

Learning How to See

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After listening to the six-part series *Learning How to See* by Brian McLaren I have been made aware that there are thirteen different biases that we as humans must break through to truly see the world and accept others. These biases are confirmation, complexity, community, complementary (mirrored), contact, conservative/liberal, consciousness, competency, confidence, conspiracy, complacency, catastrophe, and cash biases. The most significant bias that I found myself guilty of is comfort bias. This means that's we are less likely to believe something that makes us uncomfortable or in other words, if something is going to be more difficult for us, we will reject it.

I have seen this in my own life experiences over the last few years, but since becoming more involved and competent as a social worker it has dissipated some. When the Black Lives Matter movement first began, I thought it was ridiculous. I could not understand the movement because I have never experienced racial oppression. I am ashamed to say that I rejected the idea that cops were wrong in their practices, but after the last two years of murders at the hands of our police officers nationwide, this is no longer the case. George Floyd and Brianna Taylor are the two cases that really disrupted my comfort bias, it was no longer easy for me to sit on the side lines and ignore what was happening to our friends and communities. My comfort was no longer a factor for change or advocacy. I saw the body camera footage from Brianna Taylor's murder and the way her boyfriend was treated by police, when, the police were 100% wrong. George Floyd was assaulted by the police, and it led to his murder. The police are far too quick to pull their triggers and use excessive force and it needs to end.

Since listening to *Learning How to See*, I have been dissecting those in my life that do not have the same passion for social justice that I have. It has been hard and really questioned my sense of community. Community bias is when we flock to those who have similar opinions and mindsets, and even when one begins to see through this bias, it is difficult because we all have an inherent need for love and acceptance. When our thoughts no longer align with those we love, it is difficult to stand up and have hard conversations because we feel we may be rejected or left out. This is something I have been working towards with my family members for the last year. My father has been the hardest nut to crack with this. For a long time, when my beliefs were different than his, I would just shut down the conversation rather than trying to make him understand a different point of view, it was easier this way. Since my mother died, I have had this feeling of do not do anything that would break the relationship of the only parent I have left and that is not right. It is my duty as a social worker, and a daughter to help my father grow, even if in the slightest way. Now instead of not talking about what I am passionate about, such as housing insecurity and women's rights, I stand up and give evidence-based information to help him understand my point of view. It does not always work, but at least he is being exposed to other's ways of thinking.

Overall, without this podcast, I do not think I would be able to recognize those with different mindsets and have compassion for their way of thinking. *Learning How to See* has given me the understanding that as humans, we all have biases, and we all need help to break through them. Without the School of Social Work and all the amazing mentors I have been in contact with through my time at Southern, I'm not sure I would be able to recognize my own

biases. I owe a great deal of my personal growth to the men and women at Southern Adventist University and in the community agencies I have worked with. I am a better person and am learning how to see more and more through every interaction.