



Everything You Know Is Wrong 1

Student Handout #1: Us vs. Them

Prejudice: A preconceived belief about all people belonging to one type or category. *Even if a stereotype is based in reality — and many are not — it will not be true of every member of a group. Assuming that you know what someone is like because of the groups they belong to is prejudice, and it can keep you from rationally evaluating their motives and choices.*

Example: _____

Partisanship: The tendency to favor those with whom you agree. *We tend to make positive assumptions about groups to which we belong. Among other assumptions, we believe that people who think like us are more rational and more informed than people with whom we disagree. This hinders reasoning because we accept arguments based on who makes them, not on their content or support.*

Example: _____

Provincialism: The tendency to believe that the issues you feel most strongly about are the most important. *We tend to think that issues affecting our identity groups are more important or more urgent than issues affecting other groups. This prevents us from accurately evaluating these issues.*

Example: _____

Herd instinct: The tendency to adhere to cultural norms of belief and behavior. *We make assumptions about what's acceptable and popular in the groups to which we belong, and it's often hard to go against these norms. When an opinion is unpopular, the herd instinct can make us inclined to ignore evidence so we can maintain beliefs that are in line with the mainstream beliefs.*

Example: _____