



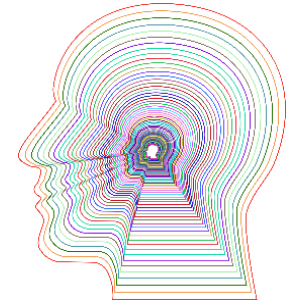
Brain Bias, Belief, Bullying, & Bigotry

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Brain References
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8-18

BIAS can be defined as an inclination for or against something—it begins in the brain and appears initially to be innate



Bias assessments may be the fastest decisions the brain ever makes, occurring at nano-second speeds and related to a perception of safety

Typically, the brain seems to feel safer around what is *familiar* and what is most *like it*, which can impact Beliefs, Bullying, and Bigotry—which in turn can influence Bias

This presentation focuses on bias related to human beings although it can exist about almost anything

- **Humans, gender**
- **Race, skin color**
- **Culture, language**
- **Environments**
- **Clothes, styles**
- **Beverage types**
- **Dancing**
- **Hair, styles**
- **Tattoos**
- **Recreation**
- **Music, Art**
- **Objects, things**
- **Foods Sports**
- **Vacations**
- **Competition**
- **Odors**
- **Religion**
- **Politics**
- **Ideologies**
- **Career choices**
- **Education**
- **Marriage**
- **Relationships**
- **Movies**



When the brain sees another human being—especially for the first time—it goes on high alert, making an evaluation about safety

- **Have I seen this person (or someone similar) before?**
- **Is it like me or different from me?**
- **Am I SAFE?**



Depending on its bias assessment, the brain prompts you to approach or withdraw—to “move forward toward” or “move back away from”—the person

Every brain has its own bias: some biases are innate, others are learned and developed

Have you identified your own brain biases?

Estimates are that 50% of the problems people face in life are of their own making—and what you don't know you don't know can create many of those problems

Studies have identified links between bias, beliefs, bullying, and bigotry ...



Healthy discrimination based on accurate bias assessments can help keep you safe—unmanaged, it can be deadly

Everything after the brain's initial bias assessment tends to represent a learned response (based on personal experience, reports from others you trust, what you read or hear on the news ...)

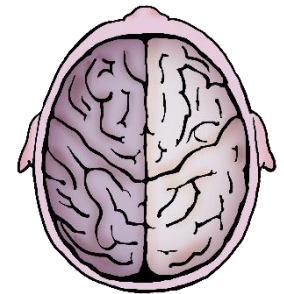


If it is a valid and appropriate learned response, great—if not, there may be undesirable consequences

Over time, a bias tends to become an entrenched belief

BELIEF can be defined as a state of mind in which you perceive the likelihood of something being true based on empirical (observed, experienced, reported) evidence rather than on established theory or logic

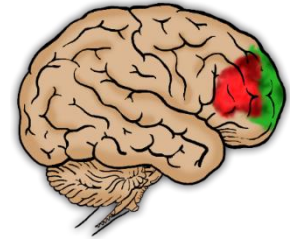
Since every brain is different, some say there are a minimum of 7 billion beliefs on this planet



Humans develop beliefs about everything and once imbedded in your brain, a belief can take on a life of its own, with little thought given to how it started or where it came from or if it is or was ever valid ...

Your brain creates your beliefs from what you are taught and from what you learned—two different things

This may include cellular memory from biological ancestors, role-modeling by adults around you, interactions with people you admire or don't, your own life experiences, what you watch on TV and movies, what you read, what political or religious leaders tell you ...



Who or what do you believe? Who do you believe “in?”

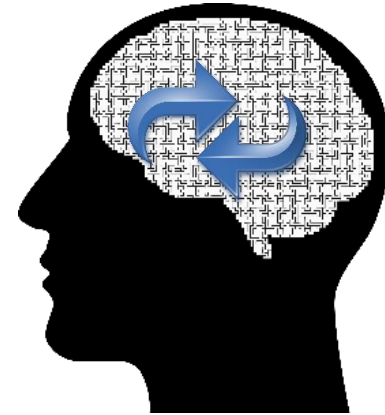
I know whom I have believed, have trusted —2 Timothy 1:12

Metaphor: vehicles create traffic, which then can impact and impede vehicles

The brain creates the mind, which then can impact and direct the brain

Once beliefs are firmly entrenched they can impact your brain's bias assessments along with resulting choices, and behaviors . . .

Anger, hate, or fear for something that is “different” may surface when that might not otherwise have been the case

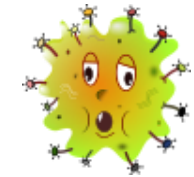


My mother was germaphobic:



“Always wash your hands and never touch the door handle with bare hands when leaving a public toilet”

**Helpful when applied specifically and appropriately;
unhelpful when globalized if that leads you to avoid
desirable and helpful behaviors (e.g., volunteering activities
with the underprivileged such as feeding the homeless)**



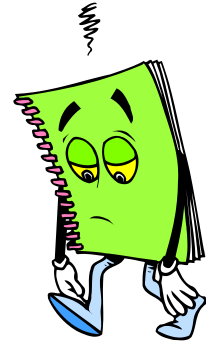
**Beliefs can take on a life of their own when globalized and
even turn into zealot or fanatical perspectives and actions**

Globalized beliefs can be unfortunate if not lethal

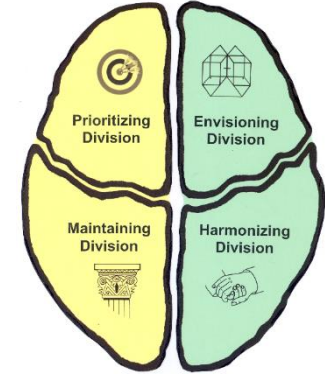
You get a low grade on your first science test, believe you will likely flunk all tests, so you drop out of school

You get sick shortly after eating a sandwich, believe it was due to the peanut butter, and refuse to ever eat it again

You pray for a friend to be healed and when that doesn't happen you believe that prayer never works

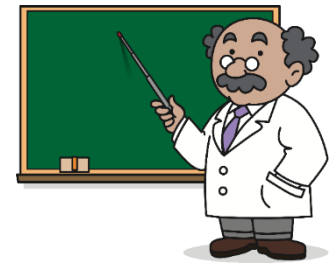


The human brain—left frontal lobe especially—continually tries to come up with reasons for everything, even when it doesn't understand what just happened (e. g., ancient myths often were created to explain natural phenomenon)



Studies: the human brain (child or adult) is very susceptible to deceptions and illusions including magic tricks, and lacks a well-developed capacity to distinguish the accuracy of their beliefs; adult brains are particularly vulnerable in terms of maintaining self-deceptive beliefs

According to Neurotheologians like Andrew Newberg, MD, even what constitutes a “proof” about something is itself a form of belief—because human brains craft experiments that are designed to “prove” something



Beliefs are susceptible to alterations!

Individuals within a culture that espouses specific or unique beliefs, especially in the presence of authoritarian pressure, and may find it extremely difficult to go against prevailing beliefs (e.g., snake-handling, celibacy of the clergy, ordination of women, sexual orientation)

There are consequences for bucking a “party line” (family, culture, politics, religion . . .) and those who do so may risk unemployment, persecution, expulsion, imprisonment, and even death



Historians suggest this may have been strong motivation for individuals leaving (or trying to leave) a culture or belief-system they perceived as oppressive — in favor of immigrating to the “new world” or to another country or region that is less proscriptive

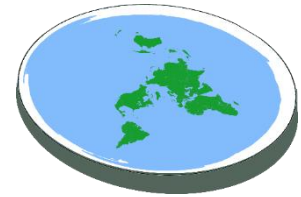
According to Dr. Bruce Lipton, arguably the foremost current living authority on epigenetics and cellular memory, beliefs function much as camera filters, altering the way you see and perceive the world—this can be positive or negative



The good news is that you *can* identify, evaluate, and change your beliefs, which can impact even your genetic potential—because your biology (body) adapts to your beliefs, which means that up to 70 percent of how long and how well you live is in your hands based on your lifestyle choices

Studies have shown that once humans commit to a belief, they tend to employ a *confirmation bias*, in which they look for and find confirming evidence in support of their belief and ignore or rationalize away disconfirming evidence

In one experiment subjects were presented with evidence that contradicted a belief they held deeply along with evidence that supported that belief



They recognized the validity of the confirming evidence but were skeptical of and tended to discount the value of any disconfirming evidence

Beliefs form the basis for your values and practices

- **Values: what you think is really important in life and for you personally (or your family)**
- **Practices: actions and behaviors you exhibit based on your bias, beliefs, and values**



Erroneous bias, beliefs, values, and practices form the basis for bullying and bigotry

Bullying can be defined as a subcategory of aggressive behavior that is characterized by three minimum criteria:

- **Hostile intent to harm or humiliate someone**
- **Imbalance of power including perceptions about physical strength, popularity, looks, position, embarrassing information, finances . . .**
- **Repetition in that it happened more than once or has the potential for happening again**



Studies show that bullying behaviors are learned—and begin early, by age two if normal aggression is mishandled

Some may have a genetically higher tendency for aggression and gravitate toward it



Typical profile: individuals usually have a good level of self-esteem but tend to come from a background of bullying and abuse; possess a sense of entitlement and superiority over others; lack compassion, impulse control, and social skills; some are just mean and cruel and feel good only when they harm others or make them feel bad

Typical targets include:

Race, skin color, region of origin (indigenous); facial appearance; body shape—fat, thin, big, small, malformed; sexual orientation; religion; health choices (some studies found no difference in bullying behaviors between Christian and non-Christian schools)



Categories of bullying include:

Verbal, physical, mental, emotional, relational, racial, cultural, region of origin, skin color, religious, sexual, gender, cyberbullying, sexting, financial, black mail . . .

Bigotry can be defined as an obstinate devotion to one's own beliefs, and a stubborn and complete intolerance of any creed, belief, or opinion that differs from one's own

Bigotry can involve targets and categories that are similar to those of bullying, and anything else about which an individual has very strong emotions and feelings

- **Example: Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in the USA**
(a secret hate group founded in 1915, directed against Muslims, Jews, Catholics, Blacks, foreign-born individuals, and some other groups)



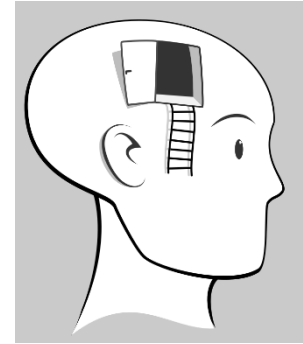
Bigotry tends to involve underlying issues of anger, fear, and low Emotional Intelligence or EQ and self-esteem issues (Note: Self-esteem issues tend to form a circular continuum: abysmally low versus over-inflated. Some are stuck at one position, others rotate between them.)



Children exposed to people of many different cultures are less likely to exhibit bigotry UNLESS their families / cultures teach it to them

Children who are exposed ONLY to their own culture's music are less able to understand and appreciate the music of other cultures in adulthood

It can be a challenge to bring your brain bias, beliefs, bullying, and/or bigotry tendencies to conscious awareness—you only manage effectively what you can identify, label, and describe



Learned perspectives can be relearned

***Unity in diversity* is possible—it can be fun and enriching**

Christian perspective: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female ... —Galatians 3:28