

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a large, diverse crowd of people walking on a cobblestone street. The people are dressed in winter clothing, and the scene is busy and somewhat chaotic, illustrating the concept of unconscious bias in a workplace setting.

# Addressing Unconscious Bias in the Workplace

Casualty Actuarial Society  
2017 Spring Meeting

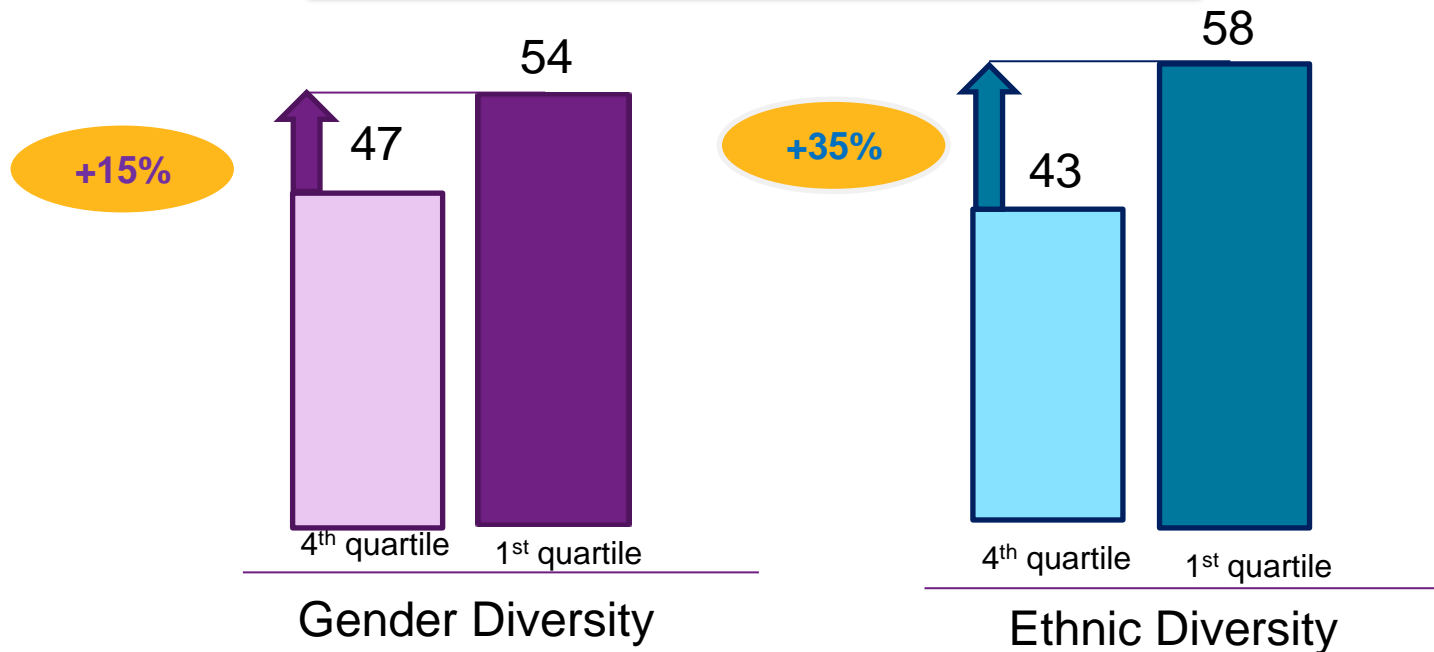
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# Why are we talking about Unconscious Bias?

# Diversity and Financial Performance

In their 2015 report  
“Why Diversity Matters”  
McKinsey & Company show the  
likelihood of financial performance  
above national industry median, by  
diversity quartile %

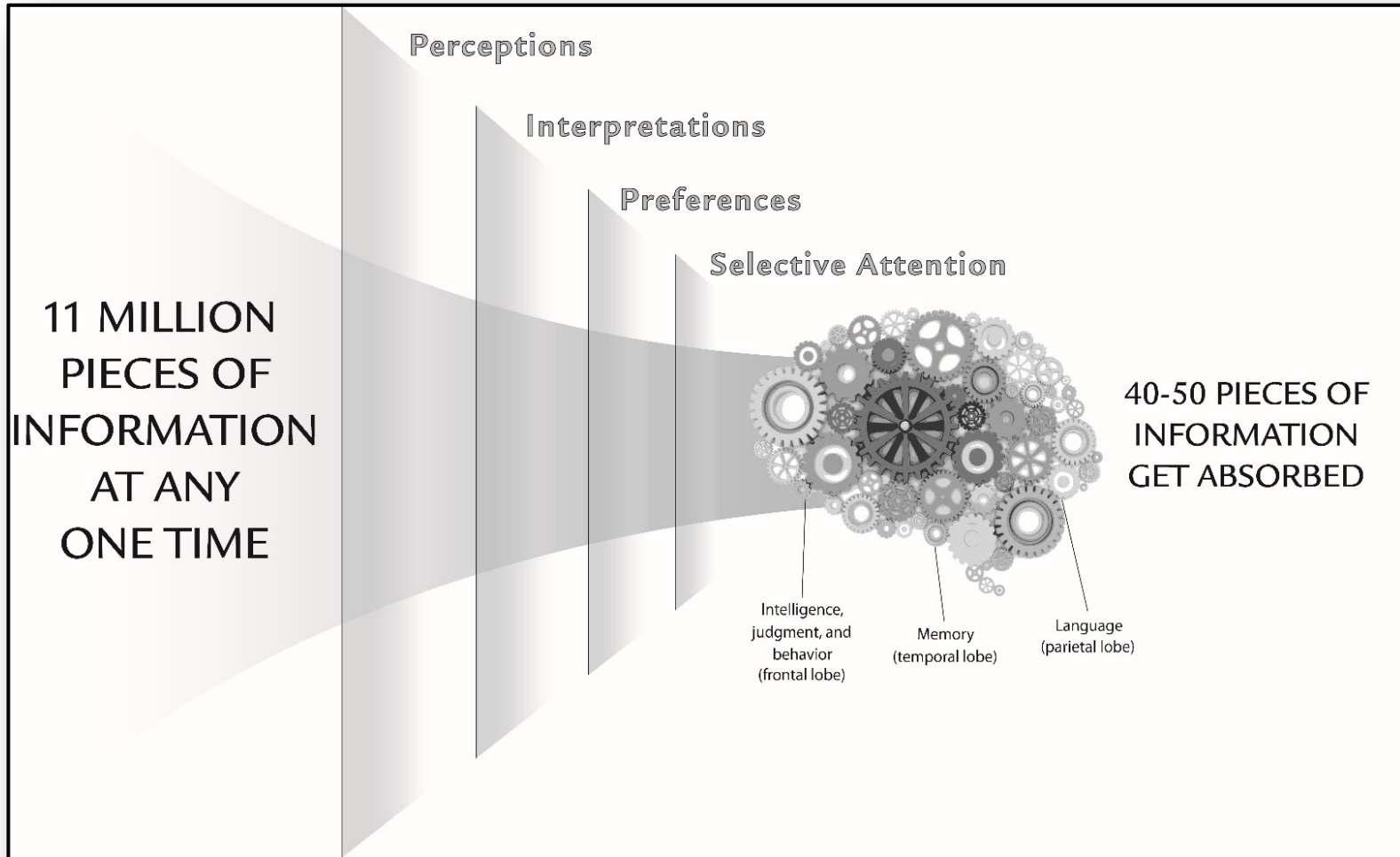


# What is Bias?

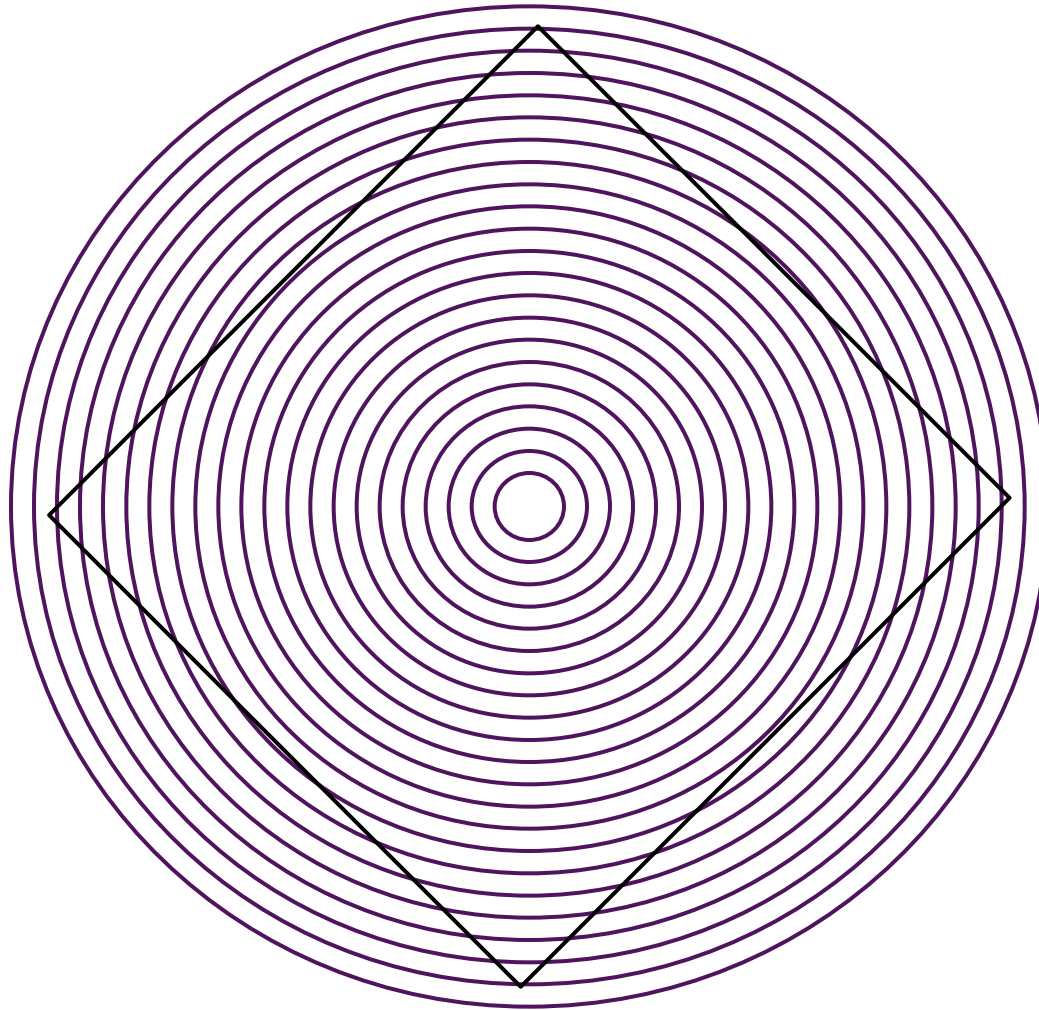


**Bias** is an inclination of the mind or a preconceived opinion about people or things. It often emerges without our conscious awareness. Biases can be favorable or unfavorable.

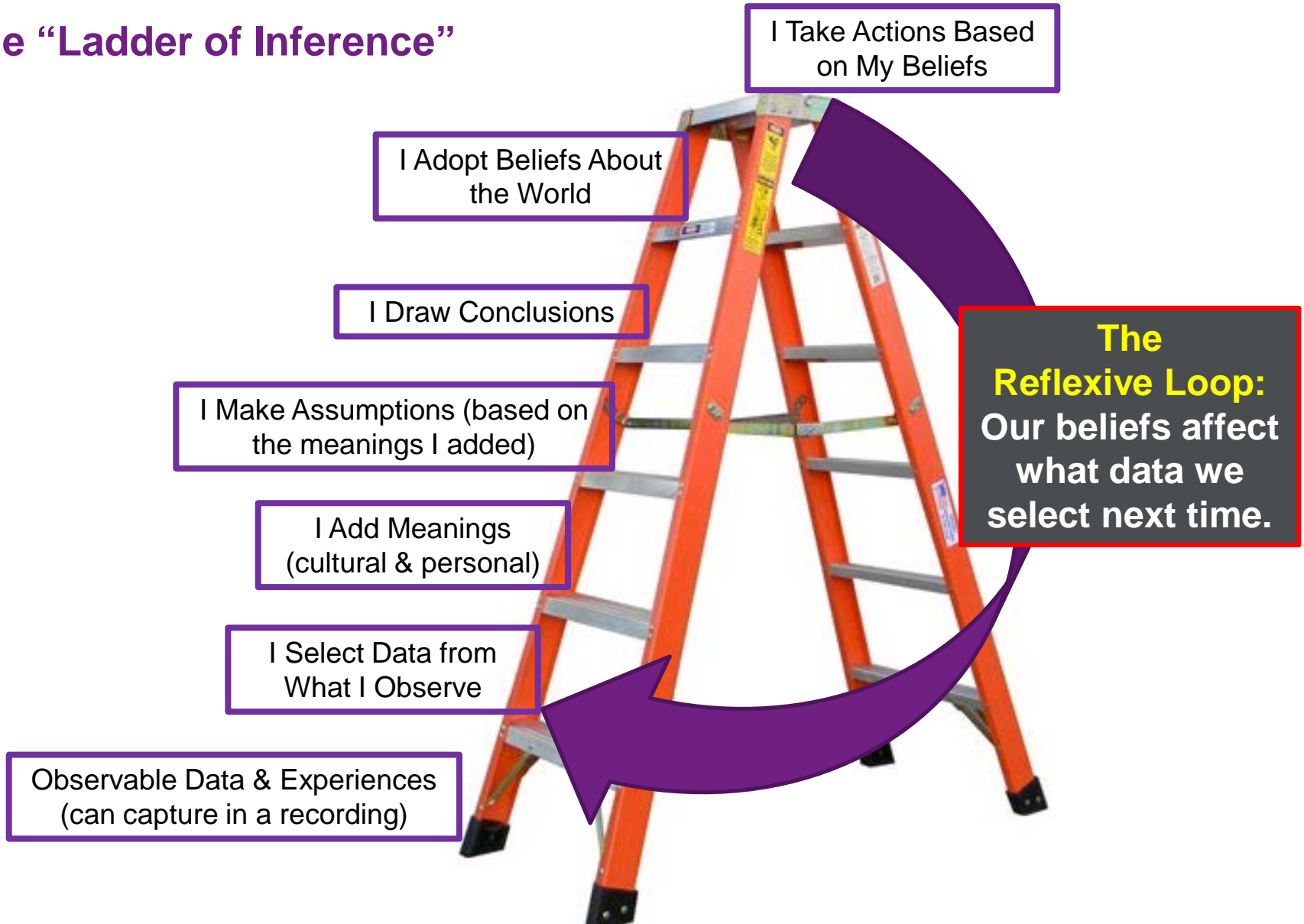
# Bias is Biological



# Bias is Based on Our Experiences



# The “Ladder of Inference”



# Defining Four Types of Unconscious Bias in the Workplace



# Defining Four Types of Unconscious Bias

## AFFINITY

- Inclination to feel more comfortable with and gravitate toward people who are like us or toward products that reflect our values

## ANCHORING

- Tendency to rely too heavily on one piece of information (usually the first available) when making decisions

## CONFIRMATION

- Tendency to search for, interpret, focus on and remember information in a way that confirms one's preconceptions

## ATTRIBUTION

- Systematic errors made when people explain their own and others' behaviors (social bias)

# Addressing Four Types of Unconscious Bias in the Workplace

## Affinity:

- increase purposeful mentoring & coaching
- proactively recognize different capabilities
- consider who might consistently feel like an outsider
- evaluate your actions daily
- seek regular feedback

## Confirmation:

- challenge what you think you see
- seek information from a range of sources
- discuss your thoughts with others
- surround yourself with a diverse group
- listen openly to dissenting views

## Anchoring:

- consider if you've rushed to judgment in the past
- make decisions slowly
- be ready to ask for more time if you feel under pressure to make a quick decision

## Attribution:

- use empathy & cultural intelligence to understand people's actions
- build emotional intelligence to accurately reflect on your behavior

# Case Studies



# How Would You Address These Situations?

## Case 1

- A high-potential associate approached you because he has a trusted mentoring relationship with you. He is thinking of leaving the company and gave you the following reasons:
  - He thinks his peer on the account is getting the “plum” assignment because she is more outgoing than he is
  - He believes the company’s inclusion and diversity effort is favoring women at the expense of men
- What are some of the unconscious biases at play, and how would you counsel him?

## Case 2

- Two associates on one of your teams are up for promotion.
  - One is detail-oriented, a good writer, and very confident; however, the person lacks good project management skills, interpersonal skills with peers, and judgement about getting input from others.
  - The other is a great project manager, has very good judgement and perception of their own skills, and is knowledgeable technically although the associate occasionally misses details in reviewing work.
- Which would you more highly recommend for promotion? Why?

# Equal vs. Equitable

## EQUALITY VERSUS EQUITY



In the first image, it is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports. They are being treated equally.



In the second image, individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game. They are being treated equitably.



In the third image, all three can see the game without any supports or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.

Thank you for your participation