

Taking an Alternative Perspective

One of the most helpful social skills is the ability to look at a situation from someone else's perspective. This skill increases our ability to avoid arguments, get along with others, and compromise.

When you find yourself getting angry, frustrated, or upset, take a step back and say to yourself that no one has to win or be right. Then,

Step 1. Stop the discussion and ask the person to summarize their perspective.

Step 2. Listen closely to what they say, rather than just thinking about your perspective. Repeat back to them what you heard them say.

Step 3. Once they agree you have heard and understood their perspective, thank them for sharing and agree to have a discussion again once you have thought about their perspective for a while.

You don't have to agree with someone else's perspective or acknowledge they are right, you just need to accept that everyone has a right to their own opinion.

STEP 1. Stop the discussion and ask the person to summarize their perspective.

For example, "Let me make sure I understand your perspective. Could you please repeat your 2 or 3 main points, as simply as possible?"

Now write what you could say in your own words:

Step 2. Listening Skills

- Don't interrupt
- Make eye contact and nod to show you understand and are listening
- Focus on what they are saying, rather than what you want to say
- Ask questions to clarify what the person is saying
- Paraphrase their point of view

Step 3. Once they agree you have heard and understood their perspective, thank them for sharing and agree to have a discussion again once you have thought about their perspective for a while. For example: "I hadn't thought about it like that. Thank you for sharing your perspective. Let me think about this for a while, and we can talk about it another time."

Now write what you could say in your own words:
