

Jessica Nordell (2021). *The End of Bias: A Beginning: The Science and Practice of Overcoming Unconscious Bias*. New York: Metropolitan books Henry Holt and Co.

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And for those who intend and value fairness, it is still possible to act in discriminatory ways. That contradiction between values of fairness and the reality of real-world discrimination has come to be called “unconscious bias,” “implicit bias,” or sometimes “unintentional” or “unexamined bias.” it describes the behavior of people who want to act one way but in fact act another. How we work to end it is to focus of this book.

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The idea of implicit bias suggests a sharp distinction between the prejudiced and the unprejudiced, but the distinction is perhaps not so clear cut. Even the idea that there are two distinct process is in the mind—an automatic one and a deliberate one—is still debated; some see the idea of two processes as overly simplistic. There are, psychologists propose, many processes that unfold in a person’s mind between any stimulus and any response—between, say, seeing a pair of words and pressing a button we're seeing a female candidate’s resume and making a judgment about her ability to do the job. Our behavior is likely governed by processes that are automatic, deliberate, and combinations of the two.

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Some researchers have begun avoiding the term “implicit bias” altogether. Instead, they refer to bias “measured implicitly,” distinguishing the tool, not the attitude. Devine prefers to call it “unintentional bias.” A more straightforward term for bias that opposes a person's values is simply “unexamined bias.” Practically speaking, the difference between this and other more overt kinds of prejudice is the large gap between what is consciously intended by one person and what is experienced by another.

The exact sequence of mental events that causes well-intentioned people to engage in bias is still a roiling question. The truth is that... [it] may stem from an unknowable combination of associations we do not endorse and beliefs we have not fully examined.

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Patricia Devine’s ...” approach is based on principles from cognitive behavioral therapy. For someone to change their behavior, the thinking goes, it's not enough for them to be aware of their problem. They also have to be sufficiently motivated to make an effort. And they need concrete strategies to use so they can replace the old responses with something new. Thus, the Madison workshop has three parts. The first is designed to increase people's awareness that they may be acting in biased ways without realizing it. The second builds their motivation to stop this behavior. And the third provides strategies to help people start to change.

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The goal is to interrupt people's automatic responses and their studies' results suggest that teaching people about bias this way can begin to shift their behavior.

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The workshop is conceptualised as a way to curtail biased behavior, through those three cognitive behavioral pillars of awareness, motivation, and replacement strategies.

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Habitual thinking uses parts of the brain including the basal ganglia (104) and cerebellum. Deliberative thinking, which is slow and requires more effort, uses the prefrontal cortex, the part responsible for planning and more complex decision making. ... An intervention like the Madison workshop may awaken people to the fact that every time they respond in a biased way, they are making a choice. And seeing bias as a choice may help a person move from an automatic mode of thinking to conscious desperation.

But another key question about the Madison workshop is why it seems to motivate people to put in this effort. Devine's team believes it has to do with how individuals see themselves. In the late 1960s a social psychologist named Milton Rokeach posited that the self is made of many layers, some of which are more central than others. Our values, for instance, are core to our sense of self; our beliefs or knowledge about the world a little less so. The associations and stereotypes we hold would be even more distant from our sense of identity.

This hierarchy within our sense of self matters because the more central a layer is, the more resistant it is to change. It's hard, for instance, to alter whether a person values tradition, or security, or fairness but if you manage to alter something within one of the deepest layers the effect can be far reaching. "If you think of therapy, the goal is to (105) change processes central to how people view themselves," said Patrick Forscher, a psychologist and co-author on many of the Madison studies. "When it works, it can create very large changes." and while it may be difficult to modify a person's values—their judgment about what's important—it may be easier to alter their beliefs and knowledge about themselves and the world.

The Madison workshop zeroes in on this layer—people's belief that they don't discriminate or that bias is not important. And this layer is actually susceptible to change if people come to see that they themselves inadvertently discriminate, but they also value fairness and equality, that realization can be a spur to action. People want to be internally consistent.

Rokeach himself proved this in a set of experiments in the 1960s. He asked White students to rank a list of eighteen values. Students were shown that most ranked "freedom" above "equality." To induce a sense of internal inconsistency, they were then told this reflected that they care about their own freedom much more than they cared about other's freedom. They were also presented with the suggestion that support for civil rights is support for one's own freedom and others freedom as well. Students who were confronted with this contradiction

were, months later, more likely to enroll in an ethnic studies course and respond to an invitation to join the NAACP. More than a year later they expressed more support for civil rights for Black Americans.

...

“We can't change people's values But we can give people knowledge about how they might not be living up to their values...Once you have this information you can't help but make an effort.”

We might call this the “Goldilocks layer”—the one that's just right in terms of trying to effect change. This layer of the self is removed enough common change core values that it might, with the right kind (106) pressure, yield to transformation. When these beliefs move, they may bring with them a torrent of other changes.

[See Devine video for strategies of change]

- Stereotype replacement
- Counter stereotype imaging
- Individuating
- Perspective taking
- Increasing opportunities for contact

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In the Bulletproof Warrior, a seminar developed by former army Ranger Dave Grossman, attendees ... are encouraged to see the world is divided into sheep and wolves. The sheep are the public, oblivious to evil; the wolves are the criminals, waiting to attack. (Police are sheepdogs, the sheep's defense.)

Footnote to page 306 note 22.

Steve Featherstone, “professor carnage,” April 17, 2017, <https://newrepublic.com/article/141675/professor-carnage-dave-grossman-police-warrior-philosophy>;

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Mindfulness is generally been studied as it benefits the individual; it is not been thoroughly researched as an interpersonal or social practice... but early research is promising, finding that subjects who participate in mindfulness meditation show less implicit race and age bias on the IAT, and that it seems to help deconstruct automatic reactions.

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Neuroscientist Yoona Kang... Recruited to betten Buddhist priest to lead weekly compassionate meditation workshops... after the intervention, IAT scores of the meditators effectively dropped to zero: they scored as if they held no biases at all.

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The truth is we don't know yet whether mindfulness training will reduce racial bias in police behavior. The studies are not yet complete. But we do know this: chronic stress and the other impairments cops experience lead them to act more aggressively and use more force. These impairments are also known to increase bias. Mindfulness, on the other hand, diminishes such

impairments. It also allows individuals to observe their habits of mind and begin to change their Reflexive reactions.

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While there is growing awareness that creating an inclusive environment requires active, meaningful efforts, what “inclusion” actually *means* is less clear. Without a single universal definition, it has come stand for everything from having meaningful connections to others, to participating in decision making, to having access to insider information. Some researchers posit that in inclusive environments, people have a voice and feel that they belong. Human resource is studies professor Lisa Nishii, drawing on two decades of research, proposes that an inclusive setting has three features: fair and unbiased practices, a welcoming attitude of respect for peoples “whole selves,” and the desire to seek different perspectives. In much research, inclusion is assessed by asking questions. Do you feel welcome? Do your ideas matter? Do you belong?

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Note 16

Patricia Devine et al., “A gender bias habit- breaking intervention led to increased hiring of female faculty in STEMM departments,” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 73 (2017): 211-15.

Note 17

Patricia Devine et al., “Long- term reduction in implicit race bias: a prejudice habit- breaking intervention,” *Journal of experimental social psychology* 48, no. 6 (2012): 1267- 78; and Patricia Devine, “Breaking the Prejudice Habit” (workshop, University of Wisconsin, Madison, February 23, 2017

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Can we overcome biases that are unconscious, unintentional, or unexamined? I began this project because I wanted to find the answer. I now believe the answer is yes.

Altering one's own habits of thinking is not quick or straightforward, even for the most well-intentioned. It is not a cure-all, either. Reducing individual bias won't end disparities and societal inequities: these are the legacy of historical exclusion, unequal access, extractive economic policies, and another invidious structures built on corrupt foundations. [272] Only system change—from the reinvention of public safety in prisons to broad economic repair—can redress such gross and long standing injustices.

But the role of authentic inner, individual change can't be overstated. Laws and institutions emerge from human hearts, motivations, and consciousness. Policies are created by people, and it is people who interpret, implement, and abide by them. We might dismantle structures or laws, but we are still left with human minds that must imagine their replacement. Moreover, political or social action without internal transformation risks recreating the oppressive and

hierarchical thinking that enabled the original wrongs. To avoid that possibility, it is necessary to unwind harmful and unexamined patterns of thinking, practice seeing one another and ourselves with new eyes, and build cultures to support this transformation. All of this work strengthens the foundation for larger, more systemic repair.