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Cognitive Biases and  
How to De-Bias Our Cognition




- MEMORY
- SOCIAL
- LEARNING
- BELIEF
- MONEY
- POLITICS

Aka What Influences Our Thinking Without Us Even Realizing

Fundamental Attribution Error

We judge others by their personality or fundamental characteristics, but we judge ourselves based on the context.



"They broke up because she was mean to him. We broke up because it was a bad timing for us."

Self-Serving Bias

Our failures are situation-based contrary to our successes which are deserved.



"I've won the chess tournament because I worked hard. I've failed the math exam because the teacher didn't tell us it would be this week."

In-Group Favoritism

We favour people close to us as opposed to those who are not in our circle.



"Anna is a better cosmetician than her colleague. I hang out with her often, and that girl, Victoria, is an outsider and kind of strange."

Bandwagon Effect

You have the tendency to acquire a particular style, fad, idea, belief, behaviour or attitude because everyone else is doing it.



"Articles about the health benefits of autophagy motivated me to adopt it myself."

Third-Person Effect

We believe that others are more affected by mass media than we are.



"You've clearly been brainwashed by the media!"

Halo Effect

Our overall impression of a person influences how we feel and think about their character.



"Marco is such a handsome young boy. I don't think that he could have hit the stray dog. That must be a misinterpretation."

Blind Spot Bias

We underestimate biases that we have, and overestimate the ones that others have.



"They have no clue. I'm the one who's right and objective about that fight we had."

False Consensus

We see our own behavioral choices and judgments as relatively common and appropriate to existing circumstances.



"Everybody thinks that!"

Curse of Knowledge

Communicating with other individuals, we unknowingly assume that the others have the background to understand.



"I can't believe you don't know how to cook Beef Wellington. Sprinkle the tenderloin generously with salt and pepper. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil..."

Availibility Heuristic

We tend to heavily weigh our judgments toward more recent information, making new opinions biased toward that latest news.



"Media often reports on plane crashes, so I guess the disasters happen on a regular basis."

Just-World Hypothesis


We attribute consequences to a universal force that restores moral balance or a universal inherency in the structure of things that connects actions and results.



"She collected some bad karma because she cheated on the exam."

Naive Realism


We believe that people who disagree with us must be irrational, uninformed, or biased.



"He isn't a vegan, and still calls himself an environmentalist. Isn't it ironic?"

Naive Cynicism

We naively think that we observe reality objectively and that the other people have a higher egocentric bias.



"I'm an atheist. Obviously I won't be attending Easter Sunday lunch with my family."

Forer Effect (aka Barnum Effect)

We easily attribute our personalities to vague statements, even if they can apply to a wide range of people.



"She's so bubbly. A typical Gemini."

Dunning-Kruger Effect

The less we know, the more confident we are. The more we know, the less confident we are.



"I was 100% sure that I will have outstanding results on the test, can't understand why I only scored 35/100 points."

Anchoring

We rely on the first piece of information introduced when making a decision.



"The first ski jacket that you tried seemed just fine. Do we really need to wander around the mall any more?"

Automation Bias

We trust automated systems so much that we accept their suggestions even if our decisions were correct in the first place.



"GPS led me to the wrong place."

Google Effect (aka Digital Amnesia)

We easily forget the information that's easily looked up in search engines.



"What's the name of the author of 'Harry Potter'? I looked it up eight times before and I never managed to memorize it successfully."

Reactance


We do the opposite of what we are told, especially when we feel that our freedoms are threatened.



"Look! A photo of me smoking next to the 'No smoking' sign!"

Confirmation Bias

We find and remember information that confirms our perceptions.



"She didn't answer my phone call yesterday. That confirms that she wasn't fond of me."

Declinism

We romanticize the past and think negatively about the future believing that the societies are in decline.



"My parents always tell me how people showed more solidarity during the times they were young and attribute it to collective actions they were a part of."

Status Quo Bias


We prefer things to stay the same and perceive the changes from the baseline to be a loss.



"I'm okay with my current job. Why would I quit it if the company that offered me a position is going to give me the same salary?"

Gambler's Fallacy

Probability of a random event occurring in the future is influenced by previous events of the same type.



"The conveyor belt broke three times during last month. It's unlikely that it will happen again any time soon."

Framing Effect

We often draw different conclusions from the same information depending on how it's presented.



"Normally, he prefers Pepsi to Coke. Since he started going to the gym, he orders Coke Zero Sugar, and not Pepsi Max, although both are allegedly low calorie."

Stereotyping

We adopt generalized beliefs that someone will have certain characteristics as a member of a group, despite not knowing the individual.



"The guy with fancy moustaches is an artist. He must be full of himself."

Authority Bias

We are more often influenced by the opinions of authority figures.



"I'll buy the toothpaste that dentists advertise. They're the experts in the matter!"

Law of Triviality

We give disproportionate weight to trivial issues, while avoiding to deal with the more complex ones.



"Our local government invested money in new bike lanes while ignoring the serious problem of poverty."

Zeigarnik Effect

We remember incomplete tasks rather than completed ones.



"I still remember that one math problem that I couldn't solve on my exam, but the rest of them are completely gone from my memory."

False Memories

We confuse imagination for reality.



"I thought Sally told me a funny story about sloths but she explained to me that in fact I've heard it on TV."

Suggestibility

Our thinking is prone to be altered because of others' suggestions.



"So did you have a bad fight with your best friend from kindergarten because she didn't give you her plush toy?"

Pessimism Bias

Sometimes we overestimate the likelihood of a bad result.



"Nothing will ever get better."

Optimism Bias

We are occasionally over-optimistic about good outcomes.



"Everything is going to be great!"