

**EPISODE 114: WHY WE MAKE BAD COMMUNICATION CHOICES**

Brain Bias: A faulty way of thinking that is hardwired into the human brain. An erroneous way of thinking, so common to all of us, that it's been given a name "blind spot."

- Confirmation bias: The tendency to seek, interpret and remember information that confirms your pre-existing beliefs. We filter information to fit what we already believe.
- Distinction bias: The tendency to over-value the effect of small quantitative differences when comparing options. Decision paralysis; comparing small differences in products.
- Some of these brain biases lead us to make bad decisions as communicators.

**1. THE SPOTLIGHT EFFECT**

- The spotlight effect is the phenomenon in which people tend to believe they are being noticed more than they really are. Stage fright: relax—no one is looking that closely. We worry about small things, convinced that someone will notice.

**2. THE FALSE CONSENSUS EFFECT**

- The false-consensus effect occurs when individuals overestimate the extent to which other people share their opinions, attitudes, and behavior. Mistake: assuming our listeners are just like us.
- Then we make bad decisions about topics, illustrations, references.

**3. THE FALSE UNIQUENESS EFFECT**

- The tendency of one to underestimate the extent to which others share the same positive attitudes and behavior.
- This is the opposite of the False Consensus Effect.
- Mistake: assuming that no one is like you. People are more similar than they are different.
- We might end up arguing points that the listener already agrees on.

**4. THE SELF-AS-TARGET BIAS**

- This concept describes when someone believes that events are disproportionately directed towards him or herself.
- Mistake: assuming it's always about you. Victim mentality.
- There may be other motives. It may have nothing to do with you at all.

**5. THE ILLUSION OF TRANSPARENCY**

- Overestimating the degree to which your personal mental state is known by others, or how well you understand others' personal mental states.
- No one knows if you *feel* anxious, or tired, or afraid. They can only tell if you *look* anxious, or tired, or afraid.
- The opposite version of this problem: misreading the clues.

Sources mentioned in this episode:

[Communication Guys Episode 26: “Who Do You Think You’re Talking To?”](#)

[Communication Guys Episode 111: “How to Deal with a Victim Mentality”](#)

Are there other communication-related topics you’d like to hear the Communication Guys address? Let us know on our [Facebook page](#).