



September 13, 2023

Small Shifts Lead to Large Health Improvements

A "ReFresh" start to the new school year.

There are students who rush through the doors in September with anticipation, energy and excitement.

There are students who will hesitantly enter their classrooms with nervousness and anxiety.

There are students who DRAG themselves from the parking lot wishing they were somewhere else.

And there are students at all different points along this continuum.

So, what determines how they arrive?

In a word: PERSPECTIVE

How are you arriving this September?

About a year ago, I was on a webinar when a member shared their shift in perspective from, "I have to do this..." to, "I *get* to do this". They noted how something as simple and small as that shift put them in a place of gratitude and privilege, rather than demand. This example had an impact on me, and reminded me of a mentor who once responded to my perspective on a particular scenario by asking, "How can you change the story? Here is what I see." My mentor proceeded to put a very different spin on my perspective. It was a positive, grateful spin, that forever changed how I view situations and how I work with others. A small shift, but a big change to my overall well-being.

How Does Your Perspective Define How You Are Arriving?

Your perspective is mostly formed through personal beliefs developed throughout your lifetime. You have a set of core beliefs, many of which are solid, reasonable, and beneficial for you and those around you. You also likely have limiting beliefs that hold you back from experiencing your full potential. These beliefs are developed through your life experiences or life trauma, and can be rigid and resistant to change. Limiting beliefs tend to be negative and can limit your growth by making it hard for you to see a different point of view or to change perspective.

Your perspective on life determines your interactions with others, your relationships and challenges, and how you navigate your days. You may not realize how important your perspective on life is, or how it affects those around you. If we are not open to other perspectives, our own perspective on life can have a detrimental impact on our relationships and our job performance.

Rigidity in your perspective can create negative thought patterns and rumination. We experience life through the 'tainted' lens of our perspective; that perspective is reinforced as we tell ourselves the same story, over and over, impacting our coping ability and replicating our reaction to situations. Whether our perspective leads us to be angry, frustrated, scared, or intimidated, these thoughts and emotions over time form an unhealthy environment within our mind, which can then be manifested in our lives. Over time, this can impact our mental health.

A Change in Perspective Strengthens Our Mental Health

When you have a growth mindset and the ability to see things in a different light, or even to change your perspective, you can both find a sense of calm and relieve stress and anxiety in others. This can free you from a harmful cycle of rumination about a person or a situation.

Our lives are constantly changing, and when you can adjust your mindset, you will find that you can perceive, navigate, and cope in a healthier way, reducing your stress triggers, anger, and frustration.

This ability is a key leadership skill that opens the door for meaningful relationships with staff, and for you to ultimately coach them in shifting their own perspectives. [This simple short video](#) summarizes these concepts and demonstrates the importance of this skill during times of societal change.

[This article](#) outlines specific active steps to help you change your perspective. Key points include:

- Your perspective on life determines how you relate to people, how you handle relationships and troubles, and how you live day-to-day.
- Changing your perspective is an active decision you have to make intentionally. You have to come to terms with the fact that your current perspective on life is not absolute.
- When you are constantly brooding and thinking negatively, your perspective will never change. Negative thinking tends to have a dominant effect that leads to diminished goals.
- When you are on social media, always seek the angle of the person disagreeing with you. Your opinion is not alpha; it is just an opinion that can change.
- Practicing gratitude is a great way to help shift your perspective.

This video [The Power of Perception - Change your Perspective Change Your Life!](#) encapsulates this summary.

May you have a great start to your 2023/2024 school year, and may it bring an open mindset and a “ReFreshed” perspective that enhances your leadership skills and overall well-being.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Morandini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rochelle Morandini

Director, Member Health & Well-Being

BCPVPA

If you would like to contribute or have ideas about what you would like to see in the ReFresh series, we would love to hear from you: contact rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca.