

However objective or receptive you may think you are, your thoughts and actions are usually always influenced by ever-present unconscious biases. If you are concerned about how much you truly want equality, then you must dig deep into your unconscious biases. These are deeply rooted in our personal experiences and upbringing.

From the most intense and well-conducted psychological studies, Author Dolly Chugh was able to formulate an interesting picture of the source of our instinctual behaviors and choices. These unconscious biases are inconspicuous. For instance, you might find out that even the supposedly anti-racist have underlying racist tendencies.

However, by understanding the modus operandi of our minds and that of others, we might just be able to pinpoint and correct these subtle tendencies accordingly. We might also realize what we should be focusing more on.

A comparison of a growth mindset and a fixed mindset in the face of unconscious biases.

In making your decisions, are you more comfortable with adhering to previous standards, or would you rather delve into new methods or areas?

In the 2000s, while the documentary filmmaker Perrin Chiles prepared for a new film, he chose to work on autism, despite knowing very little on the subject. Exploring new things offer you a varied and rich perspective on different subjects.

This kind of mindset can be denoted as a growth mindset. It can lead to exciting discoveries and adventures. Despite the excitement such a mindset brings, many people would rather stick to the old standards-a fixed mindset.

For instance, an example of someone with a fixed mindset is a person who thinks a skill such as drawing is innate, and thus they either have it naturally or don't, on the other hand, a person with a growth mindset believes their inability to make desirable drawings is only because their drawing skills are weak, and they believe they can improve them even to the point of mastery if they practiced and worked persistently on them. These people usually make the most of the opportunities available to them.

At the time, Chiles largely considered his film on autism as an opportunity to understand other different people. The documentary-Musical- which was available in 2007, was revelatory and influential. It affected the lives of a lot of people that watched and created awareness on autism. Although undertaking adventures involves taking risks, like the aforementioned the impact makes it worthwhile.

Not everyone shares Chiles' mindset though. People with a stagnant mindset are usually biased against exploring new things. You don't have to look further than Hollywood to find an example of such a myopic mindset. If aliens watched movies produced by Hollywood and were to form general opinions about humans, they might think all humans are white, straight and not handicapped.

There is a great deal of imbalance in role allocations in Hollywood films. Recent data on the most successful movies indicates that men obtain a significantly higher number of speaking roles than women. Far less number of black actors star in top films and only 4 percent of directorship roles have been assumed by women.

In the following, we discuss the nature of unconscious biases and the reason we cannot easily rid ourselves of these Hollywood-like deep-seated prejudices.

The measurement of unconscious biases and its rather surprising outcomes.

As the subject of unconscious bias has grown in popularity, it is generally denoted as involuntary discrimination or a proneness one is unaware of. Given the efforts of researchers over the years, unconscious bias can now be measured. For this reason, it is increasingly easier to increase its awareness.

Studies have shown that, of all the millions of information processed by the mind per day, only about 40 of them are done consciously. As such most of the time our minds process information unconsciously.

Therefore, it is reasonable to state that about 99.999% of the information processed is unconscious, which includes our unconscious biases. These automatic associations are

made by our minds due to information amassed over time. For instance, an association of blacks with violent activities and weapons.

So how can your unconscious bias be measured? one known way is by taking the Implicit Association Test(IAT), an online test developed by three Harvard psychologists-Mahzarin Banaji, Anthony Greenwald and Brian Nosek. The test requires you to provide rapid answers to questions that access your unconscious biases.

For example, do you associate men or women with careers or household duties? Do you associate men with careers in the arts or sciences? The requirement of quick reactions to the questions provided is needed to be certain that our responses are rather unconscious.

Many people that strongly advocate for gender equality have taken it since the test was made available online in 2011. The results of the test revealed that about 75 percent of these supposedly progressive set of people have conservative biases. They mostly associating women with domestic duties and activities related to tending for their husbands and children, and men with professional careers.

With regards to racial biases, the test revealed that 85 percent of white Americans associate black people with violence and weapons-guns and knives. Many people that had always thought they had no racial and gender biases were stumped by the results. They found out that these biases were existent. Therein lies the unconsciousness of these biases

People generally avoid admitting to their privileges if they feel their sense of self-worth was being threatened.

Did you have a privileged childhood? For instance, in comparison to black Americans, white Americans are known to historically have more privileged upbringing with regards to access, to quality education, high-quality healthcare systems, and better living standards.

You may think white Americans would admit their privileges when they are reminded about it. However, according to a study conducted by Stanford psychologists in 2015, the majority of white Americans rather punctuate the adversities they faced during their childhood, once

they are reminded of their privileges. It was also shown that people generally admit to their privileged upbringing when their successes and achievements are initially mentioned.

This shows that people would prefer to highlight the disadvantages faced by certain groups of people without admitting the advantages they have been accorded. This is mainly because they feel their accomplishments would be considered less impressive if they acknowledged their privileges. They feel less of themselves when other people talk more about their privileges than their achievements.

This situation also occurs at workplaces. According to another study, employees with higher income, better healthcare, or legal services have a high tendency of talking up the difficulty of their jobs, when people bring up their access to these benefits. They nonetheless become more open about admitting their privileges when they are told to initially reflect on their positive achievements.

Another deduction from the 2015 study was that, if people were asked to think about a remarkable accomplishment or success, or their excellence in an aptitude test, then afterward are reminded of their childhood privileges, they usually openly admit that they had these privileges. This is mainly because they no longer feel a low sense of self-worth. No white man or woman wants to be thought of as nothing without their white privilege.

So you can always remind people of their privileges, but remember that they would be more honest about their privileges if you mention their achievements prior. If you don't mention their achievements, they will possibly deny that their position, reputation or patronage was as a consequence of their privileges or because of the perceived superior place they occupy in the society.

Unconscious biases are often inconspicuous and thus difficult to identify and eradicate.

To further understand the form of unconscious biases, let's discuss some examples.

Take a look at the example of Kimberly Davis, a friend of mine, who attended a convention for female executives. Once she entered a room full of female white executives and tried to interact with them, most of them were not willing to freely open up about themselves and

their businesses. Kimberly, however, didn't think they were intentionally dismissing her. She thought they probably, unconsciously were not expecting to meet a black businesswoman there. Their unconscious is probably biased towards seeing whites occupying executive roles

Another example is Joe Lentine, from a white middle-class family, who, as he got more matured realized that he only ever interacted with his fellow whites, although he lived in Detroit, a multiculturally diverse city.

Lentine is however not alone in this experience. Studies in the Detroit area in the 1980s and 1990s shows that most white families never interact with their neighboring black families, even in areas dominated by blacks. Lentine only realized his racial bias after befriending a black in his college fraternity. This realization is in no way unusual, as overcoming unconscious biases requires proactivity.

Even after college, Lentine was still trying to figure out the depth and breadth of his racial bias. As his consciousness grew, he sought to get rid of his unconscious biases. To achieve this, he traveled to foreign countries such as India, Korea, and Japan and tried to insert himself into their cultures. He thought that by blending into foreign communities, he could successfully phase out his unconscious biases.

Lentine further addressed his racial biases more spiritedly when he became the owner of Dental Plans Company in 2009. He collaborated with an organization that assisted transgender youths to find jobs and consulted with his town's US-Arab chamber of commerce to ensure his business adequately reflects the racial variegation of his community.

We all have unconscious biases in one form or another, but we should not accept them as unbeatable, rather, we should proactively tackle them and change how we interact with our social environment.

Privileged people present the greatest force needed to counter unconscious biases.

Have you ever heard a racial slur and refused to comment on it because you thought it wasn't your responsibility to talk about it? You may want to rethink that assumption.

Many people think it's the responsibility of prominent people of color to speak up on racial comments. For example, the American poet, Christopher Owens was once barraged with messages on facebook from people requesting that he addressed a racist comment made by someone. This is because many people believe that the prominence of prominent people puts them in the position to speak on social issues.

This, however, is not always effective. A 2003 study by psychologists Alexander Czopp and Margo Monteith indicated that criticisms of racist comments were more impactful if they came from whites. According to their study, people unconsciously believe the privileged represent the most powerful force in our societies, thus they were at the center of counteracting racist speeches and behaviors, the effect was more impactful.

In confirmation of the aforementioned perceived impactfulness of different races, in 2016, a group of psychologists and management researchers conducted a study of 350 North American executives for their effectiveness in promoting diversity in their teams. The executives and their bosses were surveyed. The result showed that white male executives were portrayed in a more positive light than their female or colored counterparts.

In addition, male executives are perceived favorably in comparison to their female and colored counterparts, even if they failed at creating a more diverse team. In the case of failure during one activity or another, female and colored executives face a higher level of criticism. The general belief is that if the white failed, it was because it was inevitable, however, if a colored or a female executive failed, it was due to their incompetence.

Furthermore, white males exercise a high degree of freedom in hiring other people. They could hire anyone they desire, even employees of their own kind, without fear of scrutiny from their bosses. The same cannot be said of their female and colored counterparts. A woman or colored person cannot hire people of their kind without criticism. No matter how progressive or pro-diverse women and colored people are, they are usually less appreciated.

Given the power wielded by white males in the exertion of change or control in the scheme of things, they constitute a powerful tool in the fight against racism and fight for diversity at the workplace.

The consciousness of racial identity requires considerable time and effort. It is therefore paramount that we keep at it.

You may have heard about Kyle, American author, Jodi Picoult's son, and his partner Kevin's submission that they felt she had unconscious racist biases, given her white upbringing. This was in spite of Jodi's progressiveness.

Picoult initially associated racism with white supremacists, but after they explained to her the subtlety of unconscious racial biases, she began working towards becoming more aware of her unconscious racist biases including by attending an anti-racism workshop. This realization led her to write the 2016 book "small great things".

Therefore from Picoult's experience, we can designate three stages of changing our racial awareness. The first stage is an admission of our unconscious racial tendencies. Many people never even go past this stage because they not only deny having racial prejudices, they also assert that these prejudices do not even exist.

The second stage is acceptance. At this stage, we do not only admit that racial prejudices exist, but have begun realizing some elements of our unconscious biases.

The third stage is deeper comprehension. At this stage, we recognize that different racial contingents are exposed to different circumstances and we are borne of different personal experiences. At this stage, we investigate the influence our racial belonging has had on our lives in comparison to others.

So if you really want to change your awareness of racial stereotypes you must follow these three steps in order. To achieve the desired change none of these steps can be skipped. A lot of people do not make it past the second stage. This is particularly true because people don't usually deeply rethink factors they believe in.

For instance, a study in 2005 by management scientists Kristine Ehrich and Julie Irwin indicated that most people opinionated against child labor are likely to avoid thinking about how the goods they regularly use are produced, although these goods especially imported ones, could have been manufactured by factories largely dependent on child labor

Thus, In our effort to change our awareness of racial identities all other elements connected directly or indirectly related must be considered.

Categorization of people and a pretense of “color-blindness” does not help us tackle our unconscious biases.

These days, it's becoming common to find people calling themselves “colorblind” to evade confrontations on racism. This may seem like an effective way to become less racist-avoid using words associated with racism. However, Is this response even remotely suitable?

According to a 2008 study by Harvard researchers Evan Apfelbaum and Michael Norton, the “colorblind” notion is generally a bad idea. In the study, individuals were paired such that they either included a white-white pairing or a black-white pair. Each individual was required to identify the faces on provided pieces of paper. To achieve these, individuals in each pair were allowed to ask each other questions that could help them make a correct guess.

For 51% of white-white pairs, partners asked each other if the face was that of a black or white. However, for 21% of black-white pairs, the whites, under the pretense of being colorblind avoided asking their black partners if the face was that of a black or white. Converse to what would be expected, the blacks felt their white partners were more racist.

It is also far-fetched to find people ascribing certain qualities or behaviors to certain races. This is not in the slightest bit helpful, as such an affirmation could factor into how services are rendered to different races.

For example, Asian people are sometimes stereotyped as hardworking and courteous. Asian Americans are generally also assumed to be academically gifted and well-to-do. If an

employment and financial aid grant application were submitted by an Asian or Asian American and if the application evaluators believe in these aforementioned stereotypes, it could have a significant bearing on their decisions.

They could refuse to hire or grant financial aid to an Asian or Asian American based on these stereotypes. By doing this, they could be denying the most competent of employment or the most deserving of financial aid.

Foster all-inclusive activities in communities, pay attention to all people equally, give credit to whom credit is due.

We all have been caught up in situations where we have ignored an opinion posited by someone else, which could be intentional. This problem is growing in significance, especially due to our use of numerous technologies that serve this purpose. For better solidarity, we must listen to the voice of everyone equally. Figures show that the opinions of the minority are increasingly being ignored.

During my Ph.D. on unconscious bias in 2006, I conducted a study on the streets of Boston. In this study, random people were called and asked to guess how many jelly beans there were in a jar.

I played several recordings of different people suggesting good advice. I intentionally made the recordings recognizably White, Black or Latino. As expected, most of the people provided answers based on suggestions made by whites and largely ignored those made by others. This unconscious bias bedevils a lot of people, and I suppose you will start listening more to non-white people.

Also, people, many a time do not get the credit they deserve. In 1979, a study by psychologists Michael Ross and Fiore Sicoly revealed that people involved in team projects give themselves more credit than they objectively deserve, and thus correspondingly give others less credit.

Given what we now know about unconscious biases and since there is a relatively higher tendency of ignoring the opinion of minority groups, we can make the assertion that persons from minority groups would likely receive less credit for their work in team projects. The

success of a team project can be better appreciated if all contributions are rightly credited. The voices, opinions or contributions of persons belonging to minority groups must not be discounted.

The Person You Mean to Be: How Good People Fight Bias by Dolly Chugh Book Review.

Against what the majority of people believe, studies show that many people have prejudices including racial ones. Many people picture colored people in a bad light. We listen more to whites than people of other races. This is even true for non-whites.

To become more conscious of racial identities, we need to admit the existence of racial prejudices, realize our own unconscious biases, and seek to reconcile our societal privileges with our personal experiences in the background of understanding how disadvantaged people of other races are.

An important way of limiting and tackling the extent of our unconscious biases is by controlling the kind and amount of media products we consume.

The media products we admit is vital to our general impression and judgment of people since it's a gateway to an unknown world. In the grand scheme of creating awareness and eliminating our unconscious bias, we should be more careful about the media products we consume. For instance, it would be useful to watch series and films such as All in the Family, Black-ish and Modern Family, which are more racially encompassing.

If we instead watch films and series that portray only a section of the world, for instance, if most of the characters are white and straight, our comprehension of people is usually limited and shallow. To this effect, we can engage in activities and consume media products that are more "all-race-inclusive" to correct our unconscious biases.

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