Leading and Managing from Within: Overcoming Unconscious Bias

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UNCONSCIOUS BIAS DEFINED

Unconscious biases, also known as implicit biases, are underlying attitudes and stereotypes that people unconsciously attribute to another person or group that affect how they understand and engage with a person or group.

They are learned stereotypes that are automatic, unintentional, deeply ingrained, universal, and able to influence behavior.

Unconscious bias is far more prevalent than conscious prejudice and often incompatible with one’s conscious values.

EXERCISE:

Think about a time when your judgement or decision may have been influenced by somebody’s gender, race/ethnicity, age, size, height, disability, or accent.
COMMON TYPES OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

**Affinity**
Tendency to gravitate towards people like ourselves in appearance, beliefs, and background.

**Gender**
Preference or prejudice towards one gender over another.

**Race/Ethnicity**
Preference or prejudice towards one race/ethnicity over another.

**Affirmation**
Only seek out details that confirms or supports one's prior beliefs or values.

**Microaggression:** Commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental actions, whether intentional or unintentional, that can be insulting.

**Micro-inequities:** Subtle, unconscious messages that devalue, discourage, and impair workplace performance.

COMMON ORGANIZATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- Diversity
- Innovation
- Hiring Decisions
- Pay & Salary Decisions
- Career Promotion
- Retention

EXERCISE

List three words to describe you as a professional.

EXERCISE

List 5-10 names of people you trust professionally.
STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING & OVERCOMING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- **Slow Down**
- **Listen**
- **Be Aware**
- **Be Intentional**

Resist the temptation to compartmentalize.
View people as unique individuals.

**BUILD**
**GROW**
**EXPAND**

**Ally**
Someone who is not a target of oppression but still works to end it.

**Advocate**
Someone who publicly supports a change or policy.

**Accomplice**
Someone who will focus on dismantling the structures that oppress an individual or group.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

**ORGANIZATIONS**
- Review hiring practices.
- Review performance review process.
- Review job descriptions.
- Review job postings.
- Review evaluations.
- Create structures & protocols.

**YOU**
- Be attuned to stereotypes.
- Anticipate the bias.
- Manage your impressions.
- Control your career.

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RESOURCES

Unconscious Bias Assessment:
Project Implicit, Harvard University- https://implicitbias.harvard.edu/implicit/

Books:

Break Through Bias: Communication Techniques for Women to Succeed at Work, by Andrea S. Kramer and Alton B. Harris, Bibliomotion, Inc. 2016.


Websites:


Videos:
McKinsey & Company: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFW2cfzevio

Gender Bias & Communication: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEHi4yauhu8