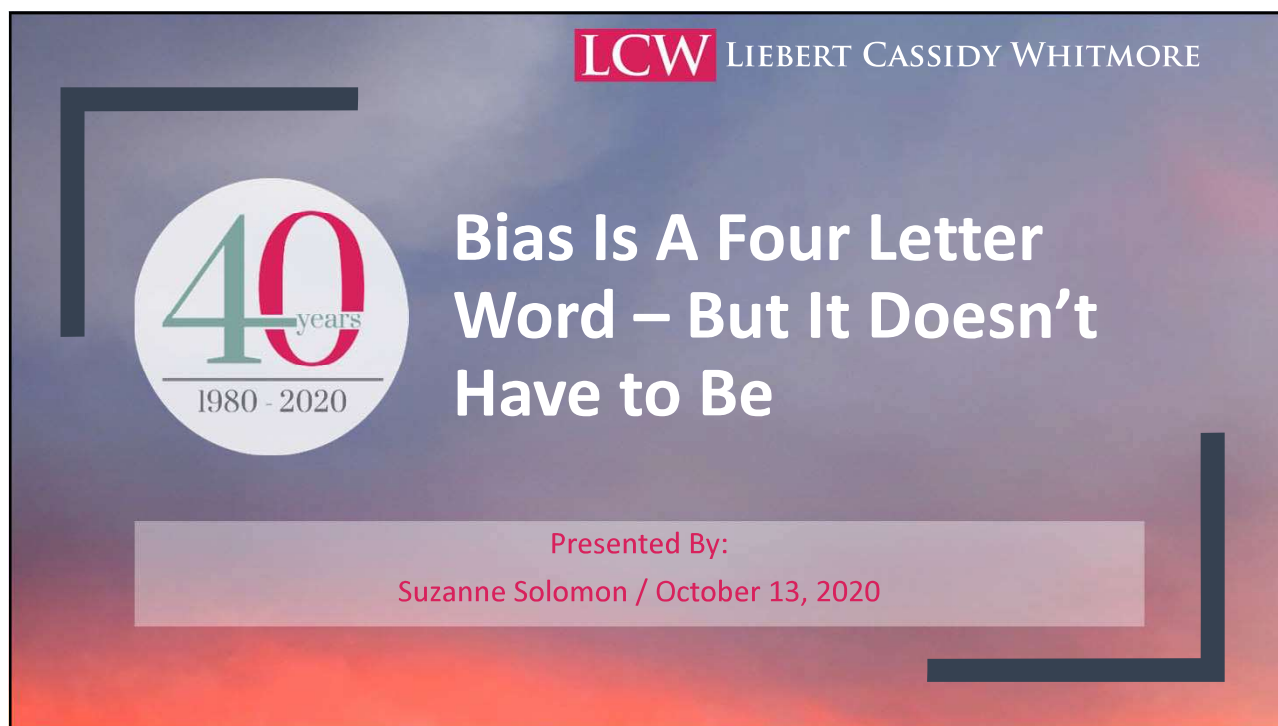


# Bias Is A Four Letter Word – But It Doesn't Have to Be

Riverside County District Attorney's Office | October 13, 2020

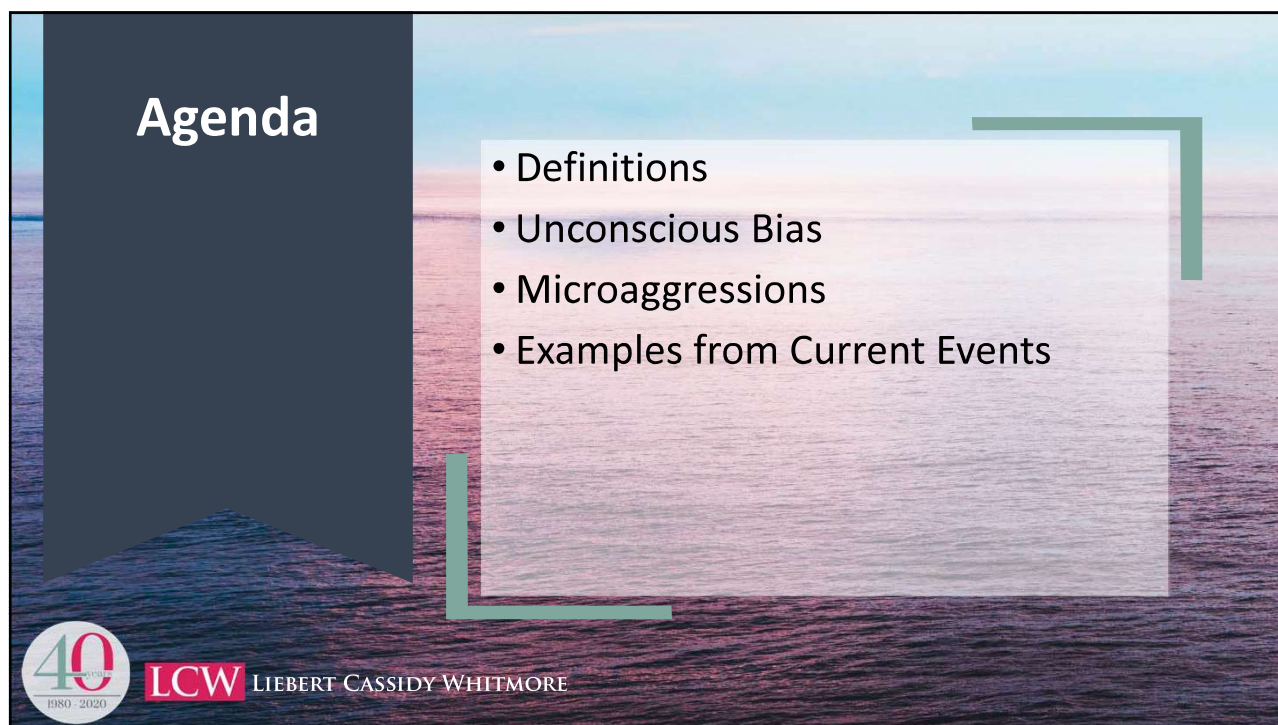
*Presented by: Suzanne Solomon*



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**Bias Is A Four Letter Word – But It Doesn't Have to Be**

Presented By:  
Suzanne Solomon / October 13, 2020



**Agenda**

- Definitions
- Unconscious Bias
- Microaggressions
- Examples from Current Events

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## Definitions



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## Unconscious v. Conscious

Two distinct psychological systems:

### **Unconscious:**

“Operates automatically and quickly, with little or no effort and no sense of voluntary control.”

– *Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman



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### Unconscious v. Conscious

Two distinct psychological systems:

#### **Conscious:**

"Allocates attention to the effortful mental activities that demand it, including complex computations."

– *Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman



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### Cognitive Reflection Test

A bat and a ball cost \$1.10 in total

The bat costs \$1.00 more than the ball

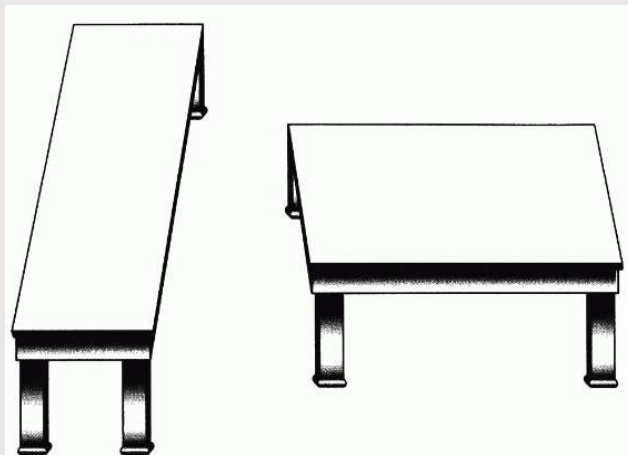
How much does the ball cost?

– *Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman



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## Two Tables



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## Bias Defined

- A particular tendency, trend, inclination, feeling, or opinion, especially one that is preconceived or unreasoned.



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## Our Bias Impacts:

- **Our Perception** – how we see people and perceive reality.
- **Our Attitude** – how we react towards certain people.
- **Our Behaviors** – how receptive/friendly we are towards certain people.
- **Our Attention** – which aspects of a person we pay most attention to.
- **Our Listening Skills** – how much we actively listen to what certain people say.
- **Our Micro-affirmations** – how much or how little we comfort certain people in certain situations.



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## Examples Of Common Biases

- **Anchoring**
  - The tendency to rely to heavily on one piece of information when making decisions.
- **Bandwagon effect**
  - The tendency to do (or believe) things because many other people do (or believe) the same thing.



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### Examples Of Common Biases

- Bias Blind Spot
  - The tendency to see oneself as less biased than other people, or to identify more bias in another than in oneself.
- Confirmation
  - The tendency to confirm what we already believe is true.



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### Examples Of Common Biases

- Negativity Effect
  - The tendency to allow things that are negative to have a more significant effect than things that are positive or neutral.
- Similar to Me Effect
  - The tendency to have an affinity for people or behaviors that are similar to you.



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## Examples Of Common Biases

- Stereotypes
- Name Bias
  - Study done by Marijuana Pepsi Vandyck (yes, that's her actual name).



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## I'm Ok; You're Biased

People underestimate the influence that self-interest has on their own judgments.

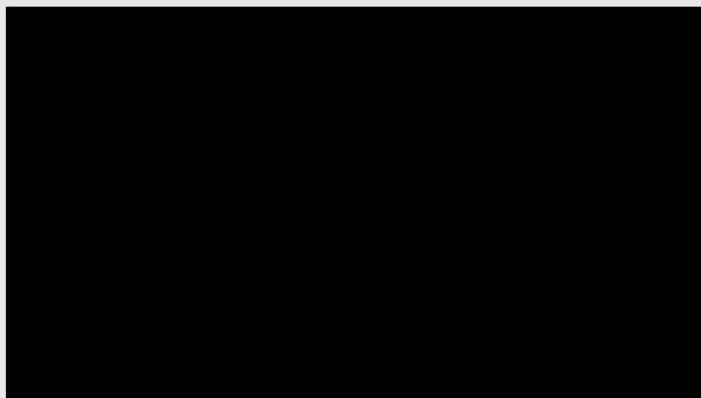
People overestimate the influence that self-interest has on other people's judgments.



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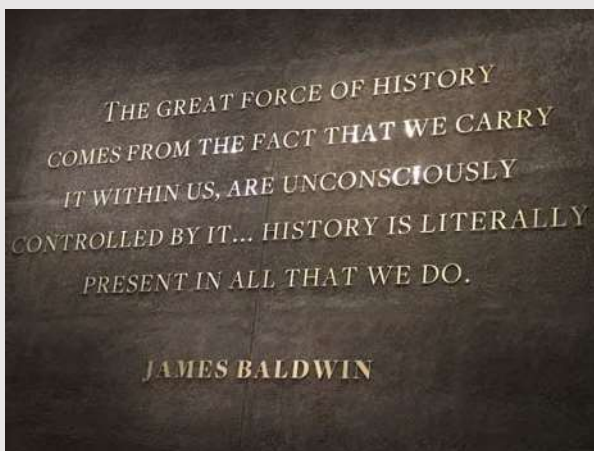


## Example: Amy Cooper Video



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## James Baldwin



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## Is BLM Controversial?



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## What You Say & What Others Hear



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## Awareness

- Be aware of body language and facial expressions. Yours and others.
- Think about what influences and/or experiences in your life would lead you to develop a bias or an unconscious bias.
- Accept what you probably can't understand; it doesn't make you a bad person, it makes you a real person.



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## Reflection

- Assess who you spend time with, what you read, what you watch on TV, etc. and see if you give yourself the opportunity to expand your perspectives.
- As you experience an emotional response/trigger to workplace activity, try and determine the root cause of the reaction/emotion.



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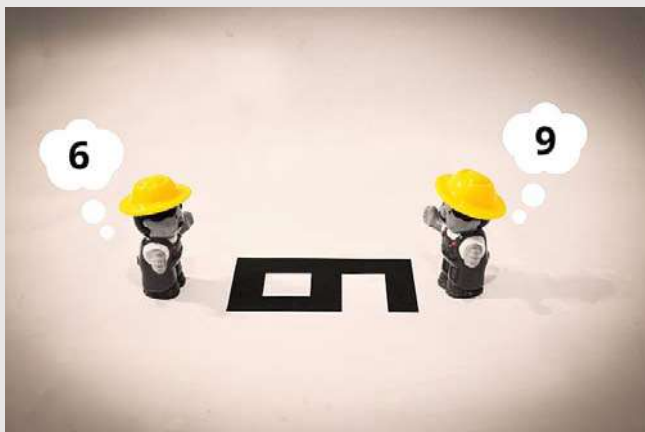
## Bias Management

- Check the accuracy of your assumptions before you act on them.
- Think before you put a label on another person based on generalizations and stereotypes.
- Reflect on how you may have developed impressions, assumptions, or beliefs about others and focus on treating each individual as unique.



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## Our Perspectives May Both Be Correct!



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## Project Implicit

- Project Implicit is a non-profit organization and international collaborative network of researchers investigating implicit social cognition - thoughts and feelings outside of conscious awareness and control. Project Implicit is the product of a team of scientists whose research produced new ways of understanding attitudes, stereotypes and other hidden biases that influence perception, judgment, and action.
- Project Implicit translates that academic research into practical applications for addressing diversity, improving decision-making, and increasing the likelihood that practices are aligned with personal and organizational values.

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>



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**MICROAGGRESSION**



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## Microaggression Defined

A comment or action that is subtly and often unintentionally hostile or demeaning to a member of a minority or marginalized group.

- Brief
- Commonplace
- Can be:
  - Verbal (word or tone)
  - Body language, looks, gestures



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## Microaggressions

They are often:

- Subtle
- Difficult to address
- Glossed over
- Perceived as innocuous
- Unintentional
- Recipient fears appearing petty



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## Common Types Of Microaggressions

- “Alien” in own land
- Assumptions about other countries
- Exoticization
- Assuming inferior intelligence
- Invalidation of differences with race/ethnic group
- Denial of Racial Reality
- Misunderstanding that everyone is “ethnic”



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## Avoiding Microaggressions



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### Be Culturally Aware

- Is your comment/question necessary?
  - What's your real goal?
- Consider how your comment will land with the other person, who has different life experiences than you do.



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### When You Mess Up, And You Will

- Apologize.
  - No IF-pologies
- Don't get defensive or trivialize the event.
- Take the opportunity: You have a bias! You will work on it and do better next time.
- Move on.



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## What If You're On The Receiving End?

- Be gracious, even though you may also be offended.
- Remember, we all do this. Even you.
  - Do NOT fool yourself into thinking you do not do it, just because you're in so-and-so group
- Do not demonize the other person.
- Move on.



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## Black Oregon Lawmaker Says Police Were Called As She Knocked On Constituents' Doors

***"I don't know if race had anything do with her call — she didn't say that — but race had everything to do with my reaction, and my fear of not being treated well, my fear of maybe being misunderstood," Ms. Bynum said in an interview. "I was, of course, in disbelief."***



Oregon state Rep. Janelle Bynum poses with the Clackamas County sheriff's deputy who responded to a call from someone who said Bynum was casing the neighborhood. The legislator said she was going door to door talking to constituents.



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**Questions?**



**Thank You!**

**Suzanne Solomon**

**Partner | San Francisco**

415-512-3000 | [ssolomon@lcwlegal.com](mailto:ssolomon@lcwlegal.com)

[www.lcwlegal.com/our-people/suzanne-solomon](http://www.lcwlegal.com/our-people/suzanne-solomon)



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