Thinking About Thinking

A Primer on the Unconscious Mind
A penny saved is...a penny earned

Barking up the...wrong tree

Live long...and prosper
Conscious Vs Unconscious Mind
2 \times 2 =
$2 \times 2 = 4$
2 \times 2 = 4
572 \times 293 =
2 \times 2 = 4
572 \times 293 = 167,596
Conscious Mind → Rational Thinking

Unconscious Mind → Instinct, Skills, Implicit Knowledge
Conscious Mind ➔ Rational Thinking

Unconscious Mind ➔ Instinct, Skills, Implicit Knowledge

Who we know
Culture & environment
Personal history
Unconscious Mind: The Ultimate Shortcut

Turn Here
Unconscious Mind: It’s Often Wrong
Together, a golf tee and a golf ball cost $1.20. If the golf ball cost $1.00 more than the golf tee, how much is the golf tee?

A. $0.01
B. $0.10
C. $0.20
D. $1.00
1. Some decisions seem simple and straightforward, so we completely rely on our unconscious mind without taking time to think.
Conscious Mind

Unconscious Mind
Unconscious Bias
Justifying Our Own Actions

**Overconfidence** - we overestimate our skills relative to others and consequently our ability to affect future outcomes. We take credit for positive outcomes without acknowledging the role of chance.

**Excessive optimism** – We are overly optimistic about outcomes of planned actions. We overestimate the likelihood of positive events and underestimate negative ones.

**Moral licensing** - when people initially behave in a moral way, they are more likely to display behaviors that are immoral, unethical, or problematic in other ways later.
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Confirmation bias – we place extra value on evidence consistent with our favored beliefs and not enough on the evidence that contradicts it. We fail to search impartially for evidence.

Egocentrism – We focus too narrowly on our own perspective to the point that we can’t imagine how others will be affected by something. We also assume that everyone has access to the same information we do.
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I've heard different opinions, time to find out the truth...

I'm right again!
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Compared to your friends, do you consider yourself:

A. A safer driver  
B. A more dangerous driver  
C. About the same  
D. I don’t drive
Controllability bias – We believe we can control outcomes more than is actually the case, causing us to misjudge the riskiness of the course of action.

Sunk Cost – We pay attention to historical costs that are not recoverable when considering future courses of action.

Escalation of Commitment – We invest additional resources in an apparently losing proposition because of the effort, money, and time already invested.

Loss Aversion – We feel losses more strongly than gains of the same amount, which makes us more risk-averse than a rational calculation would recommend.
**Framing Information**

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Stability

**Status quo Bias** – we prefer the status quo in the absence of pressure to change it.

**Present Bias** – we value immediate rewards very highly and undervalue long-term gains.
Overcoming Bias

- Start with awareness
  - Self, team, and organizational
- Slow down decision making
  - Both individually and as a team
  - Monitor each other
- Practice professional skepticism
- Stop and think about reasons for decisions
In Group – Out Group Dynamics
Do you consider your organization’s culture:

A. Mostly Positive
B. Somewhat Negative
C. Toxic
In Group – Out Group Dynamics

- A preference and affinity for one's in-group over the out-group.

- Expressed in evaluation of others, allocation of resources, and many other ways.

- One of the key determinants of group biases is the need to improve self-esteem.

- Individuals will find a reason, no matter how insignificant, to prove to themselves why their group is superior.
Intergroup Aggression

• If the beliefs of the in-group are challenged or threatened, then they will express aggression toward the out-group.

• Driven by the perception of conflicting interests between in-group and out-group.

• Justified through dehumanizing the out-group, because the more the out-group is dehumanized the less they deserve normal treatment.
Overcoming Group Dynamics

- Self-awareness
- Professional Awareness
- Empathy
Thank You

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