

## Buildings and Behavior

Nobody ever woke up in the morning and said: "I want to be worse off than I am now" but every day people make decisions that do exactly that. So what is behind the irrational choices people make around buildings?

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### **Status Quo Bias**

People tend to choose what is familiar over what is unfamiliar, even when the unfamiliar thing is the better choice.

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### **Friction Costs**

When a behavior is hard to do or meets with obstacles, it is less likely to occur.

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### **Anchoring Effects**

People tend to use the first piece of information as a reference point in a decision.

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### **Hyperbolic Discounting**

People unconsciously put an inappropriately low value on rewards in the future.

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### **Non-Economic Drivers**

We often assume that certain decisions are driven primarily or solely by economic or monetary drivers. This fails to take into account the large role non-economic drivers (such as social roles and identity) can play in our decisions.

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### **Choice Architecture**

Our decisions are strongly influenced by the context in which they are made and this context can be designed to increase the likelihood of beneficial behaviors.

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### **Framing Effects**

People don't make choices based on things but based on descriptions of things.

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**Education  
As Default**

People's default assumption is that education will result in a change in behavior even though it is clear that education alone (that is, knowledge) is insufficient to change behavior.

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**Empathy Gap**

People don't take into account how their future emotional states will influence their decisions and preferences.

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**Motivated  
Reasoning**

When there is a conflict between what a person wants and their stated beliefs, the person may invent a reason why their stated beliefs don't apply here.

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**Intention-Action  
Gap**

We don't always do what we intend to do.

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**Cost Benefit  
Analysis Machine**

A hypothetical machine that is capable of weighing all of the costs and benefits of a particular choice so that it picks what's in its best interest every time (i.e., not a human).

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**Inhibiting  
Pressures**

All the things (real and perceived) that might make a behavior less likely.

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**Intervention**

A tool that is developed using a rigorous, evidence-based process and is designed to elicit a particular behavior.

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## About Erase40.org

Erase40's purpose is to speed the adoption of zero energy, climate safe buildings. We use peer-reviewed behavioral research to design interventions that work in the field and influence the behaviors of developers, home buyers, renters, architects and institutional investors, insurers and others. Current initiatives: Meeting Map, Zero Energy Building Lender Workshop, Energy Costs Choice.

**Become a member:** [www.Erase40.org/membership](http://www.Erase40.org/membership)  
or contact James Geppner at [James@Erase40.org](mailto:James@Erase40.org).