

Implicit Bias

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“The most dangerous kind of person is one who is unaware, who does not have self-awareness, because then they assume that they’re always right.”

Andres T. Tapia (author of *The Inclusion Paradox*)

Implicit Bias

- Attitudes or stereotypes that **originate in our unconscious mind** and affect our understandings, actions, and decisions.
- **Feelings and attitudes about other people based on social identity** such as race, gender, class, ability or sexual orientation.
- Often hold implicit biases **in favor of our own in-group**.
- Often manifests itself as an **impression or gut feeling** that shapes your perception.

Implicit Bias



- Formed by past experiences, culture, background or exposure to media.
- Pervasive, even for people with avowed commitments to impartiality such as therapists and judges.

Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity,
Ohio State University

Self-Awareness=Superpower



*Deep Diversity:
Overcoming Us vs. Them*
Shakil Choudhury

“A Flutter in the Chest”

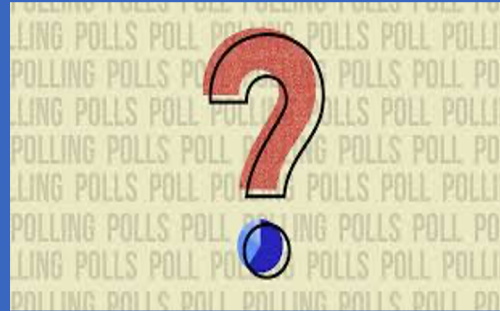


For Individual Reflection and Small Groups

- **Make a list of your social identities** (i.e. race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, ability, age, religion, ethnicity, religious status etc.).
- **To what degree are you aware** of your social identities or another's and how they might be impacting either of you?
- **How do your social identities show up** in your everyday **professional** interactions with colleagues, clients, etc. and in **society generally** (advantages/disadvantages)?



Poll #2



Can Bias Be Eliminated?

- Accept that we have biases (and that doesn't make us "bad").
- Become more aware of when they are "in play"... and of the effects they have on others.
- Learn how to reduce biases--or their influence & impact.



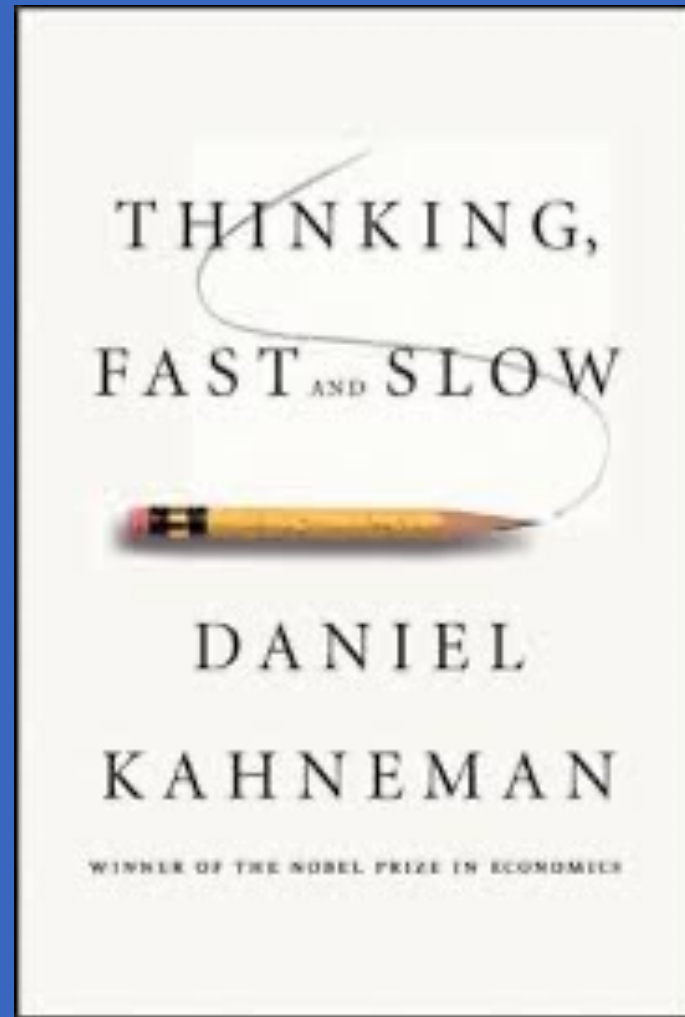
"That's the racist bone in your body you claimed you didn't have."



17 x 24

Thinking Fast and Slow

Daniel Kahneman, Ph.D.



Two Modes of Decision Making

- System 1 Thinking: Fast, automatic, effortless, intuitive and emotional; no sense of voluntary control (i.e. vast majority of daily decisions).
- System 2 Thinking: Slower, conscious, effortful, logical (i.e. weighing costs and benefits of different course of action). Conscious, reasoning self that has beliefs and makes choices.

Two Modes of Decision Making

- **System 1:**
 - Heuristics/short cuts: Day to day decisions.
 - Imagine: Effort is required for the most basic tasks.
 - What is the proper cultural protocol?
 - Speaking the language.
 - Driving on “wrong” side of road.
 - Basic tasks become cognitively exhausting.



Two Modes of Decision Making

- System 2:
 - “Lazy”: Cognitive effort is mildly unpleasant and avoided as much as possible.
 - The thoughts/actions that it believes it has chosen are often guided by the impressions and feelings originated in System 1.

Examples of Short Cuts

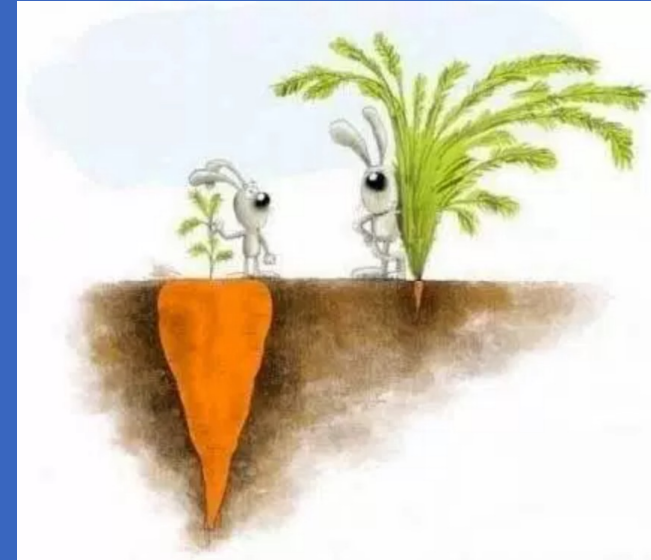
- **Availability Heuristic:** Draw conclusions based on information that is immediately at hand.
- **Law of Small Numbers:** Characteristics of a sample population estimated from a small number of observations.

Or

- **WYSIATI** (What You See is All There Is)

Examples of Short Cuts

- **Halo Effect:** Make broad assumptions about all of the qualities of a person based on one attribute that is notable to you.
- **Consider:** All the information you have is race, gender, ability etc. (stereotypes).



Examples of Short Cuts

- Affinity Bias: Invest more energy and resources in those who are in your affinity group while unintentionally leaving others out.
- Confirmation Bias: Pay attention to information that confirms what you believe.
 - “In science, you move closer to the truth by seeking evidence to the contrary.”

What leads to bad decisions?

- People who are **cognitively busy, fatigued, fearful, or stressed** are more likely to make superficial judgments. **More likely guided by implicit biases.**
- **Knowing little makes it easier to fit everything you know into a coherent pattern or story.**

Steps to Uncover Bias and Lessen Its Impact



What strategies have helped you learn more about and/or reduce the impact of your biases?

One Surprisingly Helpful Tool

**Harvard
Business
Review**

DECISION MAKING

Mindfulness Mitigates Biases You May Not Know You Have

by **Nicole Torres**

DECEMBER 24, 2014

One Surprisingly Helpful Tool

[The study](#), published in *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, suggests that mindfulness meditation can reduce implicit bias—and the negative behaviors that it causes.

There are competing definitions of what mindfulness means, but it boils down to paying attention to what's happening around you at a given moment, instead of operating on autopilot. By concentrating on the present, you're more likely to act thoughtfully, and therefore less likely to succumb to automatic evaluations based on previously established associations.

Mindfulness

- Awareness of your thoughts, emotions, and sensations as they arise in the present moment.
- Non-judgmental.
- By concentrating on the present, you're more likely to act thoughtfully, and therefore less likely to succumb to automatic evaluations based on previously established associations.

Mindfulness Helps Us “Wake Up” to the Impact of Our Conditioning

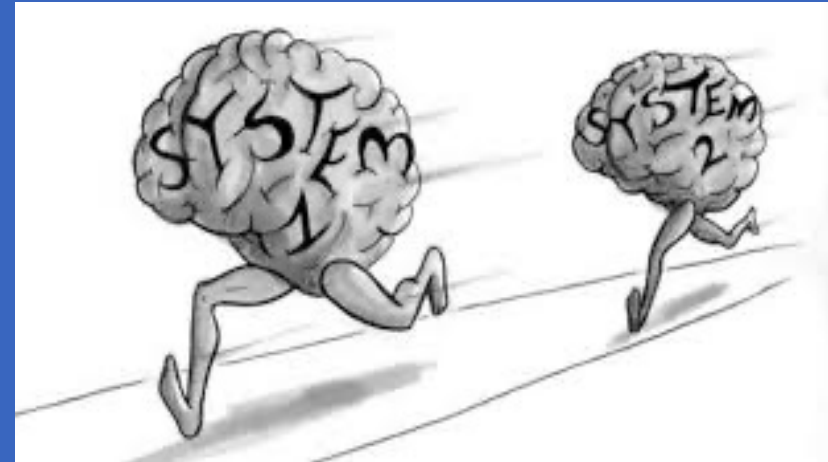
- Catch yourself in the act of a bias or stereotype.
- What am I thinking and feeling?
- Where did that come from? Question the story or stories that are influencing your responses.

Mindfulness Helps Us “Wake Up” to the Impact of Our Conditioning

- Is the thing I do automatically the same as I would do if consciously deciding?
- Does it agree with my values?

Mindfulness and *Thinking, Fast and Slow*

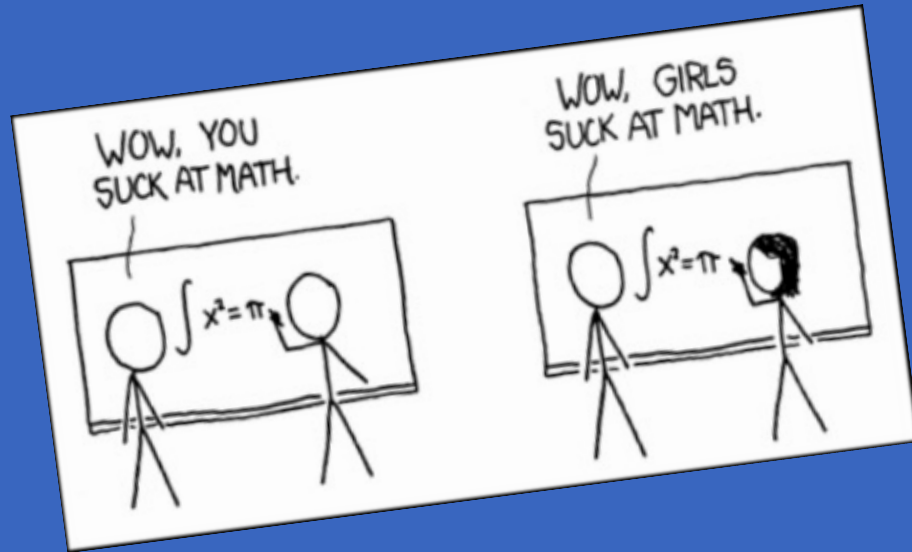
- Helps S2 engage and check S1.
- “This is my System 1 talking. Slow down so my System 2 can take control.”
- More aware of impact on decision-making.



BE CURIOUS



Steps to Uncover Bias— and Lessen Its Impact



- See the person as an **individual**, not just a symbol of a group.
- How might my **lack of historical knowledge** of a group be getting in the way of understanding the person, group, or issue?

Steps to Uncover Bias— and Lessen Its Impact

- **Get input from those who you trust.** Ask them to share how they experience/observe you so you can learn about your implicit biases.
- **Be open to feedback** about how your words and actions are coming across to those who are different than you.



Sue, D., *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation* (2010);
Choudhury, S., *Deep Diversity: Overcoming Us v. Them* (2015)

Steps to Uncover Bias— and Lessen Its Impact

- **Commit** to begin each interaction or experience with a new person or group of with a “**beginners mindset.**”
- **Implicit Association Test**
implicit.harvard.edu



Sue, D., *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation* (2010);
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