

# PERSPECTIVE TAKING - STORY



I ask for what I desire as we begin this topic



I pray that my entire being become open to God's grace



I imagine these texts being addressed to me, and note my response

**Grace:**

Pending

Pending

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

# PERSPECTIVE TAKING - EXERCISE

### Connecting to an Experience

Take a moment and connect to the following experiences which you may encounter on a daily basis at work:

- a) A colleague failed to deliver on his promise to finalize his part of the project, which caused delays in your submission
- b) You are convinced that the organization has to review its strategy and internal policies while others on the board have opposite views
- c) Two members in your team have been fighting a lot lately

How do you relate to the above situations? What are your first reactions (thoughts and feelings) to the outlined scenarios?

### Taking the perspectives of others

- a) Brief another participant about the above scenarios and listen to them sharing their first reactions. What do you learn from this sharing? How different was their thinking?
- b) Choose a character in each scenario and put yourself in their shoes. How in this case would you perceive the situation differently?
  - i) Putting yourself in your colleague's shoes: What do I want? What do I fear?
  - ii) Taking the perspective of other members on your board: What do they want? What do they fear?
- c) Which other perspectives can you take? If you take a different perspective, such as a bystander or a friend with whom you are sharing these incidents, how do these answers differ?

### Reflecting on learning

- How difficult was the exercise? What did you learn about yourself?
- How is this perspective-taking enriching your meaning-making?
- How do you think one's ability to take perspective influences the way he leads and makes decisions?

### ADDITIONAL EXERCISES

Action Inquiry, the Ladder of Inference and Triple Loop Learning are additional tools for widening our perspectives.

Refer to the Handout for an overview on the role of perspective taking for mission integration (by David McCallum)

# PERSPECTIVE TAKING - INPUT

## INTRODUCTION

What we pay attention to is ultimately what focuses our resources and energy. Perspective taking is the act of perceiving a situation or understanding a concept from an alternative point of view, such as that of another individual, or organization. The ultimate purpose of such a practice is to have a more complete picture of reality (moving from dualistic black and white thinking to viewing issues from multiple perspectives and to reconciling seemingly contradictory realities).



**Dualistic Thinking**



**Dialectical Thinking**

## MAIN IDEAS

Research shows that one way of understanding an individual's level development is in looking at the number of perspectives that person can take (Loevinger, 1987; Selman, 1980). In this sense, growth and development are described as "an increase in the number of perspectives you can take" (Wilber, 2006). This involves putting attention not only to our side of things but also to other dimensions (including people's viewpoints - their attitudes, motivations, assumptions, feelings, as well as to how our perspective fits in the larger climate of our organization, how it links to our sense of purpose or mission..)

Every event we experience in life has many dimensions to it, and can be seen through various perspectives:

- One way of looking at any situation is from the point of view of the "I" (seeing the world from the person speaking standpoint "I", "Me" or how I personally see and feel about the event). **This is the 1st perspective.**
- Taking **the 2nd perspective** is growing our ability to view things from another person's standpoint, for example from the point of view of the "you" or "we" (not only how I see the event but how others see, experience and relate to them)
- Finally, taking **the 3rd perspective** is distancing ourselves further and taking the viewpoint of the person or thing being spoken about ("It" or "its", "they" or "them").

The practice of “perspective taking” is receiving increasing attention in the current body of research in what is currently called “stage development” or “vertical development” and plays a key role for mission integration.

For more details on this, refer to:

- the work of Ken Wilber on the Integral Model,
- the work of Bill Torbert on Action Inquiry
- this section’s handout (the Integral Model of Leadership by David McCallum SJ)

## EXPECTED LEARNINGS AND OUTCOMES

1. Practicing seeing things from someone else’s perspective
2. Introducing the distinction between 1st, 2nd and 3rd person dimensions
3. Increasing likelihood of skillful action and healthy interaction by expanding awareness

# PERSPECTIVE TAKING - RESOURCES

## GENERAL LEADERSHIP RESOURCES

Title	Author	Publisher	Year	Link
The Integral Model - Leadership and Mission Integration (Handout)	David McCallum Sj			
Perspective-Taking as a Leadership Practice	Bill Joiner	LinkedIn	2015	<a href="#">Link</a>
Why Understanding Other Perspectives Is A Key Leadership Skill	Steffan Surdek	Forbes		<a href="#">Link</a>
The power of perspective taking	Gillian Ku and Kathy Brewis	London Business School		<a href="#">Link</a>

## QUOTES

- “Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact. Everything we see is a perspective, not the truth” - Marcus Aurelius
- “I have one major rule: everybody — including me — has some important pieces of truth, and all of those pieces need to be honored, cherished, and included in a more gracious, spacious, and compassionate embrace.” — Ken Wilber
- “To change ourselves effectively, we first had to change our perceptions.” - Stephen R. Covey
- “It is a narrow mind which cannot look at a subject from various points of view.”— George Eliot
- “Most misunderstandings in the world could be avoided if people would simply take the time to ask, "What else could this mean?" — Shannon L. Alder
- “For what you see and hear depends a good deal on where you are standing: it also depends on what sort of person you are.” — C.S. Lewis
- 'If I speak of myself in different ways, that is because I look at myself in different ways.'- Michel de Montaigne