

## Why Should We Delay Our Judgements?

In our daily lives, we're constantly making judgments about others. We think we know exactly why they act the way they do and we quickly categorize them as good or bad based on their actions and intentions. This influences how we react to them, which in turn affects their reactions to us. It's like we're all part of a continuous loop of human interactions, with our judgments forming the foundation of our social world. If we're making incorrect judgments, it's like building a house on shaky ground.

In our intricate social environment, judgments can assist in rapid navigation. However, can these judgments be inaccurate?

We often make judgments based on our own perspectives and experiences, which may differ significantly from those of others. Typically, we associate certain actions with the intentions that are most readily apparent to us at the time.

However, [Robert Sapolsky](#), in his book "Behave," makes a compelling case that human behavior in the present moment is shaped by a combination of factors from the recent past, including seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and even years ago what happened to you. He argues that our behavior is influenced by our external environment, our reactions, our nurturing, experiences from our childhood, our parents' behavior, and our evolutionary history as a species. According to Sapolsky, in any given moment, [the entire history of an individual is reflected in the microscopic neural changes that occur in their brain.](#)



Five simple questions in a moment pause may help us to avoid incorrect attributions of human actions by consciously becoming aware of why people behave the way they behave.

1. Is it hardwired human behavior? Can I tame it?
2. Is it livewired human behavior? Can I shape it?
3. Is it primed human behavior? Can I neutralize it ?
4. Is it reactionary human behavior ? Can I listen to it?
5. Is it thoughtful human behavior? Can I read through it?

### Human Behavior- Hardwired?

Some folks, like [Nigel Nicholson](#), say our behaviors are hardwired into our genes because of evolution. He famously said, “ *You can take the person out of the Stone Age, not the Stone Age out of the person*”.

Take gossiping, for example. We might think it's a bad habit, but it's actually a natural thing for us to do. It's in our genes because it helped our ancestors share info and survive. Same goes for our sense of "us vs them" and our love for hierarchies. These behaviors gave us an edge in evolution.

But here's the thing: just because something is hardwired doesn't mean we can't control it. [Instead of blaming, we can recognize and tame these instincts.](#) Channel gossiping into positive outlets, embrace our differences as humans, and turn "us vs them" into "we."

### Human Behavior- Livewired?

On the flip side, [Dan Gilbert](#) argues that “*Human beings are works in progress that mistakenly think they're finished*”. Human beings in front of us are products of experiences that they have and also experiences that they don't have. So on one side, their life experiences have made them who they are but their future life experiences would make them who they can. David Eagleman refers to the human brain as livewired.

Human brains are unfinished at birth and molded by our socio-cultural context to help us adapt. Through the tuning and pruning process of nurturing, our brain develops maximum neural pathways at age of 2 and our thinking brain is not

fully shaped till we cross the age of twenty five. This means a lot of what we do depends heavily on where we have been.

Understanding that the person in front of us is a product of their unique journey can help us be less judgmental. And knowing that [they're as transient as all our past selves makes us more likely to give them the benefit of the doubt](#) and work towards shaping better behaviors in the future.

Once we appreciate that the person in front of us is a product of a unique life journey So, are our behaviors hardwired? Livewired? A mix of both? It's a fascinating topic to ponder, and the more we understand about it, the better we can navigate our interactions with others.

### Human Behavior- Primed?

[John A. Bargh](#) wrote a book called *"Before you know it: The unconscious reasons why we do what we do."* This book is a summary of all his research on the unconscious mind. Every external environment cue, from the food you ate a few hours ago to the smell you're exposed to, from facial expressions and smiles to race, gender, and class cues, from noises you hear to images you see, influences human behavior. Environment primes us to behave in a certain way.

Priming is like the brain's way of getting ready for what's coming. It's like when you're about to do something, and your body starts to get all hyped up for it. Even our bodies get primed for different stages of life, like when a mom's hormones get her ready to take care of her baby after it's born.

If we take a step back and consider all the factors that might be influencing their behavior, we might be surprised at what we find. From the way a room is decorated to the stress of a commute or even a recent interaction, there are countless things that can prime them to act in ways [that might be less about "who they are" and more about "what they've encountered."](#)

Understanding the power of priming can help us be more compassionate and patient with others. Instead of rushing to judgment, we can take a moment to consider how their circumstances might be shaping their actions. This doesn't mean we have to excuse bad behavior, but it does mean we can try to understand

it.

By giving people the benefit of the doubt, we can avoid misjudging them based on behaviors that are, to some extent, out of their control. And who knows, we might even learn something about ourselves in the process.

### Human Behavior- A Reaction?

Through hardwiring, livewiring and priming, our actions are often automatic reactions learned by the brain to the world around us rather than carefully thought-out decisions. This is because [our brains evolved to help us survive in a dangerous world where quick reactions were important](#). As a result, we often act based on gut feelings, past experiences, and habits without really thinking about it.

This can be helpful in some situations, like when we need to react quickly to danger. But what is heuristic acting as a north star in the world with information overload can turn into biases in a socially complex world. Heuristics can also lead to problems, like when we misinterpret someone's actions because we don't take the time to understand their perspective. As [Daniel Kahneman](#) said *"by their very nature, heuristic shortcuts will produce biases"*

It's important to remember that everyone's behavior is influenced by their own unique experiences and circumstances. So, before we judge someone, we should try to understand what might be going on in their life. By being more patient and understanding, we can avoid making unfair judgments and build stronger relationships.

### Human Behavior- a Response?

[Dan Ariely](#) famously quoted *"Even the most analytical thinkers are predictably irrational; the really smart ones acknowledge and address their irrationalities"*. When we think carefully, we try to be deliberate and avoid acting on impulse. But even then, we're not immune to making mistakes or being influenced by our own biases. It's like, even when we take our time to weigh our options and think things through, the information we're basing our decisions on might be incomplete, misleading, or biased. This means that even our most carefully

considered responses might miss the mark, because they're only as good as the data we have and how we interpret it.

Thoughtful responses are supposed to be more than just knee-jerk reactions. They're shaped by our reasoning, experience, and intentionality. They help us navigate complex situations and consider different perspectives. But even thoughtful responses aren't immune to cognitive biases like confirmation bias, overconfidence, and availability bias. These biases can make us overestimate our understanding or rely on evidence that supports our existing beliefs, which can lead our most thoughtful responses to be, well, not so thoughtful.

Given these limitations, it's [good to approach others' actions with an open mind and a little bit of caution](#). Just like our responses can be flawed due to incomplete information or hidden biases, others too might make mistakes even when they're trying their best. By acknowledging that human decision-making is flawed, we can avoid being too harsh in our judgments and be more patient. This perspective encourages us to be humble and understanding in our assessments, allowing us to support rather than condemn, recognizing that everyone faces the challenge of navigating complex information and biases.

**Humans - good or bad? take a pause !!**

In light of these insights, delaying our judgments becomes a crucial practice in fostering empathy and understanding. [Human behavior is a complex interplay of instincts, upbringing, unconscious cues, quick reactions, and even deliberate responses, each influenced by a multitude of unseen factors](#). When we take a pause before forming conclusions about others, we acknowledge the layers behind every action and give room for understanding over assumptions. This pause enables us to view others with greater humility, aware of the biases that cloud our own judgments and the myriad influences shaping the people around us. In doing so, we not only build more genuine connections but also become more insightful, realizing that, just like everyone else, our perspectives are ever-evolving.