Got Bias. Now What?

The SEEDS Model

S — Similarity Biases

People like me are better than others

E — Expedience Biases

If it feels right, it must be true

E — Experience Biases

My perceptions are accurate

D — Distance Biases

Closer is better than distant

S — Safety Biases

Bad is stronger than good

Similarity Biases

Affinity or In-group Bias: Preferring individuals who share a similar affinity, association or background (same alma mater; enjoys the same sport; goes to the same place of worship).

Similar-to-Me Bias: The tendency to warm up to people who are resemble us more and who we can see ourselves in. As we gravitate towards people who appear "relatable" to us, it may have the unintended effect of alienating others who we do not find "relatable."

Bandwagon Effect: Adopting a certain belief as the number of people who hold that belief increases. This is a powerful form of groupthink which may be driven by a desire to "fit in."

Selective Perception: Noticing only what we want to hear while ignoring opposing viewpoints; the tendency to "see things" based on our personal frame of reference or mind filter.
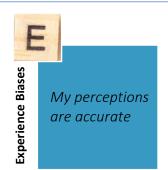
Expedience Biases

Stereotyping: Expecting a person to have certain qualities based on the perception of the person's affiliation with a social group, ignoring the individuality of the person.

Confirmation Bias: Seeking and finding information that confirms your beliefs and ignoring evidence that does not (trusting selective news channels; seeking expert opinion that you know will confirm your POV).

Recency Effect: Tendency to weigh the latest information more heavily than older data or experiences.

Halo Effect: Letting one trait or one occurrence in the past influence the overall perception or judgement of that individual. This can be used for both a positive or a negative bias (sometimes called the "pitchfork effect").

Experience Biases

Blind Spot: Research shows that people rate themselves as less susceptible to biases than others, thus failing to recognize one's own cognitive biases.
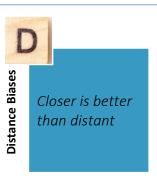
False Consensus Effect: Overestimating the extent to which others agree with you or think the same way as you. (e.g., leaders can find themselves assuming that others agree with their POV and make decisions without seeking opinion of others that might result in better ideas.)

Fundamental Attribution Error: The tendency to explain someone's behavior based on internal factors, such as personality or disposition, and to underestimate the influence that external factors, such as situational influences, have on another person's behavior.

False Transparency: Overestimating the degree to which your mental state is accessible to others. ("Everyone in the room could see what I was thinking; I didn't have to say it.")

Distance Biases

Not Created by Me: Preference for the credit of contributions and innovation to oneself or one's affinity group. Leads to hoarding of information or lack of collaboration outside one's group (operating in silos).

Endowment Effect: Expecting others to pay more for something than you would pay yourself. (e.g., a person might pay $1 for a neutral object, say a bottle of water. However, if you "endow" them with the bottle of water, they might value the bottle of water at $2).

Proximity Bias: Placing greater value and attention to people, places and circumstances that are closest to the center of power, e.g., worksites remote from the HQ of an organization being ignored.

Affective Forecasting: Judging your future emotional states based on how you feel now. ("I feel miserable about it, and I always will.") Also known as the projection bias.

Safety Biases

Loss Aversion: The tendency to prefer avoiding losses to acquiring equivalent gains: it is better to not lose $5 than to find $5. The principle is very prominent in the domain of economics.

Framing Effect: Basing a judgment on whether a decision is presented as a gain or as a loss, rather than on objective criteria. ("I hate this idea now that I see our competitors walking away from it.")

Sunk Costs: Having a hard time giving up on something (a strategy, an employee, a process) after investing time, money, or training, even though the investment can't be recovered. ("I'm not shutting this project down; we'd lose everything we've invested in it.")

Negativity Bias: Focusing on one angry customer instead of the many happy customers we encounter.

Adapted from and based on the SEEDS Model by Matthew Lieberman, David Rock, Heidi Grant Halvorson and Christine Cox