Foundations for Understanding Unconscious Bias

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Learning Objectives

- Identify how bias relates to the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion
- Accept bias as a natural and necessary function of the human mind
- Identify the impact of bias on our interactions and relationships
- Practice and begin using techniques to lessen the impact of our unconscious biases

Dimensions of Diversity

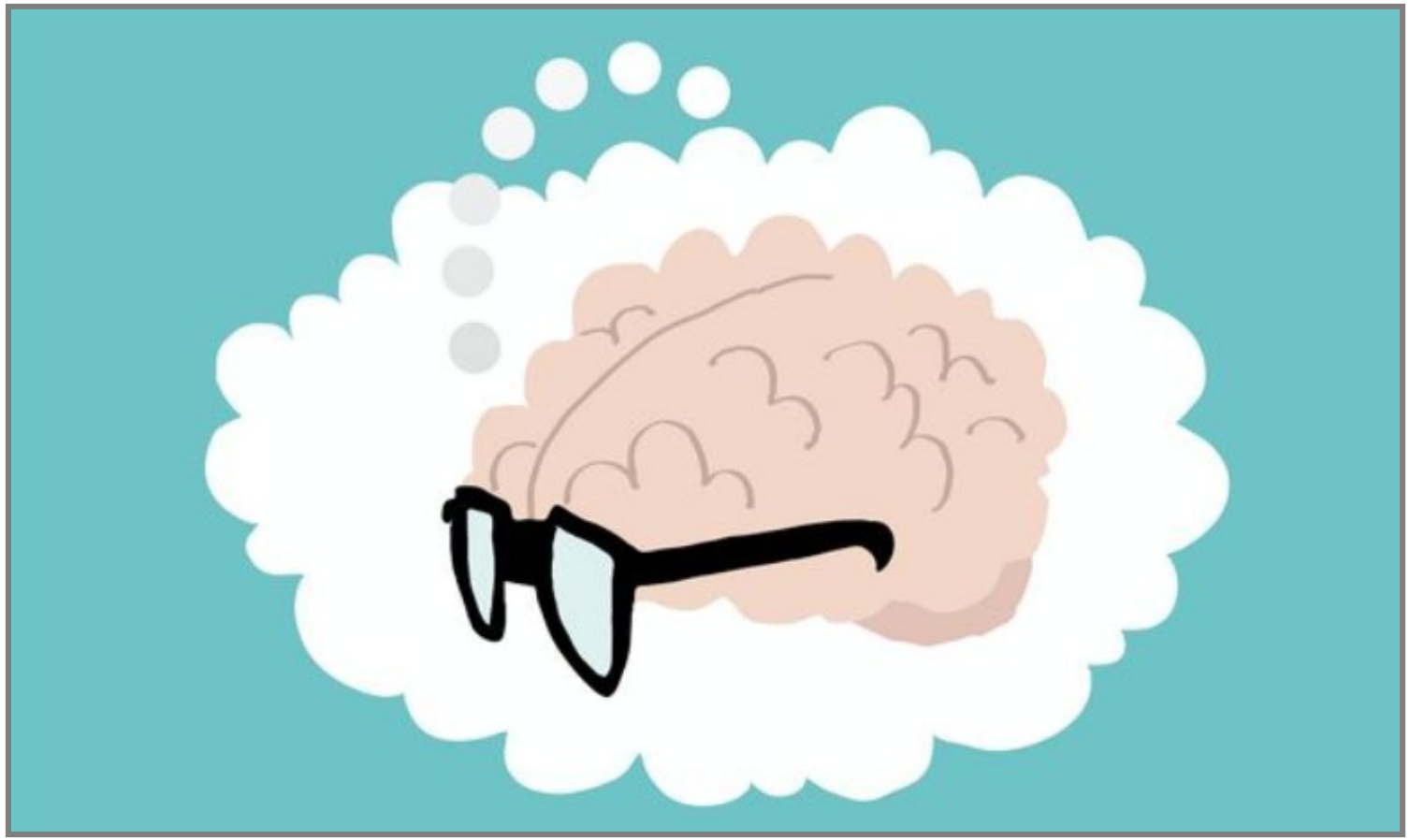
- Gender
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Religious/spiritual beliefs
- Socioeconomic status
  - Hobbies
  - Extracurricular activities
- Education
- Ethnicity
- Race
- Country of origin
- Physical Ability
- Language
  - Regional dialect
  - Foreign accent
- Physical Appearance
  - Height/Weight
- Introversion/Extroversion
- Lifestyle Choices
  - Marital status
  - Parental status

Unconscious biases are mostly triggered by primary factors such as race, gender and age

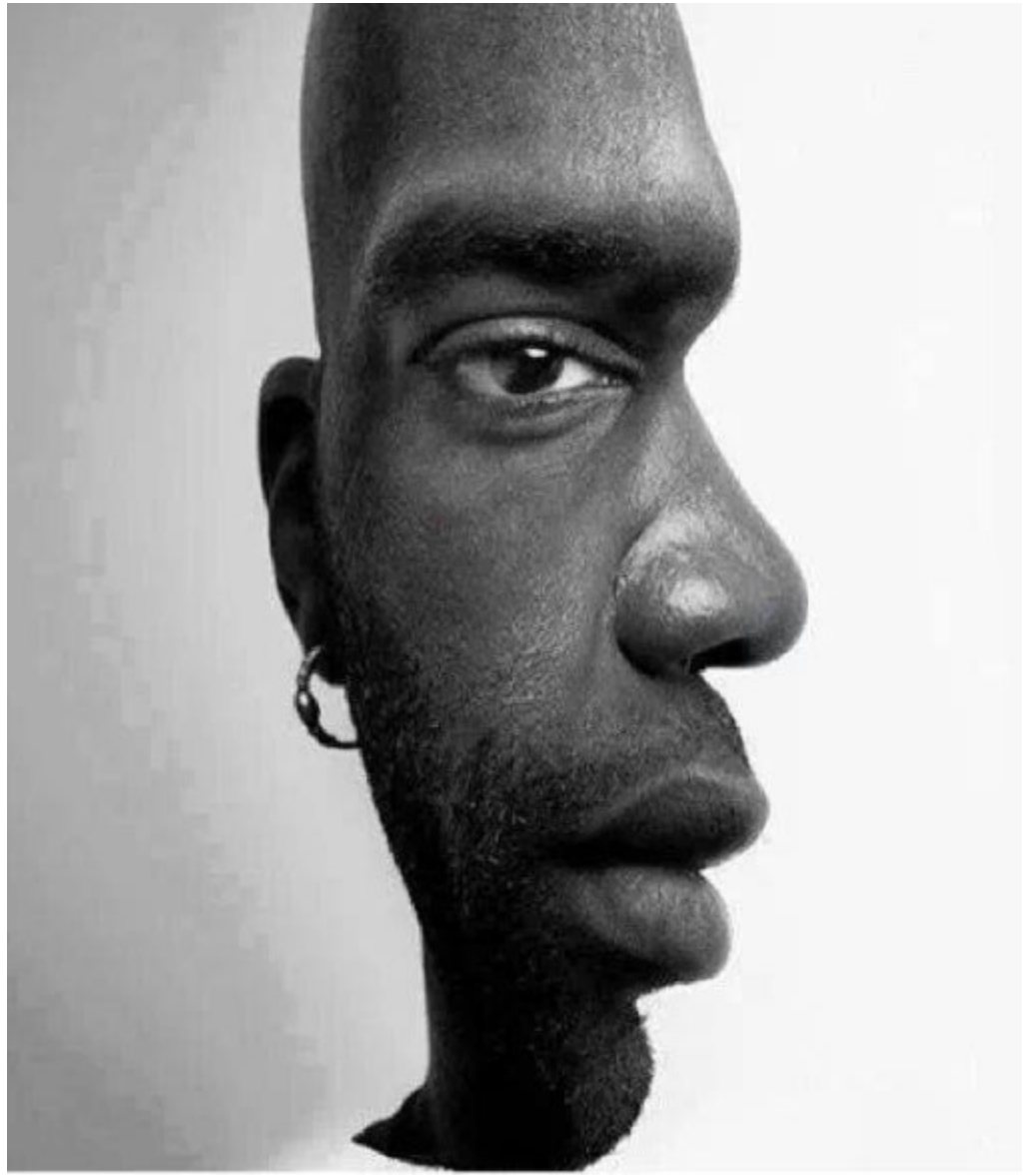
McGurk Effect

McGurk Effect

Seeing Is Deceiving

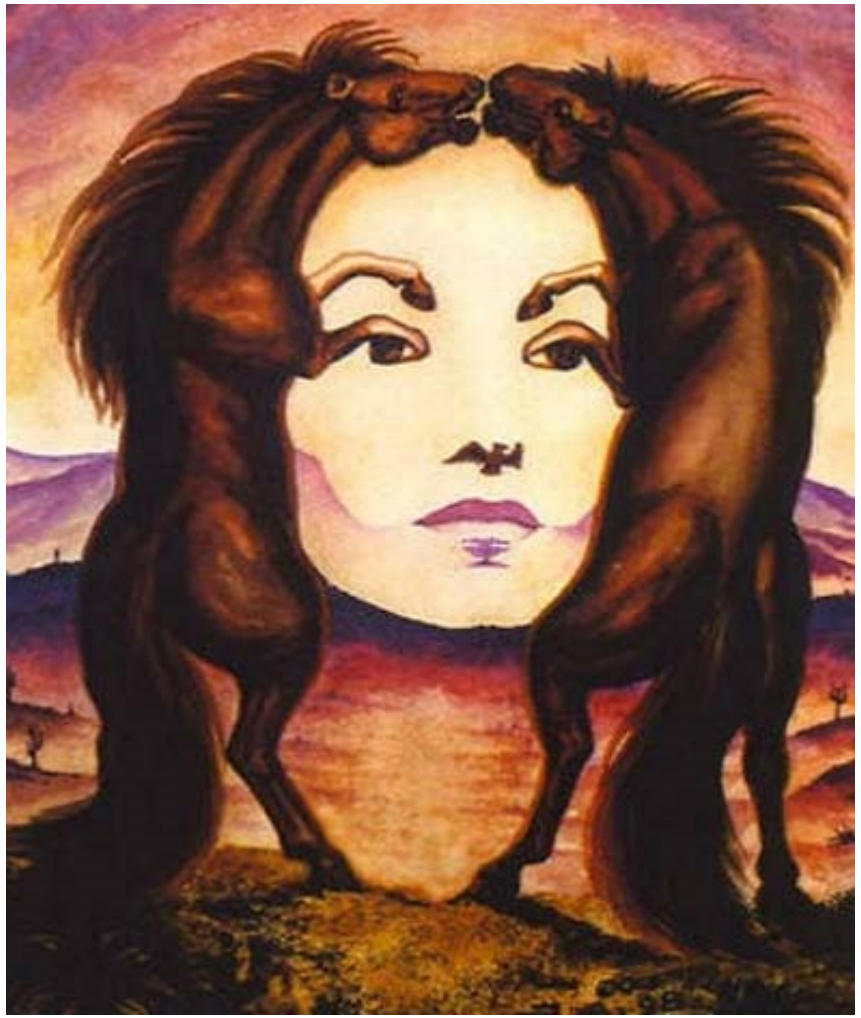


Fast Brain vs Slow Brain



Fast Brain vs Slow Brain


1200 x 620



Gender

Ethnicity

Skin tone

Age

Environment

What patterns do we read?

Appearance

Facial expression

Body posture

Body type

Clothing

WHO IS “THEY”

What is Bias?

Bias is a blind spot that requires a shift in *how we think* about other people that we perceive to be different. ***It is a belief or attitude we hold in our heads.***

Bias is the very fundamental way we look at and encounter the world.

<u>Diversity</u> is about noticing others; <u>bias</u> is all about you and your thoughts.

What is Unconscious Bias?

University of Kentucky:

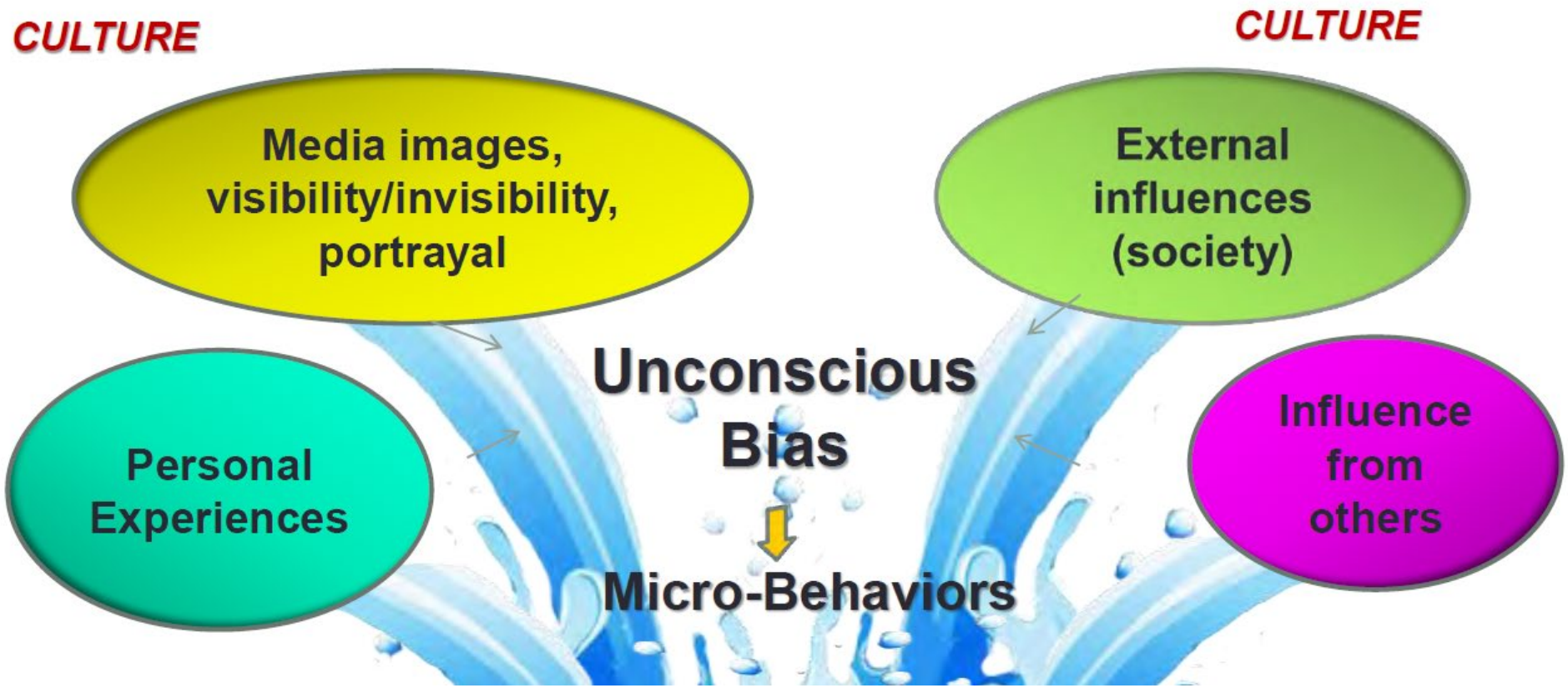
- *Unconscious, Subconscious* or *Implicit Bias* refers to the automatic stereotypes or attitudes we hold about groups or people. These biases can be held for or against those most like us and most different from us.
  - Can be based on unconscious thoughts about gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, personality types, or general appearance.
  - A host of brain functions, emotional responses, and cognitive processes that happen outside our conscious awareness but have a decisive effect on how *we* behave.

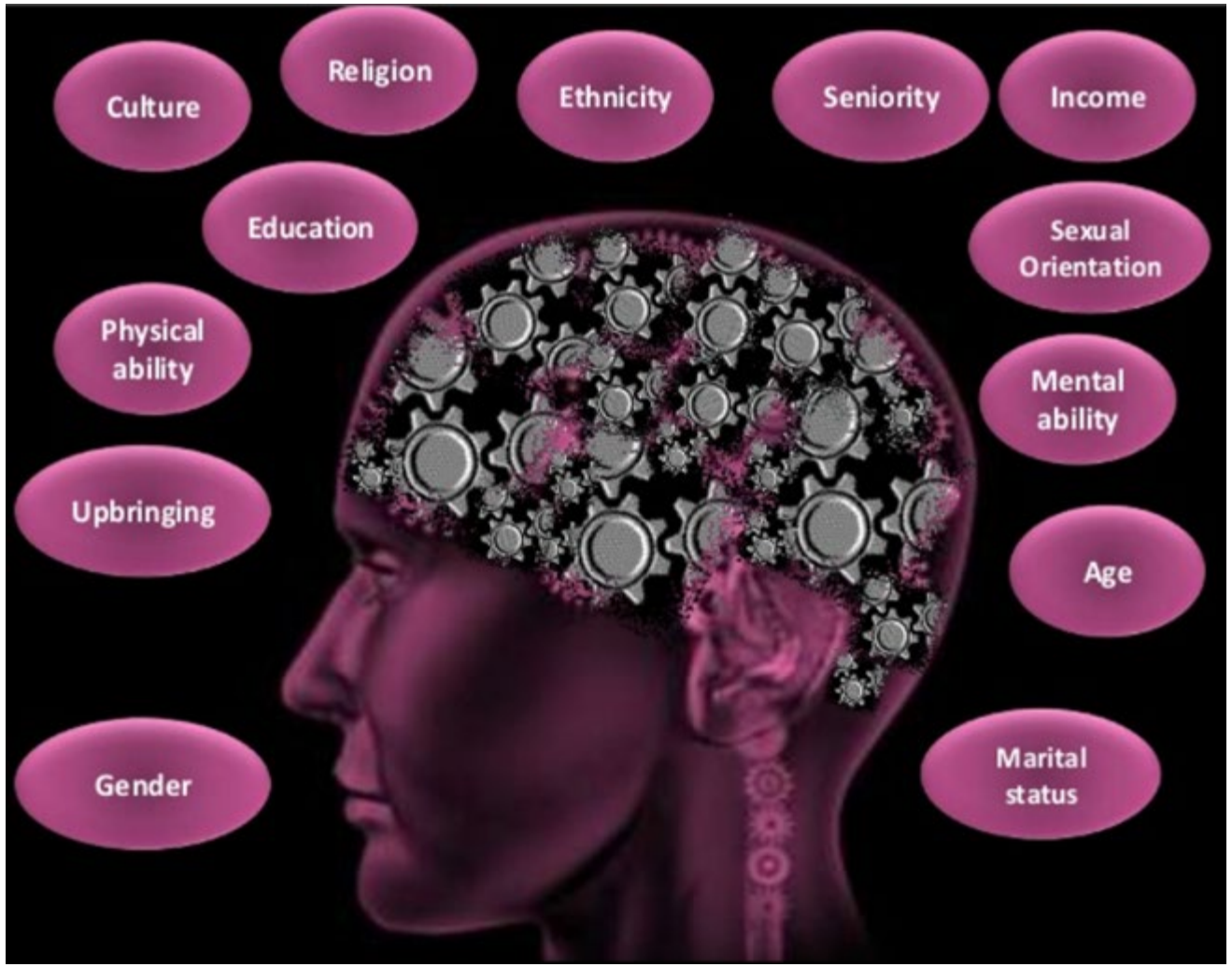
    Shankar Vedantam
  - A kind of prejudice you have that you aren't aware of, that affects the kinds of impressions and conclusions that you reach automatically, without thinking.

    Malcolm Gladwell

What is the Purpose of Bias?

Unconscious Bias





Brain Tricks - This Is How Your Brain Works - YouTube

Anterior Cingulate Cortex

Pre-Frontal Neocortex

Amygdala

Perceptions

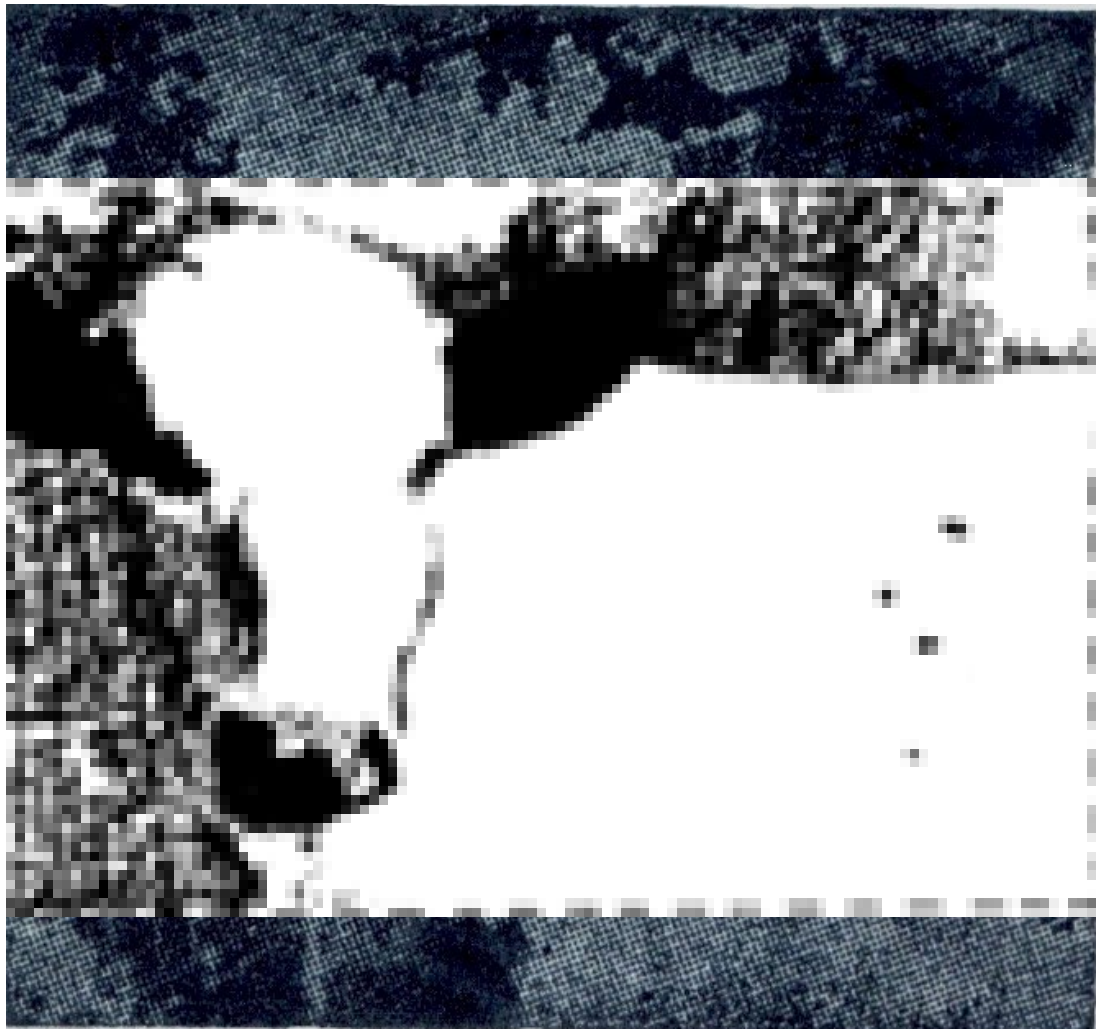
Interpretations

Preferences

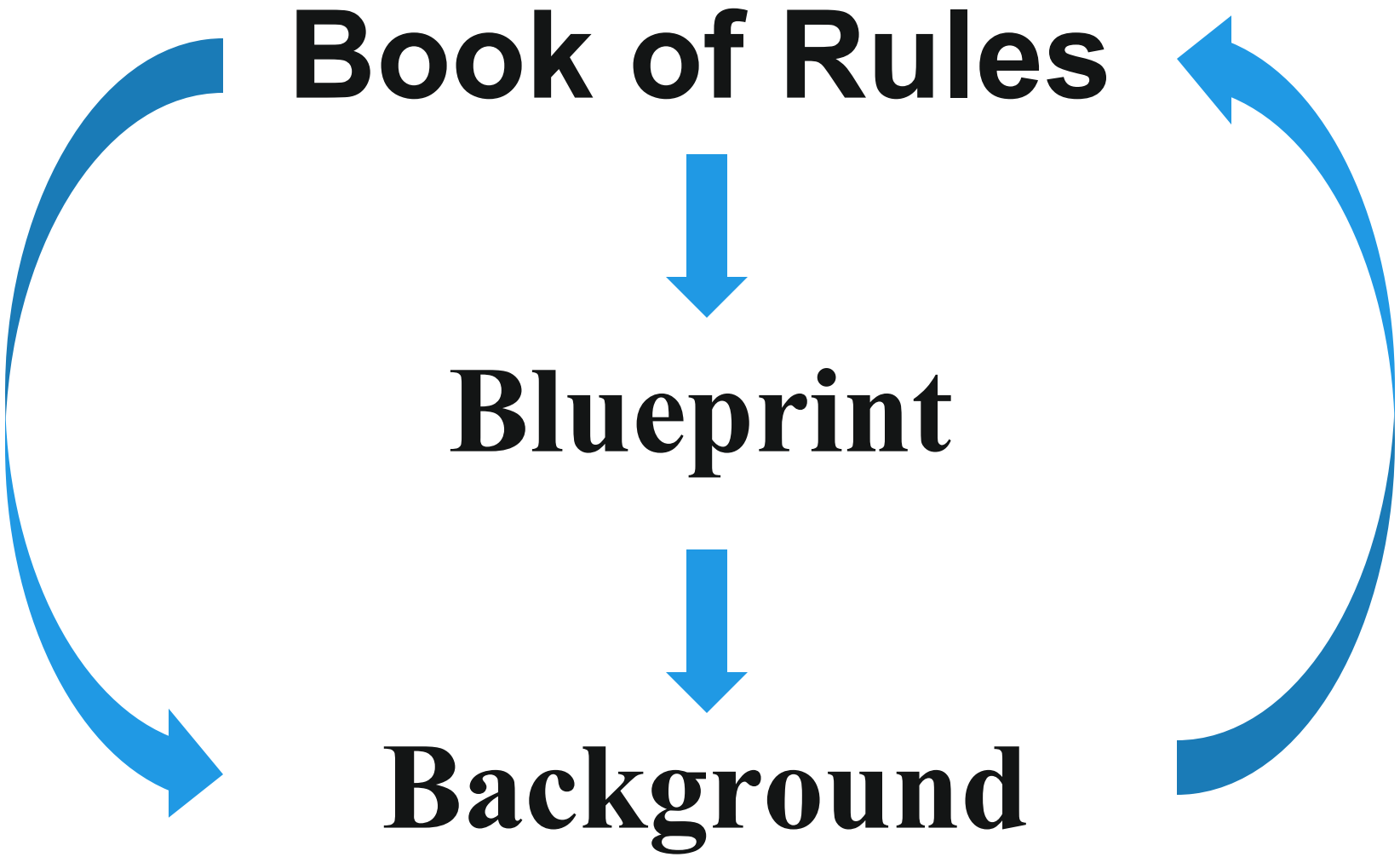
Selective Attention

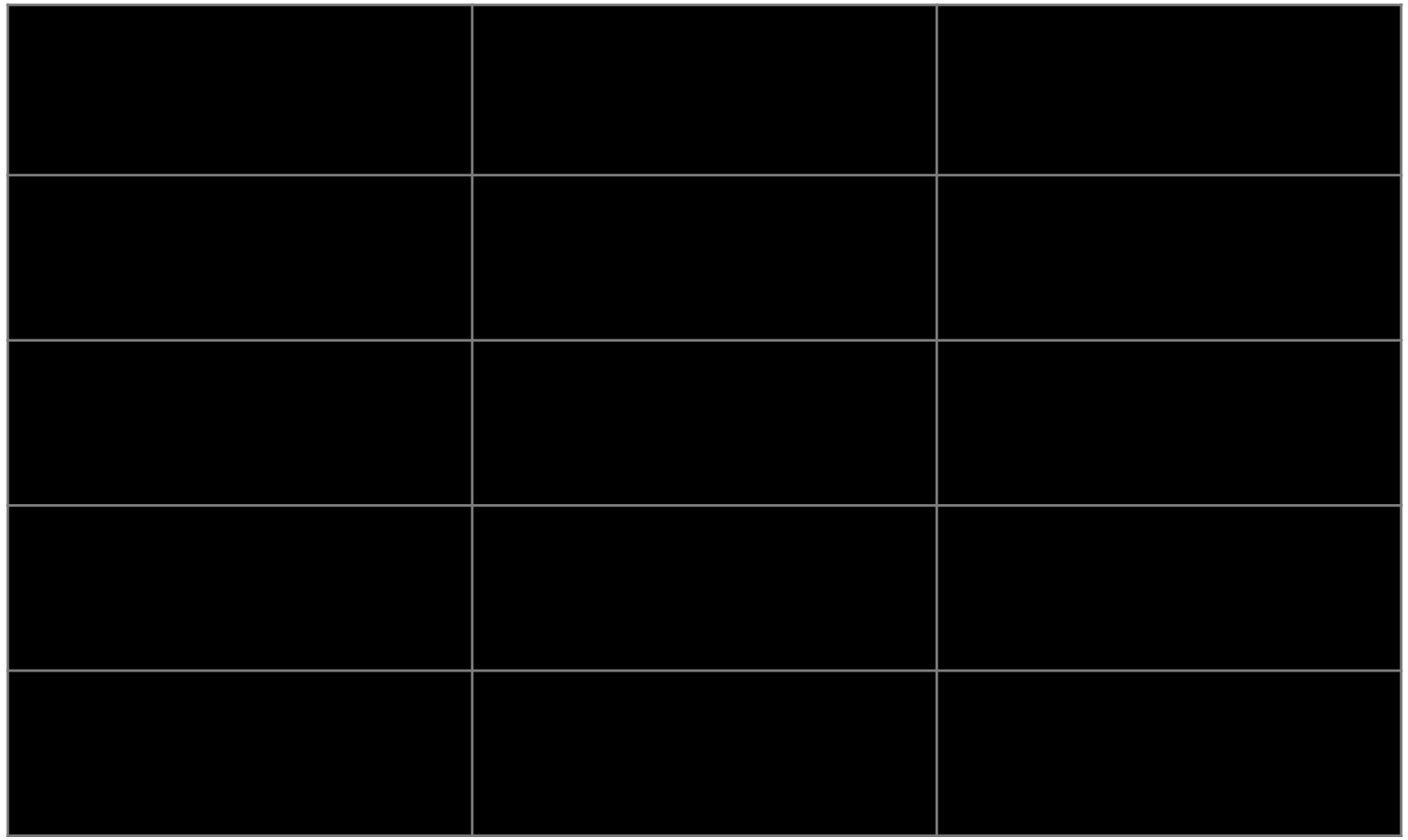
11 million pieces of information at any one time

40-50 pieces of information get absorbed

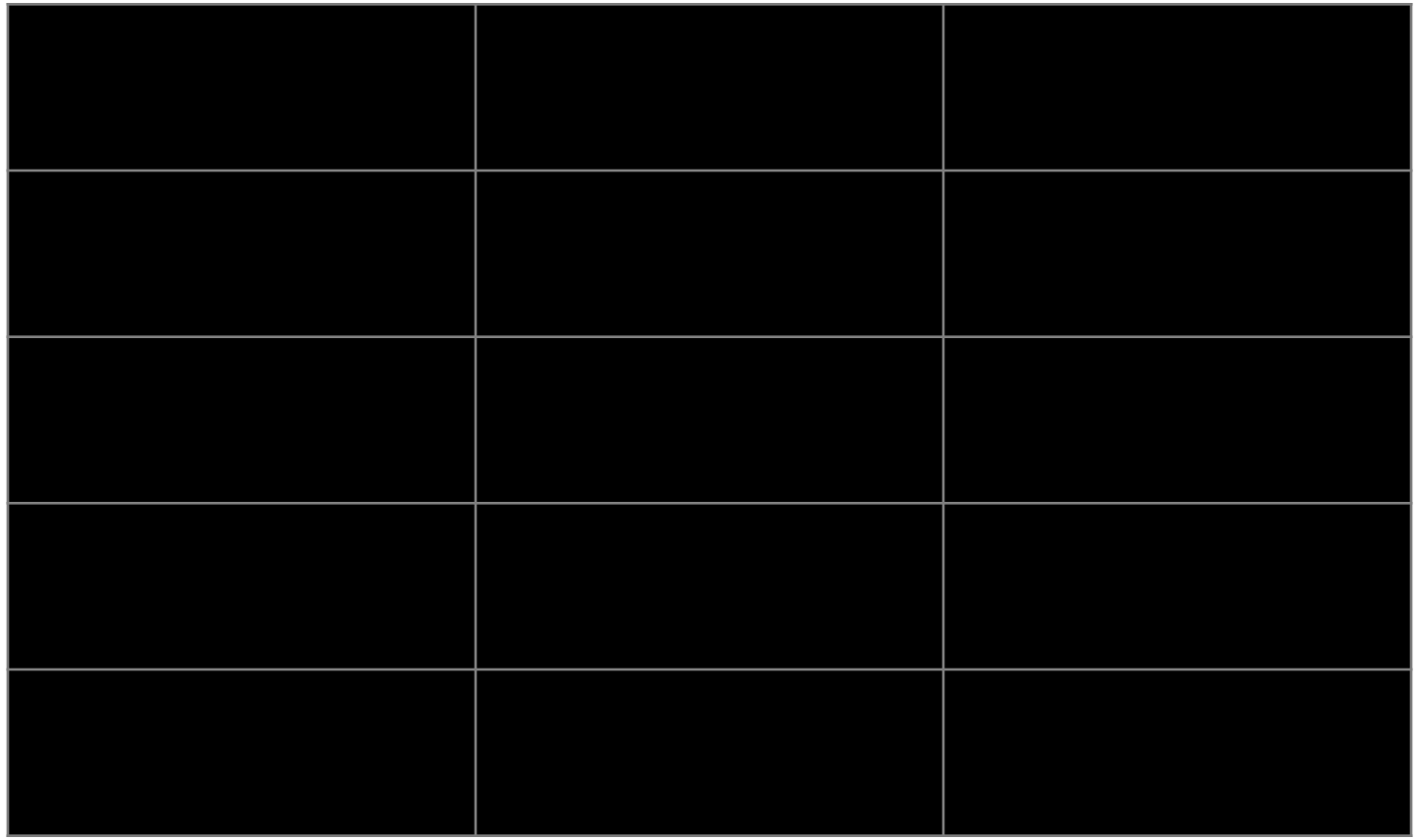


Karl Dallenbach


Book of Rules
Blueprint
Background



John Ridley Stroop, 1935



John Ridley Stroop, 1935

Sexual Orientation

Country of Origin

Disability

Appearance

Race

Gender

Which biases are yours?

Accent

Religion

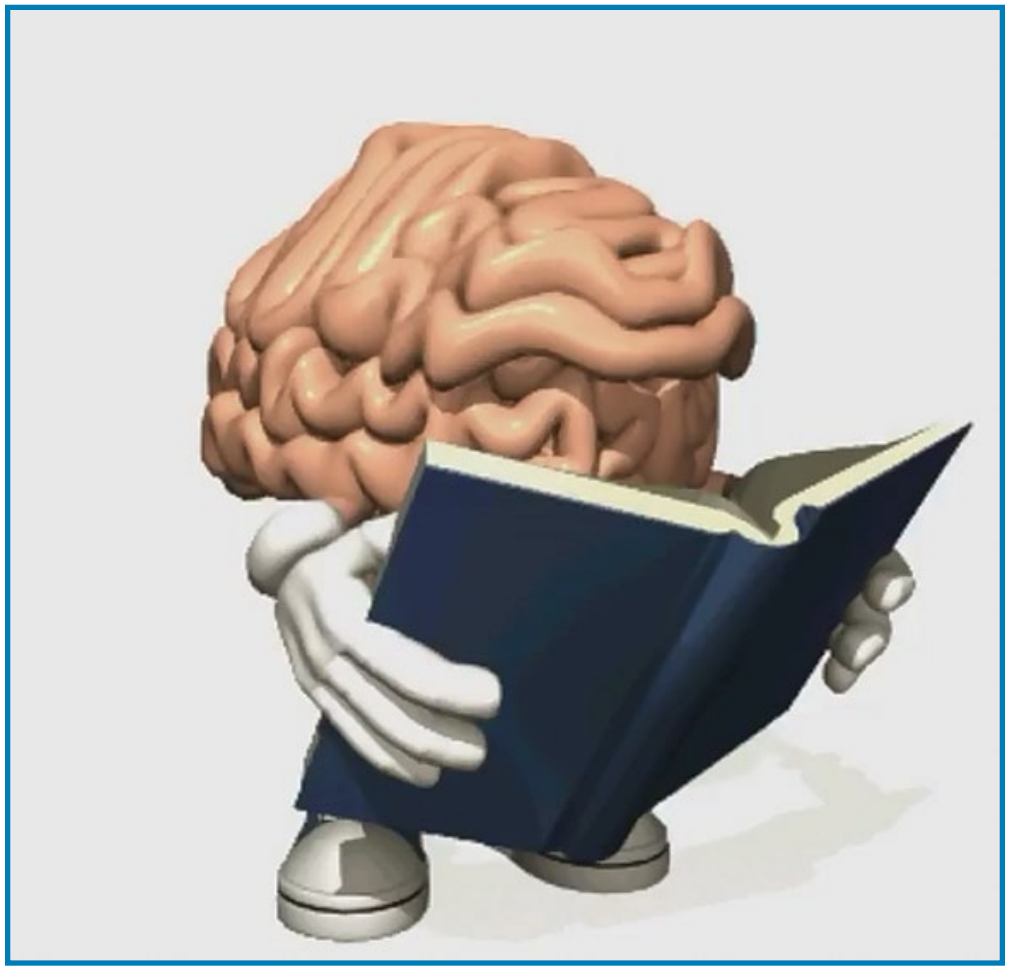
Age

Weight

Skin Tone

Name

Retrain Your Unconscious Mind



Retrain Your Unconscious Mind

Be open to the fact that you have unconscious biases. Seek to **LEARN**:

L
- Listen for understanding

E
- Engage with people and groups you may not know very well, or toward whom you have biases

A
- Adjust your surroundings so that you spend most of your time in the company of people who have a better attitude than you

R
- React with friendliness and honest curiosity to those you perceive as "different."

N
- Notice when your unconscious thoughts impact your behavior. Be open to giving and accepting feedback about biased behaviors

Questions to Ask Yourself to Consciously LEARN

Which of my biases is impacting my attitude right now?

What about this person is bothering me?

What assumptions am I making?

What are some patterns I notice that might be affecting my feelings?

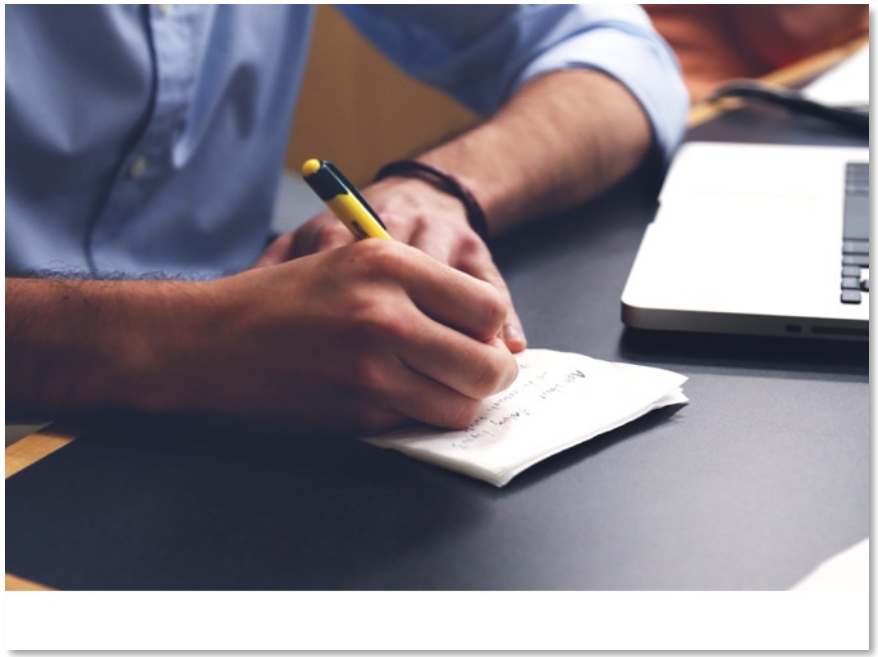
Does this person remind me of someone else?

What can I do to consciously change my behavior?

30-Day Plan

In the next 30 days, I commit to determining…

- What I can do to promote my personal and professional interests in this area.
- What the benefits will be.
- What the costs of not doing so will be.



Thank you!

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