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Psychologists have yet to find a way to diminish hidden prejudice, but they do have strategies for thwarting discrimination

By [Betsy Mason](#) 06.04.2020

A quarter-century ago, social psychologist Anthony Greenwald of the University of Washington developed a test that exposed an uncomfortable aspect of the human mind: People have deep-seated biases of which they are completely unaware. And these hidden attitudes — known as implicit bias — influence the way we act toward each other, often with unintended discriminatory consequences.

Since then, Greenwald and his main collaborators, Mahzarin Banaji and Brian Nosek, have used the implicit association test to measure how fast and accurately people associate different social groups with qualities like good and bad. They have developed versions of the test to measure things suc





was recently found that when people started to do these tests with longer delays, a day or more, [any beneficial effect appears to be gone](#).

Other strategies that haven't been very effective include just encouraging people to have a strong intention not to allow themselves to be biased. Or trainers will suggest people do something that they may call "thinking slow" or pausing before making decisions. Another method that has been tried is meditation. And another strategy is making people aware that they have implicit biases or that implicit biases are pervasive in the population. All these may seem reasonable, but there's no empirical demonstration that they work.

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I think you're right, it is surprising. The mechanisms by which our brains form

And once you know what's happening, the next step is what I call discretion elimination. This can be applied when people are making decisions that involve subjective judgment about a person. This could be police officers, employers making hiring or promotion

