



How to change your perspective and change your life

By Elizabeth Perry, February 21, 2024

How to change your perspective: 15 tips

You don't have control over every aspect of your life. But you can change your perspective by learning how to recognize a fixed mindset and maintain a positive outlook when it comes to the things you can't change. Here are 15 ways to start changing perspectives in your daily life and better control your mind:

1. Reframe

Start listening to your thoughts to see if you typically track toward negativity. Do you usually frame the events of your life as positive or neutral, or do you start the day from a pessimistic place, dreading the things you have to do? Suppose your boss asks you to give a presentation. A negative perspective could cause you to immediately panic or feel like you don't want to expend the energy because you'll do a bad job. Instead, you could frame this task as an opportunity to prove yourself and strengthen your public speaking skills. Remind yourself that you're capable of presenting well and might even enjoy the task.

2. Reflect

Slow down your thoughts by reflecting on the situation at hand instead of jumping to conclusions. Many of life's difficult moments have a lesson to teach you — and most of the time, challenging scenarios are more than just "good" or "bad."

Encourage reflection, either before or after a situation that made you question your perspective, by journaling. Free-write about your day, a conflict, or a negative experience. Then, see what upsides and insights you can gather. After writing your thoughts down, you might find that your perspective needs a change.

3. Turn inner monologues positive

The voice in your head may narrate negative thoughts, like "I could never get that promotion," or, "I'll always be alone." This action can dampen your self-esteem and close off your mind to new experiences.

Spark a change of perspective by affirming yourself. The next time you're in a tense meeting, remind yourself that you have the negotiation skills to forge a solution instead of assuming that the situation is too stressful to handle.

4. Stand in someone else's shoes

Feelings can be all-consuming when you're in an emotionally charged situation. A great way to gain perspective is to see a situation from a third-party point of view, like that of a friend or family member. What would they tell you? Perhaps your best friend would say you're talented and can handle the challenge before you. Try to find that energy within yourself.

5. Assess toxic relationships

Research shows that when someone expresses an emotion, you're likely to feel it as well through emotional contagion. That means if you surround yourself with negative people, you might become more negative as well. People who make you feel bad about yourself — whether or not it's their intention — can also cloud your thinking.

If someone constantly focuses on the negative or underestimates your skills, they may influence your self-perception. Set boundaries with people who are too critical or whose bad attitudes rub off on you. Your personal and professional circles should uplift you, not bring you down.

6. Embrace change

Change is inevitable and often offers pleasant surprises, learning moments, and opportunities. But it can also be difficult to accept. Adjusting your perspective can help you overcome the fear, stress, and anxiety of change and approach it with excitement instead.

Practice gratitude for past lessons and focus on potential positive outcomes in the future. You may miss the tight-knit team you worked with in your previous role, but your new job provides exciting opportunities to reach your full growth potential.

7. Stop comparing yourself

Social comparison pushes you to rank your achievements and abilities against others', which can lead to lower self-esteem. For a perspective change, focus instead on appreciating your unique gifts. Congratulate yourself for a job well done, and cite what you did successfully without wondering how others fare and if it's better or worse than you.

Let yourself appreciate your strengths as they are.

8. Help others

A 2023 scientific review showed that volunteering boosts your social, emotional, and physical well-being. It also helps you step out of your comfort zone and gain a new perspective by empathizing with situations outside your own. When facing a life challenge, it's natural to think that your circumstances are uniquely dire. When you volunteer, you help provide solutions for others who are struggling and remind yourself you're not alone. You'll also interact with people of all kinds of backgrounds, which can open your mind to new perspectives.

9. Take care of yourself

Your general well-being can slip when you don't get enough sleep, proper nutrition, or hydration. The following physical and mental fatigue can cast a negative light on your perceptions. You've experienced this phenomenon if you've ever felt "hangry" and lashed out at someone before mealtime. Taking care of yourself can give you the mental energy you need to seek new perspectives and see situations as they are.

10. Let little things go

Some issues deserve your attention. Others are distractions that keep you from focusing on your day and doing your best work. A change in perspective could mean filtering what's worth worrying about and learning how to let things go.

Ask yourself what the consequences would be to let a situation go instead of being confrontational or ruminating on the negative. If they're insignificant, chances are that engaging with this minor upset will only consume energy you could channel into something more productive or enjoyable.

11. Learn a new skill

Low self-confidence or esteem may be at the root of your negative perspective. Feeling stuck and stagnant in life can pull you into a pessimistic thought spiral and devalue your contributions, contributing to a limiting perspective. Instead, transform and empower yourself by continuing your education.

Take a class, earn a certification, or learn a new skill — even if just for fun. If you don't have time for a course, listen to educational podcasts and read personal growth books. You'll remind yourself how capable you are and empathize with different perspectives.

12. Practice gratitude

You always have something to be grateful for. But if you don't make an effort to take stock of your gifts, you may adopt a "nothing's working out" perspective or a scarcity mindset. Shift the narrative by practicing gratitude for what you have.

Journaling can encourage you to reflect on the good things in your life. Use a prompt like "List three things you're grateful for today," or, "What do you most like about yourself?" to get the ink flowing. Instead of developing an all-or-nothing mindset, you'll adjust your perspective to appreciate what you have.

13. Accept yourself

Nobody's perfect, so when you aim for perfectionism, you fall into the trap of never feeling like you're enough.

Overcome this tendency by allowing yourself to make mistakes and learning to accept yourself. Shifting your perspective could change your mindset from, "I need to do this perfectly," to, "I'll do my best, and that's enough."

14. Ask yourself questions

Challenge the perspectives you automatically form when something goes wrong. All emotions are valid, but that doesn't mean they're well-attuned to a situation. Ask yourself whether your emotions are rational, and if you catch yourself overreacting, don't punish yourself. Explore the feelings that came up in your journal or with the help of a coach. Through that reflection, you can unpack the reasons why you hold this perspective and take steps to deconstruct them.

15. Think big

A limited perspective can prevent you from considering all aspects of a situation. Zoom out and see the bigger picture when you encounter an issue. At work, this might look like performing an in-depth analysis to understand a problem instead of jumping to conclusions. In your personal life, it could mean asking yourself if and how the current issue impacts your life. If not, take a deep breath, let feelings go, and get back to your day.