OpenMind Platform: Summary of Content Covered

Step 1: See what you'll gain from viewpoint diversity

Key concepts covered:

- Assimilation and accommodation
- Viewpoint diversity can help you:
  - Get closer to the truth
  - Become more persuasive
  - Grow and learn

Summary:

- There are two types of learning that complement one another: assimilation is when we encounter new information that we are able to fit it into our pre-existing mental structures, and accommodation is when we encounter new information that doesn't fit. It takes extra effort (and sometimes discomfort) to accommodate new information by changing our existing mental structures.
- Viewpoint diversity can help you get closer to the truth. In order to fully understand an issue, you need to challenge your assumptions and consider it from multiple angles.
- Viewpoint diversity can help you be more persuasive. By engaging with people with whom you disagree, you can understand where they are coming from, and craft arguments that will be more likely to appeal to them.
- Viewpoint diversity will open up opportunities for growth and learning. Realizing that your beliefs have changed is a sure sign of intellectual development.
- Therefore, it's beneficial to talk to both people with whom you agree and disagree, and try to learn from them *why* they believe what they believe.

Step 2: Cultivate intellectual humility

Key concepts covered:

- Intellectual humility and the value of acknowledging and learning from our mistakes
- The theory of growth versus fixed mindset
- How to cultivate a growth mindset

Summary:

- In order to prevent our certainty from blinding us to other ideas, we must develop *intellectual humility*. This helps us become wiser by allowing us to recognize the limits of our knowledge.
- Those with a *fixed mindset* believe that intelligence is set in stone, which makes it harder for them to learn and grow because they prioritize looking smart over learning. Those with a *growth mindset* believe that intelligence can develop, which makes it easier for them to learn and grow because they relish accepting new challenges.
- There are three methods of injecting more growth into your mindset:
  - Acknowledge that your abilities are fluid

- o View each mistake as a learning opportunity
- o Challenge yourself to do things you haven't already mastered
- Below are three life hacks to help you increase your growth mindset:
  - o In the next 24 hours, use the word "yet" after describing yourself or thinking of yourself, at least three times.
  - o In the next 24 hours, whenever you make a mistake, take a moment to identify exactly what you can learn from it.
  - o In the next 24 hours, seize an opportunity to try something you were too hesitant to try in the past.

Step 3: Explore the irrational mind
Key concepts covered:
- Dual process theory
- Metaphor of the rider (slow, conscious reasoning) and the elephant (automatic, intuitive thinking)
- Visual and cognitive illusions
- Post hoc reasoning
- Confirmation bias
- Motivated reasoning

Summary:
- Even after cultivating intellectual humility and a growth mindset, two well-intentioned and well-informed people often still end up with very different beliefs. The particular way in which our minds work can help us understand why this happens so often.
- Our minds are divided into two parts that sometimes conflict, like a small human rider sitting on top of an elephant. The *rider* represents our slow, conscious reasoning. The *elephant* represents all of the automatic, intuitive processes that occur rapidly and often outside of our conscious awareness.
- While we think that our rider (conscious reasoning) is in control, it's often actually our elephant that holds the power.
- This division often causes us to fall prey to *post hoc reasoning*, the process in which our elephant makes a snap judgment, and our rider works to justify it.
- A common form of post hoc reasoning is when we seek or interpret information in a way that confirms our preexisting beliefs, which is called *confirmation bias*.
- Our reasoning becomes even less reliable when we are motivated to reach a particular conclusion, especially when a moral issue is at stake. This can lead to *motivated reasoning*.
- As a result, it can be difficult to convince other people to change their minds, especially on moral issues—because their brains, just like ours, are wired in these ways.

Step 4: Break free from your moral matrix
Key concepts covered:
- The moral matrix
- The six taste receptors of morality
- Moral foundations theory
- Moral roots of political differences

- Breaking free from our moral matrices

Summary:
- We all live within a *moral matrix*: a consensual hallucination that we believe represents objective reality. Many different moral communities exist, each with its own set of shared values, and each convinced that its group alone sees truth as it really is.
- The moral mind is like a tongue with six different taste receptors. We all share these same foundations, but we build upon them in different ways to create our own moral matrices. The six *moral foundations* are: Care, Fairness, Loyalty, Authority, Sanctity, and Liberty.
- Many disagreements can be attributed to the application of different moral foundations. There are also cases when different people apply the same moral foundation in different ways.
- We can break free of our moral matrices by learning to identify the moral foundations that we and others use to reach our conclusions.

Step 5: Tools for productive dialogue
Key concepts covered:
- Cognitive reappraisal primer
  - o Identifying automatic thoughts
  - o Dispelling cognitive distortions
- Skills for constructive disagreement
  - o Active listening
  - o Acknowledgement
  - o Moral reframing

Summary:
- We can engage in *constructive disagreement* by seeking to learn, rather than to be right. The key to constructive disagreements is mastering the language of the elephant (automatic, intuitive thinking).
- Sometimes, our automatic thoughts (generated by our elephants) aren't accurate, and these cognitive distortions can cause negative feelings. Our riders can rein in our elephants by examining our initial thoughts, and—over time—training them to be more accurate.
- We can also hone our ability to communicate effectively with other people by focusing on their elephants. We can: respect their elephants (don't criticize people or make them feel stupid); understand their elephants (learn about what other people care about and why); and appeal to their elephants (convey your thoughts in a language that will resonate with them).

If you have any questions or if you would like to learn more about using OpenMind in your institution, classroom, company, or organization, please contact info@openmindplatform.org.