

## How we learn – The Four Stages of Competence

How do we go about making change happen? There is a simple but powerful four-step model<sup>1</sup> that helps us to understand how we learn new skills:

**Stage 1: Unconsciously incompetent**

You don't know what you are doing wrong

**Stage 2: Consciously incompetent**

You know what you need to do but cannot get it right

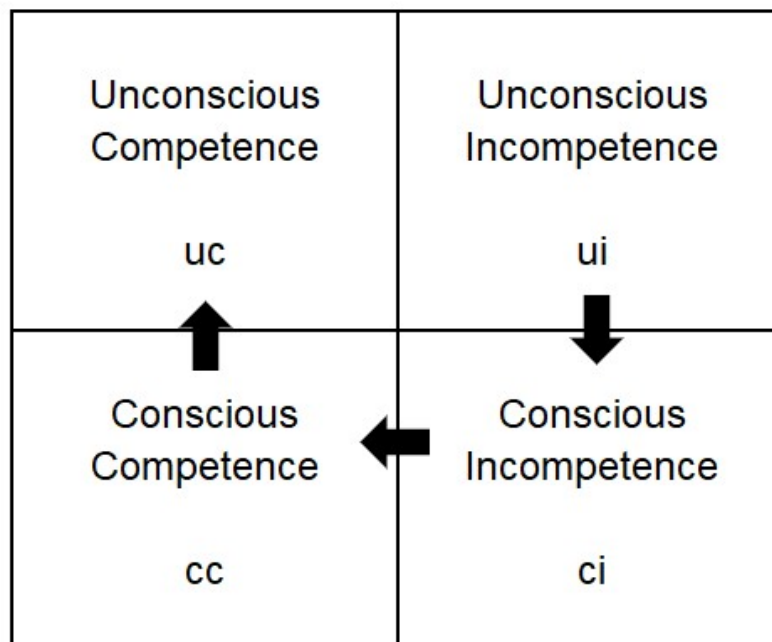
**Stage 3: Consciously competent**

You can use the new skill, but it requires focus and attention

**Stage 4: Unconsciously competent**

Performing the new skill is automatic

If it helps, think about how you learned to drive a car. If you were anything like me, the crucial skill that needed developing was timing lifting off the accelerator, while simultaneously depressing the clutch pedal, waiting until the right time to shift gear (in a manual vehicle). Then lift off the clutch and accelerate again all while your eyes remain on the road and the various mirrors that require your attention.



<sup>1</sup> Noel Burch (1970s), Gordon Training International

