

Exploring Leadership

SOCIAL AWARENESS: PERSPECTIVE

Empathy is at the heart of social awareness, and Perspective taking is one element of empathy. Leadership, teamwork, and successful relationships in general require an ability to see things from other people's perspective.

CONVERSATION STARTER:

- "Before you judge someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes." What does this well known proverb mean? Share examples from personal experience.

Perspective is point of view, the lens through which we see the world - and everyone has a different Perspective based on their background and experiences. The problem is that many people do not recognize anyone else's Perspective. They seem to believe that everyone else views the world through their eyes, which is not only egomaniacal but also foolish. The ability to understand another person's perspective is beneficial for all forms of social interactions and relationships.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

Make the Villain a Hero - Every participant will have a couple minutes to prepare a short monologue that meets these specifications:

- Choose a well-known fairy tale or Disney movie, and assume the identity of the villain. (Become him/her; speak as though you are that character using "I".)
- In character, explain your actions so that we can understand your (villain's) Perspective and sympathize. (In other words, make the villain seem like the hero.)
- Example: My name is Captain Hook. Many years ago, that troublemaker named Peter Pan CUT OFF MY HAND and FED IT TO A CROCODILE! Maybe I should have tried to get some therapy or something, but that's not really part of the pirate's code. Can you blame me for wanting to seek revenge? Do you have any idea what it is like to live with a hook for a hand for so many years?
- Participants stay in character and share their monologues with the group.

FACILITATION TIPS:

- Watch YouTube video shared in the "What You'll Need Box" ahead of time to best prepare for this lesson.
- The activity can be done with any movie or book that is widely known.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Practice Perspective by assuming a point of view other than one's own.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Computer or projector to watch this YouTube video ahead of time: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqz7UcCgbLA>



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What does assuming the role of the villain require you to do that watching the movie (or listening to the story) does not require?
- How difficult was it to assume the role of the villain? Why?
- Were you able to sympathize with the villain at all? Is it possible there is a side of the story we are not aware of? Does it change the way you see the story?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- When in real life have you tried to see the world from someone else's Perspective? What was the result?
- Why is it important to understand "where people are coming from"?
- Have you ever felt that someone did not try to see things from your Perspective? What was the outcome?



CONCLUSION:

Until you can see things from all Perspectives, you don't know the whole story and you can't empathize. Understanding Perspective will improve your leadership, teamwork, and relationships in general.

Utah State University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution and is committed to a learning and working environment free from discrimination. For USU's non-discrimination notice, see equity.usu.edu/non-discrimination.

REFERENCES

- <https://everfi.com/blog/k-12/teaching-perspective/>
- <https://empatico.org/activity-plan/perspective-taking>
- <https://www.insperity.com/blog/empathy-in-leadership/>
- <https://medium.com/@hccb/good-villains-aa54a15d812d>