

MICRO-INEQUITIES: **THE NEW ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGE**

Bruce J. Stewart

“We are Smarter than Me”

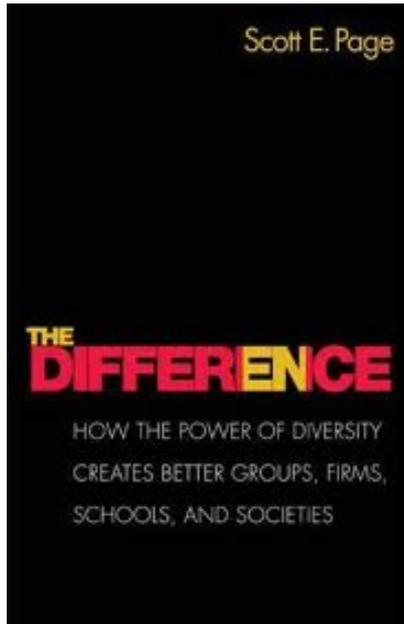
Scott Page



“Progress depends as much on our collective differences as it does on our individual IQ scores”

The Diversity Trumps Ability Theorem

The Difference



Mathematical truth

“collective ability equals individual ability plus diversity” and that diversity trumps ability”

Micro-Inequities Are

- ▣ **Usually generated by our unconscious mind**
- ▣ Small messages of prejudice
- ▣ Often subconscious
- ▣ Subtle in nature
- ▣ Verbal or non-verbal

Height

6

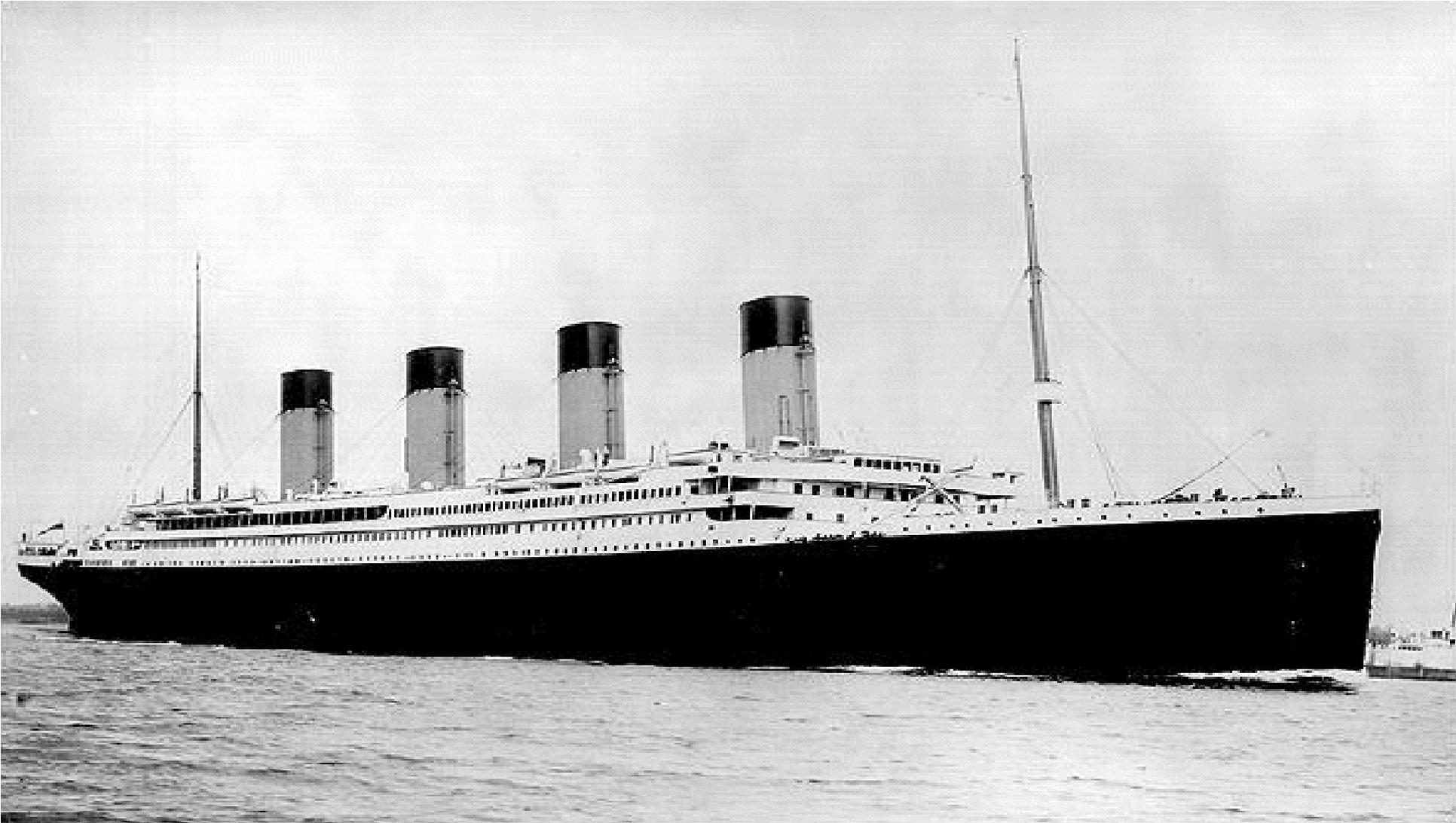
The Impact of Height



In China this bias has led to a rash of leg-lengthening

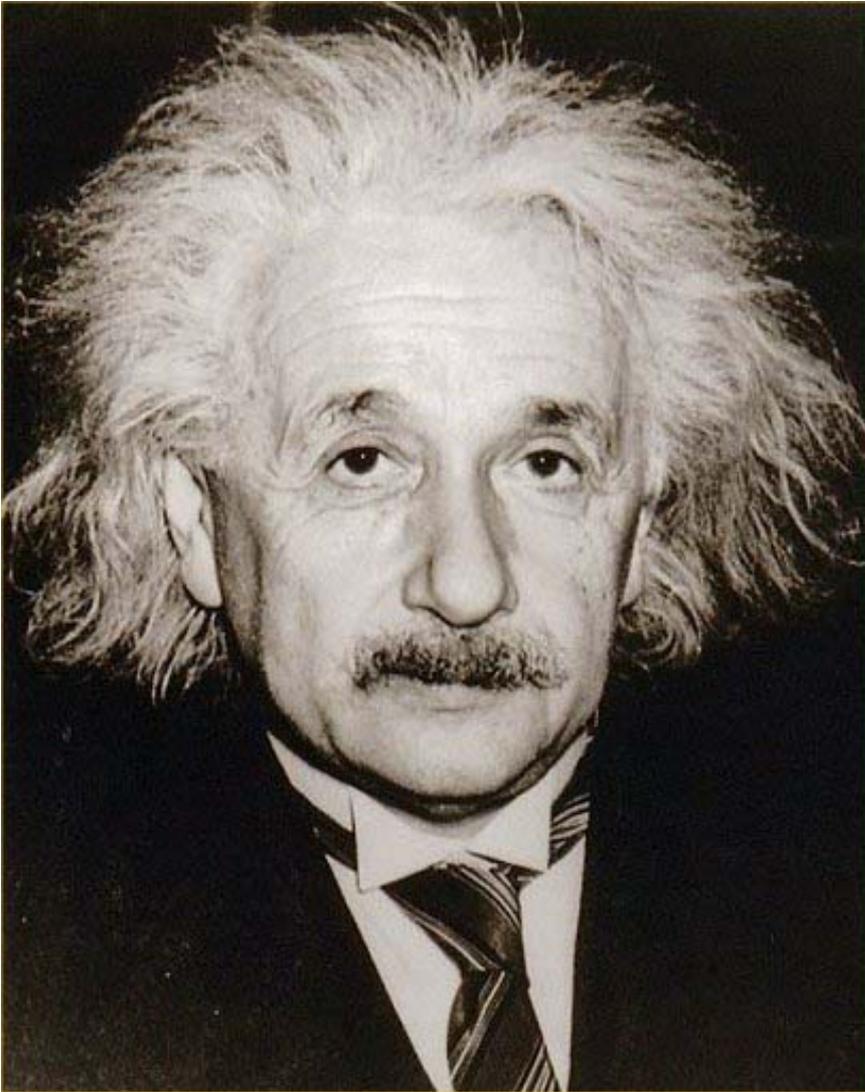
In the U.S., one inch of height is worth \$789 per year in salary





Newspapers from the time estimated the size of the iceberg to be between 50-100 feet high and 200-400 feet long. Titanic was navigable for awhile and could have pulled aside the iceberg. Many people could have climbed aboard it to find flat places to stay out of the water for the four hours before help arrived. Fixated on the fact that icebergs sink ships, people overlooked the size and shape of the iceberg (plus the fact that it would not sink).





“We can't solve problems by using the same thinking we used when we created them”

– Albert Einstein

Thomas Schelling

Segregation: Background

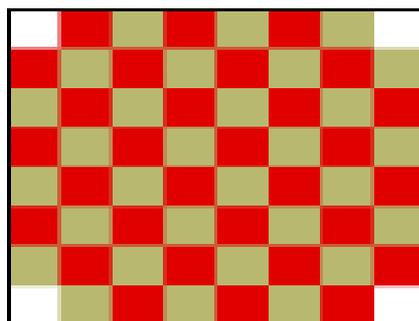


- In many (American) cities, races segregate
- This has unwanted consequences
- Why does this happen, and what can we do about it?

Main idea: this is because people don't like each other

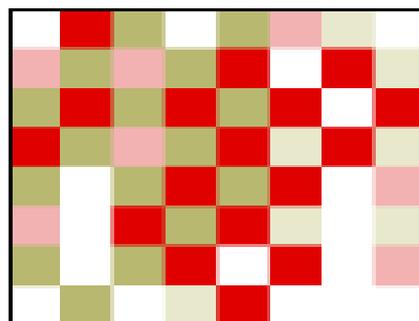
If that would be true, high-tolerance cities would have lower segregation than low-tolerance cities ...

... but empirically this does *not* hold.



INTEGRATED POPULATION

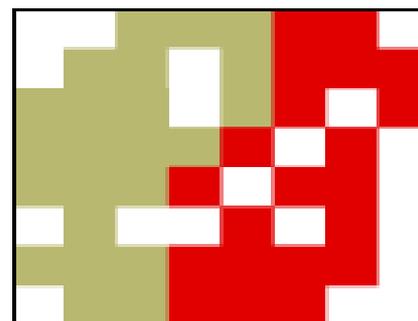
Each person has four neighbors of his own color and four of another. According to Schelling, this is an equilibrium state in which no one wants to move.



SHIFTING POPULATION

Even small changes can disrupt the equilibrium, creating "discontented" persons, shown in lighter shades. They may try to move near people of the same color. A person with:

- One or two neighbors may try to move if there is not at least one neighbor of the same color.
- Three to five neighbors needs at least two of the same color.
- Six to eight neighbors wants at least three of the same color.



SEGREGATED POPULATION

The movement of "discontented" individuals toward others of the same color could cause others to move in a chain reaction. The result is a segregated population.

Schelling's conclusion



Harsh preferences are not necessary to create segregation.
In other words: even under 'mild' circumstances, segregation can occur

And the simulation shows that segregation also depends on for instance how full the checkerboard is (if crowded, moving is more difficult)



Wrong mental maps lead to wrong
solutions which lead to lost resources...

The Brown Paradox





The key to the big is the small...why
understanding microinequities is so
important

Biases Impact Decisionmaking

Unconscious bias can infect management decisions throughout the employment life cycle:

- a. Interviewing. Recruitment, hiring & retention.
- b. Expectations of and interactions with employees. (“Micro-inequities”)
- c. Employee evaluations. (“Set Up to Fail Syndrome” – Harvard Business Review)
- d. Decisions about promotions, training and other job benefits.
- e. Termination and discharge decisions.

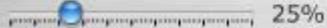
Diversity and Productivity

- Effective diversity programs are associated with higher productivity (+18%). (National Urban League, 2004)
- Gallup found that 24.7 million U.S. workers, or 19%, are actively disengaged. Another 56% of workers were not engaged, while only 25% of workers were actively engaged. Result: 75% of workers are not fully engaged.
- “Actively disengaged” employees -- those fundamentally disconnected from their jobs -- cost the U.S. economy between \$292 billion and \$355 billion a year. (Gallup)
- What causes workers to disengage at work? One notable cause is DRI’s – Diversity Related Incident’s of Disrespect.

Workforce Engagement Impact Dashboard

ANG Diversity Engagement Impact Dashboard

Daily Lack of Engagement %



Diversity Contribution %



Confidence Factor %



Forecasted Saving %



Pay per Hour



\$12.00

Number of Guard Members



5000

Hrs. Lost Productivity/Day/Person



Daily Productivity Cost/Day/Person



Diversity Contribution

Percentage of Diversity Contribution vs. Other Factors



Diversity Engagement Impact Graph

Financial Impact



Financial Impact Levels With Adjustments



More on microinequities...

Micro-inequity (Subtle Slights)

- In 1973, while researching racial and gender exclusion in the workplace, Mary Rowe, Ph.D., discovered that women and people of color were bothered by subtle, seemingly harmless, messages of devaluation that kept them from flourishing.

Examples of Micro-inequities

- ❑ Constantly being interrupted while you are talking
- ❑ Being left out of a discussion/project
- ❑ Trying to speak with someone who is reading/sending e-mails during conversation
- ❑ Talking with someone who keeps looking at his/her watch
- ❑ Not being introduced in a meeting and then being ignored

Examples of *Micro-inequities*

- Avoidance of eye contact
- Rolling of the eyes
- Cutting down ideas before they can be entertained
- Staying on the cell phone with no explanation
- Mispronouncing your name or misspelling your name

Examples of Micro-inequities



- Change in voice pitch, volume, or rate
- Change in body posture
- Change in hand movements and gestures
- Fake, masked or forced smiles

What Activates Our Biases?



Our biases are most likely to be activated by
Four key conditions. They are:

- stress
- time constraints
- multi-tasking
- need for closure



How do we identify microinequities?

THE IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TEST



Project Implicit®



<https://implicit.harvard.edu>

Demonstration

The demonstration site for the Implicit Association Test. Click this button to learn more about implicit associations and try out some sample tasks. Or, go directly to the featured task:

[Presidential Candidates IAT](#)



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Select a Test

Skin-tone IAT

Skin-tone ('Light Skin - Dark Skin' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize light and dark-skinned faces. It often reveals an automatic preference for light-skin relative to dark-skin.

Weight IAT

Weight ('Fat - Thin' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish faces of people who are obese and people who are thin. It often reveals an automatic preference for thin people relative to fat people.

Asian IAT

Asian American ('Asian - European American' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Asian-American faces, and images of places that are either American or Foreign in origin.

Arab-Muslim IAT

Arab-Muslim ('Arab Muslim - Other People' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish names that are likely to belong to Arab-Muslims versus people of other nationalities or religions.

Native IAT

Native American ('Native - White American' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Native American faces in either classic or modern dress, and the names of places that are either American or Foreign in origin.

Weapons IAT

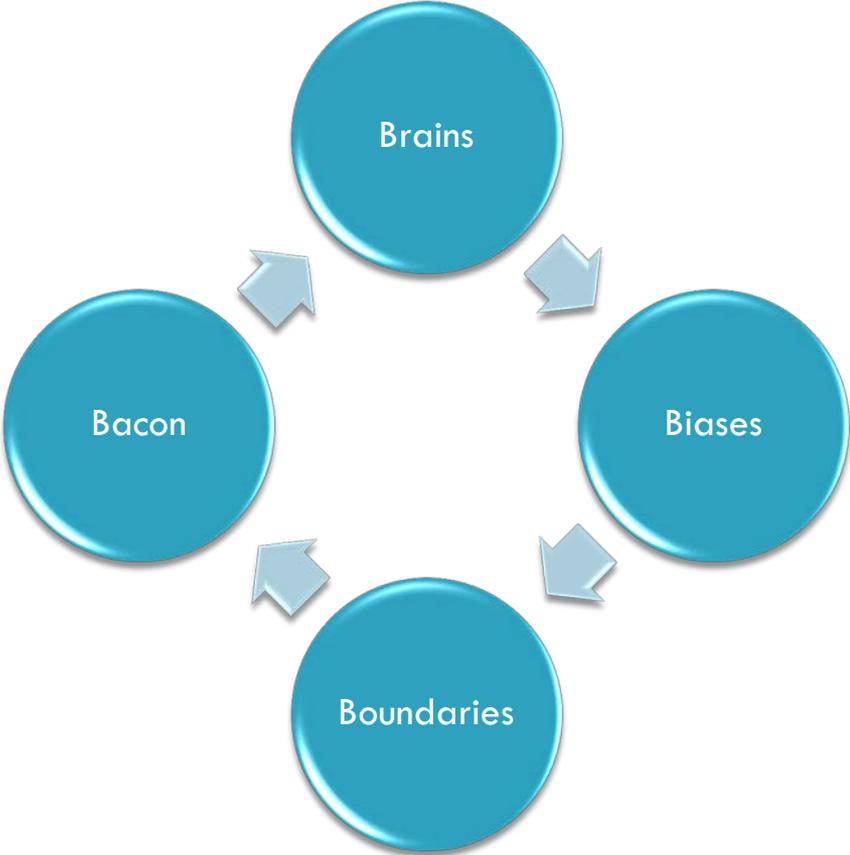
Weapons ('Weapons - Harmless Objects' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Black faces, and images of weapons or harmless objects.



Where do microinequities come from?

**The Unconscious
Cycle that leads to**

Micro-inequities...





Why is understanding the cycle of the unconscious so important?

The “Real” Pain of Exclusion

Exhibit 1: Social and Physical Pain Produce Similar Brain Responses

Brain scans captured through functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) show the same areas associated with distress, whether caused by social rejection or physical pain. The dorsal anterior cingulate cortex (highlighted at left) is associated with the degree of distress; the right ventral prefrontal cortex (highlighted at right) is associated with regulating the distress.

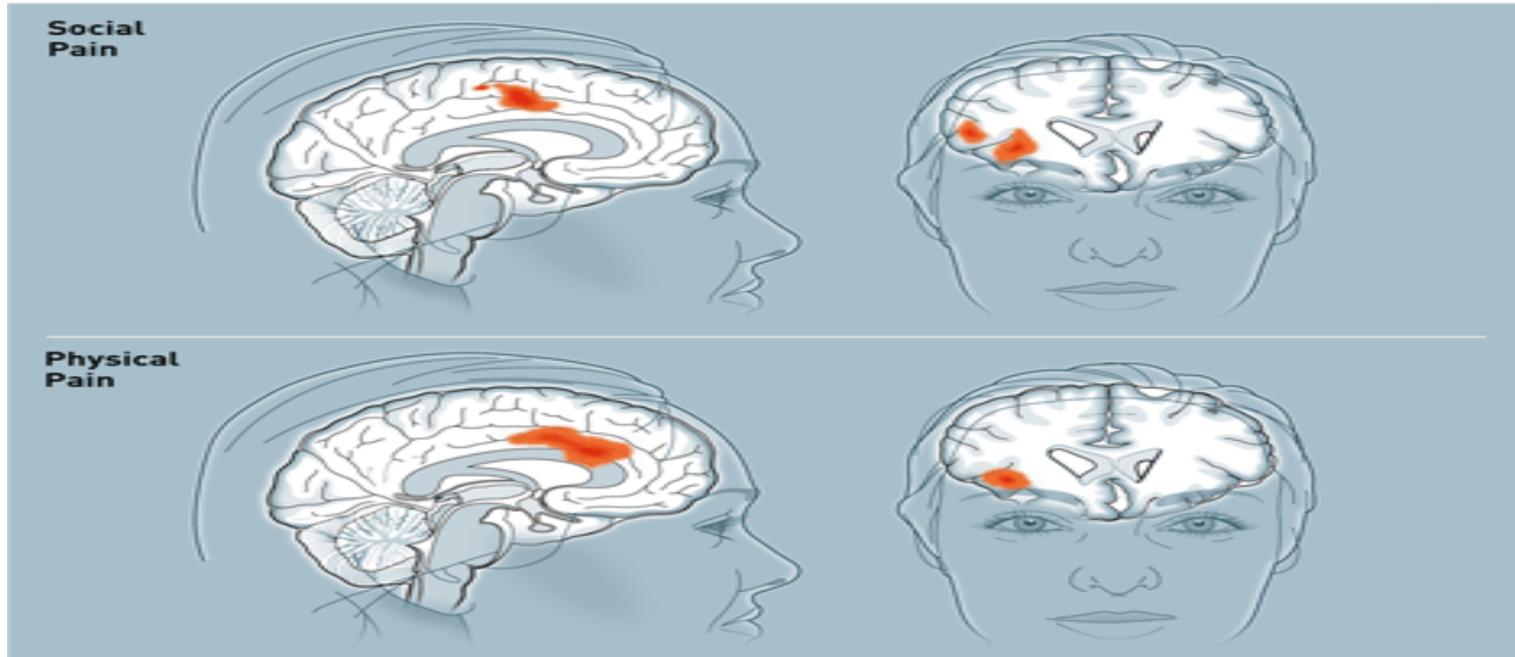


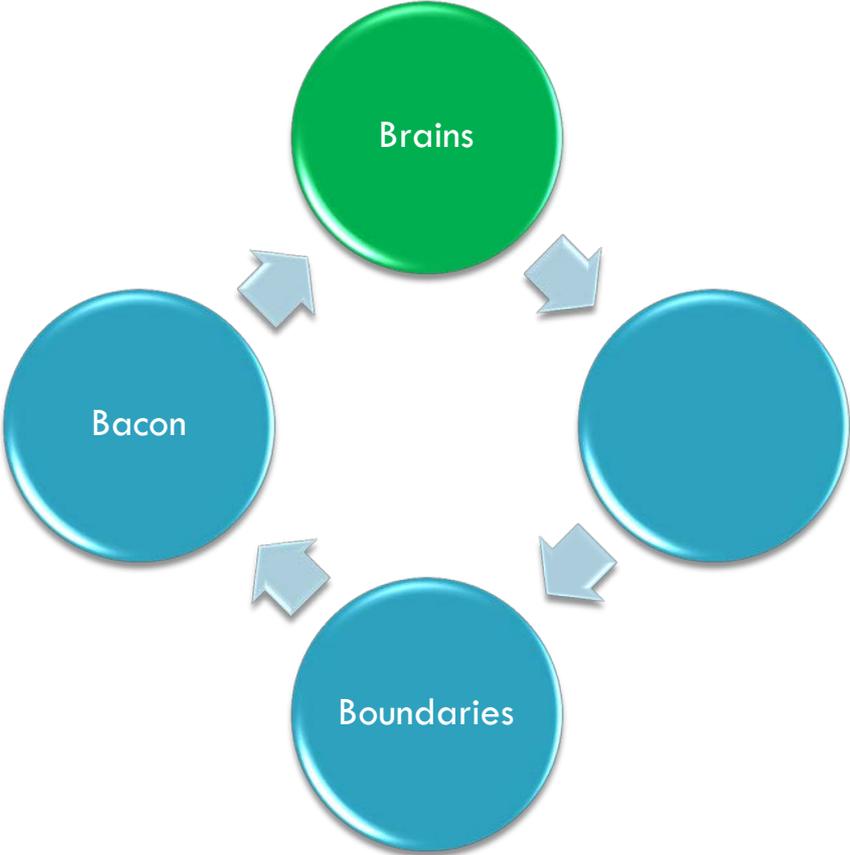
Illustration: Samuel Valasco

Source: Eisenberger, Lieberman, and Williams, Science, 2003 [social pain images]; Lieberman et al., "The Neural Correlates of Placebo Effects: A Disruption Account," Neuroimage, May 2004 [physical pain images]

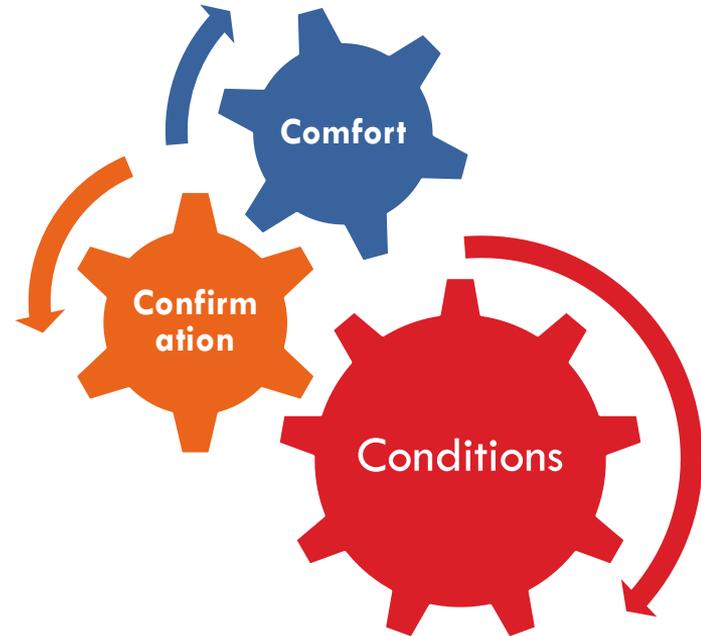
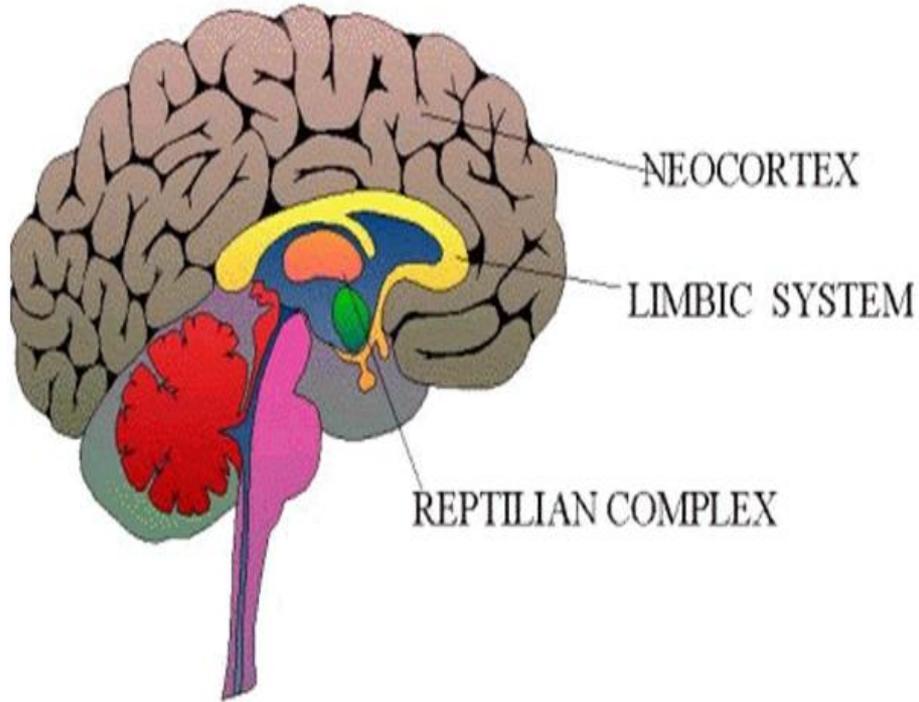


**The Unconscious
Cycle
that leads to**

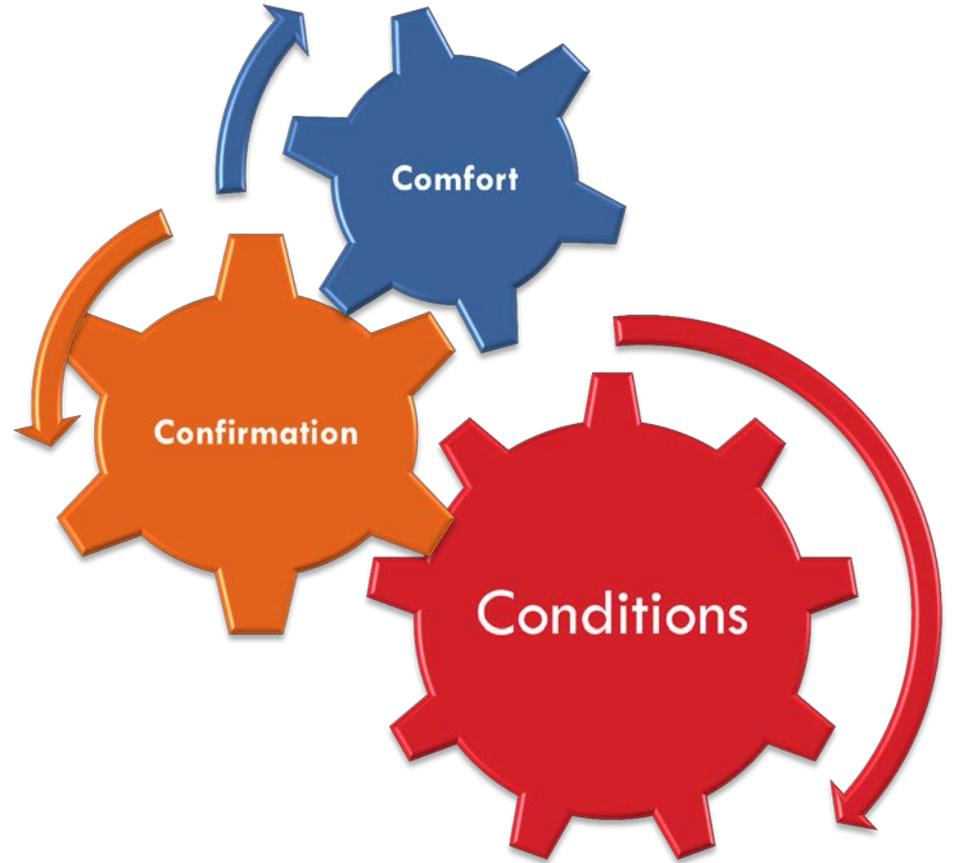
Micro-inequities...



Triune Theory of Brain



Our brains strive to minimize threats to our survival by following the path of least resistance. It does this through scanning conditions, confirmation, and maintaining comfort. This is the source of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination.



A Math Problem: Using one continuous line change the following number from 9 to 6

IX

Answer:

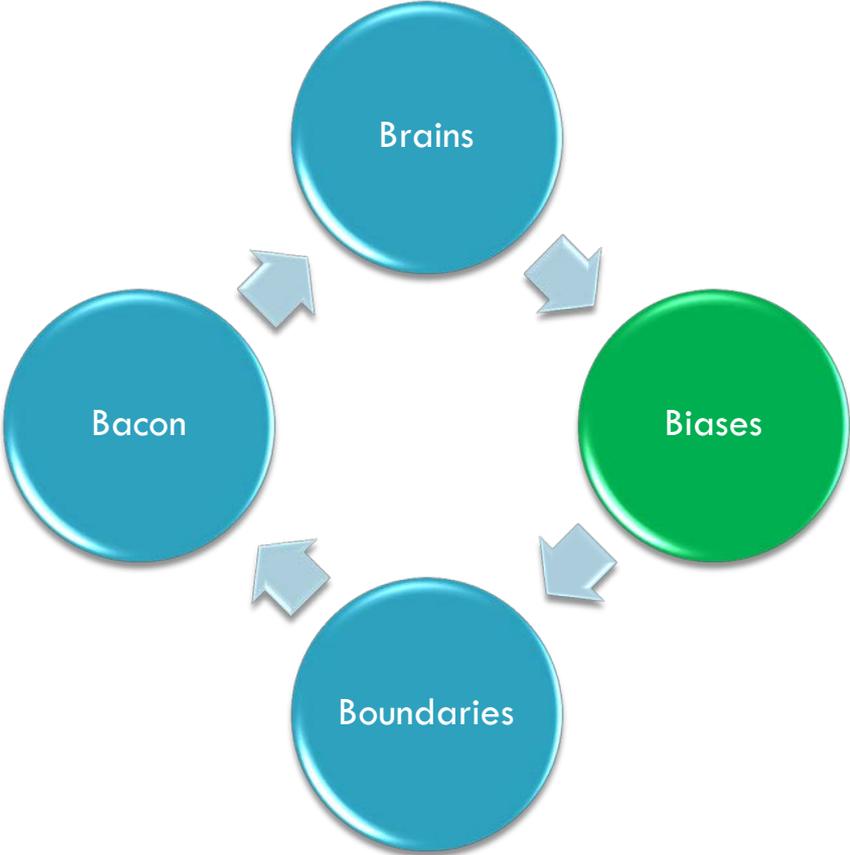
SIX

**FINISHED FILES ARE THE
RESULT OF YEARS OF
SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED
WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF
MANY YEARS.**

FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT
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EXPERIENCE OF MANY YEARS.

**The Unconscious
Cycle
that leads to**

Micro-inequities...



Social Biases that create silos and limit our potential...

“Like Me” Bias



“Confirmation Bias

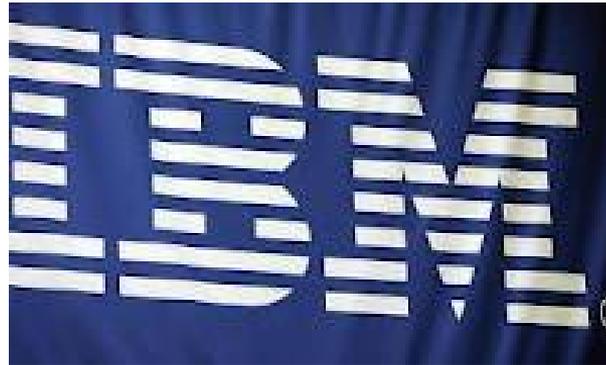
Confirmation Bias inc.



“Broken Windows” Bias

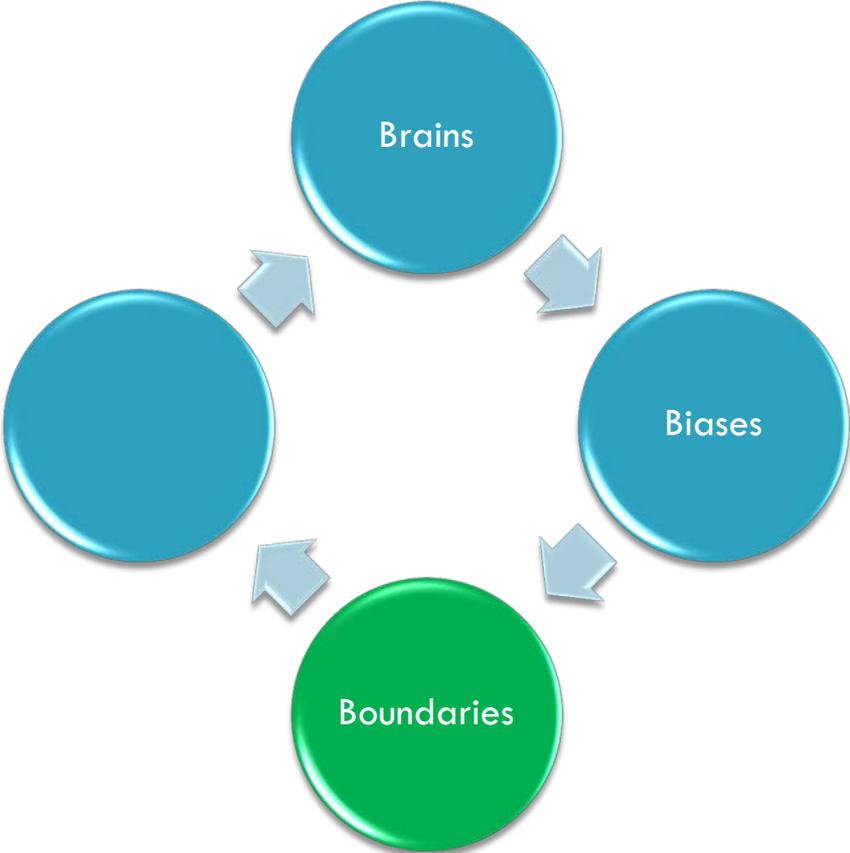


What does NYC, IBM, and Apple have in common?

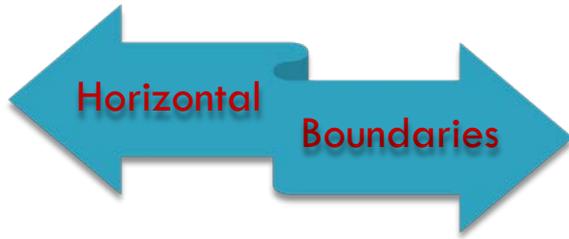
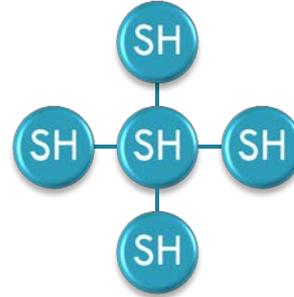
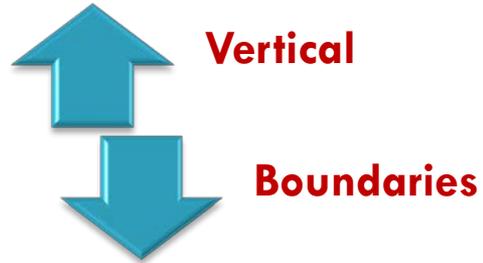


**The Unconscious
Cycle
that leads to**

Micro-inequities...



Stakeholder Boundaries



Demographic Boundaries

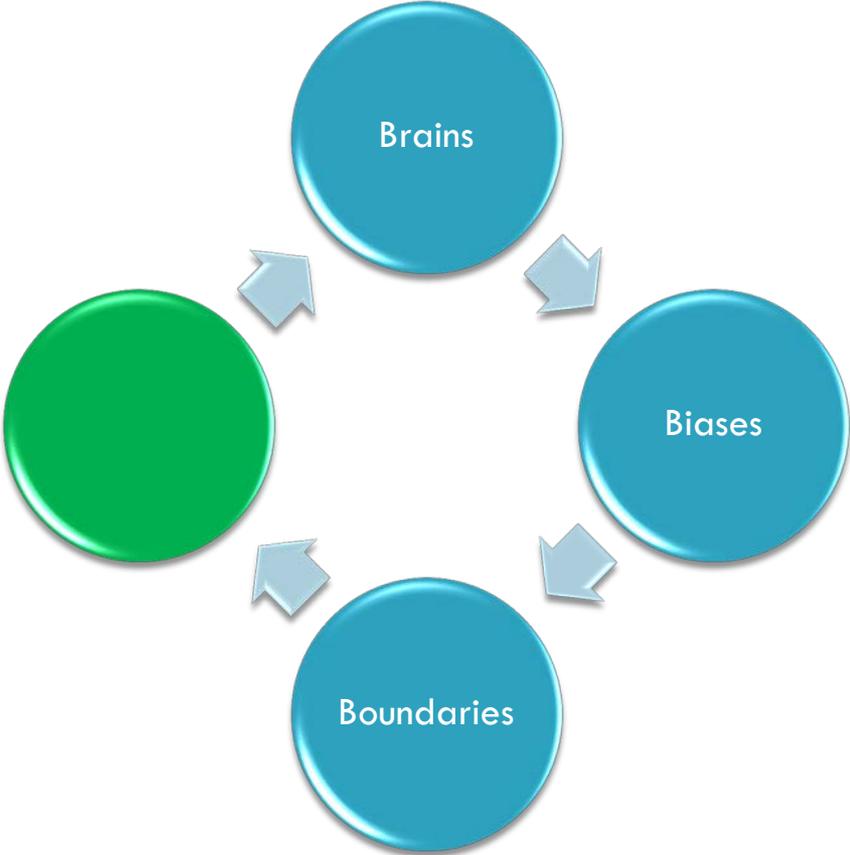


Geographic Boundaries



**The Unconscious
Cycle
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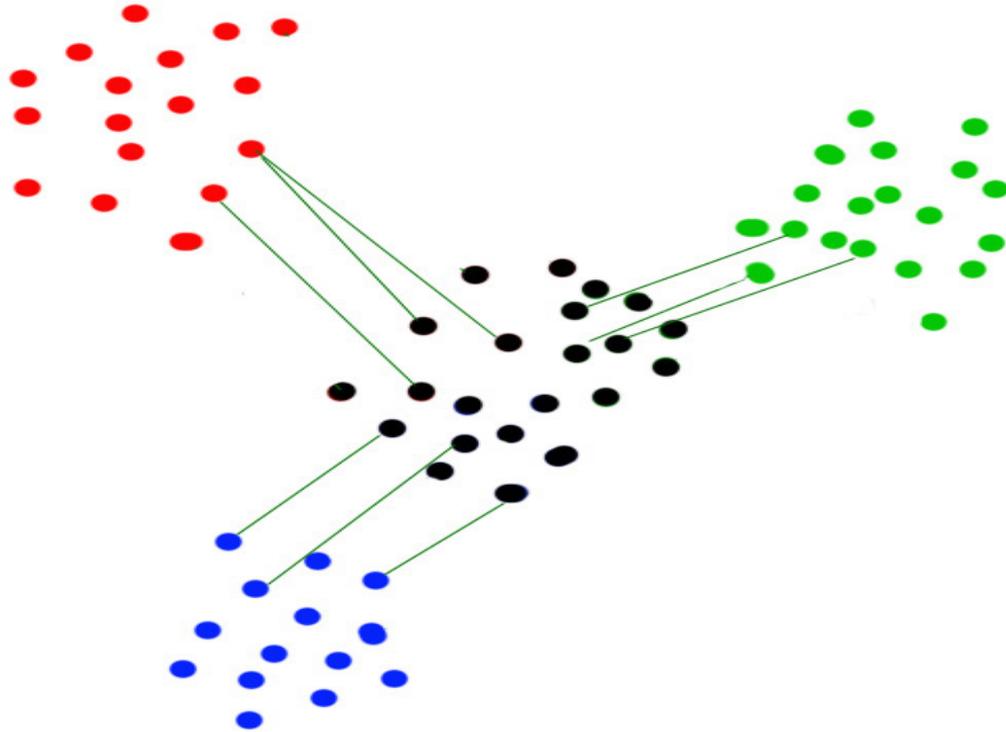
Micro-inequities...



6 Degrees of Kevin Bacon...Cliques, Clans, and Tribes



We cluster into cliques, clans, and tribes...



WORKPLACE IMPLICATIONS



Workplace Incivility – DRI's

- Studies have found that over 71 percent of the workforce has experienced some form of workplace incivility in the last five years. Incivility is evidenced by disrespectful behavior. Source: Don Zander, Brookings Institution, 2002
- Of the reported incidents of workplace-related DRI's: 32% were related to gender; 28% were related to race; 20% were related to age; 14% were related to sexual orientation and 6% were related to religion.

Workplace Incivility – DRI's

Fiscal Impact of Workplace Incivility:

Of those who experienced work-place related DRI's:

- ❑ 28% lost work time avoiding the instigator of the incivility;
- ❑ 53% lost time worrying about the incident/future interactions;
- ❑ 37% believe their commitment at work declined;
- ❑ 22% have decreased their effort at work;
- ❑ 10% decreased the amount of time that they spent at work;
- ❑ 12% actually changed jobs to avoid the instigator.

Source: The Sparticus Group: 2003.

Can Implicit Bias Be Controlled?



Researchers long believed that because implicit associations develop early in our lives, and because we are often unaware of their influence, they may be virtually impervious to change.

But recent work suggests that we can reshape our implicit attitudes and beliefs or at least curb their effects on our behavior.

In particular, there are several strategies that appear to make a difference:

- A. **Information** – re: the psychological basis of bias
- B. **Motivation** - internal (vs. external) motivation to change
- C. **Individuation** – learning to see diverse others as individuals rather than as members of groups.
- D. **Direct contact** with members of other groups.
- E. **Working together on teams**, as equals, in pursuit of common goals.
- F. **Context/environment** – images of leaders from diverse groups helps



In sum, one can either “think one’s way into a new way of behaving or behave one’s way into a new way of thinking.”

Why?

Humans do not like cognitive dissonance.

Battling Bias – What Works?

1. Enhance understanding of the psychological basis of bias.
2. Replace negative mental images of the target group with positive mental images.
3. Increase positive contacts with socially dissimilar groups .
4. Increase affective empathy and perspective taking toward out groups.

Battling Bias...



5. Work with target group members to achieve common tasks/goals.
6. Replace tolerance behaviors with acceptance and appreciation behaviors. (Shift from micro-inequities to micro-affirmations.)
7. Analyze personal patterns of privilege and privation in light of the Set Up to Fail Syndrome. (Who do you micro-manage?)
8. Get 360-degree diversity feedback from diverse members of your work-team.

Battling Individual Biases...



9. Collect, monitor and evaluate personal, diversity-related decision metrics. How frequently do you recruit, hire, mentor, promote target-group employees?
10. Obtain a target-member coach or diversity professional from outside your workgroup.

**We are called to be
architects of the
future, not its
victims.**

-Buckminster Fuller