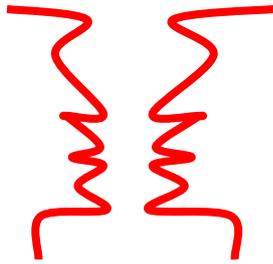


## ***Put yourself in their shoes!***

Before you try to convince someone that your views are right you really should take some time to understand their view of the world or at least their perspective on the issue of the moment.

It is possible you are both right!

What do you see when you look at the picture below?



Jot down on a piece of paper what you think you can see.

How many images or things can you see?

Whatever you see in those squiggly lines is your perception and is right for you. However, others may not see what you have. You may have some shared images and each of you may have some individual perceptions of what this drawing is.

Imagine you and I are having a conversation about this picture. I can only see the image of a chess piece—a pawn. You can only see two faces looking at each other.

What chance do we have of successfully communicating? It is possible that we could even end up arguing about who is right—not unusual in our often adversarial business environment.

Consider now if you were to say

“That’s interesting. Can you show me how you see the chess piece, the pawn, in there?”

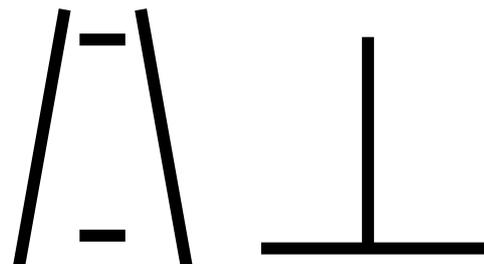
Of course I’ll be happy to tell you that I get the “pawn” by mentally filling in a curved line over the top and a straight line for the base. Hopefully you now can see the pawn.



Once you can see where I’m coming from it doesn’t matter that I can’t see your perspective because you can now talk to me from my view of the world. This little “trick” will increase your communication skills enormously.

Take time to read Stephen Covey’s “7 Habits of Highly Effective People”. This area of perception is raised early in the book.

Psychologists have studied people’s perceptions and beliefs for many years. Often what we look at is not as it seems.



Ponzo

Upside-down T

Are the horizontal lines in “Ponzo” the same length?

Are the two lines of the inverted “T” the same length?

It may not look right but the answer is “YES” to both.

We all have a perspective of the world around us that is based on *our* personal experiences. We are shaped by our parents, teachers, peer groups and others as we grow and progress through life. Recognise that there are other ways of viewing things and look beyond your prejudices that may have been based on faulty logic or irrational thought processes.

No two individuals experience the same event the same way. There may be many similarities but the experience and way it is experienced is dependent on so many factors.

We each hold onto our perspectives and, for some, to critically examine our beliefs can be a torturous experience. In the general population some things are universally perceived and accepted and these are termed paradigms. These generally accepted truths or perceptions do change from time to time as our overall knowledge of the universe expands.

Can you think of a couple of paradigms that have changed over time? The view that the earth was flat to accepting it is a globe is a great example of a paradigm shift.

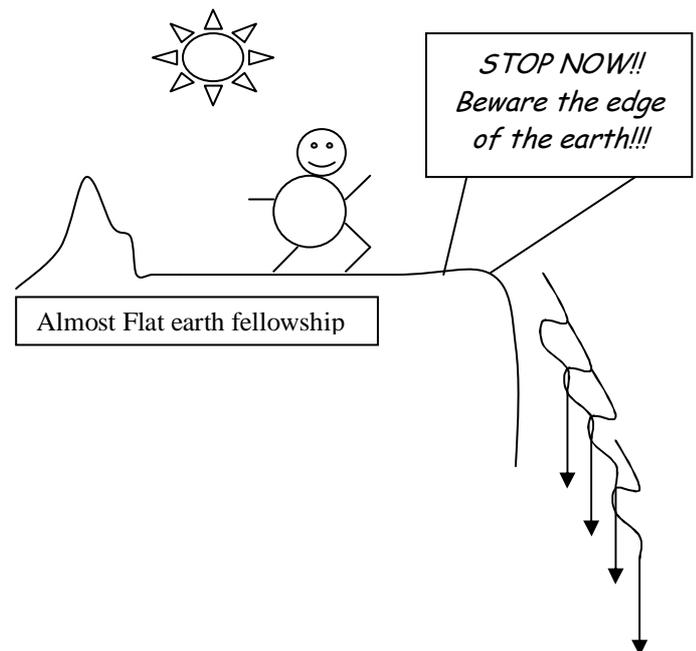
In your communications be open to alternative approaches and ways of seeing. If you don't agree it is often better to acknowledge the other persons view and move on. Alternatively ask why you hold a particular view and if that view is relevant in today's environment.

One of the major problems we have in not checking our perceptions and our view of the world is that our "maps" of the world around us can become outdated and irrelevant.

Being able to walk in the other persons' shoes can lead to opportunities and growth. Ask that

person in the mirror often "Are there are other points of view or perspectives that are valid other than my existing position?"

## *Changed paradigms?*



***Contact us for an exercise to help you put this information to work.***

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