

Adopt a Different Perspective

What to Know

Perspective refers to the way you see, interpret, and understand the world around you based on your experiences, beliefs, values, and emotions. It's how you perceive situations, events, or people, and how those perceptions shape your understanding and actions.

Here is an example to better understand what perspective means:

Let's say there's a group project in school, and one of the team members isn't contributing much. From your perspective, you might feel frustrated or annoyed because you think this person is lazy or uninterested. However, another group member might have a different perspective. They might know that the person is dealing with problems at home, and their family struggles are affecting their participation.

In this scenario, you and the other group members have different viewpoints or perspectives. Understanding and acknowledging diverse perspectives can lead to empathy, better communication, and finding solutions that consider different viewpoints.

So, the way you see things—your perspective—influences how you think and feel. Things can look very different if you change the position from which you view them. The way you feel and think about a situation can change if you look at it from a different perspective. When you're in the middle of a situation, there's a lot of information to process, including:

- what's happening in your environment.
- what's happening inside of you.
- the interaction between your environment and your thoughts and feelings.

If you're experiencing intense emotions, it might be more difficult to process all the information and make good decisions. If you step back from a situation and think about it as if it were happening to someone else, you can adopt a different perspective and see more clearly what's happening.

That's why it's sometimes a good idea to ask parents, friends, teachers, or counselors to help you manage difficult situations. They can see things more clearly and objectively because they are not in the middle of the situation.

What to Do

Describe a past situation where you experienced intense or strong feelings and were unsure what to do.

Describe what would have happened if you had stepped back and imagined someone else being in your situation. Unsure how to do that? Close your eyes, become an outside observer, and visualize another person in that situation. Now, you're detached and can view it more like an outsider—to adopt a different perspective.

Did your feelings become less intense? Were you able to think more clearly about how to respond? Explain.

Did you ask for help? If so, who helped you? _____

What was the outcome of that situation?

Now, write a brief description of a situation or issue you're currently facing. Include specific, how it made you feel, and why it's been challenging for you.

What's your current viewpoint or perspective on this situation? How do you see it, and what beliefs or thoughts do you hold about it?

How does your perspective affect your feelings, thoughts, or actions?

Consider a different viewpoint or perspective that might exist regarding this situation. How might someone else, like a friend, family member, or even a fictional character, see this situation differently? What other factors or circumstances could be influencing their perspective?

Now imagine it's your friend going through this situation instead of you. Close your eyes, become an outside observer, and visualize your friend in the experience. Does the emotional intensity feel as high when you're viewing someone else in the situation? Explain.

What advice would you give your friend? Write down what you would say.

Now consider how you can apply that advice to your own situation.

Reflect on how adopting different perspectives could positively impact your feelings, thoughts, or actions regarding the situation. What benefits might come from seeing things from a different angle? How might it change your emotional response or guide you toward finding solutions? Be specific!

Who can help you with this situation?

Brainstorm some actionable steps or strategies you could take to integrate different perspectives into your approach to the situation. How can you include new perspectives into your thoughts and feelings?

How does it feel to consider a different perspective, and what did you learn about yourself or the situation?

Did this activity help you understand how to adopt a different perspective? Why or why not?
