**PART 1 – Reading Comprehension and language awareness**

**(Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, Speaking)**

**How Do Professional Stereotypes Affect You?**

*by Rebecca Turner, PhD, Fellow, Society of Consulting*

Let’s talk about stereotypes we hold about different occupational groups and professions. Would you rather have lunch with a gardener, an *executive*, a genetics counselor or an investment banker? The images start to roll as we think about this possibility. Those in financial services have had their **reputations** *tarnished* since the financial crisis. Yet, **individual** people in financial services sometimes feel they have been personally *held accountable for* things they had nothing to do with. Dave Martin wrote in American Banker ([May 5, 2015](http://www.americanbanker.com/bankthink/bankers-be-wary-of-outdated-stereotypes-1074146-1.html)) about what he believed were **unfair** stereotypes, “It’s **heartening** that the bankers I meet almost always *defy persistent* stereotypes about what the **industry** is and the types of people who populate it…Banking isn’t the ‘exclusive old guys country club’ that many folks still consider it to be.”

A famous journalist named Walter Lippmann *coined* the term “stereotype” in 1922. He **defined** stereotypes as “the little pictures we carry around inside our heads.” Holding a stereotype is a way of simplifying how we look at the world. In our busy lives, this process allows us to take in a lot of complex information about another person and boil it down to a quick *perception*, conclusion or decision: “I trust him”, “I want to **invest** my money with her”, “This is someone I need to get to know” or “He will go far.” We can hold stereotypes about absolutely anything that we can classify or categorize. Once the stereotype is active in our minds it *evokes* a lot of *associations*, beliefs and feelings.

Recently, on a flight to LA I sat next to a tall, young, 30-something “girl next door type” (stereotype evoked?) and she began looking over my shoulder, “what are you reading? It looks so fascinating”! We spoke and I ended up giving her the quick version of my executive *coaching* life — helping leaders who are **experts** in their fields to become more effective, especially in communicating and managing the people side of the business.

“I want to do exactly what you do! I would love that work!”

“What do you do now?”

“Oh, I’m a model, heading to LA for a photo shoot now. It’s sooooo boring. Really.”

I asked for and she showed me photos of her in very well known fashion magazines. The photos and sets were stunning. She works in London, Paris, and New York mostly and she said the money was quite good.

“What’s wrong with it?”

She was, once I noticed more carefully, a very lovely woman with an Eastern European accent (stereotype evoked?) who showed such excitement and adventure by her **presence**. She said that no one **respects** you if you are a model. “You are not a person. You are not supposed to say anything. You are not supposed to have a sense of humor. You are not supposed to be intelligent and so they tell you to just be quiet. I am so tired of not being anything. It is not glamorous. I hate it. What do I need to do to be able to do what you do”? The overall point here is that stereotypes can make the **target** feel they are treated very unfairly.

The Gallup Poll has posted survey results to show what percentage of people see different professionals as either high or very high in honesty1. In 2014, Nurses (85%), Pharmacists (68%) and Medical Doctors (67%) were seen as most **honest** and ethical while Bankers (23%), Lawyers (21%), Business Executives (17%), and Members of Congress (8%) were toward the bottom of the list, not trustworthy. As Rodney Dangerfield2 used to say, “I get no respect.”

*A question for readers: How do stereotypes about different professions influence the well being of those in them?*

1 See <http://www.gallup.com/poll/180260/americans-rate-nurses-highest-honesty-ethical-standards.aspx> for the specific survey results.

2 Rodney Dangerfield, was an American stand-up comedian, actor, producer, screenwriter, musician and author. He was known for his self-deprecating one-liner humor, his catchphrase "I don't get no respect!" and his monologues on that theme.

Adapted from the source: <https://www.societyofconsultingpsychology.org/index.php?option=com_dailyplanetblog&view=entry&year=2016&month=11&day=01&id=6:how-do-professional-stereotypes-affect-you->