

Communication 101 for Movement Builders

What I Wish I Knew 40 Years Ago ...

I grew up fundamentalist. I was taught to be against evolution, LGBT people, the United Nations, and women leaders. I thought most Catholics & Methodists were going to hell ... forget about Muslims & Jews.

And I was told that if I changed my beliefs and left my religious community, God would probably send me to hell.

So I started off with far more to unlearn than most people.

But I discovered that faith wasn't against learning; good faith requires learning. And I discovered that learning and changing my mind was one of life's greatest joys.

Over the years, I've stumbled across 7 built-in biases that we share because of the way our brains evolved. You probably know most of them already, so I only want you to look for 1 or 2 that are new to you.

There's really only one thing you need to remember:

People can't see what they can't see.

Confirmation Bias

Our story or system excludes what doesn't fit.

Complexity Bias

We prefer a simple myth to a complex truth.

Community Bias

It's almost impossible to see what our community doesn't see.
(Belonging/Social Identity & Desirability/Mimetic Theory)

Competency Bias

We don't know how little (or much) we know,
because we don't know how much (or little) others know.
(Dunning-Kruger Hypothesis)

Consciousness Bias

Some things simply can't be seen from where you are
right now.

(Integral Theory, Human/Moral Development Theory)

Complacency Bias

I can't handle that much pain.
(Psychic Numbing)

conservative/liberal bias

don't you see what matters?

nurturing fairness & kindness!

or

strictly enforcing purity, loyalty, liberty, & tradition!

moral foundations theory

Lakoff's strict father vs. nurturing parent

confirmation
complexity
community
competency
consciousness
complacency
conservative/liberal

people can't see what they can't see.

?

“people can’t see what they can’t see”
isn’t the whole truth.

*people can't see what they can't see
until someone helps them see it.*

here's how you can help (not force)
others (and yourself) see more.

Confirmation Bias

Surprise and “abduct” people - through an immersive experience (field trip), unexpected guest, or powerful personal story.

Complexity Bias

Simply, briefly, confidently explain your 1 or 2 most important points.

Save the rest until they ask for it - as confirmation.

Community Bias

Create a welcoming, more desirable community
with conviction AND an onramp

Attractive Leader, Cell, and Movement

Competency Bias

Help people admit they have a lot to learn ... and build their confidence that they'll enjoy learning and succeed at it.

Consciousness Bias

Introduce people to immerse and “transcendent experiences” (states) and offer practices for growth in and through stages

complacency bias

Tell one story with feeling &
provide one simple step within their current capacity.

Beware of cynicism & apathy triggers

conservative/liberal bias

Start with compassion & fairness

and employ

Purity vs. Degradation, In-Group Loyalty vs. Betrayal,
Liberty vs. Oppression, Tradition vs. Rebellion

Checklist

1. Have I “abducted” my audience through imagination, surprise, unexpected vulnerability, etc? (confirmation)
2. Have I made 1, 2, or 3 memorable, simple points and trimmed away everything else? (complexity)
3. Have I presented myself and my group as welcoming of opponents and pleasant to be around? (community)
4. Have I celebrated people’s ability to change their minds & learn? (competency)
5. Have I helped people experience a “state” that can later become a “stage?” (consciousness)
6. Have I given them one thing to do right now about one problem? (complacency)
7. Have I led with compassion and fairness, but also appealed to purity, loyalty, liberty, and tradition?

Here's the message of terrorist organizations:

the world has gone wrong because of the actions of an enemy who hates or threatens what is good. Now is the time when violence is necessary to prevent catastrophe. If we stay true to our righteous course, we will prevail.*

confirmation

complexity

community

competency

consciousness

complacency

conservative/liberal

*from the National Counter Terrorism Center

Here's a message that could counter it:

the world has gone wrong because of the actions of misguided people who threaten what is good. now is the time when nonviolent action is necessary to prevent catastrophe. If we stay true to our righteous course, we will prevail.

confirmation

complexity

community

competency

consciousness

complacency

conservative/liberal