

Worksheet: Understanding & Avoiding the Mere Exposure Effect

Part 1 — Introduction

The mere exposure effect is the tendency to prefer things simply because they are familiar, even when that familiarity is accidental or irrelevant.

Part 2 — The Scenario

County Solicitor (Choose One):

Myron Jones

John Adams

Victor Light

Question 1: Which name feels most familiar to you? Why?

Part 3 — Why This Happens

John Adams feels familiar due to history, textbooks, and repeated exposure.

Question 2: Name a product, brand, or song you liked simply because you heard it often.

Part 4 — Detecting the Mere Exposure Effect

Situation A: Two job applicants—one name feels more familiar. How might that bias you?

Situation B: You choose a cereal you've seen in commercials more often.

Situation C: A TikTok/Instagram creator feels trustworthy just because they appear often.

Part 5 — Training: Reducing the Bias

Strategy 1 — Pause when something feels “oddly familiar.” Where will you apply this?

Strategy 2 — Seek information rather than trusting familiarity. Example:

Strategy 3 — Generate unfamiliar alternatives. Example:

Part 6 — Application Exercises

Question A: Candidate Sarah Lee vs Priya Chandrasekaran. How is familiarity affecting you?

Question B: Spotify repeats an artist until they feel like a favorite. Explain.

Question C: A book feels “high quality” because its cover is everywhere. How to challenge this?

Part 7 — Reflection

Describe a time you preferred something simply because it felt familiar.

How will you change your decision-making going forward?