

## Tools for Getting Unstuck – Trying Out Multiple Perspectives

Here are some tools for helping you generate different perspectives on a given topic.

Step One: Before you start this process, make sure that the topic you have identified does not embody a particular perspective – state it in neutral terms. A couple of examples:

- “Coping with this horrible task” is not a neutral topic. Restate it as “My relationship to task x,” or just “Task x.”
- “Dealing with this overwhelming mess” is not a neutral topic. Restate it as “My relationship to clutter” or just “clutter” or, if you prefer “My relationship to tidiness” or “Tidiness.”
- Other examples of neutrally stated topics are “How I am going to spend the weekend,” “My relationship with my mother,” “My job,” “How I related to co-worker x,” “My vacation,” etc.

Step Two: Once you have a neutrally stated topic, clearly articulate your current perspective – the one you are standing in right now (it may shift in 30 seconds, just focus on what it is now).

Step Three: Now that you have clearly identified the perspective you are in, start generating different perspectives to try on. In each case, move your body to a different place in the room as you try on a new perspective.

Here are some tools for seeing the topic from other perspectives:

1. **Embody the perspective.** I suggest using this tool regardless of what other tools you are using. Each perspective will feel different in your body – sink into that, exaggerate it if you need to in order to really feel it. Notice what it feels like, where it lives in your body. Does this perspective make you feel big or small? Does it feel constricting or liberating? All over, or just in particular parts of your body? What do your arms and hands want to do? Where in the room do you want to be? Do you want to be sitting, standing, lying down, jumping up and down, rolling?
2. **Use different physical viewing points.** Draw or otherwise symbolize the topic and put it somewhere in the room. Then approach it from different angles, get close, move far away. Move toward or away from it slowly, or quickly, eyes open or eyes closed (go slow with that last). What comes up for you when you do this?
3. **Use a meta-view.** Imagine that you are looking at the topic from the perspective of a bird circling overhead. What do you see from there? Imagine that you are looking back at the topic/decision from 20 years in the future, or 5, or 50. What do you see from there?

4. **Ask yourself what the opposite perspective would be from the one you are in now.**
5. **Use what you see around you.** Most of the perspectives we find easily are perspectives we already know well, perspectives with well-worn paths in our left brain. To shift yourself into your right brain, where very new perspectives come from, try letting yourself use the environment around you to generate ideas. Walk around the space you are in (or walk outside), stop and look at something and ask yourself what that perspective would be (i.e. the dictionary perspective, the easy chair perspective, the piano perspective, the maple tree perspective, the window perspective, the grass basket perspective...). Embody and explore that perspective. Then do it again in a new spot.

6. **Find a metaphor and explore different perspectives that way.** Examples:

- A Zoo – how would different animals see it?
- Music – how would particular songs, or artists, see it?
- House – how would it look from different rooms in the house?
- A Garden – how would different flowers, or vegetables, see it?
- An Art Museum – how would different paintings or sculptures see it?

Any metaphor that draws on your life – has meaning for you – can work. Make sure you don't get so distracted by the metaphor that you forget to focus on the topic.

Notice that all of the perspectives you are trying out have some grain of truth in them, something you can draw on.

Step Four: Once you have tried out five or more perspectives, experiment with choosing one that is different from the one you started with and embracing that one. See what solutions and actions fall from that perspective.

Step Five: Decide to make a commitment. This can be as simple as a commitment to stand in that perspective for a week, or an hour, and notice, from a place of curiosity, what that is like. It could be as big as a commitment to do five things that showed up as actions you want to take when you were standing in a new perspective.

Step Six: Get clear on what you will have to say yes, and no, to in order to honor this commitment.

Step Seven: Make the commitment. I recommend drawing a line on the floor (real or imagined) and physically stepping over it. This is big stuff – do it big.

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