Chris Goy & Mike Williams

Don’t think harder, think smarter

14 November 2025

YOUR HOSTS

Chris M Goy

Rolls-Royce

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AssistKD

OBJECTIVES

- Demonstrate some common thinking errors

- Offer practical hints to avoid them

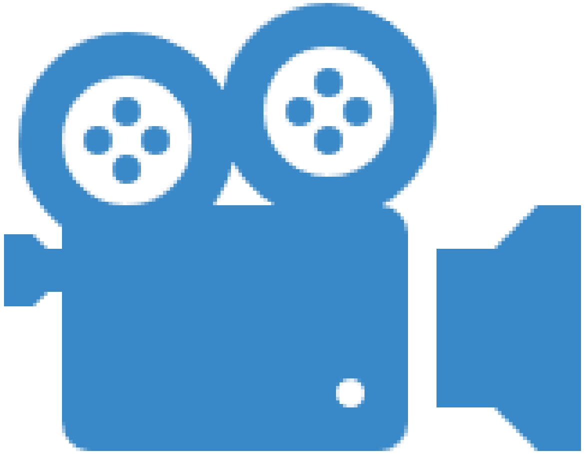
- Share the set of slides so you can share with your teams

EXPECTATIONS

- Keep an open mind

- Engage with a growth mindset

Time for a breather



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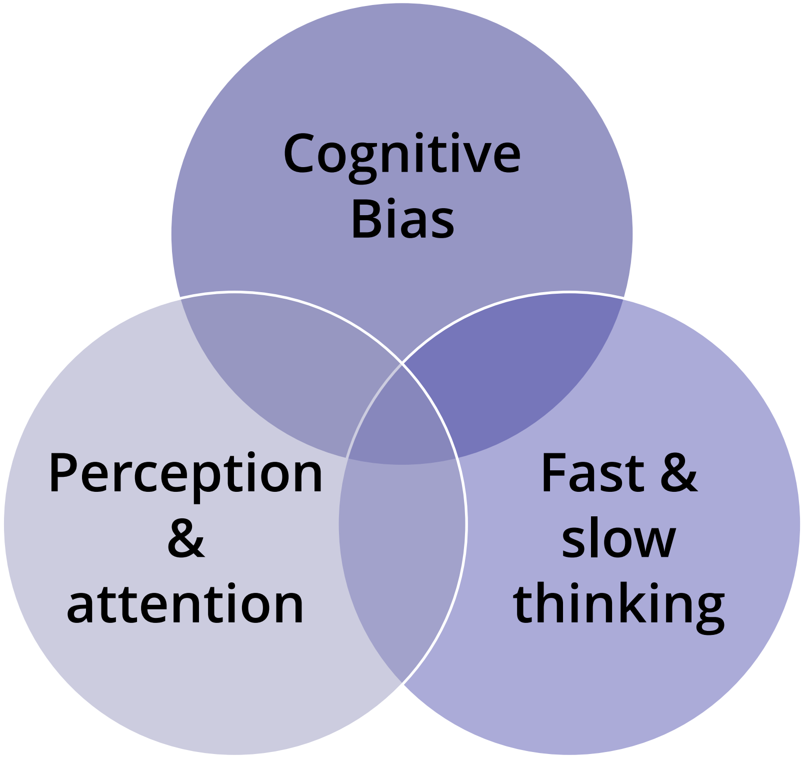
THE AREAS TO BE COVERED



Icebreaker Activity

You have 5 minutes to NOT talk about Business Analysis

Cognitive Bias

Our minds take shortcuts, and they are not always good

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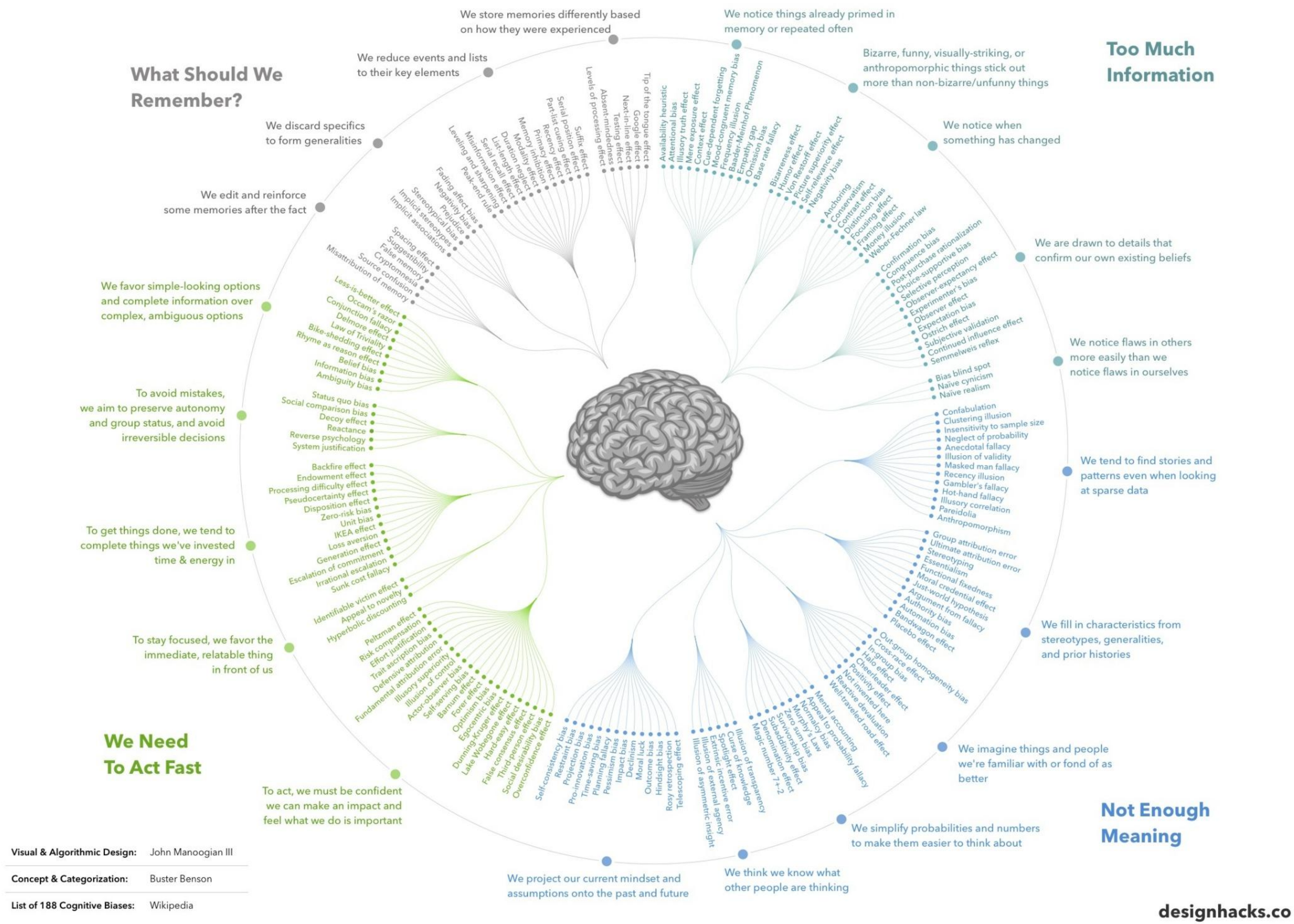
COGNITIVE BIAS

– Cognitive bias is normal

– Our brains are wired to take shortcuts (particularly in the face of a threat)

– Our life experiences influence our biases

COGNITIVE BIAS CODEX



BIAS EXAMPLES

Confirmation bias

That's what I was expecting

I think we should do this

So do I

Bandwagon effect

I have just started, and I am already an expert

Dunning-Kruger effect

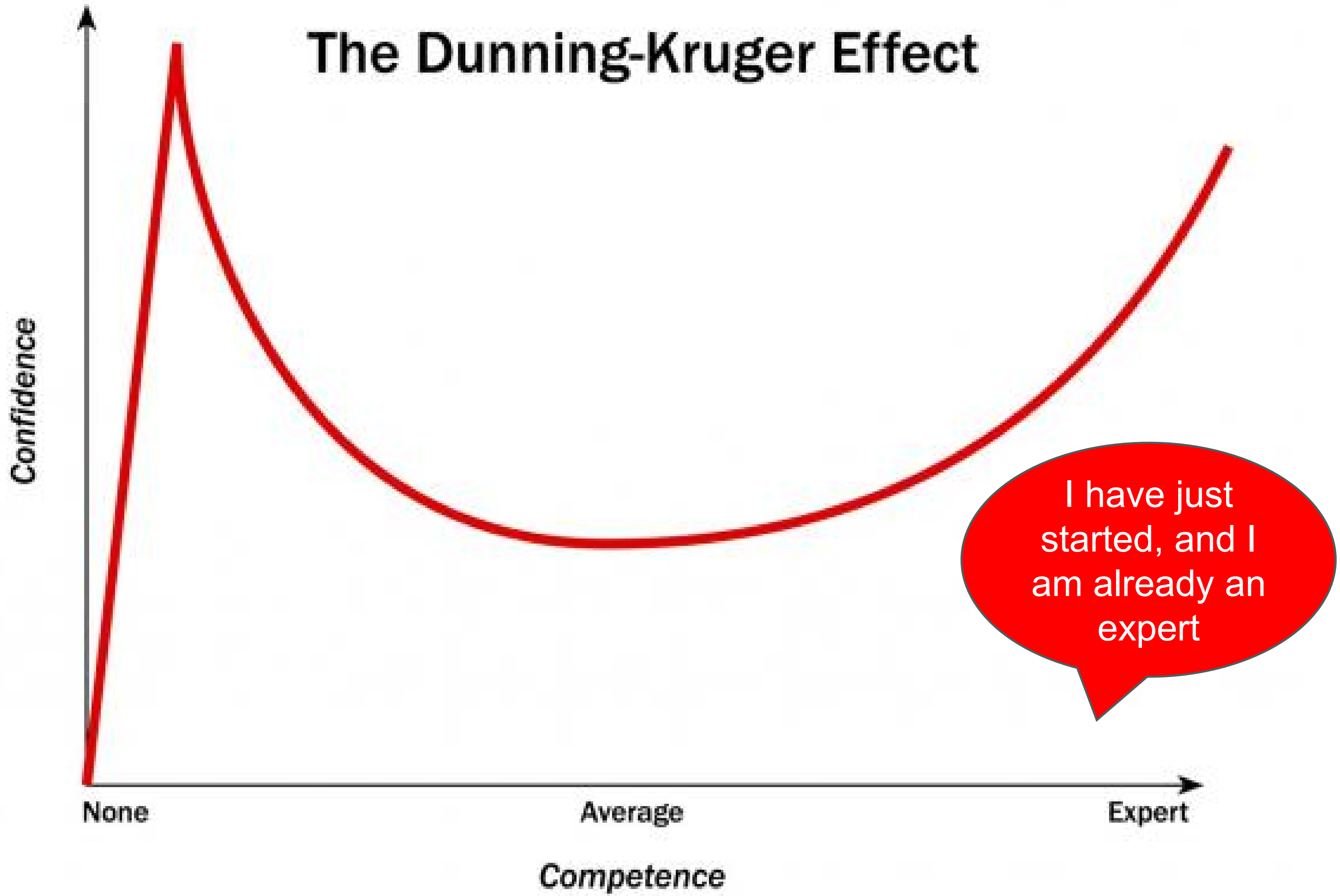
The first one was best

Primacy bias

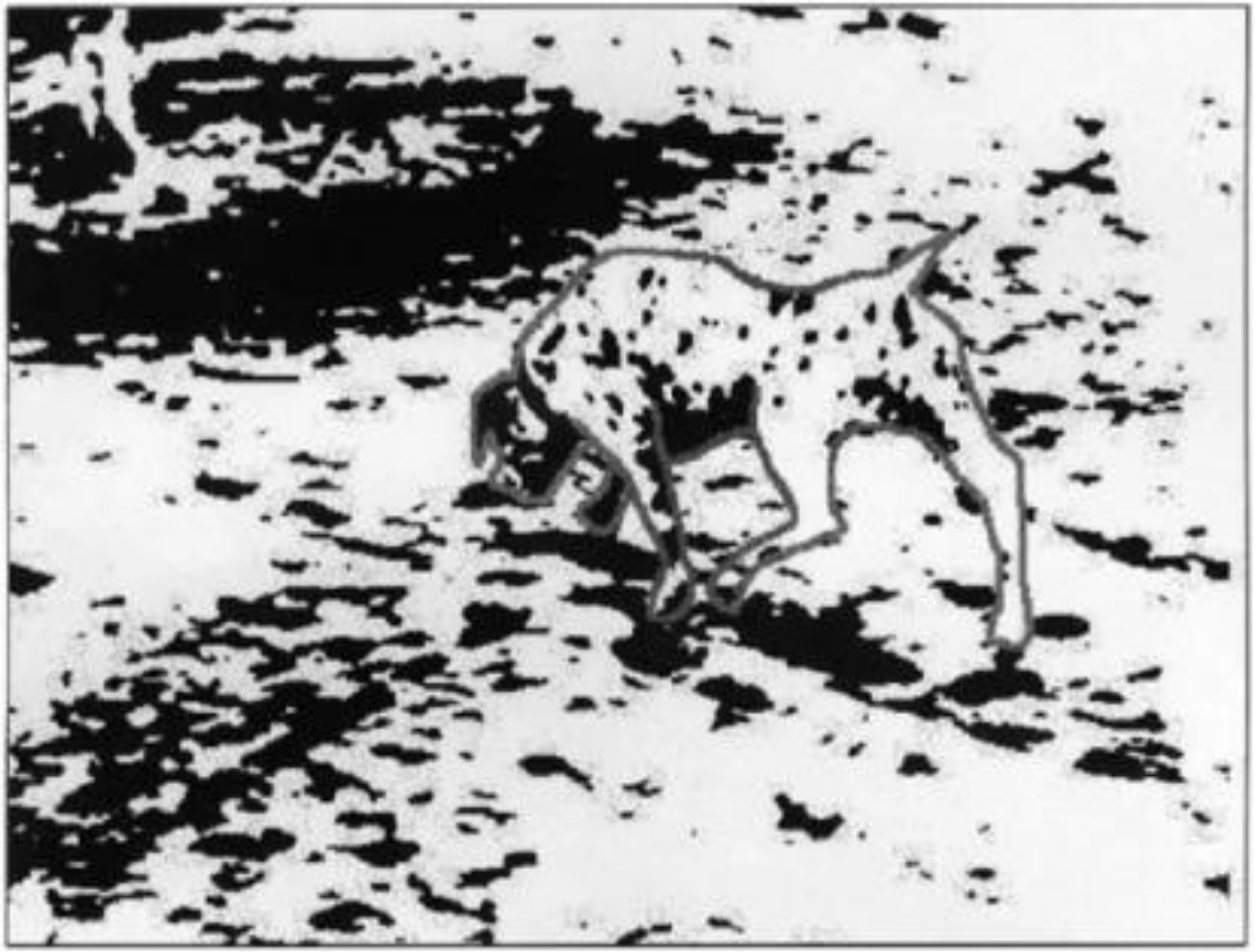
The last one was best

Recency bias

DUNNING-KRUGER EFFECT

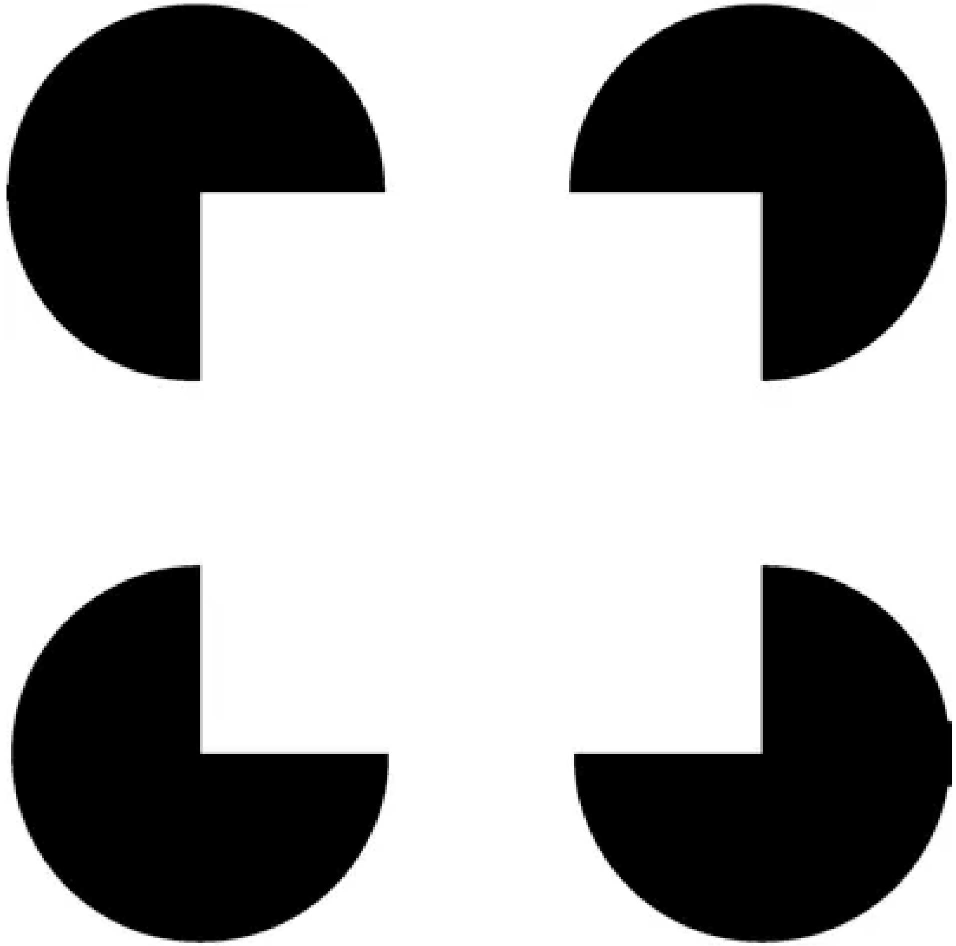


What can you see?



Can you see it now?

WHAT DO YOU SEE?



[BBC Science Focus]

REDUCING BIAS

Question your 1^{st} thought

Avoid the echo chamber

Get out of your comfort zone and expand your horizons

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EXERCISE

Discuss on your table what biases may have affected your day so far:

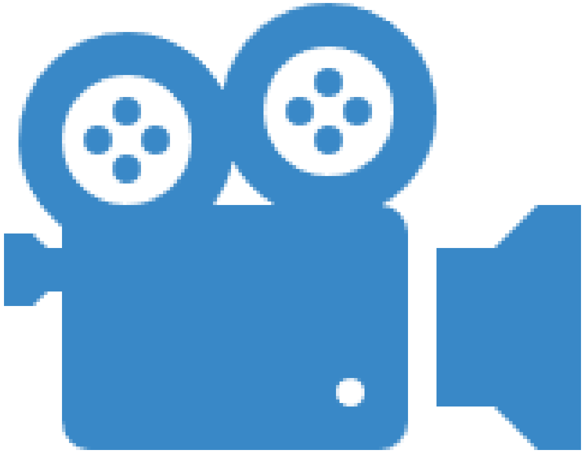
- Who have you spoken to?
- Why did you sit where you are?
- What workshops have you selected?
- Are you sitting with someone you have not met before?

Perception & attention

We have a constant source of information coming from our senses but how much can we cope with?

PERCEPTION & ATTENTION

Switch to the



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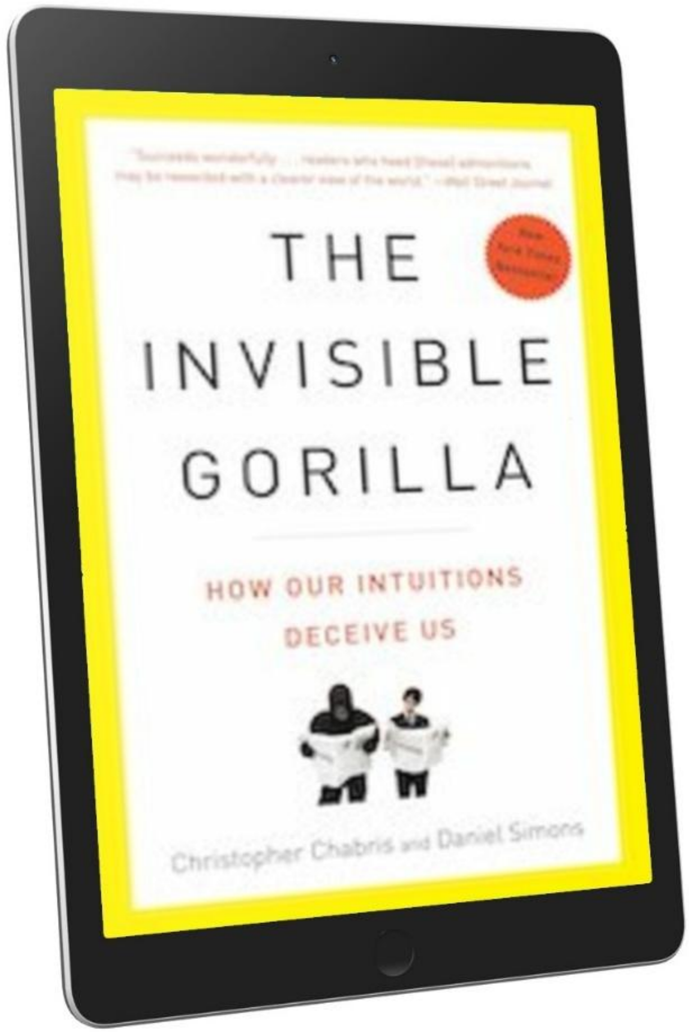
PERCEPTION & ATTENTION



WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Do you see a young or old woman?

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My Wife and My Mother-in-Law", from 1915 by W. E. Hill

PERCEPTION & ATTENTION

How can we avoid this problem?

- Be aware of your focus level
- Take a holistic view when appropriate
- Seek perspectives of others
- Sharpen your attention - Mindfulness

EXERCISE

What can you remember?

- What was the gorilla holding on the icebreaker slide?
- What are the middle initials of the presenters?
- What colour shirt was Mike wearing in the presenter pictures?
- What was in the background of Chris's picture?
- As you entered the Connaught Rooms this morning, on what side of the building was the reception desk?

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Fast & slow thinking

A two-track mind

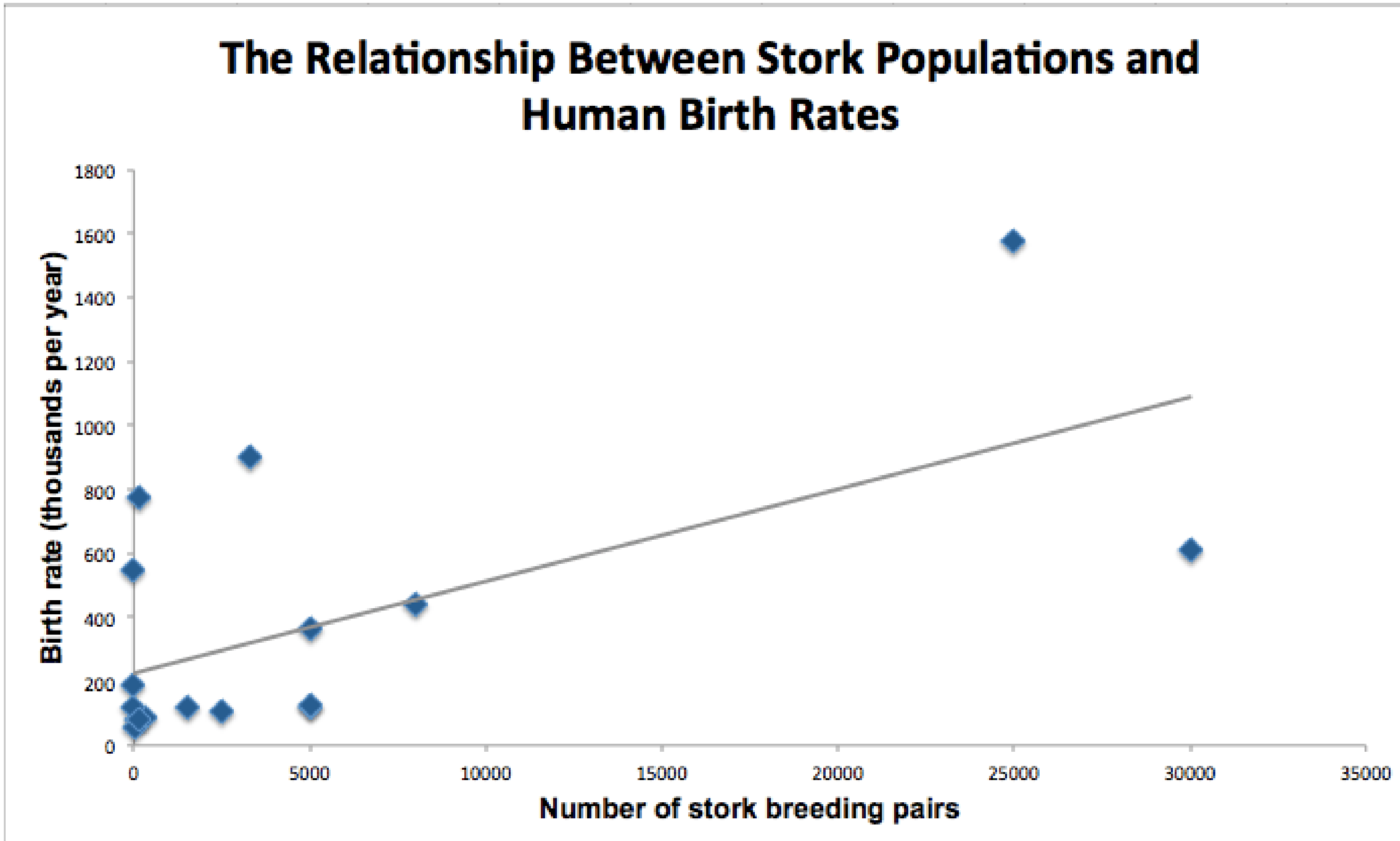
FAST THINKING

System 1 operates automatically and quickly with little or no effort and no sense of voluntary control.

Daniel Kahneman
Thinking Fast and Slow (2011)

FAST THINKING

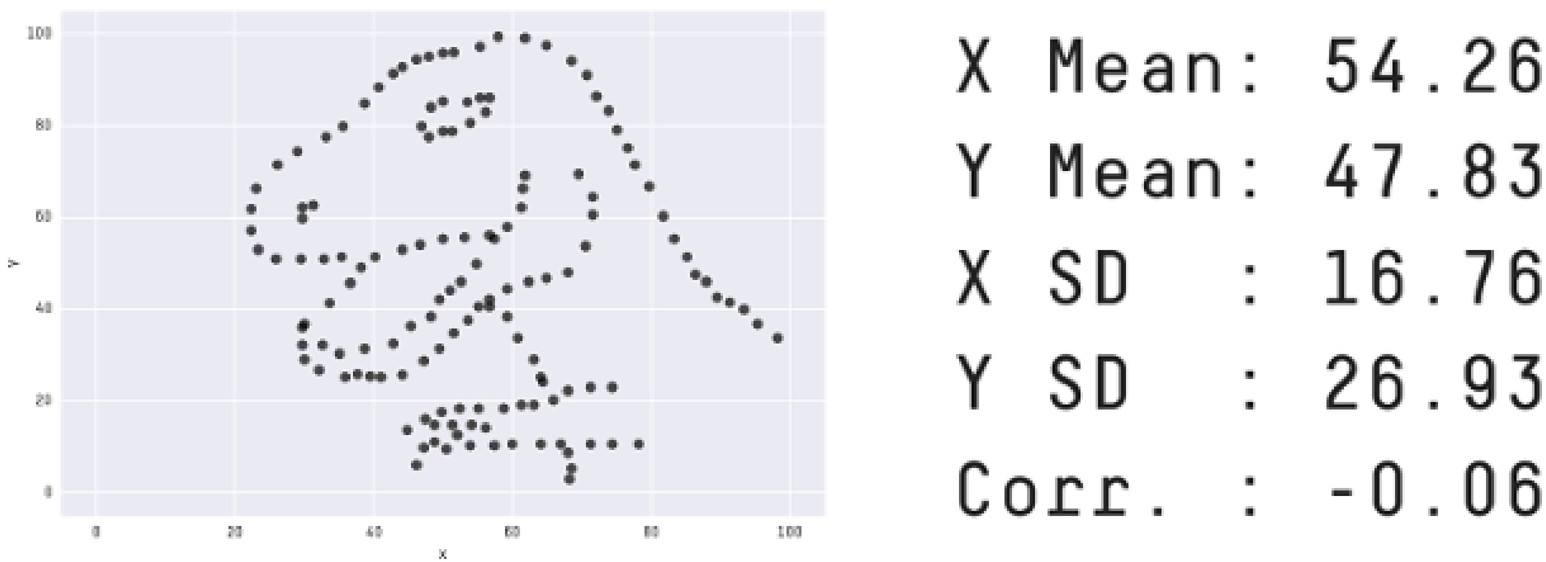
- Stork population and human birth rate



Conclusion - Storks deliver babies

FAST THINKING

- The datasaurus dozen

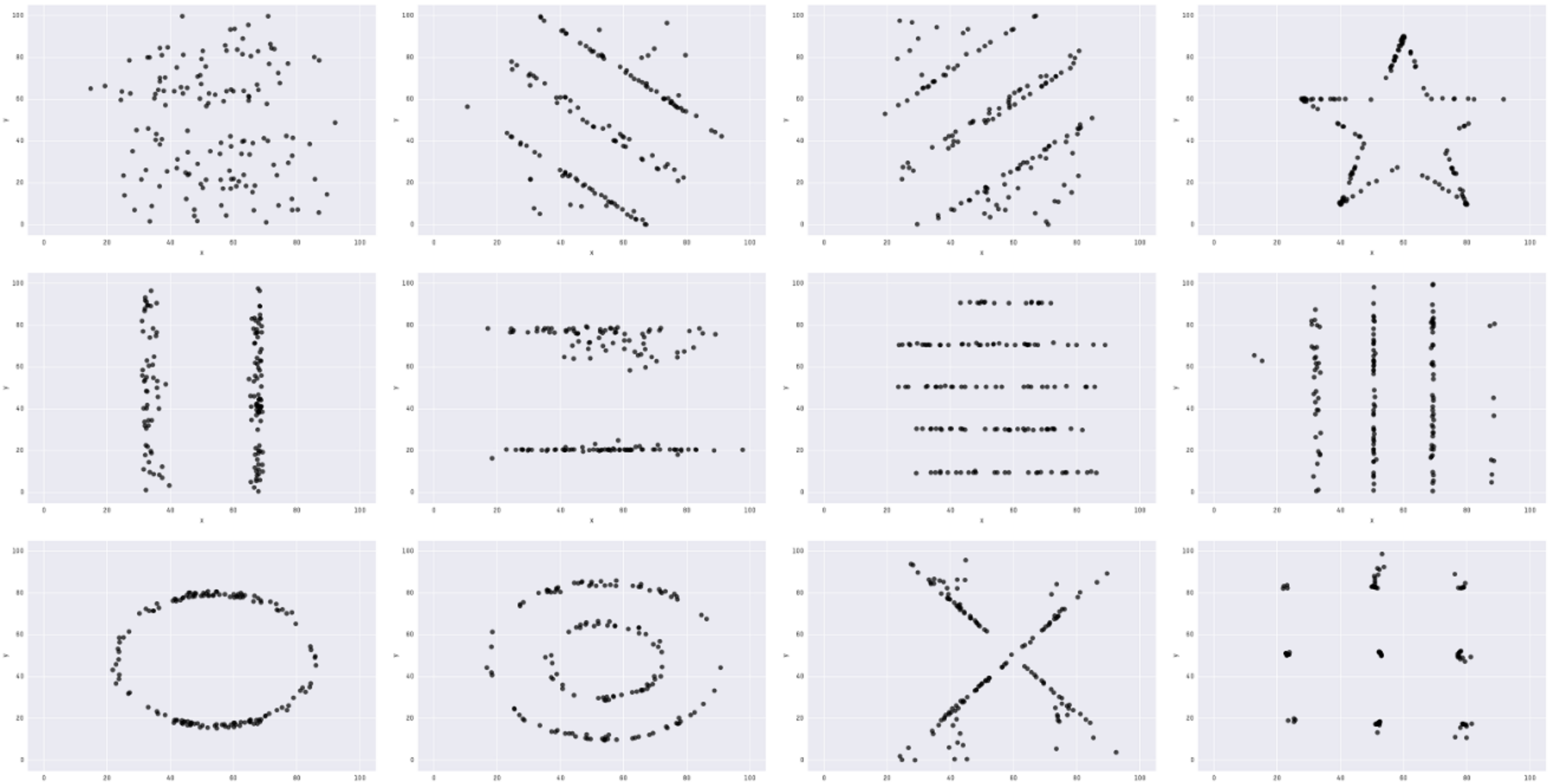


- This graph looks fairly unique

https://www.research.autodesk.com/publications/same-stats-different-graphs/

FAST THINKING

- The datasaurus dozen



- But all these have the same mean and standard deviation as the dinosaur

FAST THINKING

- Ice cream and sunburn

- Conclusion – Ice cream causes sunburn

SLOW THINKING

System 2 allocates attention to the effortful mental activities that demand it including complex computations.

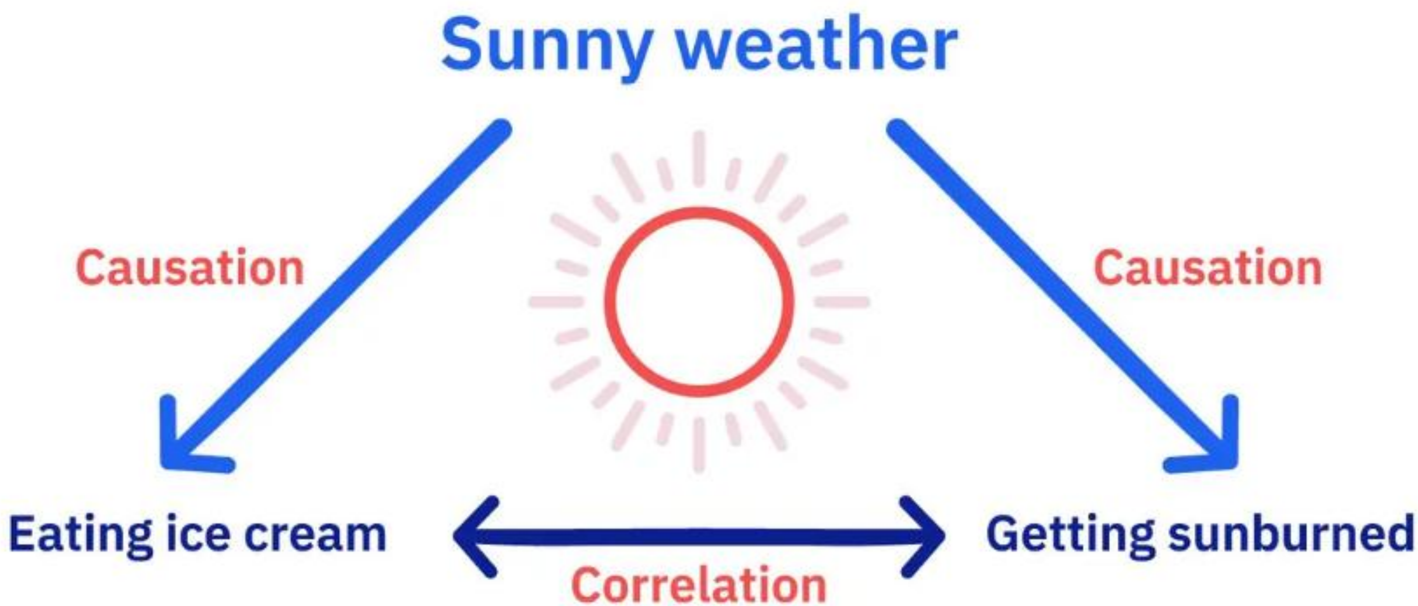
Daniel Kahneman
Thinking Fast and Slow (2011)

SLOW THINKING

- Sometimes we need system 1 (fast) thinking:
  - E.g. Where a rapid response or action is required
- If urgent action is not required, then engage system 2 (slow) thinking:
  - Stop and think
  - Consider alternative hypotheses
  - Evaluate these alternatives

SLOW THINKING

- Review the outcome of system 1 (fast) thinking
- Engage system 2 (slow) thinking brain
- Are alternative explanations more plausible?



System 2 Conclusion Sunny weather causes both

SLOW THINKING

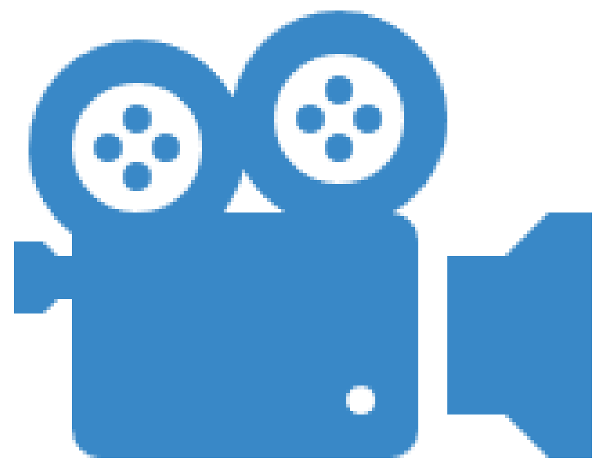
- Allocate time for thinking
- Reflect on your thinking:
    - Which environments help you think more clearly?
    - When is the best time of day for thinking?
    - What thinking tools are in your toolkit?
- Thinking is like any other skill
    - It gets better the more you practice

EXERCISE

- Problem
  - Watch the video for 10 seconds
  - What is your first thought about what is going on?

  - Watch for a further 5 seconds
  - Have you changed your mind?

  - Watch for a further 10 seconds
  - What do you think now?



- Courtesy of the Guardian, 1986

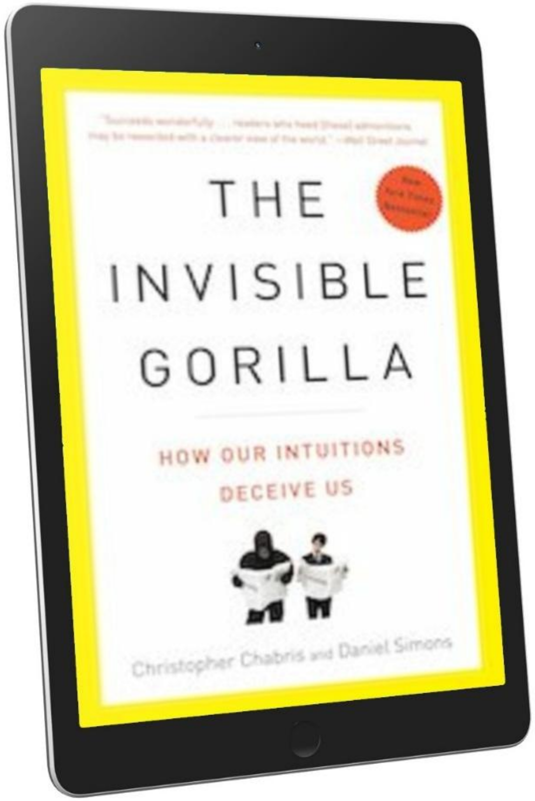
What did we cover?

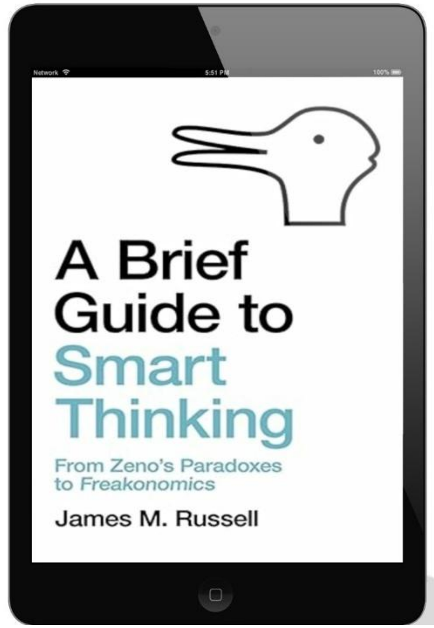
SUMMARY

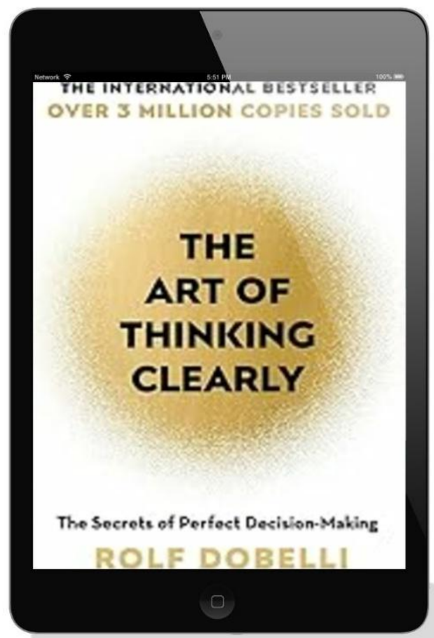
Our thinking is not always smart

- Don’t suffer from delusions of competence
- Adjust your focus
- Ensure you have time to think
- Be aware of your biases
- Embrace diverse opinions

REFERENCES


THE
INVISIBLE
GORILLA
HOW OUR INTUITIONS
DECEIVE US
Christopher Chabris and Daniel Simons


A Brief
Guide to
Smart
Thinking
From Zeno's Paradoxes
to Freakonomics
James M. Russell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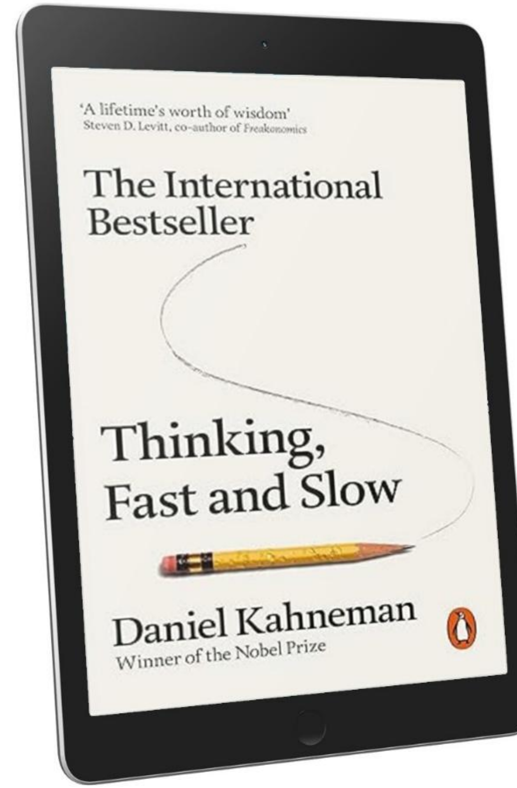
THINKING
CLEARLY
The Secrets of Perfect Decision-Making
ROLF DOBELLI


'A lifetime's worth of wisdom'
Steven D. Levitt, co-author of Freakonomics
The International
Bestseller
Thinking,
Fast and Slow
Daniel Kahneman
Winner of the Nobel Prize

Any further thoughts or questions?

What are you going to do differently following this session?

Thank you