or a decision without touching consciousness at all. This enables us to accomplish many things without thinking about them.

If our interoception is blocked by traumatic events, we are likely to be cut off from our feelings and have difficulties with our rapid feeling driven responses. We may be unaware of these signals from our heart, our sweat glands our gut, our breathing rate.

We will introduce interoception in the next stage in our model, Adolescence.