

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



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Has anybody ever accused you of being a biased individual? That your biases have led you to certain positions, decisions, and actions? How should that make you feel? I'm Jerry Roberts and let's dig into that, today, on The Extra Point.

People don't like hearing the word "bias" when it comes to them. We all like to think of ourselves as open-minded individuals, clear thinkers, reasonable, fair, just — and that we can be trusted to make good decisions. But are we biased?

We start forming opinions at a very early age, some experts claiming by four and maybe earlier. Well, maybe a whole lot earlier. Do babies have a way of showing us what they like and don't like? Isn't that a bias?

Robert Greene, an author of books relating to psychology and personality, has released a new one, entitled *The Laws of Human Nature*, and in it he highlights six biases that he claims hold us back from rational thinking. Greene says that our thoughts revolve around the most common emotion of all, the desire for pleasure and the avoidance of pain. He says we think we seek truth and to be realistic, when we're actually holding onto ideas that relieve tension and soothe our egos, making us feel superior. Let's look at three of those six biases today, and the other three tomorrow.

1. Confirmation Bias — We say to ourselves, "I look at the evidence and arrive at my decisions through more or less rational processes." According to Greene, instead we hold an idea and convince ourselves we arrived at it rationally, then go all out in search of evidence to support our view. We might look high and low to find it but as soon as we do, that validates our position. Even if most others don't share our views, if we can dig up one or

more folks — almost anywhere — who do agree, that's all we need.

2. Conviction Bias — our inner voice tells us, "I believe in this idea so strongly. It must be true." Deep inside we might have some doubts as to its truth and so we go all out to convince ourselves, and others, and to challenge anyone who contradicts us.

It's interesting, isn't it? Some of us grab onto ideas like they are a life preserver. We get a good grip on a certain position and we squeeze. Outwardly I say, "Yes, of course I'll be happy to listen to what you have to say. Inside, I'm saying, "Squeeze, Jerry, squeeze."

3. Appearance Bias — "I see people just as they are," so I understand them and what's really going on. Probably not. We don't see people as they are, but as they appear to be. To an extent everybody wears a mask to hide something. If we like them we accept the mask and judge them as real, truthful, ethical and trustworthy. If we don't like them they're bad, deceitful, immoral, and need to be avoided. What are people thinking when they see your mask?

Do you see yourself in any of this yet? We'll have another crack at it tomorrow when we look at the other three biases discussed in Robert Greene's book, *The Laws of Human Nature*.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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