



MODULE TWO PRACTICE WORKSHEET

Eradicating the Virus of Bias

Think of a current situation or relationship where bias has become a problem.

The challenge is to shift your experience of this situation from one infected by biases (a survival mindset) to one rich with unlimited possibilities (a thriving mindset). Pick a situation that's important but not overwhelming.

Identify the underlying bias that's been influencing how you've seen this situation and those involved.

What story have you been acting out because of bias? Are you assuming certain types of people are less or more capable than others? Are you innately prejudiced? Which is more applicable: They don't see your value, or you don't see theirs?

What's your pay off? What are you getting out of being biased?

As you learned in the last module, there are always perceived personal benefits attached to the stories we tell, even when they aren't achieving the results we want. What are you getting out of this situation? How do your biases let you off the hook or provide you with excuses or justification?

Acknowledge that you created a story about this situation influenced by bias.

Where might you be brain-blind in this situation? How might you gain more perspective? How could you become proactive to prove that your bias is ill-advised?

Write a new story.

You've exposed the bias infecting this story. Now, release it. Imagine yourself having transcended your bias about what's possible. See the person or situation you've been dealing with transformed so that the outcome is productive and positive. Begin writing a bias-free story about the situation.

Free from the influence of bias, how will you communicate differently?

What will you say and not say that will lead to an outcome you prefer, not influenced by bias? How will you see others differently, now that you have exposed and released your biases?

Who will you need to partner with to help avoid the influence of biases?

Is there a friend or colleague who can support you to act out this new story, free of bias? Who can alert you if biases begin to creep back into your thinking again? Can you partner with someone directly involved in the situation and share your desire to have the situation resolve productively?

See yourself experiencing this situation and its relationships free of old biases.

We all have biases. Some are helpful, some are not. You've identified certain unconscious biases you've held and are experimenting with releasing them. Muse about how different things will be in this situation if you can succeed in doing this.

Enjoy this feeling for a few moments.

Let yourself soak in the feeling of your success. Keep imagining that your biases no longer interfere in this situation.

Continue to be your own "bias monitor."

Become a detective, sleuthing out incidents of bias sabotaging your thriving experience. Journal about your vision of a bias free situation, how it feels, and how your behavior would have to change should you accept this challenge.

The Four Top Tips for Eradicating The Virus of Bias

1. Acknowledge that we all have biases.

Everyone has biases. The brain creates these “shortcuts” to streamline our ability to process repetitive data efficiently. Some biases are helpful, like filtering out unnecessary and potentially distracting visual data while you are driving. Other biases can be harmful, like ignoring someone or dismissing what they say because of how they look. There is nothing shameful about admitting that you have biases; it’s how you begin dealing with them, to keep the positive ones and eliminate those that limit your effectiveness and devalue or inappropriately inflate others.

2. Become your own bias monitor.

Once you’ve acknowledged that you and everyone else have biases, some of which are counter productive, you can become proactive in exposing them. The simplest method is inquiry. Ask questions like, “What am I thinking this about that person?” Or, “Why do I value what he is saying more than what she is saying?” And here’s a powerful question: “Although I feel convinced of my viewpoint in this situation, how might I be suffering from brain-blindness and missing the obvious? Who could help me see what I can’t see?”

3. Who are your allies, what are your resources?

Others will be interested in your new initiative. Ask a helper or two to be vigilant for biases at play in your shared environments. This can be a reciprocal arrangement; you can also help them spot their prejudiced communication and behaviors when they show up.

4. What are you learning?

Imagine being eager to learn, rather than defensive about your positions. Biases can be exposed and released, freeing you to be a more considerate person and a more effective leader. As biases emerge into your awareness and you deal with them, keep in mind that this process is radically expanding your team management ability.

You just turned a biased-based situation into a productive one.

Whenever you think about your situation during the week remember this simulation. Replay it and enhance it so you can access and deepen the feeling of success. Then act from that thriving mindset.



For more information and additional insights, read Chapter Two: Eradicating the Virus of Bias in the study manual based on our book, 12 Essential Practices for Thriving in Business and Life, provided as a downloadable pdf file with this program.