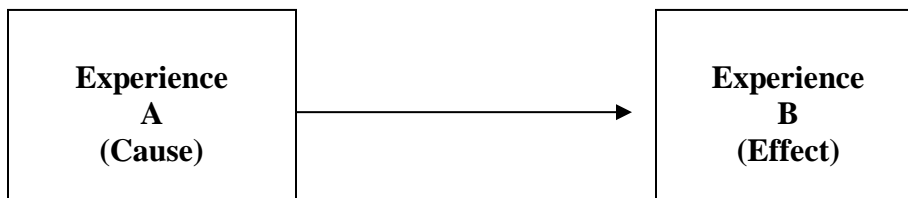


## How Karma Affects Us

As we will be seeing more and more, thought is the creator of karma and consciousness is the place where karma is stored. This concept will be enormously important when it comes to releasing set ideas about what karma may require in our experience.

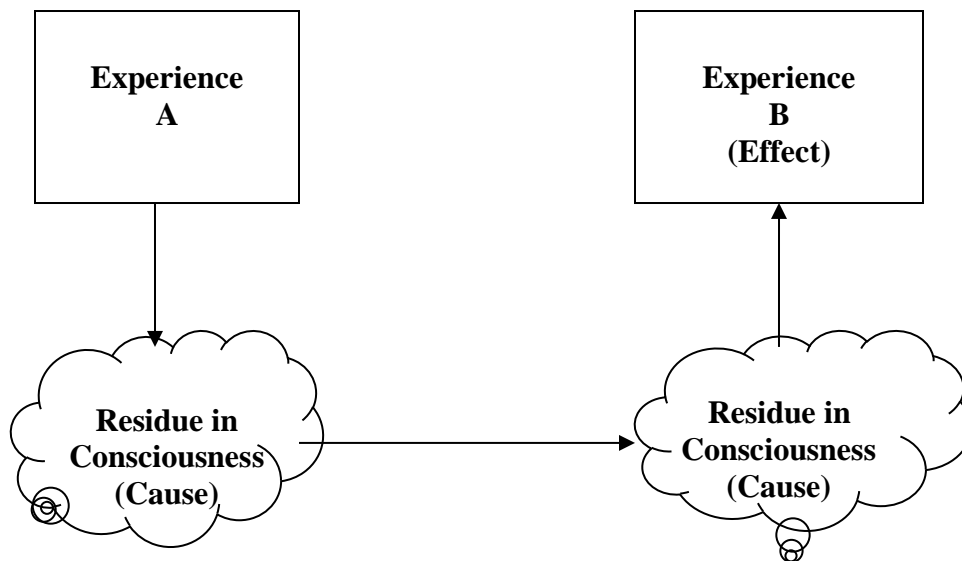
If we take the idea that our choices create complex chains that ultimately manifest as conditions in our lives, our work with karma and grace leads us to examine more closely how those chains of choices are stored until conditions come together in such a way as to be ripe for manifestation. Or, if we view those chains of choices as the karma waiting to be manifested in our lives, we could ask the question, Where is karma stored? The Cayce readings would tell us that is stored in our own deep unconscious consciousness. At its simplest, karma is nothing more or less than deep memory. In the Hindu tradition, these deep impressions on our minds are called *samskaras* (alternate spelling, *sanskaras*) and they are considered the root of all karma, both “good” and “bad.”

Think of it like this. In most simplistic terms, people often think that karma works like this:



But our karma is really not caused directly by our experiences. If it were, why would different people experience dramatically different outcomes from the same root experience? For example, two children may each have harsh and dictatorial parents, yet one may grow up to be tough and self-reliant while the other grows up unable to cope with the demands of life. One person may have an auto accident and walk away filled with wonder at being spared serious injury, while another can have the same experience and be traumatized about car rides for ever after. In a hypothetical tracing of karma, imagine a person who goes around bullying and doing bodily harm to other people. In this life we may just as reasonably expect that soul to be the victim of others' aggression; to be a gifted healer who mends broken bodies; or to still be a bully who inflicts harm on others. Clearly, there must be something within the individual that explains the great variety of outcomes that the same life experience can have.

That something is our deep, unconscious patterning, what we might call the residue in consciousness or what we hold on to as a result of the interaction between our experiences and what we hold in consciousness. In contrast to the simplistic diagram above, we may represent the role of deep consciousness in bringing our karma in this way:



Remembering what we considered about the ongoing chain that spans the entirety of our lifetimes (see *Effect to Cause Diagram*), we can see that the state of consciousness that exists when each new experience comes our way will be a major determinant of the kind of residue it leaves. This is where the action of grace comes in, for it can be the agent of deep and dramatic change in consciousness – and therefore dramatic change in karmic trajectories in our experience.