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Do you subconsciously make instantaneous judgments about people of other races? Does implicit bias really affect decisions in the real world? The New York Times bestselling author Malcolm Gladwell, in his book *Blink*, primarily focused on how we make snap judgments on different aspects of life such as race and how these quick conclusions are more accurate than well-researched and careful analysis.

Based on Gladwell's book, two economists Joe Price and Justin Wolfers explored the basic theory outlined in *Blink* by researching implicit racial bias amongst NBA referees. The relatively controversial academic-based study, which was recently published in *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, concluded that there was a 4 percent racial bias among the referees. Specifically, the research surmised that "the whiter the three-man NBA referee crew, the better the calls were for white players." Conversely, "the blacker the crew, the more favorable were the calls for black players." On the whole, the study purportedly discovered that "that there is a low level of implicit bias among NBA officials."

Although this peer-reviewed research was interesting to a certain degree, it did not yield any surprising or atypical findings in comparison to similar studies involving Major League Baseball umpires, Oprah viewers, corporations and other sample groups who have been analyzed on "blink of the eye" racism. Moreover, the rigorous study did not account for the superstar effect on the referees- that is, the superstars of the NBA receiving more favorable calls in comparison to lesser-known players. Perhaps, the biggest failure of *Blink* and like examinations such as this NBA analysis is their failure to offer advice on how to improve negative subconscious attitudes relative to race, gender, religion, etc.

Arguably, the larger narrative has to be focused on more than just the fact that we live in a world where snap judgments are relatively ubiquitous and do affect many aspects (e.g., politics, business, finance, etc.) of our lives. Are there any real solutions? In my humble opinion, I would state, "yes." And, is it possible for one to reverse subconscious attitudes, particularly implicit racial bias? Absolutely!

The following list of suggestions is not all-inclusive, but it does represent some of the best practices that one can implement to help overcome "blink of the eye" racism and implicit racial bias:

1. Acknowledge that racial stereotypes and biases are dangerous. Oftentimes, individuals learn ethnic and racial stereotypes as children from their parents. For example, a child raised in a home with two racist parents will likely internalize their behavior and carry the racism subconsciously into their adulthood, which can certainly result in implicit racial bias. In some cases, these individuals don't believe that these erroneous judgments are toxic. However, it is very important to consciously acknowledge that racial stereotypes that distort the truth about a

person or group based on preconceived notions of their habits, abilities and expectations is unequivocally hazardous.

2. Acknowledge that you may have implicit racial biases. Exclusive of background, many individuals have exhibited “blink of the eye” racism at one time or another. If this occurs often, it is important to consciously acknowledge that one engages in negative thinking on a consistent basis. It is very difficult to change subconscious habits, if you are not consciously aware of negative thinking and how they affect your rationalization about people or a certain group.
3. Make careful judgments in lieu of snap judgments. I wholeheartedly disagree with the notion that individuals should rely more on snap judgments in lieu of thorough analysis, as Gladwell and some commentators have suggested. To accurately discern another person’s character requires time and careful observation. The “trusting your instinct except when it is wrong” philosophy is not a sound manner of thinking and decision-making.
4. Speak positively on a consistent basis. A plethora of psychological studies have proven that consciously engaging in positive self-talk and speech relative to race helps to modify behavior at the subconscious level and dampen implicit racial bias.

Although the abovementioned NBA study had some fundamental weaknesses and was limited in scope, it did and does bespeak of a very important topic that requires further assessment. The breadth of impending analyses has to focus not only on the obvious xenophobia that most individuals experience but also on additional recommendations to overcome implicit racial bias.

[Anthony Jerrod](#) is a speaker, public policy expert and author of [Carnal Striving Spiritual](#).

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