

Open-mindedness

Podcast host:

Welcome to our podcast 'All about minds'. In this episode we're going to focus on open-mindedness. Did you know that it is in our human nature to polarise and put things into two categories? For example, rich/poor, boy/girl and right/wrong. This is called binary thinking or to have a binary mindset. It's because our minds like to make things easy for us – but, as you know, the world is a lot more complex than just two categories, and perhaps this is why we need to think more deeply about our, and others', beliefs and opinions. Because when we consider the world in a limited way, we often cause division. The question is: is open-mindedness the answer?

To be open-minded is to listen and consider others' opinions and beliefs that are different from our own. So, are you open-minded?

Let's listen to some traits of being open-minded so we can find out!

So, let's start. Firstly, we need to make sure that there is enough non-biased evidence to back up our claim or opinion. What do we really know about what we have a strong opinion on? Have we looked at different sources of evidence? How reliable are they? How do we know we can trust them?

Secondly, we need to try and put our biases and prejudices to the side – which, by the way, is really tough to do! This means that we really need to be very honest with ourselves and take into consideration that we automatically side with our own beliefs before listening to others.

Which brings us to our next trait ... we need to have the superpower of listening! Yes, listening. Listening to others without prejudice and with respect. When we have a strong opinion on something, or a very strong belief, it can be quite confronting to hear opposing views. However, without listening to others, we'll stop any chance of us all moving forward together and we lose respect for each other.

And finally, we need to be able to accept that we might be wrong ... or, at least, not entirely right! The world is a complex place, with heaps of people with such diverse backgrounds, cultures and societies. To think that we are always right is not the ideal ground to start being open-minded and to consider and respect others.

So, how did you do? On a scale of one to ten – with ten being really open-minded and one being not open-minded at all – where are you? Do you agree that binary thinking is a problem in our society? Is open-mindedness the answer to encourage more respectful interaction with others to stop division?

Tune in next week when we ask people around the globe what they think.