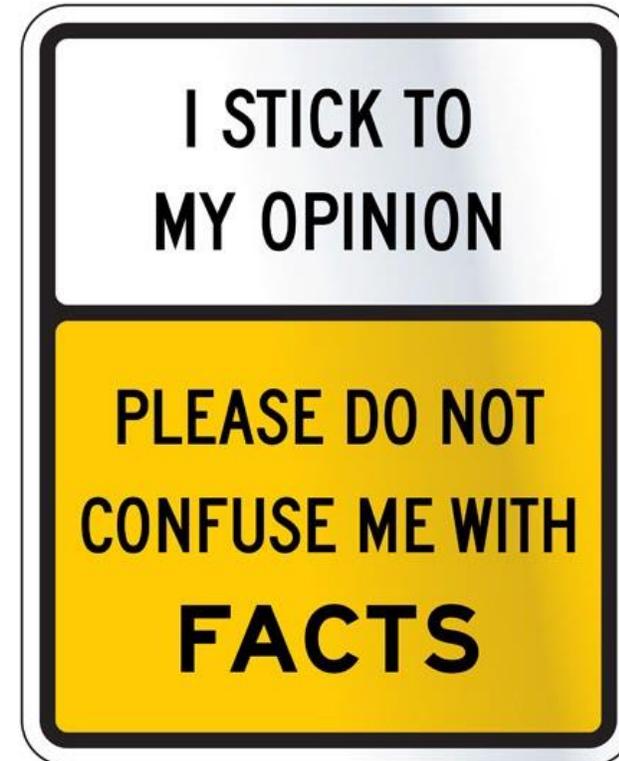


Research and Confirmation Bias



The Miseducation of Dylann Roof



Dylann Roof is the white supremacist mass murderer convicted in December 2016 for perpetrating the Charleston church shooting on June 17, 2015.



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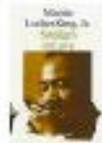
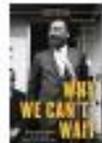
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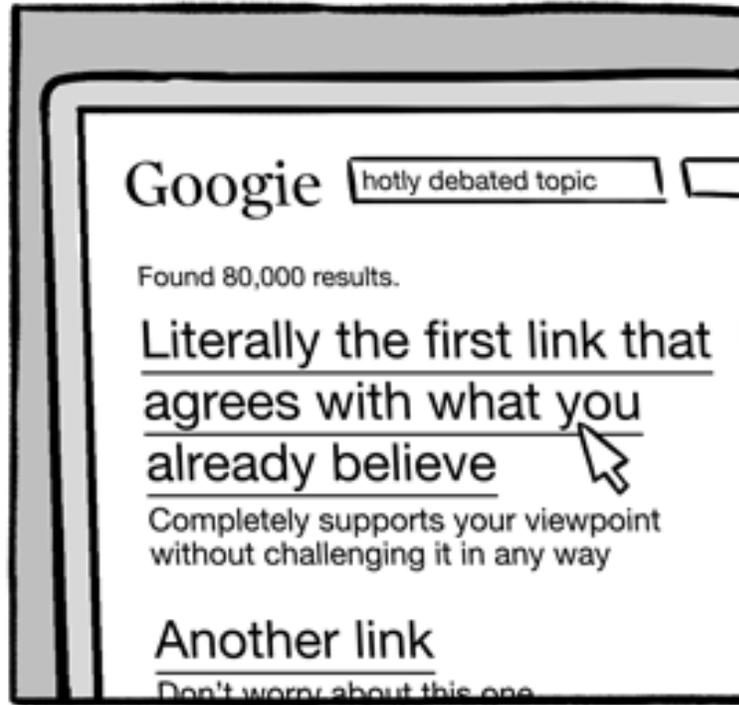
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Confirmation Bias

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Confirmation bias is the human tendency to seek, interpret, and remember information that confirms your own preexisting beliefs.

Confirmation Bias: Why You Make Terrible Life Choices

Confirmation bias is a cognitive shortcut.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/automatic-you/201710/confirmation-bias-why-you-make-terrible-life-choices>

1. How You Seek Information

Confirmation bias affects how you look at the world around you.

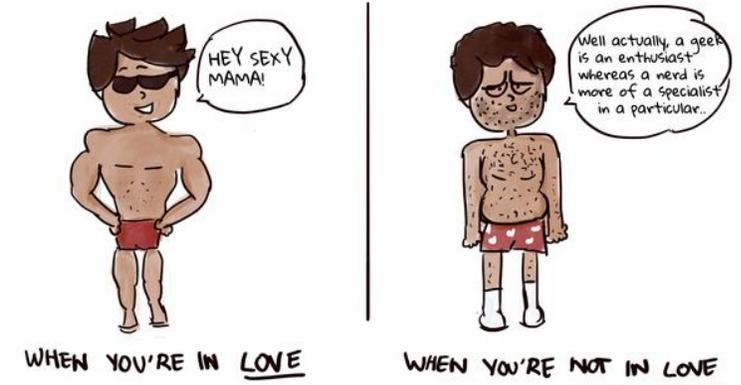


When you're alone at home feeling lousy, you immediately jump onto Facebook or Instagram. You look at pictures of people traveling, partying, and getting married, and think: Everyone I know is living a great life. You say to yourself, "I am such a lonely loser."

You sit at home and feel crappy — all because you chose to seek information that confirms your crummy feelings. You knew looking at those photos would make you feel worse, but you sought them anyway.

2. How You Interpret the Information in Front of You

Confirmation bias also affects how you process what is otherwise neutral information — and it tends to favor your beliefs.



When you are falling in love, all you see in your partner is a beautiful, perfect Adonis. You don't notice a single flaw. When that relationship sours, suddenly all you see are flaws — their coffee breath, their penchant for droning endlessly about a topic you don't care about, the hairs they leave in the sink.

You are dating the exact same person, but you perceive the things they do differently based on how you feel.

3. How You Remember Things

Even your memories are affected by confirmation bias. You interpret and possibly even change memories and facts in your head based on your beliefs.



In a classic experiment, Princeton and Dartmouth students were shown a game between the two schools. At the end, Princeton students remembered more fouls committed by Dartmouth, and Dartmouth students remembered more fouls committed by Princeton.

Both groups of students fundamentally believed that their school was better. So they tended to remember and recall more instances that showed their school in a good light and the opposing school in a bad light.



Why am I like this?

You seek evidence that confirms your beliefs, because being wrong sucks. Being wrong means you're not as smart as you thought. So you end up seeking information that confirms what you already know.

In a famous experiment, when participants were presented with evidence counter to their political beliefs, the areas of their brain associated with physical pain became more active — it's as if being wrong physically hurts.

It's easy to accept opposing views when they concern things you don't care about. But you also have deep-seated beliefs that form a core part of your identity (e.g., that you're a kind person, that your political views are correct, etc.). Evidence that runs counter to these beliefs often causes cognitive dissonance — a feeling of immense stress and anxiety.

Cognitive dissonance triggers a fight or flight response — you either dig in your heels and double down on your existing beliefs (fight), or you get away from the opposing fact (flight).

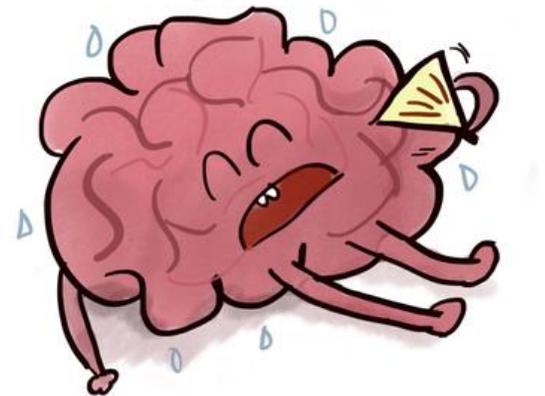


Your brain's primary goal is self-protection.

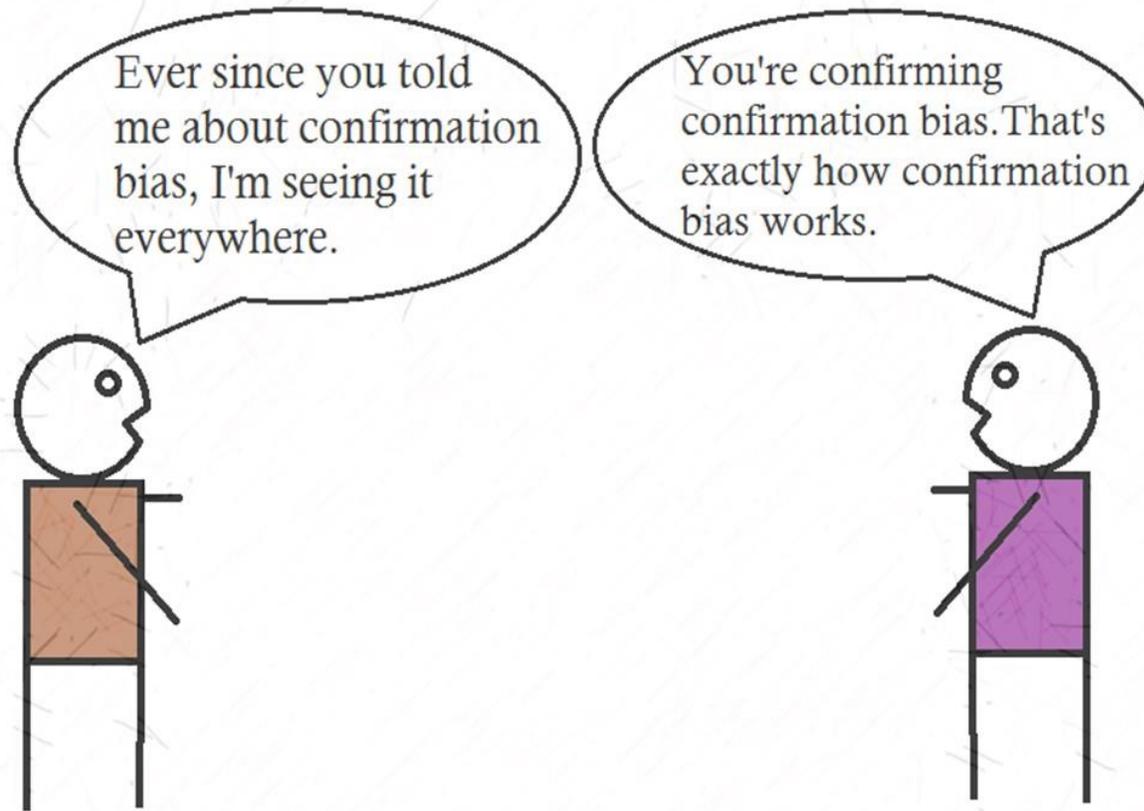
This applies to both your physical and psychological self. When opposing facts challenge your identity, your brain perceives the psychological threat and protects you as if it were an actual physical threat.

There is just too much information to process.

It takes tremendous effort to hold opposing hypotheses and try to evaluate evidence for and against each one.



So what can I do about it???



1. Approach Life With Curiosity, Not Conviction

When you walk into every interaction trying to prove yourself right, you're going to succumb to confirmation bias.

Researchers studied two groups of children in school. The first group avoided challenging problems, because they came with a high risk of being wrong. The other group actively sought out difficult problems for the learning opportunity, even though they might be wrong. The second group consistently outperformed the first.

Focus less on being right and more on experiencing life with curiosity and wonder. When you're willing to be wrong, you open yourself up to new insights.

2. Seek And Understand Disagreement

Understanding various viewpoints can help you refine your perspective. According to researchers, you can actually change your deep-seated beliefs. The trick? Surround yourself with a variety of opposing viewpoints

Say you're buying a house, and you love one in particular. Ask a friend to play devil's advocate and propose reasons for not buying this house. That way, you can make sure you're seeing more than just your viewpoint, and make a rational decision.



3. Think About Thinking

To fight back against cognitive biases, you need to evaluate your instinctive reactions.

The next time you run across facts that completely confirm your worldview, stop. Think about the assumptions you're making, and look for ways to prove yourself wrong.

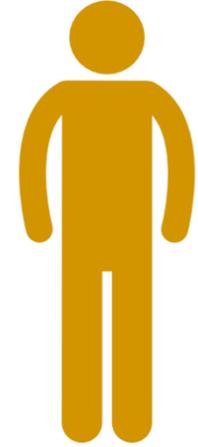
Say you're a coffee lover — you need your morning cup to properly function. When you're browsing your Facebook feed, articles touting the benefits of coffee will instantly grab your attention.

It's easy to read these articles and go, "Aha, that confirms all of my life choices." The next time you catch yourself doing that, try to actively search for information that contradicts what you believe in.

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Abortion is the act of removing a human embryo or fetus from the uterus of a pregnant woman prior to the completion of the full term of pregnancy. As early as the thirteenth century, abortion after five or six weeks was considered homicide, punishable by hanging. After the point of "quickening" in a pregnancy, usually between the fifteenth and eighteenth week when movement can be felt by the woman carrying the fetus, abortion remained a capital offense well into the nineteenth century. After a period of vagueness in the laws surrounding abortion, regulation began to be tightened and abortion was prohibited in both England and the United States unless it was necessary to save the mother's life. But during the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, many states became more liberal in their abortion laws, allowing abortion for health reasons, or rape and incest. New York introduced the first "on demand" abortion laws and that state was quickly followed by several others. Since January 22, 1973, with the Supreme Court ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, abortion has been legal (or, more precisely, prohibition of abortion has been illegal) in the United States. In a 7-2 majority vote, the abortion laws of the state of Texas were struck down as a violation of a woman's privacy in deciding to terminate a pregnancy. Essentially striking down most state abortion laws, abortion during the first trimester of pregnancy could not be prohibited. In the second trimester, abortions to ensure the mother's health would be allowed.

Despite the Supreme Court's decision in the matter, however, the question of the legality and morality of abortion continues to be debated. Forty states eventually banned nontherapeutic abortion in the last trimester of pregnancy, and a Supreme Court decision upheld the 2003 law that banned so-called partial-birth abortions completely.

For some, the primary concern when performing an abortion is the safety and health of the woman. Because of this, there are regulations about when an abortion may legally be performed, as well as specific requirements for abortions at the different stages of pregnancy. From the time when a woman has her last menstrual period prior to pregnancy, there is an eight-week period when she may have a chemical, nonsurgical, or medical abortion, which involves taking a prescription drug to terminate the pregnancy. After the eighth week of gestation, the embryo develops into a fetus. After this time, only surgical abortions, in which the fetus is removed by a physician, may be performed. Women are generally required to receive a full explanation of the procedures and given an opportunity to ask any questions they may have at that time.

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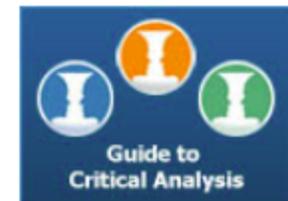
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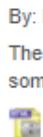
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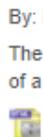
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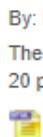
By: Rich, Alex K.; Wagner, Geraldine. *Points of View: Abortion*. 9/30/2016, p1-1. 1p. Reading Level (Lexile): 1370.

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Abortion



Volunteers grant clients access to a Planned Parenthood facility

An abortion is a medical or surgical procedure that deliberately ends a pregnancy before an embryo or fetus is born. Opponents of abortion typically object to the practice for religious or ethical reasons, contending that the procedure constitutes the cruel termination of what they consider to be a viable human life. Those who support a woman's right to choose an abortion argue that access to safe, legal abortions is a human right. In *Roe v. Wade* (1973), the US Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution protects a woman's right to an abortion through the end of the first trimester, or the... [View More](#)

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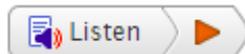
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Abortion

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An [abortion](#) is a medical or surgical procedure that deliberately ends a pregnancy before an embryo or [fetus](#) is born. Opponents of abortion typically object to the practice for religious or ethical reasons, contending that the procedure constitutes the cruel termination of what they consider to be a viable human [life](#). Those who support a woman's right to choose an abortion argue that access to safe, legal abortions is a human right. In *Roe v. Wade* (1973), the US Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution protects a woman's right to an abortion through the end of the first trimester, or the twelfth week of pregnancy. After twelve weeks, a woman's access to abortion may be restricted based on the discretion of the states, as well as the level of risk that the pregnancy poses to the woman's health. The issue remains highly controversial. State legislatures have enacted laws to restrict and regulate access to abortion. Several of these laws have been challenged in federal courts, with some laws, such as the denial of state funds for the procedure, being upheld. Other laws, such as those requiring spousal consent for an abortion, have been struck down. Politicians, religious leaders, health care providers, and activists each contribute their own perspective to the ongoing debate.

Opponents of abortion generally refer to themselves as *pro-life*, while advocates for [reproductive rights](#) typically identify as *pro-choice*. Differences of opinion persist within both movements. Some pro-life activists may condone abortions in cases of [rape](#) or [incest](#), while others take an uncompromising stance, believing that all abortion is murder. Within the [pro-choice movement](#), some activists contend that no restrictions should be placed on abortions, while many who identify as pro-choice support laws that require a waiting period before the procedure can be performed or laws requiring minors to obtain permission from their parents.

Surgical and Medical Abortions

The most common types of abortion performed are surgical and take place within the first trimester of pregnancy. The most common procedure performed is suction abortion, also referred to as vacuum aspiration, which involves removing tissue from the uterus through a thin tube. The procedure is less invasive than later surgeries that require

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The Choice of a Pregnant Woman Always Outweighs the Life of a Fetus



Ethics, 2015

From Opposing Viewpoints in Context



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"We have no obligation to allow every being with the potential to become a rational being to realize that potential."

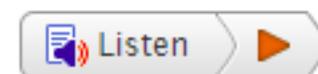
In the following viewpoint, Peter Singer argues that bans on [abortion](#) in the developing world lead to many unnecessary deaths. Singer claims that opponents of [abortion](#) make the mistake of conflating membership in the human species with an ethical right to [life](#). Singer contends that a woman's interests always outweigh any supposed interests of a [fetus](#). Singer is professor of [bioethics](#) at Princeton University, laureate professor at the University of Melbourne, and author of *Practical Ethics*.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. According to Singer, what percentage of the world's abortions occur in developing countries?
2. The author cites a World Health Organization study finding that unsafe abortions lead to the deaths of how many [women](#) each year?
3. According to Singer, the legalization of abortion in South Africa led to how much of a drop in abortion-related deaths?

The Rights of a Woman Do Not Outweigh the Rights of a Child

 *Abortion*, 2015
From *Opposing Viewpoints in Context* 



AbortionFacts.com is a nonprofit Christian pro-[life](#) education organization.

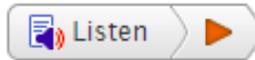
The comparison between a baby's rights and a mother's rights is unequal. What is at stake in [abortion](#) is the mother's lifestyle, as opposed to the baby's life. Therefore, it is reasonable for society to expect an adult to live temporarily with an inconvenience if the only alternative is killing a child.

Of course a child does not have more rights than her mother. Any two people are equal, and any two people have equal rights. Hence, a mother has every bit as much right to live as any child. But in nearly all abortions, the woman's right to live is not an issue, because her life is not in danger.

The mother has not only the right to live, but also the right to the lifestyle of her choice—as long as that choice does not rob other people of even more fundamental rights, the most basic of which is the right to live. The right to a certain lifestyle is never absolute and unconditional. It is always governed by its effects on others.

"Soldier in the Army of God"

 *Terrorism: Essential Primary Sources*, 2006 
From Opposing Viewpoints in Context



Anti-abortion Activist Shooting of Dr. Gunn

Magazine article

By: Anne Bower

Date: February 18, 1996

Source: "Soldier in the Army of God." *Albion Monitor*. Originally published in the magazine the *Body Politic*.

About the Author: Anne Bower was educated as an anthropologist but in 1991 turned to journalism and the publication of the *Body Politic*, a pro-choice magazine in Binghamton, New York, to oppose the radical anti-abortion group Operation Rescue, also based in Binghamton.

INTRODUCTION

On March 11, 1993, the anti-abortion movement took a new, more violent direction when Michael Griffin shot and killed David Gunn, a doctor who performed abortions at a local clinic near Pensacola, Florida. Gunn was the first known health-care worker to be killed by radical opponents of abortion.

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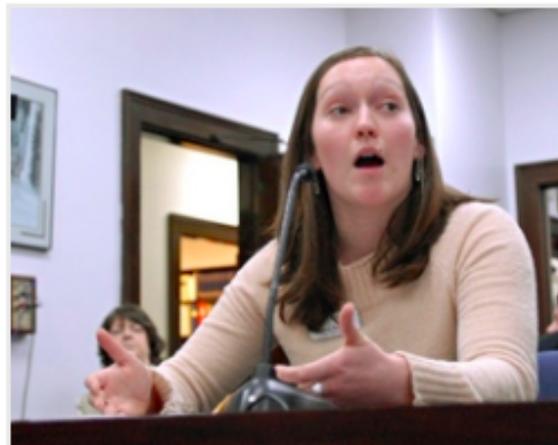
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Abortion: Parental Consent



Parental Consent Abortion Vote

Sexually active teenagers ages fifteen through nineteen have the highest rate of unintended pregnancy of any age demographic in the United States, however the rates of teen pregnancy have been declining since the 1990s. As reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2013, almost 350,000 teens ages fifteen through nineteen became pregnant. About 273,000 of these young women gave birth, and 75,700 had an abortion, which refers to the act of intentionally terminating a pregnancy. Abortions among teenagers between the ages of fifteen and nineteen accounted for 11.4 percent of all the abortions performed in the...[View More](#)

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