

anchoring

The first thing you judge influences your judgment of all that follows.

Human minds are associative in nature, so the order in which we receive information helps determine the course of our judgments and perceptions. Be especially mindful of this bias during negotiations.

confirmation bias

You favor things that confirm your existing beliefs.

We are primed to see and agree with ideas that fit our preconceptions, and to ignore and dismiss information that conflicts with them.

"The first principle is that you must not fool yourself – and you are the easiest person to fool."
– Richard Feynman

backfire effect

When your core beliefs are challenged, it can cause you to believe even more strongly.

We can experience being wrong about some ideas as an attack upon our very selves, or our tribal identity. This can lead to motivated reasoning which causes us to double-down, despite disconfirming evidence.

declinism

You remember the past as better than it was, and expect the future to be worse than it will likely be.

Despite living in the most peaceful and prosperous time in history, many people believe things are getting worse. Use metrics such as life expectancy, levels of crime and violence, and prosperity statistics.

just world hypothesis

Your preference for a just world makes you presume that it exists.

A world in which people don't always get what they deserve is an uncomfortable one that threatens our preferred narrative. Try to remember that we're all fallible, and bad things happen to good people.

sunk cost fallacy

You irrationally cling to things that have already cost you something.

When we've invested our time, money, or emotion into something, it hurts to let it go. Ask yourself: had I not already invested something, would I still do so now?

dunning-kruger effect

The more you know, the less confident you're likely to be.

Because experts know just how much they don't know, they tend to underestimate their ability; but it's easy to be over-confident when you have only a simple idea of how things are.

barnum effect

You see personal specifics in vague statements by filling in the gaps.

Psychics, astrologers and others use this bias to make it seem like they're telling you something relevant. Consider how things might be interpreted to apply to anyone, not just you.

framing effect

You allow yourself to be unduly influenced by context and delivery.

Only when we have the intellectual humility to accept the fact that we can be manipulated, can we hope to limit how much we are. Try to be mindful of how things are being put to you.

in-group bias

You unfairly favor those who belong to your group.

We presume that we're fair and impartial, but the truth is that we automatically favor those who are most like us, or belong to our groups. Try to compensate by imagining strangers to be family.



availability heuristic

Your judgments are influenced by what springs most easily to mind.

How recent, emotionally powerful, or unusual your memories are can make them seem more relevant. This, in turn, can cause you to apply them too readily. Try to gain different perspectives and source statistical information.

belief bias

If a conclusion supports your existing beliefs, you'll rationalize anything that supports it.

It's difficult for us to set aside our existing beliefs to consider the true merits of an argument. In practice this means that our ideas become impervious to criticism, and are perpetually reinforced.

groupthink

You let the social dynamics of a group situation override the best outcomes.

Dissent can be uncomfortable and dangerous to one's social standing, and so often the most confident or first voice will determine group decisions.

optimism bias

You overestimate the likelihood of positive outcomes.

There can be benefits to a positive attitude, but it's unwise to allow this to affect our ability to be realistic. If you make rational judgments you'll have a lot more to feel positive about.

reactance

You'd rather do the opposite of what someone is trying to make you do.

When we feel our liberty is being constrained, our inclination is to resist, however in doing so we can over-compensate. Wisdom springs from reflection, folly from reaction.

curse of knowledge

Once you understand something you presume it to be obvious to everyone.

When teaching someone something new, go slow and explain like they're ten years old (without being patronizing). Repeat key points and facilitate active practice to help embed knowledge.

self-serving bias

You believe your failures are due to external factors, yet you're personally responsible for your successes.

Many of us enjoy unearned privileges, luck and advantages that others do not. It's easy to tell ourselves that we deserve these things, whilst blaming circumstance when things don't go our way.

negativity bias

You allow negative things to disproportionately influence your thinking.

The pain of loss and hurt are felt more keenly and persistently than the fleeting gratification of pleasant things. We are primed for survival, and our aversion to pain can distort our judgment for a modern world.

pessimism bias

You overestimate the likelihood of negative outcomes.

Pessimism is often a defense mechanism against disappointment. Perhaps the worst aspect of pessimism is that even if something good happens, you'll probably feel pessimistic about it anyway.

spotlight effect

You overestimate how much people notice how you look and act.

Instead of worrying about how you're being judged, consider how you make others feel. They'll remember this much more, and you'll make the world a better place.

24 cognitive biases stuffing up your thinking

Cognitive biases make our judgments irrational. We have evolved to use shortcuts in our thinking, which are often useful, but a cognitive bias means there's a kind of misfiring going on causing us to lose objectivity. This poster has been designed to help you identify some of the most common biases and how to avoid falling victim to them. Help people become aware of their biases generally by sharing the website yourbias.is or more specifically e.g. yourbias.is/confirmation-bias

 This poster is published under a Creative Commons Attribution and Non-commercial license 2018 by The School of Thought, a 501c3 non profit organization. To learn more about biases you should definitely read the books *Thinking, Fast and Slow* and *You Are Not So Smart*.

The illustration above is a reference to Michaelangelo's 'Creation of Adam' which many believe depicted the human brain in God's surrounding decoration. The godfathers of research into cognitive biases, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, are pictured alongside the Christian God above.

Download this poster at www.yourbias.is