

Cognitive Bias #3 — Choice-Supportive

Nobody asked but ...

5. Choice-supportive bias.

When you choose something, you tend to feel positive about it, even if that **choice has flaws**. Like how you think your dog is awesome — even if it bites people every once in a while.



This may be my most egregious bias. I have a great deal of trouble reversing field after a choice of any kind. Reversals only take place after some sort of random collision with reality. We see evidence that I am not alone, scattered throughout my neck of the woods. Moldering, derelict automobiles and tractors outnumber anything but ragweed. It is hard to admit a mistake, sure, but it is doubly hard to alter the status quo. If it weren't for this tendency, we wouldn't have any political conservatives at all. This would not be an entirely good thing. If we had no conservatism in the species, the average life expectancy would be about a week, and we would still have all of the junk autos and tractors. Knee-jerk is as bad as stick-in-the-mud. Where it really worries, however, is in politics. How is POTUS going to climb down from that improvised "fire and fury" speech?

[Author's note: It has been awhile since the last installment in this series. The reason is that I had intended to make a podcast series as an expanded companion. So I was holding at #2 pending my publication of podcasts #1 and #2. But I have been procrastinating (for good imaginary reasons known only to me). At this point, due to subsequent developments, I have become busier than ever — I am teaching 4 sections of a college course on computing, and I am involved in 10 distinct projects at Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Now it appears unlikely that I will do a podcast in the near future. At any rate, I have decided to resume this written serial, because the delay is getting ridiculous.]