

Exercise 4.1

2 people I have formed strong opinions about

Person A: My best friend. She is very funny and I love to spend time with her. She is one of the most beautiful people on the planet. She is super compassionate and kind. She is a huge people pleaser and sometimes I get frustrated with her when she lets people walk all over her.

Person B: My boss. He is creative and unique. He is very picky and disorganized. He can't seem to make up his mind.

1. We judge ourselves more charitably than we do others

Person A: When Serena posts her BeReal, she always looks so gorgeous, but she generally waits to take hers till she is feeling good. When I take mine, I feel like I look like a bum but I take mine in the moment.

Person B: My boss makes Nancy's (our coffee shop regular) coffee really slow, but he measures things out thoroughly. When I make Nancy's coffee in much less time, I eyeball things because I have been making it for a really long time.

2. We pay more attention to others negative characteristics

Person A: Truthfully, I don't do this with my best friend because she is someone I admire most in life.

Person B: My boss is very good at getting to know our customers but I generally pay more attention to how picky he is about things and how disorganized everything is.

3. We are influenced by the obvious

Person A: I am someone Serena talks about her issues most with so I probably recognize her people pleasing tendencies more.

Person B: I work with my boss 3 days a week, so I probably notice the disorganization more than our customers who come in just for a few minutes at a time.

4. We cling to first impressions

Person A: When I met Serena for the first time, she seemed very soft-spoken so I think I sometimes fail to notice some of the times when she speaks up for herself more.

Person B: When I first met my boss, he was a little odd and peculiar. I think I sometimes disregard some of his ideas because I still think that about him.

5. We tend to assume that others are similar to us

Person A: I just assume it should be as easy for Serena to speak up and not let people take advantage of her because it is for me.

Person B: I just assume my boss prioritizes the same things as me when it comes to running the coffee shop.

6. Conclusions

These perceptions greatly influence the way we see others. I have always considered myself a fairly self-aware person who can see multiple sides to a situation but this exercise proved I still can learn more.

7. Which influences are most apt to provide you with inaccurate perceptions?

I think the obvious is a much stronger influence than people realize. Not everyone is exposed to the same person or situation as frequently as you are, so you will have much harsher and more complex perceptions since it takes up more of your time and energy. I did not recognize its impact on me until this exercise.

8. What might I do in the future to guard against inaccurate perceptions of people?

It is tedious, but I think it is important to cycle through the 5 influences on perception when I am meeting someone new who I know will be in my life for a more extended period of time. Hopefully it will lead to muscle memory and I will do this more regularly because understanding who someone truly is plays an important role in healthy relationships.

Activity 4.2

1. Background

As a Christian, I say my political beliefs should not be solely determined by the Christian narrative, while my friend disagrees and says that we must vote Republican because it's more Christian.

2. Position 1: "I'm right and you are wrong."

I am right because you cannot force non-Christians to be governed by Christian principles.

She is wrong because if you were to vote for your religion to govern the laws, this undermines the entire premise of freedom of religion which was a founding principle of the US.

3. Position 2: "You are right. I am wrong."

I am wrong because voting Democrat is voting that it is okay to kill babies and affirms the LGBTQIA+ community

She is right because the Bible tells us right from wrong and the law is the application of that in everyday life.

4. Position 3: "We are both right. We are both wrong."

We are both right because we are using the Bible and personal convictions to determine our political stances.

We are both wrong because Jesus would not have totally agreed with either major political party.

5. Position 4: "The issues may be less important than it seems; some other things may be more important."

2 ways the elements in 1-3 affect our relationships

We both have a hard time not judging each other's characters based on our differing political views. When we hit position 3, we can see we both care deeply about the Bible and living our lives accordingly, so I have gained an appreciation for her interpretation.

1 Way in which these issues seem less important

It is such a small aspect of life and our identities that it would be perfectly acceptable to even choose to just leave this topic out of conversation. Our friendship does not revolve around discussing politics.

1 Way the issue seems more important

On the other hand, particularly when it comes to LGBTIQ+ issues, generally people who vote against expanding rights for this community can be judgmental to its members and I have other friends who identify as a part of that community.

Activity 4.6

1. I think Jorge is likely to view himself highly based on his time and dedication to the facility and judge Marisa more harshly, annoyed by the fact that she isn't hiring people with different schedules. He expects his schedule to be accommodated because it has been for a long time.

Marisa would probably give herself more grace in this situation because she is having difficulty during the nurse shortage and gets annoyed that Jorge wants to cling to the same way of doing things despite the changing environment.

2. If they do not communicate how they are each feeling and do not hear one another's sides or try to have empathy for one another, they will have a very narrow view of the situation. Also, if they do not express their frustration, it is likely it will turn into resentment towards one another. If both people don't put in the effort to hear the other out, they will never be able to reach a compromise.

3. Jorge: When you asked me to change my schedule, it seemed like maybe you no longer appreciated my dedication to this facility, or that you had not tried to work around it.
Why did you ask?

Marisa: When you said you wanted to keep your schedule the same, it seemed like you disregarded my attempts at finding other staff, or that you were unwilling to compromise.

4. I think the pillow method would be beneficial to Jorge and Marisa here, since this situation is multifaceted and the outcome has a substantial effect on both of the people involved. Marisa should explain her point of view, the effort she has put into trying to find new staff and explain why she needs Jorge to change his schedule. Jorge should provide her with the space and energy to do so, listening to comprehend rather than

merely respond. Jorge should then explain why he needs to keep his schedule the same while Marisa listens to what he has to say. If done respectfully and productively, Marisa and Jorge will be able to have empathy for one another's side and move on to seeing how there is both right and wrong, or understandable and unreasonable aspects to each person's perspective. Upon reaching this point, Jorge and Marisa will likely see how the issue is not as important as it seems and they will be able to reach an adequate compromise.