

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH COMMUNICATION & CONFLICT

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WHAT IS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- Having biases is an inevitable part of being a human - We all have biases we're not aware of. It's natural - how our brains work.
- Can cause problems and lead to poor decision-making and poor conflict management
- Heuristics – mental short cuts (rules of thumb) that help people make quick, satisfactory decisions when there isn't a lot of information and/or a lot of time to carefully think about the decision

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS AFFECTS HOW YOU....

- recruit & make hiring decisions
- mentor employees (or not!)
- make job assignments
- give people training opportunities
- listen to people's ideas and suggestions
- make promotional choices
- give performance reviews
- decide organizational policy
- conduct marketing campaigns

It.....

- Impairs diversity rates (studies correlate diversity w better innovation)
- Impairs retention rates
- Promotes a disconnected culture
- Fosters mistrust, lowered morale
- Can result in potential discrimination grievance
- Cause increased miscommunication, misunderstanding, & conflict

HEURISTICS



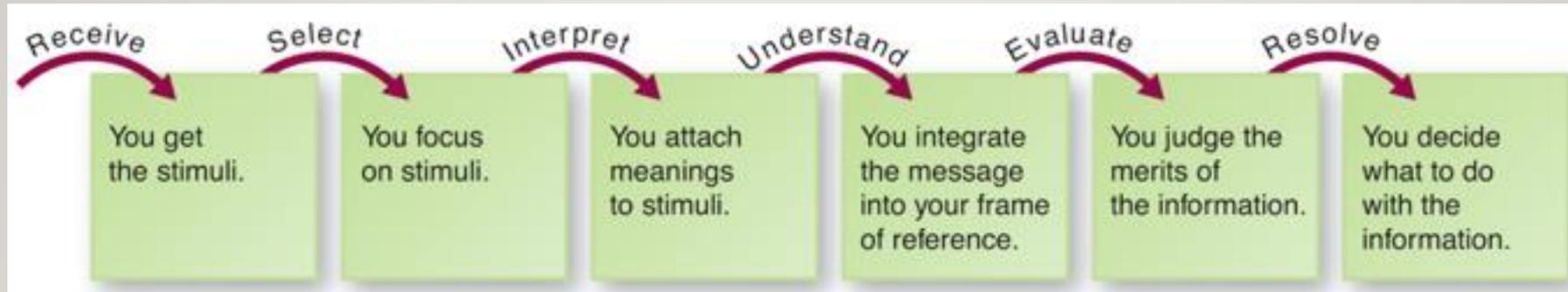
HEURISTICS

- **Availability Bias:** biases come from what we see everyday through pop culture and media.
- **Anchoring Bias:** we rely on the first info we receive no matter how reliable it is
- **Affinity bias:** more comfortable with people who are like me
 - Ingroup favoritism
 - Trusted IO exercise

COMMUNICATION

- Communication is the process of looking at the other person(s) you're communicating with, deciding what you know about them and how you're going to get your message across to this unique individual(s).
- We decide what words and non-verbals to use to best get our message across based on our perception of the person(s) or situation we're in
- What affects what words and non-verbals we use?

THE LISTENING PROCESS



We understand someone's message by filtering it through our frame of reference, aka PERCEPTION

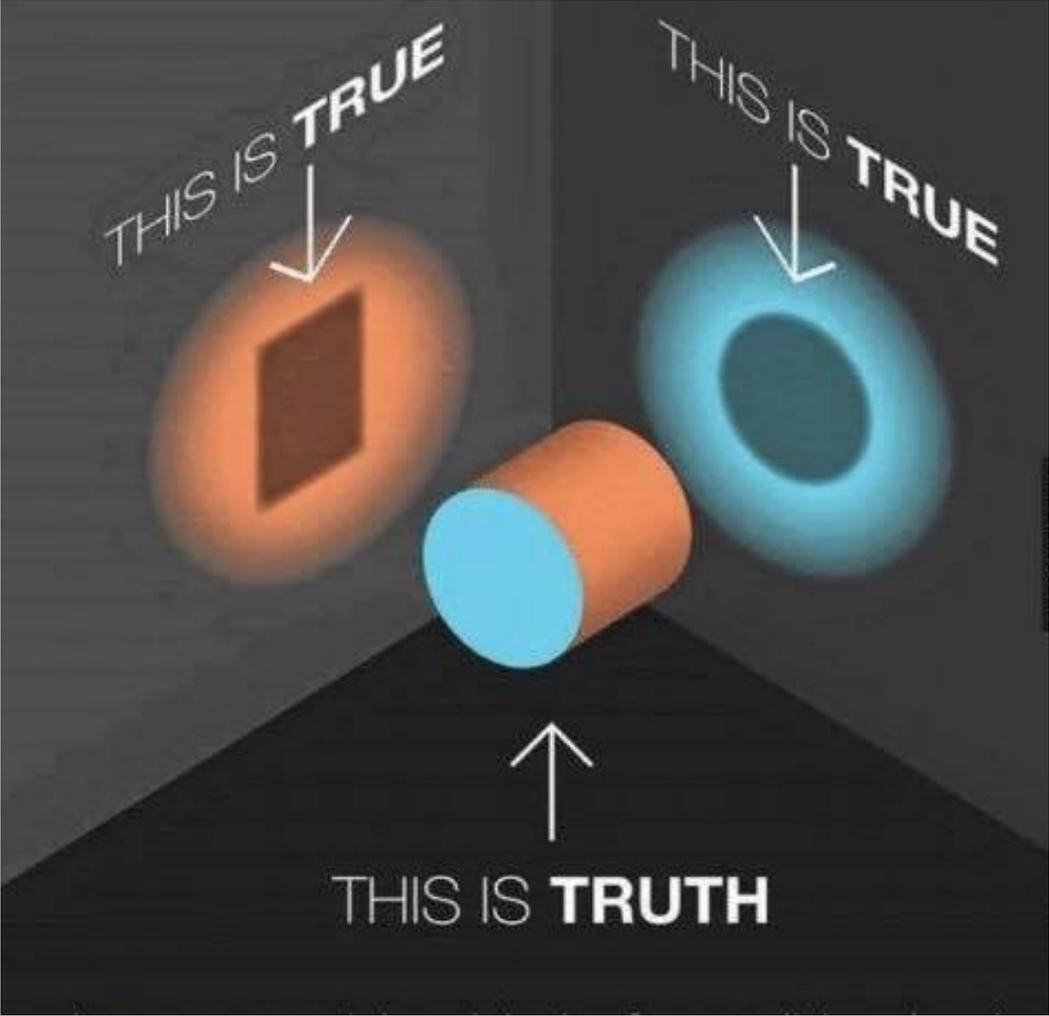
Perception & Bias

We develop a perceptual lens that filters out certain things and lets others in, depending upon certain perceptions, interpretations, preferences and, biases that we have adopted throughout our life.

Our perceptive lens enables us to see certain things and miss others, depending on the focus of our unconscious. It filters the evidence that we collect, generally supporting our already held points-of-view and disproving points of view with which we disagree.

As a result of these pre-established filters, we see things, hear things, and interpret them differently than other people might. Or we might not even see them at all!



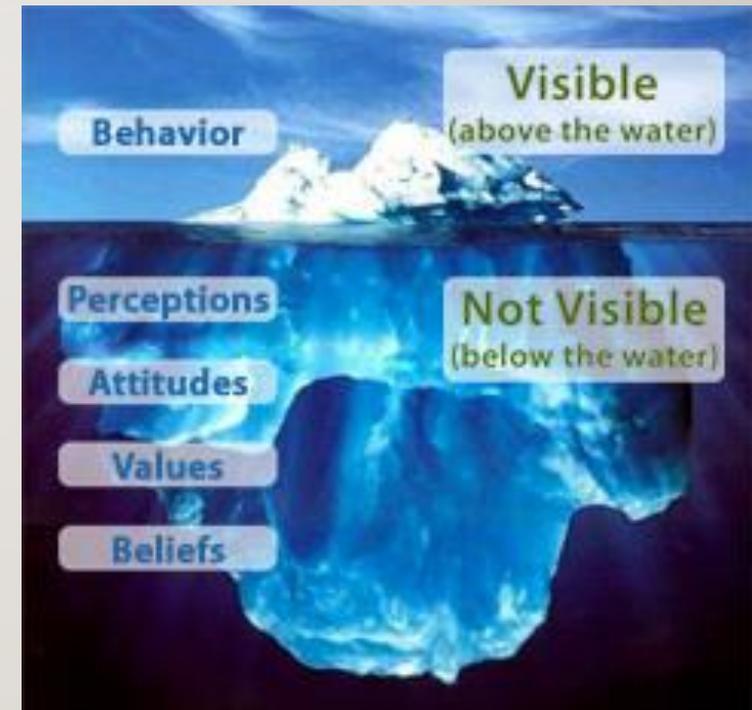




When we look at the picture, having no reason to assume that there is an illusion at play, we don't even consider that we might be seeing something different than what is obviously right in front of us. The problem is that it's not what is right in front of us at all. It's with our lens through which we're viewing it.

Effective Communication – Accurately understanding the other person's message = being aware of our perception

- What affects our perception? (like individual culture)
- No one has the same perception.
- We should assume our perception is incorrect
- To remedy this = practice perception checking & active listening



EXERCISES TO HELP DISCOVER AND REDUCE YOUR BIASES AND MANAGE CONFLICT

- Be mindful of your perceptions and judgements and know where you're getting them from.
 - What are some stereotypes you think of a Native American?
 - Where is this perception coming from? Personal experience with Native Americans, TV/Film, media?
 - Is my judgement of this person's behavior based on my own issues/challenges not related to this person/instance?
 - Am I perceiving this person's words/behavior negatively because of my bias?



EXERCISES/TOOLS

- The Trusted 10 from earlier
 - 10 people (not including family) in your inner circle. What do they look like?
- 2 islands group activity
- Implicit Association Test (IAT), created by researchers from Harvard, Virginia and Washington Universities. This measures the strength of links you make between concepts, for example race or sexuality, and evaluation of stereotypes, such as whether those concepts are good or bad.

The Story of the Two Islands

Once upon a time, there were two islands separated by a body of water. There was a ferry that traveled between the islands once a week. On one island lived Nin, and on the other island lived Zug. One week, Nin and Zug met on the ferry and instantly fell in love. Neither of them had any other means of transportation, so they met each other every week on the ferry.

One day, Zug said “This long distance relationship is just too hard. I can’t handle it. It’s over.” Well, Nin was devastated—got off the boat, sat on the dock and cried. Along came Goo who asked what was wrong. Nin recounted the story and Goo said “No problem! I have a boat; I’ll take you across to the other island. But there is one condition. You have to spend the evening with me.” Nin thought about it and agreed.

The next morning Nin and Goo set off for the other island. But news traveled faster than Goo’s boat and Zug had learned about Nin’s decision before they arrived. Zug was waiting on the shore when the boat arrived. Zug said, “Nin, you have been unfaithful. Leave.” Again, Nin was devastated—sat on the shore and cried. Along came Yak who asked what was wrong. Nin recounted the entire story; Yak became enraged, stormed off and beat Zug into a pulp.



COMMUNICATION, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT & BIAS

- By using perception checking, we can recognize that our perception of the situation may not be accurate and we can do our best to understand how others are experiencing the world and avoid misinterpreting their behavior.
- Have you ever experienced a miscommunication, misunderstanding or conflict due to inaccurate perception?

PERCEPTION CHECKING EXERCISE

1. Describe the behavior you have observed
 2. Provide at least two possible interpretations of the behavior
 3. Ask for clarification
- Make sure the way you say your thoughts are in no way accusing the person of anything

HELPFUL TOOL

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions



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Power Distance Index (PDI)

High: Acceptance of a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification.

Low: People strive to equalize the distribution of power and demand justification for inequalities of power.

PDI

Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)

Individualism: As a preference for a loosely-knit social framework

Collectivism: Tightly-knit framework in society.

IDV

Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)

Masculinity: Preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success.

Femininity: Stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life.

MAS

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)

High: Maintains rigid codes of belief and behavior and are intolerant of unorthodox behavior and ideas.

Low: Societies maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles.

UAI

Long Term Orientation versus Short Term Normative Orientation (LTO)

High: Pragmatic approach, they encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future.

Low: Societies prefer to maintain time-honored traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion.

LTO

Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)

Indulgence: Societies that allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun.

Restraint: Societies that suppress gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.

IND

The gap between
effective communication
and accurate
understanding

= our unconscious biases



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