



Hello and welcome again!

After a pause spent working on a number of exciting projects, I am happy to be back with you! One of the things I'd like to share is the results of a client survey I conducted as part of an assignment for my Master's in Coaching and NLP: a number of my clients reported that one of the most useful tools they retained from their coaching experience was the ability to consider a challenging situation from different perspectives. Let me explain...

Human beings have been said to be "meaning making machines", i.e. creatures who will derive meaning from any situation, based on the filters they habitually apply to life. For many of us, this is just a fact – we hardly ever question our interpretation of an event. Now, let's imagine we were a peace negotiator in an international conflict with no interest other than the desire to see the conflict come to a peaceful resolution. The first thing we would probably do is take a step back and create a space where we would neutrally listen to each of the conflicting parties grievances, trying to understand their individual needs, requests, etc. Let's imagine we not only did that, but also invited each party to step into each other's shoes, *genuinely* looking at the world through the eyes of their "opponent", experiencing life with that opponent's history, fears, joys, etc. What do you believe would happen?

This in a nutshell is the principle behind an NLP exercise (based on the work of Virginia Satir's, the renowned family therapist) I use in a variety of ways with clients, especially in situations involving a lack of understanding between people. In my own life, I use it whenever I feel so self-righteous about something that I become blind to someone else's opinion – because as much as I like being right (a trait I blame on my French heritage), I also realize it takes two to tango. With time and practice, changing perspective this way has allowed me to become aware of the ultimate validity of each point of view and to fully appreciate the simple wisdom of one of my coach friend's motto: sometimes, it is just more important to be happy than right...

Tips to change perspective

Choose a relationship, an event, either in the past or in the future (a past conversation or a future presentation, for instance), you would like to explore further.

- 1- Imagine you could see all the protagonists (including yourself) in a screen in front of you.
- 2- Imagine you could enter the screen and step into your own shoes, experiencing the situation from your own perspective and through your own eyes – as you look at the person or group in front of you, what do see, hear and feel inside of yourself? What might be your intention from that perspective?



- 3- Imagine now that you could leave your own perspective and step into the other person or group's shoes, literally seeing yourself, your silhouette and face, through their eyes – as you look at yourself from outside, what do you see, hear and feel that might be different from what you previously noticed standing in your own shoes? What might be that person or group's positive intention from that perspective?
- 4- Now imagine you left that perspective as well and became a third neutral party, maybe like a camera on the wall, impartially noticing the interaction between the protagonists – as you look at both parties from outside, what do you notice about the nature of the interaction, about the "you" you are seeing? What new steps do you notice that "you" might want to take to influence the interaction positively?
- 5- Finish the exercise by coming back fully and completely to the present moment, to yourself, with all the insights you have derived.



"We do not see the world as it is but as we are."

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