

MEDIATE THIS !

THE SINGLE, WORKING MOM AND AN UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

Dear Mediator:

Our manager announced at a staff meeting that we have four registrations for an upcoming conference, and she asked us to tell her who's interested. Afterward, she took me aside and said, "I know you're a single mom with a lot on your plate, so don't feel pressured to go." I was stunned by this. People assume all single moms are stressed-out, but I'm not! I have happy kids and a great life. Am I wrong to feel offended? Or should I have said something?

Resentful in Leucadia

Dear Resentful:

You are experiencing a human reaction to a dehumanizing mental construct. Whether your boss really thinks you are overwhelmed, or whether she's using a pretext to shrink the pool of registrants, her judgment is flawed, and it's never too late to address that.

When we hear the word "stereotype," we usually think of cruel caricatures based on demographic factors like race, ethnicity, gender, age, and sexual orientation. Such intentional discrimination is all too real, and it has deep historic roots, so the



GETTY IMAGES

Today's question comes from a single mother who is troubled by her manager's assumptions about her family life.

struggle to eradicate it won't end anytime soon.

But prejudicial thinking, as your case shows, is more pervasive. It involves "unconscious bias," a term made famous by the incomprehensible arrest of two African-American customers at a Philadelphia Starbucks in April.

The study of unconscious bias refutes the notion (which is itself a stereotype) that all people with discriminatory mindsets are bad actors. Almost

everyone harbors biases that don't reach the light of deliberate thought. This does not excuse hurtful conduct. But it can help us deconstruct hurtful concepts so we can expunge them before they implode.

The formula for bias is wretchedly simple: "All so-and-sos are such-and-such." No one is immune from such typecasting. Examples include "All bosses are clueless," and "All mediators are delusional."

It defies logic that every

member of any group would behave the same. So why do we think this way? Because our brains impulsively look for mental shortcuts to navigate a perplexing world with minimal effort.

This powerful insight came from psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky. Their discoveries about faulty decision-making transformed the field of behavioral economics.

In his acclaimed book "Thinking Fast and Slow," Kahneman, winner of the 2002 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, warned against the "cognitive ease" of "jumping to conclusions." As he explained, fast thinking seizes upon crude stereotypes that are imbedded in the culture. Slow thinking requires effort to examine false premises and discard unjust beliefs.

This would have been a message delivered to nearly 175,000 Starbucks employees when more than 8,000 U.S. stores closed May 29 for a day-long diversity training workshop.

Global publicity about that exercise has given all of us an opening to raise the issue at work. Re-engineering thought patterns to treat diverse colleagues and clients more inclu-

sively is a best practice for any employer. You can recommend such training through your HR office or employee suggestion program.

As for your boss, let's assume she is genuinely concerned about you. You need to relieve her of that worry by having a constructive conversation.

Tell her you've been thinking about her "single mom" comment, and you want to reassure her that your work-life balance is stable. Then ask open-ended questions about how she perceives your job performance and if she has any feedback.

If it turns out that she just assumed all single moms are overwhelmed, you can refute that with your personal display of competence. That could help her slow down her thinking and become a more enlightened manager.

Steven P. Dinkin is a professional mediator who has served as president of the San-Diego based National Conflict Resolution Center since 2003. **Do you have a conflict that needs a resolution?** Share your story with The Mediator via email at mediatethis@ncrconline.com or as an online submission by visiting www.ncrconline.com/MediateThis. All submissions will be kept anonymous.

NOTEBOOKS

From Union-Tribune reporting staff

PUBLIC SAFETY: TERI FIGUEROA

Effort aids mom, son mauled by dogs

A mother who was with her toddler son when they were both mauled by two dogs in La Mesa last week has a message to donors willing to help them out: thank you.

The woman, Karina Gonzalez, posted her appreciation Thursday on a GoFundMe account page set up to assist her and 2-year-old boy.

Gonzalez posted that they are still in recovery "but a little better."

Mother and child were attacked June 21 by two Rottweilers that had escaped from a home's backyard, La Mesa police said.

According to the page on the fundraising website, the 2-year-old "was rushed to surgery, having injuries to his arm, head, and ear." His 29-year-old mother was hurt as well.

Police said the attack happened around 8:15 a.m. as the woman was walking with two of her children on Waite Drive near 69th Street.

The dogs escaped a backyard, jumped a fence, crossed the street and immediately went after the boy, who was in a stroller.

The mother tried to fight the dogs off, but

one of them knocked her down and attacked her, while the other attacked her son.

The GoFundMe page said the mother had been walking her son toward daycare when the dogs pounced.

"As a loving mother she did all she could to protect her child," the page reads, adding that the strength and weight of the two dogs "surpassed her strength."

"Karina is a loving single mother of four children who was in the wrong place at the wrong time," the page states. "We ask for your prayers for a fast recovery, and monetary help to pay for medical expenses."

Neighbors and the dogs' owner rushed to help, and the owner was able to pull the dogs off the mother and child.

Gonzalez's 8-year-old daughter had been walking with her mother and little brother, but was not injured.

Both dogs were seized, police said.

As of Friday afternoon, the GoFundMe account had raised \$1,720 toward the \$50,000 goal.

teri.figueroa@suniontribune.com

THE READERS' REPRESENTATIVE: ADRIAN VORE

Journalism, advertising are separate

The image of the little girl in the red shirt crying as a Border Patrol officer pats down her mother is now a famous — and polarizing — image.

Both sides have used the picture by John Moore and Getty Images in the immigration debate. One side says it shows the trauma children are experiencing as their unauthorized parents are arrested while trying to enter the country. (The picture appeared in a photo illustration that made up the July 2 cover of Time magazine.)

The other side says the image has been misused to promote a false narrative. The Honduran girl was not separated from her mother.

Last Sunday, a full page ad ran in the Union-Tribune and Los Angeles Times with the photo cropped and the image of the girl enlarged. Wording in large type at the top of the ad read "Protect families. Protect Human Rights." At the lower right it read, "Make your voice heard." At the bottom of the ad was the social media hashtag "#WhereAreTheChildren." A slew of foundations, such as the Blue Shield of California Foundation and Lawrence Welk Family Foundation, were listed under the hashtag as sponsors of the campaign.

The Readers' Rep received multiple phone calls and emails expressing anger over the ad. I usually don't write about issues with ads. Newspapers keep the newsrooms and advertising departments separate, so as an editor in the newsroom, I prefer to keep it that way in the column.

But given readers' reactions, I'm making an exception. Many of those who called and emailed referred to the ad as "journalism."

"This is very wrong and very biased," a reader emailed about the image and the ad. "Just what journalism isn't supposed to be."

I responded that it was paid advertising, not journalism. The reader wrote back and said it didn't matter. The U-T should have rejected it because, she said, it gave the false impression the girl had been separated from her mother.

"If you had any sense of moral responsibility

as a journalistic entity, you would not have accepted the ad," she said.

Della Link of Rancho Bernardo said the ad was "fictional not factual."

"It wasn't right," she said in a phone conversation.

The U-T ran a Washington Post story with the picture four columns wide on A6 last Saturday that reported the little girl and mother were not separated.

That was journalism from the newsroom. What ran the next day was an ad paid for by an organization expressing its point of view.

Philanthropy California, an alliance of San Diego, Southern California and Northern California Grantmakers and other philanthropic organizations, placed the advertisement.

The organization responded to reactions about the ad with this statement by San Diego Grantmakers President and CEO Nancy Jamison:

"The picture of a crying child that we and others have featured over the past week depicts the trauma and human rights violations facing immigrant and refugee families at the U.S. border due to current policies. While this child was fortunately not separated from her parents as thousands of others have been and still are, we stand by our shared commitment to protecting families and protecting human rights."

People might disagree with the group's use of the image in combination with the ad's message, but that was not reason enough for the U-T's advertising department to reject the ad and the group's desire to express its opinion. The ad was not profane, graphic, obscene or disparaging, and it didn't promote violence.

The photo and the ad's message are debatable. Obviously some readers vehemently think the combination of the two by Philanthropy California was wrong. Others feel differently. I believe journalism, however, is not part of the debate over the ad. Journalism and advertising are conducted separately.

adrian.vore@suniontribune.com



The ad that appeared in the U-T and L.A. Times.

Independence Day closures, services

WEDNESDAY

Federal, state and county offices: Closed.

City offices: Closed.

Superior and federal courts: Closed.

Banks: Closed.

Post offices: Closed.

Libraries: Closed.

Schools: Closed.

Parking meters: Enforced in Del Mar. City of San Diego Parking Enforcement will patrol and enforce other parking violations in the beach communities on the Independence Day holiday weekend.

Transportation: MTS urban and local buses, the Trolley, Express Routes 20, 950 and Rapid Routes 201/202, 215 and 235 will operate on a Sunday schedule.

No service for Express Routes 50, 60, 110, 150; Rapid Routes 204, 237; Rapid Express

Routes 280, 290 and Rural Routes 888, 891, 892 and 894.

No service for Sorrento Valley Coaster Connection Routes 972, 973, 978 and 979.

North County Transit services is as follows: the Breeze and Sprinter will operate on a Sunday schedule and the Coaster will run on a Saturday schedule.

For schedule information, visit sdmts.com. For North County schedule information, visit gonctd.com.

Trash collection: One-day delay from the day of the holiday for residents serviced by the city of San Diego, EDCO, Escondido Disposal, Ramona Disposal Service, Republic Services, Waste Management of San Diego and Waste Management of North County.

Landfills: Miramar, Sycamore, Otay facilities will be open.

FROM THE ARCHIVES | LOOKING BACK OVER 150 YEARS

PROHIBITION BEGINS

The San Diego Union-Tribune will mark its 150th anniversary in 2018 by presenting a significant front page from the archives each day throughout the year.

Tuesday, July 1, 1919

In 1919 The San Diego Union marked start of Prohibition with an illustrated front-page obituary for King Booze.

The federal Wartime Prohibition Act banned the sale of intoxicating beverages at midnight on June 30, 1919, six months before the 18th Amendment took effect.

San Diego remained dry until Prohibition was repealed in 1933.

Here are the first few paragraphs of the story:

PROHIBITION GOES INTO EFFECT WITH POINT OF PERCENTAGE UNDETERMINED

PASSING OF BOOZE MONARCH FROM ANCIENT THRONE IS GAY EVENT IN SAN DIEGO

Celebration Lasts All Night, as 'The Old Town' Slips Into Dry Column for First Time in Its Long History; Enormous Business in Bottled Goods Keeps Up All Day; Cafes Stage Many Scenes of Hilarity.

KING BOOZE is dead! The once mighty monarch affectionately known to his thousands of subjects as John Barleycorn, Hooch, Redeye, Tanglefoot and a score of other familiar names, slipped from his throne and gave up the ghost at the stroke of 12 last night.

In San Diego the passing of the jag king was the signal for a hilarious celebration, lasting, in many instances, until the wee

hours of this morning. It was a big night locally, and no mistake.

Surviving Colonel Barleycorn, or whatever you may choose to call him, is a distant relative known as Low Power Beer. This distant kinsman may, this week, attempt to ascend the throne, but he never was a very popular guy and a majority of the saloonmen said last night that they will have no dealings with him. The news that the department of



justice will not attempt to prohibit the sale of 2 3/4 percent beer and that dealers may dispose of it at their own risk until a court ruling on its intoxicating qualities is obtained, failed to cheer the waning spirits of the liquor purveyors. A majority declare that they never could pay high license and big rents from the proceeds of the low voltage stuff.

DEMISE NOT UNEXPECTED

Colonel Barleycorn, whose demise was celebrated in San Diego last night, was a pioneer citizen of the United States and the vet-

eran of many wars. He had been in failing health for several years, the victim of a disease known to the medical fraternity as prohibitionitis. Stricken with this dire malady, Colonel Barleycorn showed considerable improvement on occasions, but was never his former self, and late yesterday suffered a severe paralytic stroke, from which he failed to rally. As was his wish, however, the colonel cashed in his checks with his boots on, and breathed his last surrounded by those who loved him best. His death, although expected, will prove a great shock to the community and his career on earth will ever be kept green in the memory of those with whom he was so closely associated.

Saloons, cafes and cabarets were all the scene last night of festivities which will live long in the memory of all past disciples of the wine god. It was one of the biggest nights in history for the "gin hounds." Fairly good order prevailed throughout the city, but at midnight more than one inebriated individual wound his way up Broadway, lamenting the demise of old Al K. Hall and calling down curses upon the heads of those who tumbled the old boy into his grave.

WINE, WOMEN AND SONG

In the cafes and cabarets they didn't exactly kick off the roof, but they kicked holes in it. There was wine, there were women, there was song, and plenty of each. As the courthouse clock struck 12, glasses were lifted and toasts drunk to the days when King Booze reigned supreme and prohibition was a joke.