

Hindsight Bias

What is hindsight bias? What are the dangers of it? Listen to a part of a podcast about it and improve your listening skills and vocabulary on the topic.

Before you watch

Match the words with the definitions.

to foresee	to think again about a decision or opinion
to presume	to understand something before it happens, foresee
to reconsider	to understand something before it happens, envision
to interpret	to think about something too much and find it difficult to stop
to evaluate	to reject or disregard
to dismiss	to judge how good, useful, or successful something is
to envision	to believe something to be true because it is very likely, assume
to fixate	to decide what the meaning of something is

Transcript

"I told you so."

"Well, if you'd mentioned all this road work, I would've gone a different way."

Well, if you'd been listening, you'd have heard me say that the highway is always better, and we wouldn't be sitting in this traffic jam right now!"

"I told you so" - one of the most annoying phrases in the English language, especially when it isn't true! Did she really foresee what was going to happen? No, she just got lucky. This is a classic example of "hindsight bias."

Humans have the ability to review and reconsider past experiences and analyze the decisions we made. This is how we learn from our mistakes. Hindsight bias interferes with this process, making it difficult to accurately evaluate past situations. If you're convinced you knew how something would eventually turn out, then you dismiss any doubts you might have had beforehand, you reject alternative scenarios that might have led to the same outcome, and you fixate on a single explanation.

Hindsight bias also makes it easy to presume you know what's going to happen in the future. If you're convinced there was only one way to interpret a past

situation, you're less likely to envision creative solutions for new problems. You just go with the first idea that comes to you and disregard the advice of others. And soon, you're the one hearing "I told you so."

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After you watch

Can you think of any examples of hindsight bias in your own life. Talk to a friend and see if they have also experienced hindsight bias in their lives. Also, try to use three new words that you have learned from the talk. As always, you can read the transcript at any time too.

