

Common Cognitive Biases

NINE EVERYDAY PATTERNS IN HOW WE THINK

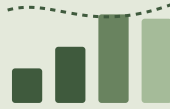
Cognitive biases are automatic mental shortcuts that shape how we notice, interpret and remember information. They are a normal part of thinking — usually helpful, but not always accurate.



Confirmation Bias

The tendency to seek out, favour and remember information that confirms what we already believe.

"I knew it wouldn't work" — noticed only after ignoring early signs of success.



Anchoring Bias

Relying too heavily on the first piece of information offered when making a decision.

A high original price makes a discount feel like a better deal than it is.



Availability Heuristic

Judging how likely something is by how easily examples come to mind.

Overestimating plane crash risk after seeing news coverage of one.



Hindsight Bias

Believing, after an event, that we "knew it all along" — even when the outcome wasn't predictable.

"It was obvious the project would fail" — said only after it failed.



Self-Serving Bias

Attributing our successes to ourselves, and our failures to outside circumstances.

"I got the job because I'm skilled" vs. "I didn't get it because it was rigged."



Negativity Bias

Giving more psychological weight to negative experiences than positive ones of equal size.

One critical comment outweighs ten pieces of positive feedback.



Illusion of Control

Overestimating our influence over events that are largely determined by chance.

Feeling luckier about a dice roll when we throw it ourselves.



Sunk Cost Fallacy

Continuing an effort because of what has already been invested, rather than its future value.

Finishing a bad film because you already paid for the ticket.



In-Group Bias

Favouring people who belong to our own group over those who do not.

Assuming a colleague from your team is more trustworthy than one from another.

Noticing a bias doesn't remove it — but it can create a moment of choice about how to respond.

SOURCES

Tversky, A. & Kahneman, D. (1974). Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases. *Science*, 185, 1124–1131.
Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, Fast and Slow*.

NOTE

Evidence-informed educational resource.