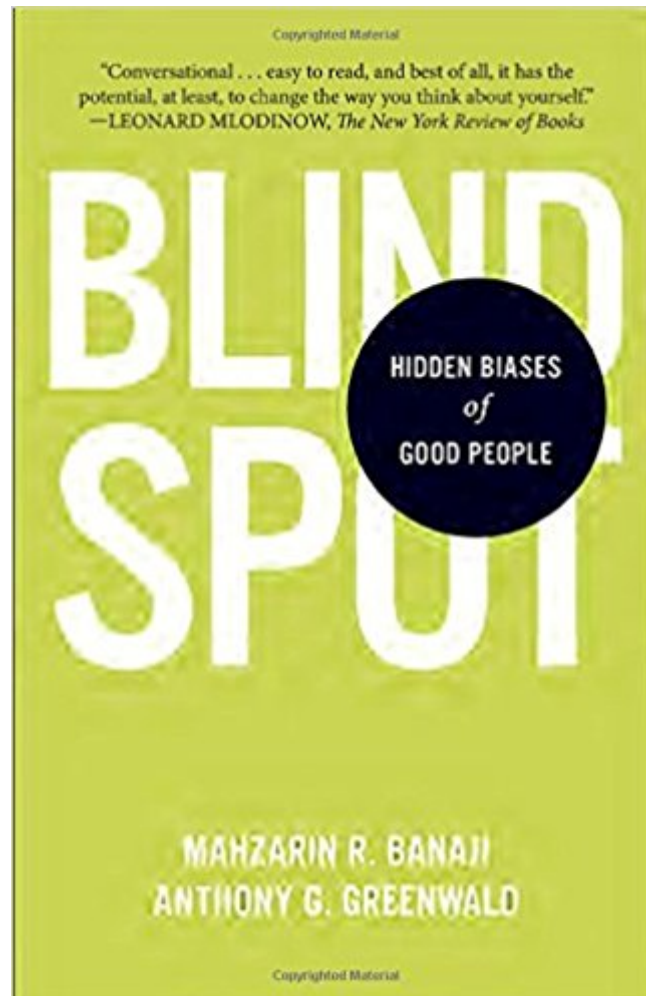




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Blindspot: Hidden Biases Of Good People



Synopsis

I know my own mind. I am able to assess others in a fair and accurate way. These self-perceptions are challenged by leading psychologists Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald as they explore the hidden biases we all carry from a lifetime of exposure to cultural attitudes about age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, social class, sexuality, disability status, and nationality. "Blindspot" is the authors' metaphor for the portion of the mind that houses hidden biases. Writing with simplicity and verve, Banaji and Greenwald question the extent to which our perceptions of social groups—without our awareness or conscious control—shape our likes and dislikes and our judgments about people's character, abilities, and potential. In *Blindspot*, the authors reveal hidden biases based on their experience with the Implicit Association Test, a method that has revolutionized the way scientists learn about the human mind and that gives us a glimpse into what lies within the metaphoric blindspot. The title's "good people" are those of us who strive to align our behavior with our intentions. The aim of *Blindspot* is to explain the science in plain enough language to help well-intentioned people achieve that alignment. By gaining awareness, we can adapt beliefs and behavior and "outsmart the machine" in our heads so we can be fairer to those around us. Venturing into this book is an invitation to understand our own minds. Brilliant, authoritative, and utterly accessible, *Blindspot* is a book that will challenge and change readers for years to come. Praise for *Blindspot*: "Conversational . . . easy to read, and best of all, it has the potential, at least, to change the way you think about yourself." —Leonard Mlodinow, *The New York Review of Books* "Accessible and authoritative . . . While we may not have much power to eradicate our own prejudices, we can counteract them. The first step is to turn a hidden bias into a visible one. . . . What if we're not the magnanimous people we think we are?" —*The Washington Post* "Banaji and Greenwald deserve a major award for writing such a lively and engaging book that conveys an important message: Mental processes that we are not aware of can affect what we think and what we do. *Blindspot* is one of the most illuminating books ever written on this topic." —Elizabeth F. Loftus, Ph.D., distinguished professor, University of California, Irvine; past president, Association for Psychological Science; author of *Eyewitness Testimony* "A wonderfully cogent, socially relevant, and engaging book that helps us think smarter and more humanely. This is psychological science at its best, by two of its shining stars." —David G. Myers, professor, Hope College, and author of *Intuition: Its Powers and Perils* "[The authors'] work has revolutionized social psychology, proving

that we unconsciously affect people are affected by dangerous stereotypes. Psychology Today “An accessible and persuasive account of the causes of stereotyping and discrimination . . . Banaji and Greenwald will keep even nonpsychology students engaged with plenty of self-examinations and compelling elucidations of case studies and experiments. Publishers Weekly “A stimulating treatment that should help readers deal with irrational biases that they would otherwise consciously reject. Kirkus Reviews From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

“Conversational . . . easy to read, and best of all, it has the potential, at least, to change the way you think about yourself. Leonard Mlodinow, The New York Review of Books “Accessible and authoritative . . . While we may not have much power to eradicate our own prejudices, we can counteract them. The first step is to turn a hidden bias into a visible one. . . . What if we are not the magnanimous people we think we are? The Washington Post “Banaji and Greenwald deserve a major award for writing such a lively and engaging book that conveys an important message: Mental processes that we are not aware of can affect what we think and what we do. Blindspot is one of the most illuminating books ever written on this topic. Elizabeth F. Loftus, Ph.D., distinguished professor, University of California, Irvine; past president, Association for Psychological Science; author of Eyewitness Testimony “A wonderfully cogent, socially relevant, and engaging book

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Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald, collaborators for more than thirty years, are kindred spirits in their search to understand how the mind operates in social contexts. Banaji teaches at Harvard University, Greenwald at the University of Washington. With their colleague Brian Nosek, they are co-developers of the Implicit Association Test, a method that transformed them, their research, and their field of inquiry. In this book, for the first time, research evidence from their labs and from the more than fourteen million completed tests at implicit.harvard.edu is made available to the general reader.

A good read. Intelligible and well thought out by the author.

I just started reading this book and seems to be a great material to know ourselves better.

An eyeopening introduction to "Implicit Associations" aka biases that we might be totally unaware of, because our intellect believes that we don't have them. Do I believe intellectually that a woman can do an as good as or even better job as a CEO, or even the POTUS, than a man? Definitely! But, after taking a few of the tests, I didn't have to take the gender test to know that I'd flunk and put women to work in their homes, because that's the way I was raised, and that's my primary and hidden bias. I now have an explanation for feeling more "comfortable" with male bosses over the years, despite being a feminist. The racial bias test was was even more challenging intellectually. Unlike the authors, I didn't "flunk" it (meaning I don't share the "white" bias of 75% of the test takers, including many people of color). But, how do I reconcile the fact that I have a more positive association to people who do not share my European ancestry? I was actually born in Germany

after WWII to German parents who had a pronounced preference for their own kind. I suspect that's the reason for my apparent contrariness, but after reading about the authors' shock at their results, I was definitely concerned that I might also flunk the test, despite my intellectual view on the subject. Along with the relief of "passing" the test came the next question...so, why don't I like my own race...myself? No, this book doesn't give in-depth explanations for ways to combat test results that don't fit with your intellectual self-image, but it definitely makes you aware that what you think and believe about yourself doesn't necessarily match how you feel innately, and those innate feelings do influence your behavior, despite your belief to the contrary.

The authors have evidently devoted a lot of thought to their research and to writing this book. They tell us about unconscious biases that we may have that are inconsistent with our conscious thoughts and ideals. An example of the authors' thoughtfulness can be reflected in their use of different colours to label the various types of lies (white, grey, invisible, blue, red, etc) that we often tell, often without being fully conscious of what we are doing. The presentation is vivid, and the ideas easy to commit to memory. I also find the authors' Implicit Association Test (IAT) to be a rather ingenious device to reflect unconscious associations or biases. As I read from a Kindle edition, I find it rather too tedious to try to produce hard copies of the tests to try out. Instead, I went online to take a couple of the tests. With the hard copies, the authors have emphasised that someone taking the test may opt to start first with either sheet A or B. That is not possible with the online test. Because I am already in my 60s, I find that my mind has considerable difficulty adjusting to switching from the left column to the right (and vice versa) as I progressed from part 1 to part 7 of the online test. As the test relies on measures of the speed and accuracy in which the subject takes the test, I cannot help but wonder if the difficulty that I have experienced in switching time and again between left and right may not have contributed significantly, but erroneously, to what the test attempts to measure. Perhaps the test procedures can be refined to cater for such possible errors. As it stands, I think the IAT is best taken as a good reflection of unconscious biases, instead of an accurate measure of such. A final comment is that while the authors have done an excellent job in detailing various unconscious biases, they have made less headway in coming up with solutions. I find the few solutions discussed in the book to be much less insightful, or impressive.

Pretty good book. I'm conducting my dissertation on implicit bias so it was interesting to read about how the whole process started and also see it broken down in less scientific terms.

Solid read, we would all be better off if we had a deeper understanding of our own prejudices and the role they play in our everyday lives. Follow up with the Project Implicit website for sure!

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