

# Perspective

A person with their back to the camera, wearing a light-colored, hooded jacket and matching pants, stands on a weathered wooden pier. They are looking out over a vast, flat, hazy landscape that extends to the horizon. The sky is a pale, uniform color, and the ground is a mix of light and dark patches, suggesting a dry or sandy terrain. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

Perspective is far more than simply a point of view. Perspective is an understanding of reality. It is not merely what we see, but the experience of it: what we think, what we feel, what we know. Our ability to reflect on what we perceive is what makes us human, and the many ways of perceiving reality are what differentiates us from one another. Perspective is intricately woven into our identities as individuals.

Everyone has a perspective, and everyone's perspective is different. This fact can make life difficult: If everyone saw and felt exactly the same, we would have very few problems. Yet, a globally homogenous perspective would also make life rather dull. One of the many wonders of humanity is that despite all of the people who exist, who have existed, and who will exist, each person has, has had, and will have a different understanding of reality. They will have the ability to change, evolve, morph, and rearrange the views of the world, as we consistently learn to perceive each other and ourselves in new and different ways.

It is disturbingly easy to become attached to a single perspective and to ignore all others. And why not? After all, perspective is what makes each person unique. Why should anyone have to change his or her perspective because of someone else? Because this ignorance has been the cause of war and suffering throughout our existence. Asking this is much like asking: *Why do we need compassion?*

We need compassion because we

need each other, and we cannot live with each other unless we understand one another. So while perspective is a major indicator of individuality, this openness to experiencing the views of others is a key element of harmony and humanity.

Perspective, identity, compassion—these are the keys to a rich life and a peaceful world. In the following three essays—“A Simple Push,” “Sugar,” and “Biking Wrong”—the authors’ courage to step away from their own perspectives and into another’s world, and their courage to share their experiences, demonstrate this truth. Each of the following pieces reflects differentiating points of view and unique, fresh perspectives of ourselves, of other people, and of life. The endearing personalities of these skilled writers combined with their bold receptiveness to change makes each of these essays simultaneously touching, inspirational, and a pleasure to read.

The writers reveal that the best way to gain perspective in our own lives is to experience life from another’s point of view. Leaving their comfort zones in order to see life through a different lens, all three of these authors discover a new sense of purpose and, as a result, grow from their experiences. After reading these essays, you may feel like you’ve gained some wisdom as well. At the very least, these essays will hopefully persuade you to re-evaluate your own perspective.

That’s our perspective anyway.

—Maura Buckley,  
Emily Goldberg, and T.J. Tree