



# PERSPECTIVE

Values for Living—Cadet Character Development Forum

## INTRODUCTION

Each Values for Living character development forum helps Civil Air Patrol members explore a virtue from multiple angles and practice that virtue through a hands-on activity. The combination of analysis and practice helps members internalize the virtue so it stays with them beyond the end of the squadron meeting.

**Perspective** describes the way we interpret situations, events, and even other people. To become effective leaders, we must be aware of our perspectives and the factors that shape them. Changing our perspectives can transform challenges into opportunities and adversaries into allies. In this lesson, we examine how perspectives contribute to happiness, success, and resilience.

## PRECLASS CHECKLIST

Prior preparation is essential to success. Please prepare the following well ahead of time:

- All media installed and checked out
- Phase Three cadet orientation/training completed
- Participation awards such as candy or granola bar treats available
- Room arrangements complete

## ATTENTION GETTER

**LARGE GROUP FACILITATED BY CHAPLAIN/CDI/COMMANDER (5-10 MINUTES.)**

Select one of the following videos that best meets the needs of your audience. If you cannot use media at your unit meeting, you may want to re-tell the story depicted in option #2. You may also choose to tell your own story about the effects of our perceptions.

**Option 1:** This motivational video argues that our perspectives determine our reality and our outlooks shape our outcomes. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1il2Z46T\\_PQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1il2Z46T_PQ)

**Option 2:** This story illustrates how interpretation can transform our understanding of events and other people. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n5E8gyDPs70>

## RECOGNIZING THE DESIRED BEHAVIOR

### SMALL GROUP FACILITATED BY PHASE III CADET (15 MINUTES.)

- Perspective does not need to be complex. It can be as simple as the difference between the glass being half-empty and half-full. Think about yourself for a moment; most of the time, do you see the glass as half-empty or half-full?
- When you see the glass as half-empty, what are you more likely to notice and feel? How do you tend to talk when you see the glass as half-empty?
- When you see the glass as half-full, what are you more likely to notice and feel? How do you tend to talk when you see the glass as half-full?
- What can "glass-half-empty" people contribute to a team? What can "glass-half-full" people contribute to a team? Are teams stronger with one, the other, or a mix of both? Why?
- Can you describe a time in your own life when your perspective changed? What prompted the change? What happened when you began to see things differently?

## APPLYING THE DESIRED BEHAVIOR

### LARGE GROUP FACILITATED BY CHAPLAIN/CDI/COMMANDER (15 MINUTES)

Successful leaders need self-awareness (see Learn to Lead I.11). However, we often fail to notice our own perspectives! Becoming aware of our perspectives requires taking a careful look at ourselves. Facilitators should choose several of the following questions or propose similar questions appropriate to their units.

- Perspectives—like attitudes—are contagious. The people around you will change the way you see the world. Who has had the greatest influence on your perspective? How has this person taught you to understand situations and people?
- New information can change our perspectives (as you may have seen in the video). Can you describe something you learned, read, or heard that changed the way you see the world, another person, or yourself?
- How do your personal values and our CAP Core Values affect your perspectives? For example, how does your commitment to volunteer service influence the way you see other people? How does your commitment to excellence affect the way you understand setbacks?
- Physical factors can also affect our perspectives. How do you see the world differently after a good night's sleep, when you are hungry, or after a workout?
- Perspective is often tied to identity. You may have heard the expression, "to the hammer, all the world's a nail." With which attributes or roles do you most strongly identify? Son or

daughter? Student? Athlete? CAP member? How do those identities affect the way you see the world?

- Perhaps you have heard the saying, "What you aim at determines what you see." Our goals can narrow our vision in both helpful and unhelpful ways. Can you describe a time when your focus on goal made you miss something you might have seen otherwise? How about a time when your determination to achieve a goal made you re-examine a situation?
- Recent experiences also influence our perspectives. What happened to you earlier today that is affecting your attitude now? What are you expecting to happen soon that might be shaping your perspective?
- We have examined some of the things that can affect our perspectives. Suppose you needed a new or different perspective on some issue. Where might you start?
- Perspective is part of CAP's Five Pillars of Wellness and Resilience (under the pillar of Spirit). How does being aware of your perspective make you more resilient? How can changing your perspective (often called "reframing") make you more resilient?

## ACTIVITY

LED BY SMALL GROUP FACILITATORS OR ONLINE INSTRUCTOR (15-20 MINUTES.)

### Activity #1: Changing Perspectives

In this lesson, we have identified some of the factors that shape our perspectives. If we can change these factors, we can change our perspectives. For each scenario, brainstorm about ways to change your perspective in response to a setback. Your goal in each case should be to promote resilience or "living with excellence."

Small group facilitators may choose from these scenarios or propose different scenarios according to the needs of their units.

- Despite an outstanding career in the Civil Air Patrol, excellent grades, and peak physical fitness, you were not accepted to the United States Air Force Academy. Your fear that childhood dream of flying an F-22 has been crushed.
- Since COVID-19 forced your unit to switch to online meetings, your interest in CAP has been decreasing. CAP is not as much fun when you cannot see your friends in person and perform hands-on activities. You are thinking about quitting when your membership is up for renewal next month.
- You have been working for several months on a pet project: your first novel. Things are finally starting to come together. You have charted the plot beats and understand your characters and their motivations. As you sit down at your computer for your daily writing session, you cannot find your saved document. All your work has been lost.

- COVID-19 has been tough on your family. You are not enjoying “virtual” schooling and your parents are under a lot of extra stress at work. Just when you thought it could not get any worse, your father tells you that he has lost his job.
- You have been playing basketball almost every day for the past three years. Tryouts are next month and you are hoping to land a spot on your school's varsity basketball team. While practicing in your driveway, you hear a loud pop before collapsing to the pavement. The doctor tells you your knee will need surgery. You will miss tryouts and most of the upcoming season.

### **Activity #2: Discussing Prejudice**

This lesson provides an excellent opportunity to discuss current controversies related to prejudice. If your cadets are mature enough, consider posing the following questions in a large group setting, with the commander, chaplain, or CDI facilitating the discussion.

- One of the most crucial issues surrounding perspective in our day concerns prejudice. How can you use what we have learned in this lesson to understand prejudice and consider ways to address it?
- What is prejudice and how is it related to perspective?
- Where does prejudice come from?
- How does prejudice affect our society?
- What will it take to change prejudicial perspectives?

## **LESSON SUMMARY AND WRAP-UP**

### **LARGE GROUP FACILITATED BY CHAPLAIN/CDI/COMMANDER (2 MINUTES)**

Perspective describes the way we interpret situations, events, and even other people. We began this lesson by examining our own perspectives and exploring some factors that influence our perspectives. Using those factors, we practiced using new perspective to “reframe” setbacks.

How can you make perspective work for you? First, practice becoming more aware of your own perspective. There may be more to any situation that you notice at first glance. Second, embrace flexibility. Seek out new and different perspectives, welcome different points of view. New perspectives often reveal new opportunities. Third, consider how your perspective can benefit the people around you. Your optimism and resilience will inspire and empower your teammates.

Perspective can show you the way through setbacks. Perspective can turn adversaries into allies. And perspective can unify teams in service to community, state, and nation.

## QUOTABLE QUOTES

“There are invaluable insights and lessons to be learned when you open up to different perspectives.” — Abhishek Ratna

“An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered. An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly considered.” — G.K. Chesterton

“When we focus so hard on the tiny details, we leave ourselves open to miss the bigger picture. Details matter and so does an eagles' point of view.” — Rosangel Perez

“The first to plead his case seems right until another comes and examines him.” — Proverbs 18:17

“We can complain because rose bushes have thorns or rejoice because thorns have roses.”  
— Alphonse Karr

“A man sees in the world what he carries in his heart.” — Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

“The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function.” — F. Scott Fitzgerald