



Wellbeing

Insights

Living a Better, More Vibrant Life



10 Ways to Challenge Your Biases & Enhance Your Wellbeing

Having a bias toward a group of people or persons with certain characteristics or experiences is quite common. A bias might be based on a single experience, experiences over time, lack of experience or one person's perception (or misperception) of others. While it may seem like a natural phenomenon, biases are learned and can have negative effects on our interactions with others and limit our ability to make sound judgments. Fortunately, with some intention, biases can be unlearned or changed to improve personal and work relationships, enhance decision making and open oneself up to more joy in life.

What is bias? A bias is preference, but more often than not it's a strong opinion

or attitude in favor or against a point of view or group of people. Examples of common biases include opinions formed around physical appearance, race, gender, parental or marital status, disability, age, income, education, and sexual orientation.

There are different types of biases, but in simplest terms a bias is explicit or implicit. A person with an explicit bias is aware of their feelings and expresses it in direct ways, whereas a person with an implicit bias is not mindful of their feelings and their bias operates in indirect ways. For example, a person with an explicit bias toward obese people may say that they prefer to work or socialize with fit people. Whereas, a person with an implicit bias might take a seat far away from an

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10 Ways to Challenge Your Biases

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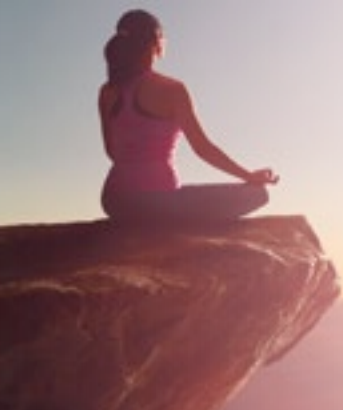
overweight person without even realizing it. In both cases, the prejudice impacts behavior and in worst cases results in intentional or unintentional discrimination.

A bias may seem harmless if it is in favor of a particular group or attribute, for example, holding a belief that a young, single person is well suited for a career that entails travel or that a good public speaker must also be a good leader. It's important to note, however, that these biases are also based on perception and not fact and will ultimately cloud your decision making when selecting the best person for a role.

We all have biases. If we know them, we can correct them. Challenging your biases is a lifelong journey, but it's worth the effort to experience more joy and bring more joy to others. Here's how:

1. **Through Project Implicit**, a non-profit organization whose goal is to provide education about hidden biases, you can take an [Implicit Association Test \(IAT\)](#) from a list of many topics.
2. **Ask for feedback from others on what they observe** – what do others perceive as your biases? Listen to what others say without being defensive. Open and honest conversations with colleagues, neighbors or friends will identify potential blind spots. For further reflection, consider reading [“Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People”](#) by psychologists Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald.
3. **Once you acknowledge your biases**, diversity advocate Vernā Myers suggests moving toward, not away from, the groups that make you uncomfortable. Listen to her TED talk on [how to walk boldly toward your biases.](#)
4. **Learn to slow down and manage stress.** When we are under pressure, we are more likely to revert to our biases and rush decisions. A daily meditation practice or other self-care exercise can help put you in a better position to be effectively present and open with others.
5. **Practice active listening and get to know one another.** Give people time and attention to voice their thoughts and feelings, and share their personal stories, which in turn will help break down barriers and disrupt your own biased thinking. Offer multiple modes of eliciting feedback.
6. **Test your assumptions.** Seek out information that is contradictory to your views. Don't only look for different viewpoints; examine sources of information you might not normally follow. Try to disprove your own beliefs.
7. **Expand your professional networks and social circles in person and on social media.** Create diverse project teams and join a variety of forums for the best results and to minimize one-track thinking.
8. **Use inclusive language.** Pay attention to how, what and when you say things, and avoid generalizations. Before communicating about a significant change or opportunity, ask another colleague or friend for their read on tone and appeal of the message.
9. **Invest time working through biases** with a professional coach or counselor.
10. **Ask yourself how you can be an ally to colleagues and others who experience bias.** When you see bias in action, don't let it slide.

Mindful Minute



During the hustle and bustle of the holidays, it's easy to get caught up in the chaos. Slowing down to pause and breathe deeply is one way you can nourish your mind and body during the holidays and beyond. Although you might feel pressured to constantly be on the go, it can have profound effects on your physiology. The mind is wired to crave entertainment and being busy feeds into that. Deep diaphragmatic breathing is a simple, yet effective way to signal your brain to relax; it lets your brain know you are not in danger. The simple practice of making the exhale longer than the inhale initiates the part of your nervous system that helps you “rest and digest.”

Pausing to breathe deeply can be a reminder to stop multitasking and focus on being present.

When you feel anxious or out of control this month, try the following:

1. Slow down to pause.
2. Focus on one thing – your breath.
3. Lengthen your exhale so it is longer than your inhale.
4. Use the full capacity of your lungs. If it's helpful, place your hands on your ribs to feel the ribcage expand as you inhale and fall as you exhale.

On the Menu

Bok Choy

Bok choy, a Chinese cabbage, has been a staple vegetable in Chinese cuisine for thousands of years. Archaeologists discovered 6,000-year-old bok choy seeds in China's Yellow River Valley. Over the years, it has worked its way into many cuisines around the world. The leafy green is a member of the Brassica family (cruciferous vegetables), which includes kale, collard greens and other cabbages. It tastes similar to cabbage with a mild, fresh flavor. Their stalks are crunchy like celery, while their leaves are softer like spinach.

Bok choy is packed with valuable nutrients, which is why it has been used medicinally in Chinese culture for thousands of years. Some of its nutritional highlights include:

- Rich in antioxidants. Studies have shown that people who eat more cruciferous veggies, which contain antioxidants, have a lower risk for lung, prostate and colon cancer.
- Contains the mineral selenium, which is known for preventing inflammation and decreasing the rate of tumor growth.
- Great source of potassium, which can lower blood pressure and risk of stroke.
- Rich in calcium, which is essential to building and maintaining strong bones.

Sesame Ginger Bok Choy

This simple side dish is nourishing, packed with flavor and takes only minutes to prepare. You can serve it over a bed of rice or pair it with chicken or beef.

Ingredients:

- 8 heads baby bok choy
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed and chopped
- 1 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 Tbsp. water
- 1 tsp. fresh ginger, minced
- 1 tsp. sesame oil
- ¼ tsp. red chili flakes
- Sesame seeds for garnish

How to Purchase

Bok choy can be found in most grocery stores, as well as health food stores and Asian food markets. In addition to standard bok choy there is baby bok choy, which is essentially a smaller version with tender leaves and a sweeter flavor. It can be used in place of other greens in salads. When buying, look for vibrant colors with minimal browning. Enjoy both the leaves and the stalk; no need to discard either.

Keep It Fresh

Store bok choy in a plastic or mesh vegetable bag in the crisper section of the refrigerator for up to one week. Wash immediately just before cooking.

Nutrition Info

Per serving (¼ of recipe)

Calories	74
Total Fat	5.8g
Carbohydrates	4.3g
Sugar	0g
Fiber	2g
Protein	2.3g
Sodium	320mg

Directions:

Combine sesame oil, soy sauce, water and chili flakes in a small bowl. Heat the vegetable oil in a large skillet or wok and cook the garlic and ginger until fragrant, about 1-2 minutes. Mix in the white of the bok choy and cook 3-4 minutes. Add the soy sauce mixture and leaves and cook 2 more minutes until heated through and the green leaves are just wilted. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve.



Ask the Experts

End-of-Year Traditions

Our Engagement & Wellbeing Team Shares How They Set Up Their New Year for Vibrancy & Happiness



Sue Trogu

My traditions include both looking back on the past year and looking forward to the new. I always relive the year's memories by going through pictures and journal entries. This generally brings many smiles and shows accomplishments, and it's fun

to reflect on memories that were made. To help me turn the page into the New Year, there's always a trip to the ocean with a secret wish drawn in the sand at water's edge to be washed away for safekeeping for the next 365 days. Lastly, a real passion of mine is organizing a new planner. I include my personal and professional goals, pencil in birthdays and holidays, and budget for the first six months. My planner for 2021 will be the [Commit30](#). This is my fun way to daydream about the New Year and what all of the pages may hold.



Abby Carter

The most powerful ritual I have for bringing in the New Year is a technology detox. For the past 8 years I've taken a full day on January 1 to turn off my phone, computer, TV and iPad to be present with myself. This started

out as a "mini mindfulness retreat" where I would do mindfulness practices all day long. Over time it has warped into a day of self-care where I'll journal, do mindful movement (yoga), practice relaxation and engage in visioning. I ask myself "How do I want to feel? What can I do this year to generate those feelings? How can I pay attention to myself and my needs? How can I be more loving to myself? How can I be more understanding of others?" Starting my year in this intentional way has been a powerful shift from traditional goal setting, which often loses steam quickly, to a way of being.



Natalie Magee

Toward the end of each year I have my kids fill up a trash bag full of items to be donated. We talk about families in our area who are less fortunate and how important

it is to give back. I love this tradition as it accomplishes multiple goals. It helps me teach my children about organization and respect for what they have, as well as loving others and giving back. I also go through my closet and the rest of the house to declutter at the same time. This helps me keep things in perspective and stay focused – just as much as it helps my kids.



Amy Snyder

At the end of each year, I look forward to setting up a new daily planner. It's a time for me to reflect on the past year and set new goals.

I use a paper-based planner to stay organized with appointments, birthdays and to-do lists. I also use it to journal my moods and experiences. I get enjoyment out of choosing a new planner, and I love the feeling of starting with a new blank, clean slate. I write three goals at the front of my planner and at the beginning of each month. This helps remind me to reset and refocus each month to ensure that I am truly prioritizing the things that matter most throughout the entire year. At the end of the year, I can browse through the planner and remember a special day that I had with family, reminisce about a vacation I took, congratulate myself on small wins or accomplishments, and even recognize how some tasks that seemed so important at the time were really not as critical as I thought.

Emotional Intelligence for Holiday Stress Amid the Pandemic & Beyond

The holiday season is known to offer a sense of comfort, hope and joy as we gather with families and friends, attend festive parties, and celebrate traditions. However, the pandemic has upended “life as we know it” and the holidays are no exception as we continue to work through a wave of uncertainty.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the pandemic has surfaced mental health challenges for many, resulting in a significant increase in anxiety and depression as people follow public health restrictions to reduce their own risk and their risk to others. The holidays can already be an emotion-laden time; add to that the stressors of navigating the pandemic and it can feel especially overwhelming.

Perhaps now more than ever, it’s important to hone in on our emotional intelligence skills. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to understand, use and manage one’s emotions effectively to alleviate stress, improve communication, defuse conflict and otherwise traverse life’s challenges.

Following are some steps to cope with the trials of this holiday season and beyond.

- 1. Not experiencing your usual holiday cheer?** Perhaps you’re feeling more sensitive to other’s feedback or actions, or maybe you’re having angry outbursts or feeling a sense of doom and gloom. Whatever the feeling, take a moment and sit with it. Ponder what led to that feeling and consider what impact it is having on you.
- 2. Label the emotion with specificity.** There’s more to our emotions than the basic happy, sad and mad. [Expand your emotion vocabulary](#) and find the right descriptor to find the right solution. Are your tears due to frustration with the tightening restrictions in your region? They certainly could be, but for some it may be feeling homesick due to being away from family and friends. Getting to the root of the emotion will help you determine how to cope.
- 3. Now that you’ve identified the emotion, ask yourself if it is the right emotion.** Is it based on facts or is it based on a narrative you’ve told yourself in the absence of facts? It can be easy to jump to conclusions or to shift to worst-



case scenario thinking. Are you feeling guilty that you’re letting down your family and friends by not attending traditional celebrations and gatherings? Certainly those feelings of guilt and disappointment can be stifling and real, but it’s important to ask yourself if they are based in reality.

- 4. Ask yourself how you want to feel.** While the answer to this question may sound obvious, considering how you want to feel in a particular situation can be a powerful catalyst to working toward it. Again, specificity about the desired emotion(s) is important here. For example, you may want to feel connected with family and friends, appreciated for the efforts you are able to take and at peace with any decisions you have made.
- 5. Next, get unstuck** from ruminating on your current emotional state by focusing on your desired feelings. Consider what strategies to put in place to lead you there. With the aforementioned example, the desired emotions were feeling connected, appreciated and at peace. The strategies to get there may include hosting a virtual celebration, writing a heartfelt note to loved ones or perhaps simply relaying your care to someone whom you fear may be having a difficult time.

Since it began, the pandemic has led to uncertainty, high stress and a loss of routine. Add to it the stressors of the holidays and emotions can run rampant. Working through these emotions that may feel out of control and shifting our focus to a desired state can have a powerful effect on our wellbeing, relationships, work and more. It’s a continual effort, but one where the successes, however small, can make all the difference in these high-stress times. Give yourself and others grace and hang in there – we will get through this!

Building a Budget

Most people approach the idea of budgeting with dread as it can feel like depriving yourself or saying no to things you want. But the truth is that a budget is really just a spending plan. When you create your budget, you get to decide in advance what you want to do and where your money goes.

At the most basic level, your budget is a balance between money coming in (your income) and money going out (your expenses). The first thing you need to know is how your money is moving right now. Start by writing down your monthly income. This includes your take-home pay, as well as any money you bring in from a small business, child support, residual income and/or any other source. Then look at your monthly expenses. Review at least the last month or two and see exactly where you're spending your money (e.g., mortgage, utilities, food, entertainment, clothing).

Once you've gained an understanding of how your money is moving, you can create a written plan so that every dollar has a purpose. A method that has benefited many is to divide your spending into three primary categories:

1. Essentials – About 50% of your monthly income should be devoted toward expenses that you must pay. These may include items such as mortgage or rent, utilities, insurance, taxes, transportation, food and childcare.

2. Financial Priorities – Another 20% should be devoted to planning for the future. This involves paying off what you already owe and establishing savings. This part of your budget will depend on your financial situation but may include items such as contributing to your retirement plan, paying off student or personal loans, making credit card or medical bill payments, or creating an emergency fund.

3. Lifestyle Choices – The remaining 30% of monthly income is left for the extras that help you live more comfortably and perhaps more enjoyably but are not essential. These differ for everyone but may include things like shopping, memberships, daily lattes, entertainment or travel.

Also, be sure to set aside a small amount of money every month for miscellaneous expenses. That way, when something unexpected happens you can pay for it without having to dip into another category of your budget or borrowing.

It will take time and practice to properly develop a budget, but this diligence is key toward establishing financial freedom. That being said, it's also important to keep it simple; don't get caught up in tracking every penny. If it's too complicated, you will quit. Remember, your budget is your friend so you can tell your money where you want it to go and change things as you like.



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