

What Does Modern Prejudice Look Like?

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NPR:

Harvard psychologist Mahzarin Banaji was once approached by a reporter for an interview. When Banaji heard the name of the magazine the reporter was writing for, she declined the interview: She didn't think much of the magazine and believed it portrayed research in psychology inaccurately.

But then the reporter said something that made her reconsider, Banaji recalled: "She said, 'You know, I used to be a student at Yale when you were there, and even though I didn't take a course with you, I do remember hearing about your work.' "

The next words out of Banaji's mouth: "OK, come on over; I'll talk to you."

After she changed her mind, Banaji got to thinking. Why had she changed her mind? She still didn't think much of the magazine in which the article would appear. The answer: The reporter had found a way to make a personal connection.

For most people, this would have been so obvious and self-explanatory it would have required no further thought. *Of course*, we might think. *Of course we'd help someone with whom we have a personal connection.*

For Banaji, however, it was the start of a psychological exploration into the nature and consequences of favoritism — why we give some people the kind of extra-special treatment we don't give others.

Read the whole story: [NPR](#)