

Focus

City Voices.

Photos and interviews by Stephanie Glaros

I've been thinking about unconscious biases, and how humans evaluate one another based on what we see. What assumptions do you think people make about you that may or may not be true?



Brian Kilduff, Minneapolis ▲

It kinda goes with every person in a wheelchair, I would say. Some people may assume that you're not there mentally, you don't have all your mental faculties. Like this weekend I was at a wedding, and this lady kinda baby-talked me, like, 'Oh, I'm so glad you could make it.' But I don't fault them, because they don't think of it. You really don't think of it until you're on the other side. It's just society's perception of disabled people. I mean, I would've thought the same way until I became disabled. But I take advantage of it, so I'm a piece of s***, too. I get into football games for free. Got into Rock the Garden. I just go up to the ticket counter like, 'Oh, my friends, they're in 203, they said they'd meet (me):' They're like, 'All right, just bring your ticket down.' Or I'll just fly by, going 6 miles an hour, and they're like, 'Ah, whatever, he's in a chair.' So there's good and bad."



Anya Yurchenko, Shorewood ▲

Funny, I'm a psychiatrist, so assumptions are what we do (laughs). Yeah, never make assumptions, always ask. You're impressions are only a lot of times your projections, not necessarily what's really going on. I think people look at how you look physically, and how you present yourself, and make a lot of assumptions. It's part of our normal psychological makeup and defenses. ... I think people look at me and they think I'm not very approachable, because that's kinda how I like to present myself. And I stand out because I'm tall. I think maybe people assume that I'm not very easy to get to know.

Would you say that's true, or not true?

It kind of depends, but I guess it's largely true, because like I said, I think that's how I like to be, in a way. I don't wanna be all out for everybody to just come up and get to know me. I need to have a little bit more of a distance first. Take a little time to warm up.



Legacy X, Minneapolis ◀

I know that being a bold person like myself, and speaking my mind, and trying to be as truthful as I can in every situation, that automatically attracts attention in certain cases. I tend to speak out on things that people normally don't.

[What] I would hope is that [people] would think that I actually care, you know, that I care about my people. Or I pay attention, I'm aware. And I feel. I would hope that people see my heart in everything that I do, and every opportunity I have to be myself. That's what I hope that people see me as, a black man, 'cuz that's the first thing that somebody's gonna see when they look at me. So I would hope that within that, they see me as being a proud and strong black man. And being proud of my history, which I'm still learning. And my skin color, my beautiful skin color. The thing that protects me and gives me everything I need. Being proud of that, and being aware of that. I hope people see that.