Dena R. Samuels, PhD
Dena Samuels Consulting
www.denasamuels.com

Challenging Implicit Bias

As troubling as it is to admit, the way we perceive people and treat them is significantly correlated with the stereotypes we hold to be true, even in spite of our best intentions. We may consider ourselves to already be inclusive of others. Unfortunately, we may not be aware that some of the stereotypes we have learned have in fact sunk in, whether we wanted them to, or not. The good news is that it is possible to challenge those automatic, unconscious, reductive stereotypes so we can begin to treat people as the complex individuals that they are.

3 ways to challenge our own bias:
1. We must be willing to accept that we do, in fact, have biases, and to make ourselves aware of them.
2. We must be determined not only to unearth our own stereotypes, but also to challenge them.
3. We need to learn how to exchange those automatic biases for different, more inclusive, notions. And we can, in fact, learn to challenge those prejudices before we act on them.

To figure out what your implicit biases are, you can take at least one Implicit Association Test (IAT) created by Harvard University's Project Implicit from the link below. Each quiz takes 5-8 minutes. Your immediate, personalized results are compared with the results of the 5 million other people who have taken these quizzes. Although sometimes difficult to accept the results we are given, from a scientific perspective, they have shown excellent validity and consistency. They have been shown to give us insight into what we don't know we don't know that is going on in our brain in terms of how we have internalized some potentially disturbing notions.

Project Implicit provides tests on many different social identities. It is recommended that you start with the IAT on *Race,* and then take at least one other test on another social identity (gender, disability, sexual orientation, etc.). You can find the tests either through the link below, or by Googling: "Project Implicit test" and click on the link to "Take a Test."

https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html