How to Reduce Prejudice?

Reducing prejudice in a society should begin as individuals develop personal objectives and goals toward the issue. An individual may be successful in challenging their prejudicial behavior through various methods such as developing more ethical and moral actions. Society can become more conscious about prejudice through recognition of discriminating prejudicial viewpoints, actions to change these perceptions, and increasing exposure to a stereotyped group or individual.

The initial step which is an important part in reducing prejudice is the willingness of an individual to educate themselves about stereotypes and prejudicial behaviors existing in society. By challenging their social norms through more awareness and education, an individual may change existing viewpoints positively. By first recognizing and acknowledging that prejudicial behaviors exist, an individual can then take initiative to further educate themselves on the issue and ultimately reduce their prejudicial beliefs they may have towards others through various methods. Taking a course on ethnic diversity or equality, for example, can be a form of education. According to findings, “education reduces prejudice, regardless of what particular courses you take”. Gaining more knowledge and insight about a specific issue can aid in helping an individual challenge existing beliefs. Another step that can be taken to reduce an individual’s prejudicial perception is through more exposure and interaction with those they consider different from themselves or the norm. According to a cognitive analysis carried out by researches about the effects of intergroup contact, as we interact with individuals of a group, we may focus more on the individual than the group to which they are associated within the social norms. This allows individuals to examine the idea “that our global and undifferentiated group stereotypes are actually not that informative” (Rothbart and John 41). Socializing and communicating with diverse groups of people, a person may
reach the conclusion that their personal perspective of a person is different from the stereotypical associations they are accustomed to after getting to know them better. Exposure can therefore aid in diminishing stereotypical perceptions that people may have by challenging their existing viewpoints.

Making connections and engaging in social interactions is a part of human nature. As individuals, grouping others based on predisposed ideas and stereotypes may only escalate the issue of prejudice existing in society. This matter may increase the destructive influences placed on specific individuals. Challenging prejudicial ideas through recognition, knowledge, and willingness to communicate and develop relationships may aid in reducing existing prejudicial beliefs and ideas.