

Step One: Attention to woman candidate resulting in...

Automatic rapidly activated ideas, images about the concept “Woman (girl, lady)” – how they do look, act, how they SHOULD act.



Automatic rapidly activated ideas, images about the concept “Leader” – how they look, sound, act

Rapid unconscious evaluation. Can result in sense of disconnect between candidate and job, discomfort, unfavorable “gut sense”, negative feelings, concern, perhaps indignation, annoyance, hostility, mistrust (feeling that someone trying to sell you an apple and telling you its an orange).

Step Two: Unaware of unconscious bias, we search for reasons for reaction. “Not ready” “Missing leadership qualities”. If candidate doesn’t fit feminine role, perhaps is “difficult” “abrasive” or, (my personal favorite) “subordinates won’t respect her”.

Step Three: Mutual validation through shared perspective. Others in group may be relieved to have a reason for their reaction – based on their biases outside of their awareness their discomfort is explained, validated.

Step Four: Unconscious, automatic confirmation bias – notice, amplify aspects of candidate that are consistent with automatically activated doubt. Interpretation of ambiguous evidence tends to be negative.