

Why is it that seemingly intelligent people sometimes do stupid things?

1. Before we go on with the episode of the All In The Mind podcast, try this simple test:



"Jack is looking at Anne, but Anne is looking at George. Jack is married, but George is not. Is a married person looking at an unmarried person?"

The possible answers are A) Yes; B) No, and C) Cannot be determined.

The answer follows below, but try to figure it out first.

This comes from the article [Rational and Irrational Thought: The Thinking That IQ Tests Miss](#), by Keith E. Stanovich, Scientific American Mind, November 2009 [summary only online].

More than 80 percent of people choose C, but the correct answer is A: if Anne is married, the answer is clearly A, but if Anne is unmarried, the answer is still A: in that case, Jack would be the married person looking at an unmarried person, Anne.

Here is an explanation by Professor Stanovich, from the article:

Traditional IQ tests miss some of the most important aspects of real-world intelligence. It is possible to test high in IQ yet to suffer from the logical-thought defect known as **dysrationalia**.

I coined the term "dysrationalia" (analogous to "dyslexia"), meaning the inability to think and behave rationally despite having adequate intelligence, to draw attention to a large domain of cognitive life that intelligence tests fail to assess.

Book: [What Intelligence Tests Miss: The Psychology of Rational Thought](#), by Keith E. Stanovich

2. Here are some other terms and conceptions we're going to come across in the next part of the lesson:

Cognitive miserliness – cognitive greediness

The term "cognitive miser" was coined by Susan Fiske and Shelley Taylor in 1984 and describes the ability and tendency of the human brain to problem solve in the most simple and straight-forward ways rather than utilizing more sophisticated and effort-intensive ways. By doing this the brain conserves energy.

Confirmation bias – the tendency to interpret new evidence as confirmation of one's existing beliefs or theories.

Motivated reasoning Motivated reasoning is a form of reasoning in which people access, construct, and evaluate arguments in a biased fashion to arrive at or endorse a preferred conclusion. People can therefore draw self-serving conclusions not just because they want to but because the conclusions seemed more plausible given their beliefs and expectancies.

"Earned Dogmatism" is a relative newcomer as an academic phrase, but it refers to the closed-mindedness that sets in once one dons the "expert" hat. While we like to think of experts as broad-minded, creative, and analytical, new research suggests that the "expert" label is more likely to induce a dogmatic mindset.



This may have been what the famous industrialist Henry Ford had in mind: "None of our men are 'experts'" he said. "The moment one gets into the 'expert' state of mind a great number of things become impossible."

Growth mindset: "In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment." (Dweck, 2015)

3.And, again: Dysrationalia is defined as the inability to think and behave rationally despite adequate intelligence.

Read the transcript, try to drag and drop the chunks into their places, listen and check _____:

Lynne Malcolm: David Robson describes this idea that you could be intelligent but have very poor rationality as dysrationalia.

David Robson

in that analytical, deliberative way to fall for fake news
a prime example of that
the way information is framed cognitive miserliness
your intuitions and hunches swayed by your emotions



David Robson So I would say Kary Mullis would be _____. And there's a number of causes of dysrationalia, but one of them is _____ it's called and that really means that you might be very intelligent, and when you apply your brain you really do get the right answer, but more often than not you don't really think _____, you just rely on your gut instincts and _____, and that actually leaves you open to all kinds of bias, it means that you are more likely to be _____, it means you're more likely to be swayed by _____ rather than the actual details, you're more likely _____ and misinformation as a result of that. So it's really quite a serious issue, and there are a lot of very intelligent people who just don't apply their brains in this way.

4.Listen to the excerpt, fill in the gaps and read the part of Conan Doyle out loud

Robyn Williams: Now listen to this, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle speaking early this century:

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: In _____, some curious _____ experiences came my way, and especially I was impressed by the fact of telepathy, which I proved for myself by experiments with a friend. The question then arose: if two _____ minds could communicate, is it possible for a _____ one to communicate with one that is still in the body? For more than _____ years I examined the evidence, and came finally to the conclusion _____ all doubt, that such communication was possible.

Robyn Williams: You can tell the way his mind worked, can't you, _____ less scientific than dear Sherlock Holmes'. That was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, in the _____s I'd guess.

Lynne Malcolm: Robyn Williams on the ABC's *Science Show* in _____, with an archival recording of Arthur Conan Doyle.

5. Listen and decide whether the statements are true or false _____

1. So Arthur Conan Doyle a Professor of English Literature, he was very highly educated. T F
2. He fell time and time again for fraudulent mediums and wasted a huge amount of money supporting those people. T F



3. Arthur Conan Doyle saw some teenage girls had put together these fake photographs of fairies at the bottom of their garden, and he didn't fall for hook, line and sinker. T F
4. Houdini was the total opposite. T F
5. Houdini had a very good formal education and he was very intelligent. T F
6. He often tried to tell Arthur Conan Doyle that he was being duped by these mediums. T F
7. Arthur Conan Doyle tried to present those very rational arguments to Houdini, but Houdini just wouldn't listen to them. T F
8. Arthur Conan Doyle wrote a whole essay explaining why Houdini was in fact a paranormal being himself and so he was trying to cover up the existence of magic in the world so he could keep that a secret. T F

6. Here is a clip from the VOA Learn American English program _____. Unjumble the questions, listen to the snippet and answer them.

- 1./he try/ died, what did /when / to do/ Houdini's mother?

-
2. do to communicate/ during Houdini's lifetime / what did / with the "other world"/people try to/?

3./ did Houdini/ were doing /what / discover mediums/?

4. /say to/ what did/ the United States Congress/ Houdini /?

5. /how much/ offer to prove/did he/ he was wrong/ money /?

6. /the money/ anyone/ collect/did/?

7. Listen to another clip from VOA podcast. Put the pieces in order _____



_____ Bess was said to have kept a lighted candle by a picture of Harry in her home. Her last attempt at communicating with him was in nineteen thirty-six at the Knickerbocker Hotel in Hollywood, California.

_____ “I do not think that Harry will come back to me or anyone. I think the dead don’t speak. I now regretfully turn out the light. This is the end, Harry. Goodnight!”

_____ Harry told her two words that he would say to her so that she would not be fooled by some trick. Those words were, “Rosabelle, believe.” “Rosabelle” was the name of a song that Bess had sung many years before. No one but Houdini and his wife knew these secret words.

_____ But the story of Harry Houdini did not end there. He had said that no one could communicate with the dead. Yet he had told his wife, Bess, to try to speak with him after he passed into the spirit world.

_____ Then she blew out the candle.

_____ She had been sick. She had heard nothing. Finally, after ten years of trying, something unexpected did happen. Bess gave up. She said that was long enough to wait for any man.

_____ She took the candle with her and kept it lit while she called to Harry’s spirit. She tried again and again. When nothing happened, she finally said, almost in a whisper:

_____ Bess tried to talk with Harry’s spirit each year on Halloween night. The years passed. Once, Bess said that she thought that one time she had made contact with Harry. But she then said she was wrong.

8. Why are more curious people more resilient

against some of biases (especially the kind of confirmation biases)? _____

9. Listen and join the chunks _____

the growth

bias

seems fairly

humble

to overcome

mindset

protects you from

more rational

confirmation

identity

can always learn

always changing

makes you more

robust

wrong on one particular

challenges

threaten your whole

occasion

your intelligence is

and get better

make you

motivated reasoning

10. Listen and complete the pieces with 2-3 words _____

how general intelligence _____

highly specialised knowledge can be _____

the findings that I found _____

_____ your decision-making in those areas

the _____ just aren't as rational as they should be

the perceptions of expertise _____ you to over-claim

that kind of stops you from _____ with new information

That phenomenon is called _____

They are so certain that they are right that they don't really _____ and beliefs

11. Listen and read _____. Find in the transcript words that match following definitions:

(of a plan or action) have an opposite and undesirable effect to what was intended _____

the quality or state of being correct or precise _____

inclination or prejudice for or against a person, a group or thing _____

a mistake _____

But there are other reasons that expertise can backfire, and one of them is just that if you have a lot of expertise your decision-making becomes very automatic, which is great because it means that doctors, for example, can diagnose patients very quickly, sometimes within minutes of you walking into their surgery, with a pretty high degree of accuracy. But that automatic behaviour does also leave you open to bias. It means when your intuitions are wrong you don't really question whether they might be wrong. So that also leaves you open to error in quite a few cases as well.

12. Listen and read _____

Lynne Malcolm: And this intelligence trap doesn't just happen with individuals, it can also happen in organisations, can't it.

David Robson Yes, that's right. You know, there's a lot of psychological research now examining what's called collective intelligence, and that's really how groups or teams perform together, and they have found potentially for various reasons the average IQ of the group isn't a very good predictor of group performance at all, even in tasks that should **require** greater intelligence. What's more important there really is the **sensitivity** of the different members and how they interact.

So one of the ways that a group of intelligent people might **underperform** is if you have one or two very **enthusiastic** members who **dominate** the conversation. They don't have to be rude or especially **bossy**, but if they are just **over-enthusiastic** and start to stop the other people from talking and contributing, then that really reduces the overall group performance or collective intelligence. And I think that's very relevant actually for the discussions of mansplaining in the workplace and how men often do **talk over** women.

Explain in your own way any three of the words in bold above.

Have you ever experienced mansplaining? Can you recall any instance(s)?



13. Drag and drop, listen and check _____

the performance of everyone around _____ this cultural attitude
the collective intelligence _____ the conversation in that way

Because what these researchers have found is that _____ of groups of mostly women is much higher than the collective intelligence of groups with more men in or with, say, a 50-50 split. And it seems to be because of _____ that some men have that they will dominate _____, and it actually just reduces _____ them.

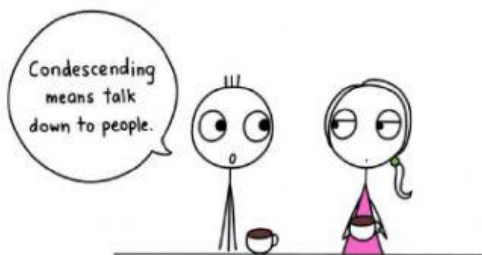
14. Watch the video from a comedy skit on ABC TV's *Tonightly* with Tom Ballard

15. Now, listen the same dialogue and fill the gaps _____

Woman: What is mansplaining? Mansplaining is when a man...

Man: Mansplaining _____, you know? I mean, it's sort of a term invented by women to vilify and oppress men.

Woman: It is a term that has been recently invented, but it's really useful because...



Man: Look, you know, there's nothing really wrong with men explaining stuff anyway, is there. I mean, if you think about it, women, I mean they don't really understand anything at all, so if a man _____ them, cuts them off, really we are just _____, _____.

Woman: Helping out? I mean, another way to think about it is that when a man explains something...

Man: Have you ever noticed that really there's no such thing as womansplaining? You know, if I, a man, were to say that women were cutting me off and speaking over me and being all condescending and called that womansplaining, I'd be _____ being a misogynist.

Woman: Mansplaining is when a man explains something to woman in a _____ or _____ tone.

Man: Yeah, sorry, but in reality that just doesn't happen, does it? Who is this anyway? Who are you?

Woman: I'm Dr Jessica Keane, I'm a lecturer in the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney.

Man: Yeah, but you know, what is that, a PhD in _____?

Woman: It's 10 years of study.

Man: Oh yeah, well, day one: I'm _____ ! Day two: Here's your degree! Oh dear.

Woman: I'm actually an expert in this.

Man: Yeah I know, but, I mean, we all are, you know. I believe in _____ anyway, University of Life.

Woman: I can see that.



"Let me interrupt your expertise with my confidence."

So, can one learn to apply your intelligence more wisely?

Can you suggest any ways or techniques of doing that?