

# Implicit Bias: What is it and what can we do about it?

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# Ground Rules...

- **Speak Your Truth:** Share from your own experiences
- **Seek to Understand:** Actively listen, before responding
- **Respect Others' Experience:** We may have different OR similar stories to share, and contexts to draw from. All are legitimate.
- **Disagree without being Disagreeable:** Disagreement is expected. HOWEVER,
  - Approach unexpected ideas with curiosity, not argument.
  - If you disagree, debate and challenge ideas. Don't attack the speaker.
- **Share the Air:** Make room for all voices to be heard, and don't dominate the conversation.
- **Confidentiality:**
  - Share stories and experiences, but don't identify individual people or provide details that would allow someone in your story to be identified.
  - Do not share the experiences you hear in this space outside this space.















We receive **11 million bits** of  
**information** every moment.

We can only consciously process  
**40 bits.**



99.9999996%  
UNCONSCIOUS

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/daviddisalvo/2013/06/22/your-brain-sees-even-when-you-dont/>



# YOU are biased.

(So am I.)

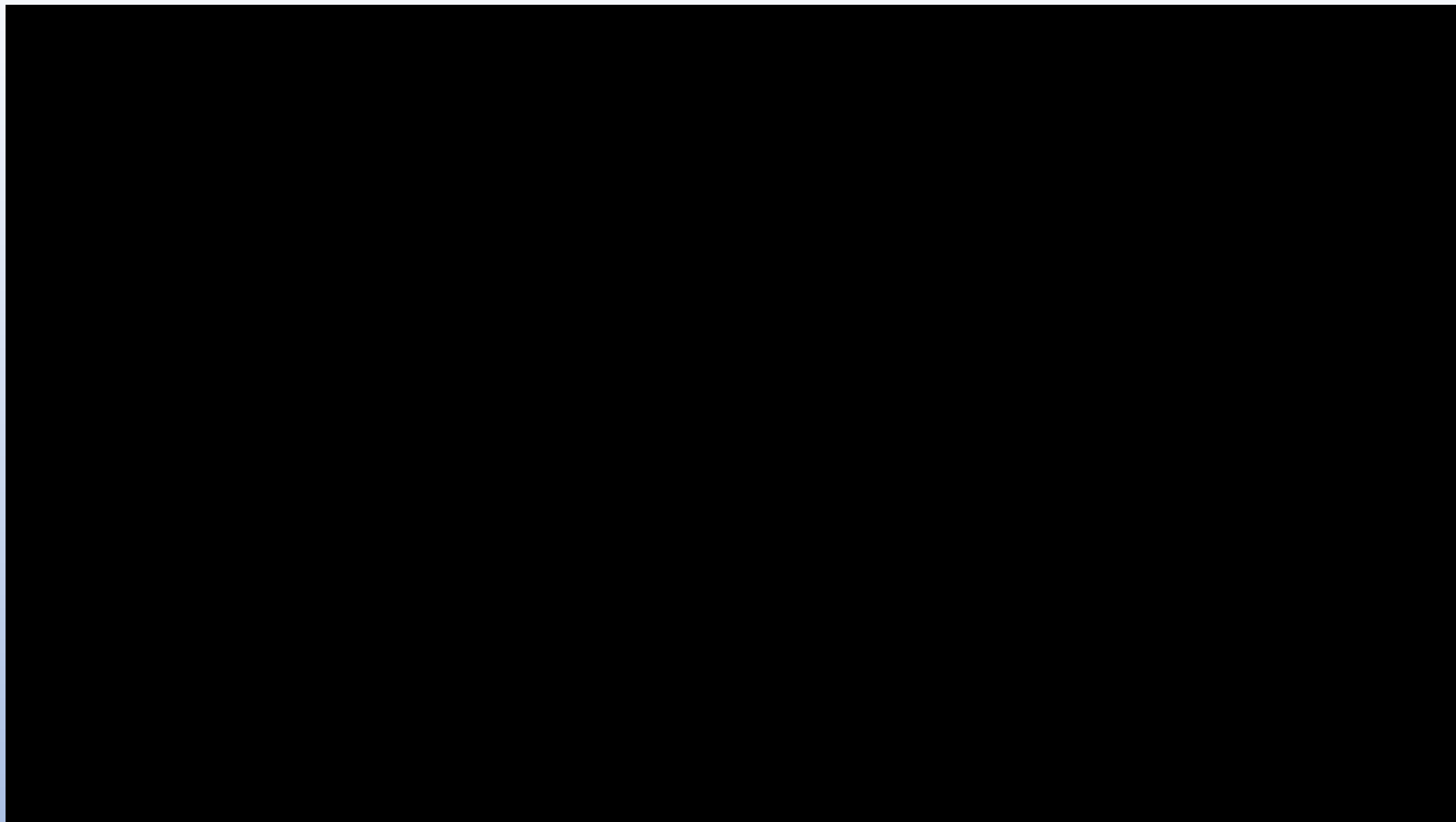


# Mind games

- Part of learning about unconscious bias is realizing that our brains are capable of making assumptions and creating mental shortcuts without us even being aware.

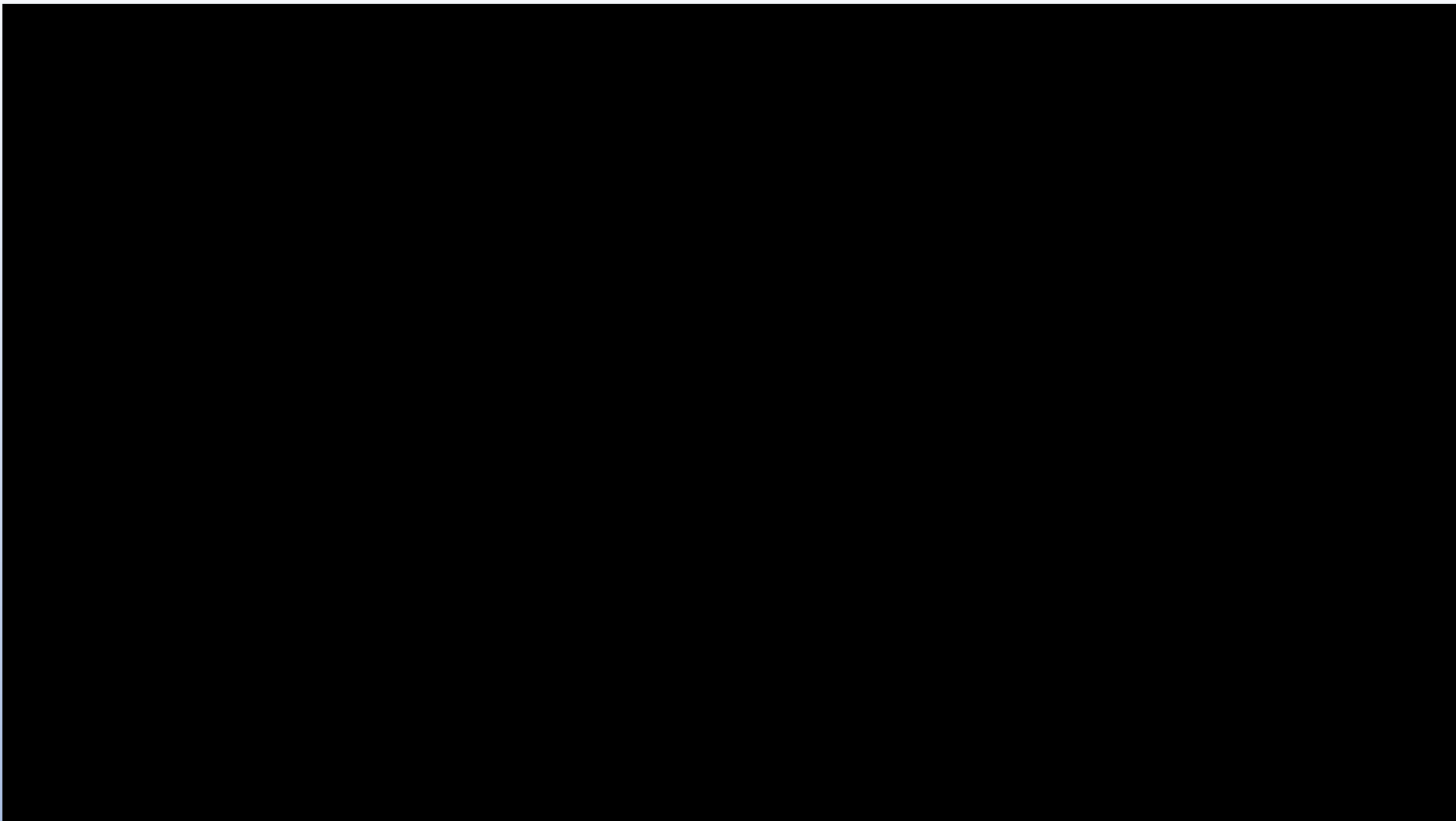






<https://youtu.be/zNbF006Y5x4>

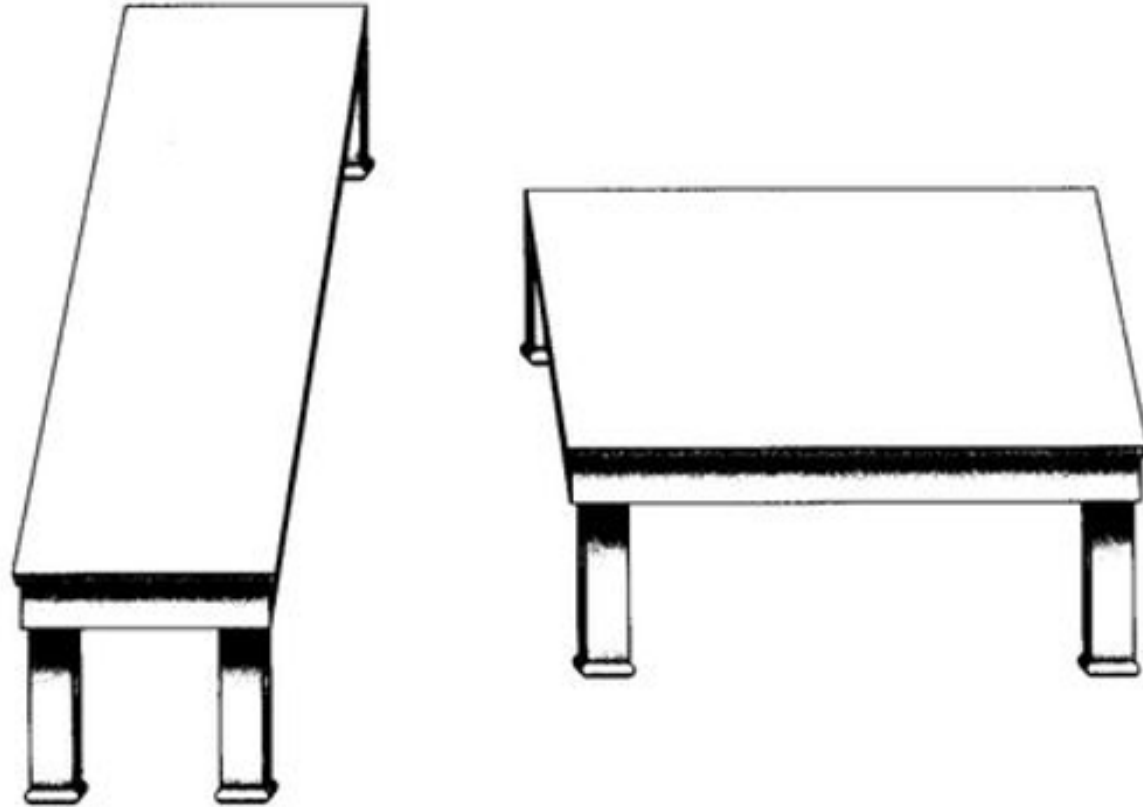




<https://youtu.be/tG9HSvNPVKQ>



# Are these tables the same size?







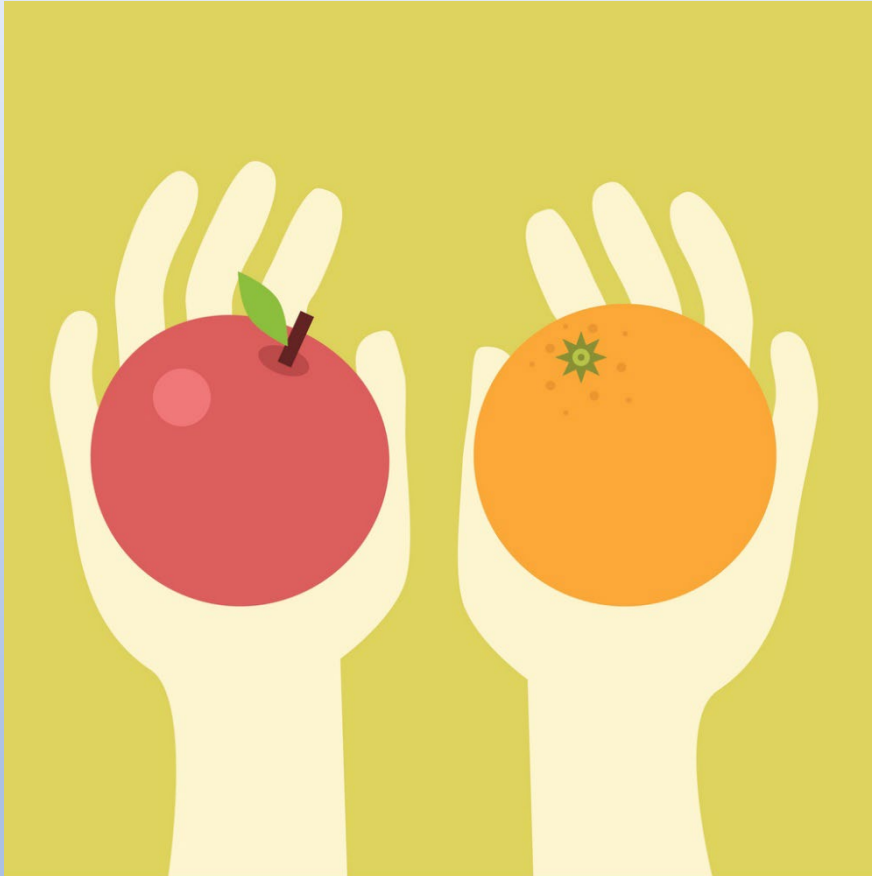
[https://youtu.be/\\_EqGqEpOV3o](https://youtu.be/_EqGqEpOV3o)



Bias doesn't make  
us bad - it makes us  
human



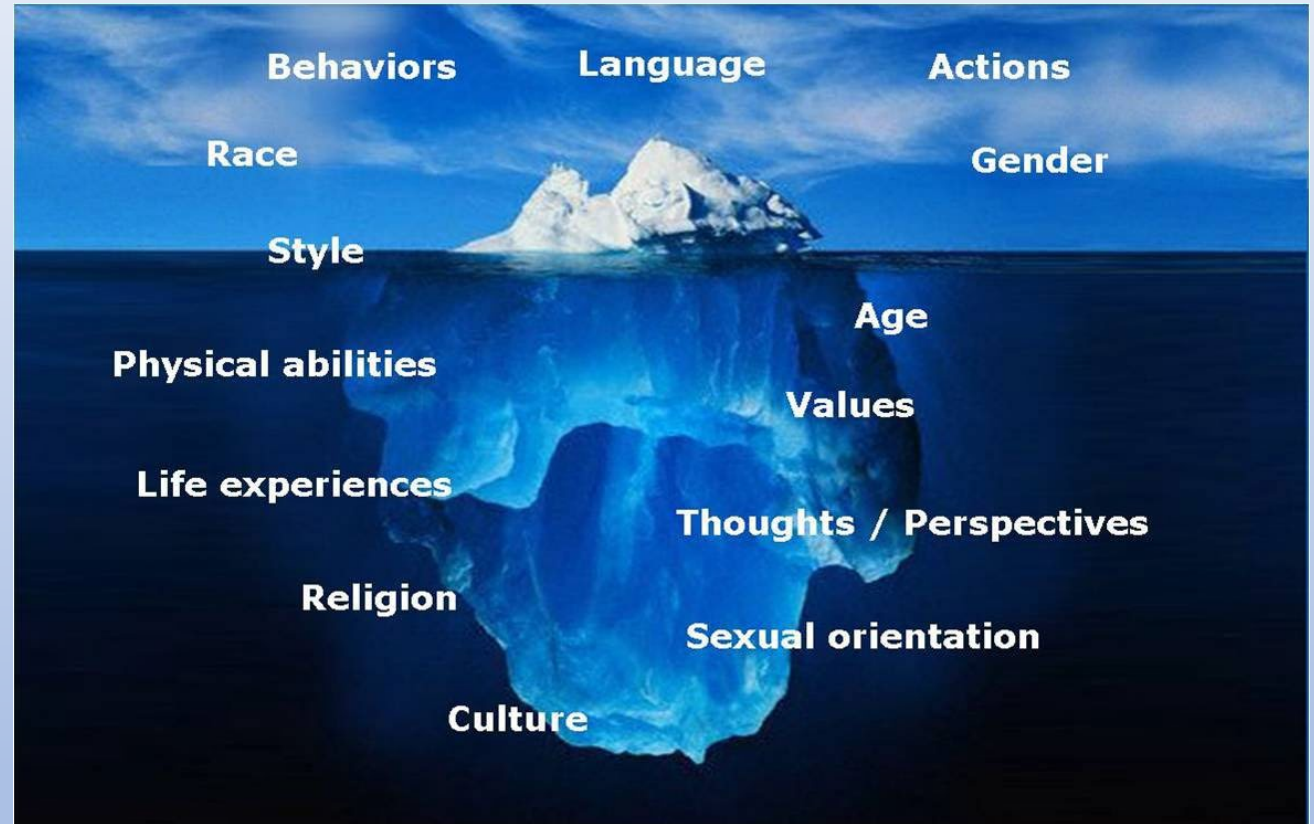
We all have preferences...





# IMPLICIT BIAS

“Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual’s awareness or intentional control. Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness.”



# CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPLICIT BIASES

- Implicit biases are **pervasive**. Everyone possesses them, even people with avowed commitments to impartiality such as judges.
- The implicit associations we hold **do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs** or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse.
- We generally tend to hold implicit biases that **favor our own in group**, though research has shown that we can still hold implicit biases against our in-group.
- Implicit biases are **malleable**. Our brains are incredibly complex, and the implicit associations that we have formed can be gradually unlearned through a variety of de-biasing techniques.



How our implicit biases show up in everyday language

This language will ALWAYS prevent us from fully including those who hold different identities





# Different Types of Microaggressions

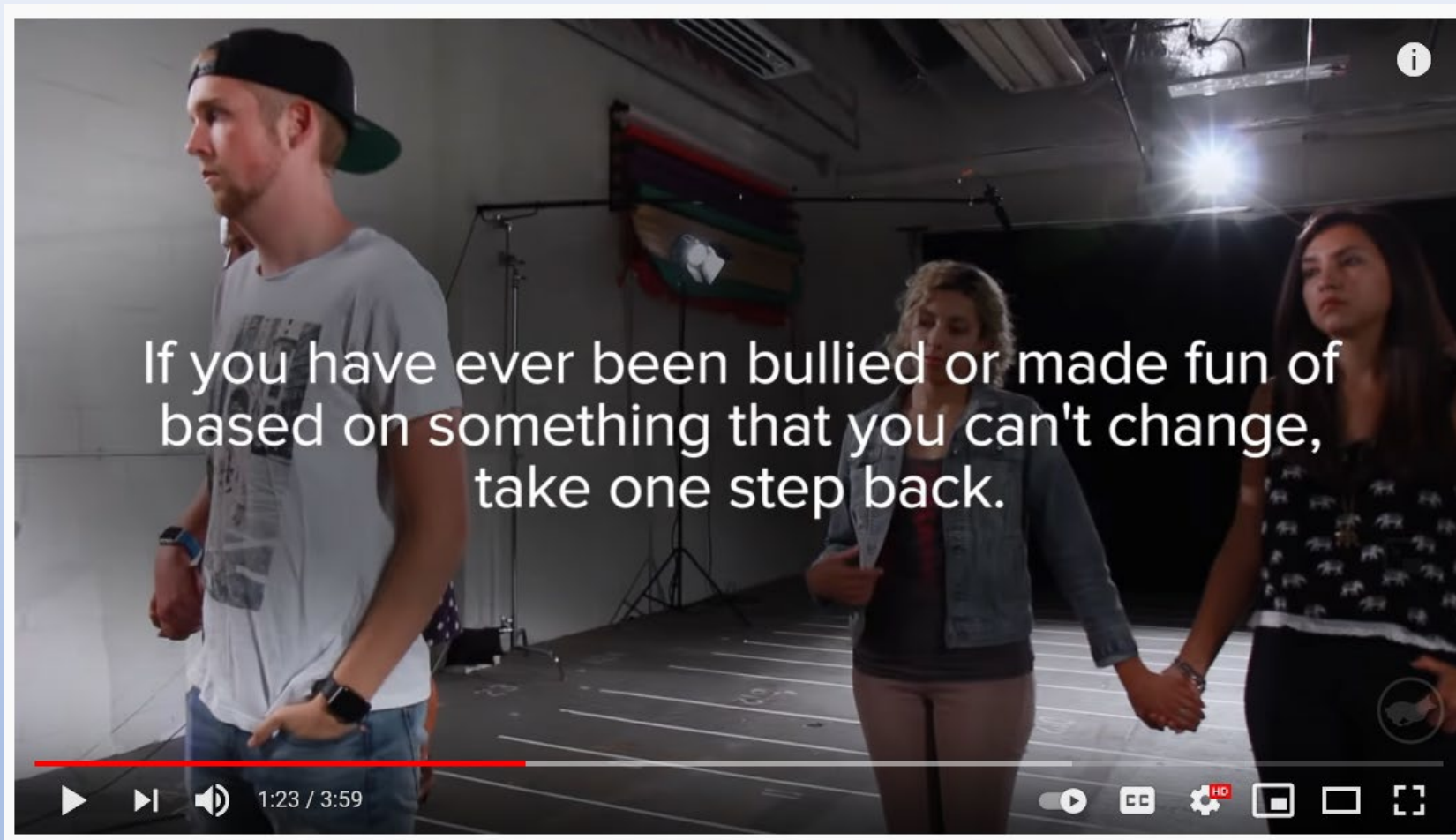
- In a 2007 article published in the *American Psychologist*, Derald Wing Sue describes three types of racial microaggressions:
  - **Microinvalidations:** Communications that subtly exclude, negate or nullify the thoughts, feelings or [experiential](#) reality of a person of color.
    - Ex: when a white person asks a Latino where they were born, conveying the message that they are perpetual foreigners in their own land.
  - **Microassaults:** Conscious and intentional discriminatory actions.
    - Ex: using racial epithets, displaying White supremacist symbols - swastikas, or preventing one's son or daughter from [dating](#) outside of their [race](#).
  - **Microinsults:** Verbal, nonverbal, and environmental communications that subtly convey rudeness and insensitivity that demean a person's racial heritage or [identity](#).
    - Ex: an employee who asks a co-worker of color how he/she got his/her job, implying he/she may have landed it through an affirmative action or quota system.



# Privilege / Disadvantage “Walk”

- Each of us has aspects of privilege and oppression in our history and identity.
- There are aspects of identity which are more “visible” and therefore less able to be hidden or voluntarily disclosed.
- There are also particular aspects of identity in each of our communities which are viewed as “less than”.
- We also commonly make assumptions about identities we cannot “see” to our own detriment.
- Asking someone to “out” their area of disadvantage can be stigmatizing and painful.





<https://youtu.be/hD5f8GuNuGQ>





# Reactions.....

- If you are willing / comfortable to share, what surprised you?
- What did not surprise you?



# Reducing bias – think AAA

- **A**cknowledgment

- Accept the fact that each of us are affected by cultural socialization, therefore, we are all susceptible to bias

- **A**wareness

- Maintain a high level of awareness of internalized biases and how they affect interactions with others who have marginalized aspects of their identity

- **A**ction

- Commit to increasing cultural competence through continual self-examination, exposure to other cultural norms and histories, and meaningful interpersonal relationships



# Habit 1 – Slow down...

*You cannot “unlearn” bias, but you can create new habits that can help you stop from acting in biased ways.*

- Test your assumptions - Your “gut” isn’t always right
- Resist the urge to give immediate answers for important decisions, especially when you suspect a decision could be influenced by unconscious bias.
- Focus and remove distractions—don't multitask.
- *The busier we are and the more information and tasks we try to juggle, the more likely we are to turn to automatic or unconscious thinking.*



# Habit 2 – Question and challenge your thinking

- Create a list of challenging questions that will help you get to the root causes of emotions or "instincts" you may have about a person or a situation.
- Write down instances where you realize your evidence is weak or misleading and note any gaps in your knowledge or understanding.
- Ask yourself whether you are using objective criteria for the decision. If not, create it.





# Habit 3 – Get input from other people

- Talk to people inside and outside of your usual circles.
- Have a conversation with the people actually impacted.





#InclusionStartsWithI

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2g88Ju6nkcg>

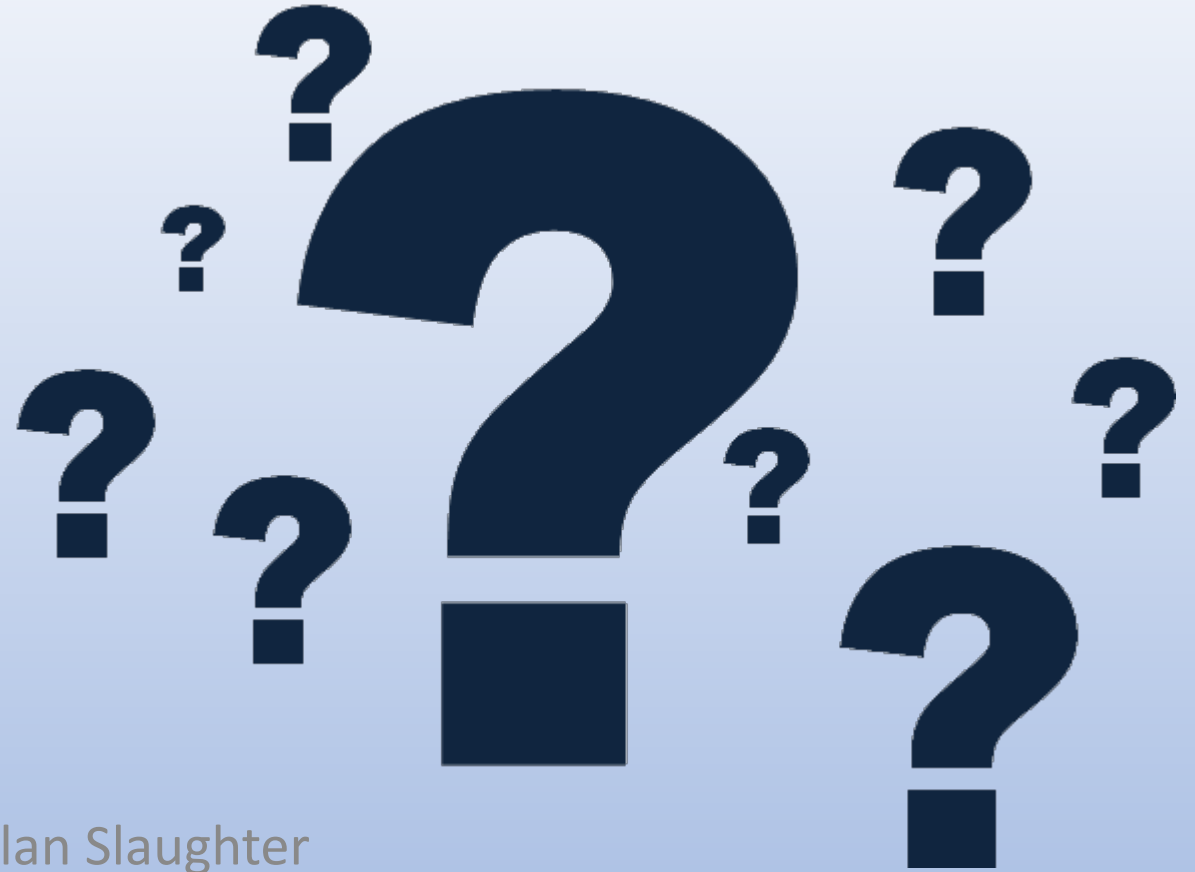


# Additional Resources

- <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit>
- <https://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/article/understanding-implicit-bias>
- <https://rework.withgoogle.com/subjects/unbiasing/>
- <https://www.catalyst.org/topics/unconscious-bias/>
- <https://www.edx.org/course/unconscious-bias-from-awareness-to-action>



# QUESTIONS?



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