
What's Your Point of View?

The Influence of Perceptual Positions in Effective Communicating

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The Importance of Perception

“We see things not as they are but as we are” Anise Nin



Did you know that the top negotiators and communicators generally get what they want through applying a communicating strategy? They use a strategy that looks at the same situation from different perspectives.

What's the value of knowing your point of view and that of others? It will expand your ability to better achieve agreements, build better and more meaningful relationships, accomplish faster what you need to do and get you what you want.

One of the ground breaking models available through the NLP Guides learning experience is that of developing Perceptual Position Skills. Other than acting and writing courses, NLP training is one of the only pathways that actively teach the process of shifting points of view. Effective leaders, those whose leadership has a positive impact on generations and societies, demonstrate a natural predisposition to

perceptual positions. From Abraham Lincoln to Walt Disney to the Dali Lama, to the wisdom teachers of shamans in indigenous societies the ability to “walk in the shoes of another, to see through their eyes, to understand the implications of actions through time and on societies marks people for greatness, just as the lack of perception can be the downfall of individuals and societies. Think about the wide spread impact of Warren Buffet, Oprah Winfrey, Nelson Mandela, or on the other hand Saddam Hussein, or Bernie Madoff. The list could be endless. The point is to recognize the implication of knowing and working with perceptual positions. Here is a brief overview of Perceptual Positions

First Position: This is your own point of view — your perception of what is happening, as you, yourself, experience it. In the NLP model this a fully associated position. You are fully present in what see, hear and feel – living it in the here and now. You can flip back to a full first position associated experience when you are re-‘living’ an intense past experience or ‘living’ an imagined future experience.

Second Position: This is the Perceptual Position of someone else – the ‘other’ person. It is seeing through their eyes, hearing, feeling, thinking, believing, etc., in another 's experience.

When you adopted Second Position you come to a deeper understanding of the needs and motivations of the other and the impact of your behavioral style on their experience of you.

Multiple second perceptual positions involve looking at a situation from the viewpoint of the all people involved. For example, a strike looks very different from the viewpoint of a CEO, a worker, a customer and a supplier. A problem is almost always harder to solve if a person only appreciates their own viewpoint, and not those of others involved.

Third Position: This is the Perceptual Position outside the communication loop that is going on between first and second positions. From third position, it is as if you are an interested, but not directly involved observer of the other two. It's a valuable position for gathering information and noticing relationship dynamics going on between your ‘self’ in first position and the ‘other’ in second position.

Third Position, observer skills are one of a highly developed sensory awareness. Seeing and hearing what is present without projecting meaning into the observation. Third position skills give an individual a heightened ability to be aware of more information and develop new choices of response.

Fourth Position: This is the Perceptual Position that is a synthesis of all the others, a sense of being the whole system. From this position you can see the genesis and effects of all the other positions and their interactions, and notice large patterns that transcend individual identities, parts and relationships.

Finding Your Familiar Point of Perceptual

Start enhancing your communication powers today. Answer the following questionnaire spontaneously, allowing your most familiar response reveal itself. Remember no one but you needs to see the results.

This questionnaire will take less than five minutes to complete and score and will give you a good indication of your most frequent style of perception. By knowing your most familiar perceptual pattern you will have a reference point from which to review common situations and challenges in a way that you can increase your impact and control in achieving the outcomes you need.

Questionnaire

Answer the following questions with total honesty. No one but you needs to see the results. This questionnaire will give you a good indication of your most frequent style of perception.

The skills developed in the NLP Guides Series for Business – Fast Track Your Outcomes will help you develop your effectiveness in communication and your excellence as a leader in your company by shifting your points of view.

Circle the most natural, most frequent initial response in each of the following scenarios:

*(The most genuine one for you... not the most 'politically correct' response)

1. Driving in heavy traffic when another driver coming from a side street appears to want to pull in front of your car. Do you:

a) Close the gap between your car and the car in front of you to prevent the other driver from 'cutting in'.

b) Feeling what it must be like for the driver to be waiting for an opening, you slow down to let the other driver pull in to the line of traffic

c) Consider the traffic flow pattern and adjust accordingly.

2. If you were in a position to present your product or service to a potential customer.

Do you:

a) Keep your focus on "making the sale" and convincing the customer that they need your product or service.

b) Step in to the customer's shoes and sensing their needs, then determine if they really will be served by what you offer and happily refer them to someone else if that would be better for them.

c) Take into account how to make the engagement Win/Win.

3. Imagine attending a dinner party with friends and colleagues and the meal is served buffet style. Do you:

- a) Make sure you get in line immediately to get as much as you can of the 'best' food being served.
- b) Fill a plate for an elderly guest because you sense that standing in a long line would be stressful for them.
- c) Take a small portion until you see if there is enough for everyone to have a share of what is served.

4. Standing in the supermarket express line (12 items or less), with your 12 items and knowing you will be using a credit card and the person behind you has only 4 items, is noticeably in a hurry and has cash in hand. Do you:

- a) Proceed through the check out line.
- b) Feeling their urgency let them go ahead of you.
- c) Evaluate the swiftness of the cashier and your time schedule as well as the needs of the other before making a decision one way or the other.

5. You are at a meeting with your colleagues and each will be presenting potential solutions to a stalled project. You are very confident about your idea. Do you:

- a) Jump right in with your proposal.
- b) Encourage a colleague who you know is hesitant, but often has a good point to be made, to voice their opinion.
- c) Wait and observe how the other participants engage before speaking.

6. You are meeting up with your significant other and several close friends for an evening on the town. Do you:

- a) Inform everyone that you will make reservations for the group at your favorite restaurant.
- b) Let someone else pick where to go and even when they choose an ethnic food that you find unappealing feel their pleasure in sharing their restaurant choice.
- c) Pole the group and find a choice that serves food everyone likes and is within everyone's price range.

7. You are deciding on the design of the new landscape project for your yard. Do you:
- a) Think about how it would look to you as you look out your windows or walk through your yard.
 - b) How it will appear to your neighbors as they look out at your yard.
 - c) Consider a bird's eye view of the architectural relationship between the trees, shrub and flowers, their shapes, sizes and colors.
8. You have a phone appointment with a new colleague from a branch office who has the reputation of being a rising star in the organization. You recognize that this person may potentially be in competition for the position you are hoping to get. Your colleague failed to contact you at the agreed upon time. Do you:
- a) Take it personal and begin to think about what it means to you that s/he didn't call.
 - b) Assume they have a good reason for not showing up for the call.
 - c) Know that these types of situations often happen, so think about rescheduling it.
9. Your team is working on a project and you are on a roll with your part. You have all been putting in extra hours. At this point you are on target with the deadline and the data has been collected and organized. It's early Friday afternoon and your co-workers are taking off early to go to a local 'watering hole' to watch a big game. Do you:
- a) Judge them for leaving early while you are staying to work.
 - b) Tell them to enjoy the game since you know how vested they are in their team reaching the finals and how stressed they are from working really hard.
 - c) Step back and evaluate the project and what impact that leaving early or staying and continuing will have on the project before you decide whether or not to join them.

Scoring

Your scoring will give you a way to start looking at the way you communicate and start looking at all your interactions in a different manner.

Total the A, B's & C's and you will have an snapshot of your unconscious point of view.

Number of: A _____ B _____ C _____

Mostly A – This perception is primarily from your point of view. The advantages are that you know what you want and you will tend to place your interests first. This is a resource especially when others attempt to impose their agenda or inappropriate demands on you. The disadvantages are that you may limit your options and opportunities because you can easily break rapport in a social context or in teamwork. You will tend to be more rigid and less flexible and may appear to others as selfish.

Mostly B – This perception is primarily from the point of view of others. The advantages are that you tend to be considerate, flexible and take others needs into account. You are aware of more options and opportunities because you have multiple points of view. It is easy to maintain rapport with others. The disadvantages are you could sometimes disregard your own needs. You may overextend yourself. And by trying to accommodate everyone you may end up pleasing no one.

Mostly C – This perception is from the point of view of an observer. The advantages are that you can see the big picture. You tend to be more objective and are less likely to be swayed by emotional reactions. The disadvantages are that you may be perceived as aloof and uninvolved. You may hold back from joining in and you may feel like an outsider.

While we have not included **Fourth Position** in the questionnaire, as you develop flexibility in shifting your perceptions, Fourth Position the group position. Perceiving from the point of view of the whole system (the business, team or group). This is a developmental step you take as a highly effective leader. If you would like more insight on the leadership qualities that align with perceptual positions, Leadership Agility by Stephen Josephs & Bill Joiner is a particularly insightful resource.

Perceptual positions are not right or wrong. Coming from only one can be detrimental to your success in relating to a wide range of people and situations. Developing flexibility in how you see and experience a situation will expand your understanding of others and your influencing abilities.