

## Perspective

This is a tough lesson. I have had to learn, and relearn this several times. At my day job, I have recently been involved in interactions which required an understanding of perspective, both mine and the other party's.

One of my tasks involves being a Covid-era door greeter, ensuring that visitors to the medical facility have a current negative Covid test, and that they are properly wearing a mask. It is a job that I do not particularly like, because it has been thrust upon me in addition to my other full-time duties, and I am constantly getting up from my desk to greet the visitors. However, I do understand the need to protect our patients by ensuring that everyone coming in is covid-free.

A typical interaction would go as follows: Mr Jones enters the facility. I hear him enter from my desk and enter the lobby to greet him.

ME: Hello. Do you have a negative Covid test?

MR JONES: Test? I did not know that I had to test.

ME: That's okay. The Department of Health requires visitors to provide a negative Covid test prior to visiting. I will give you a home test kit, and you can test yourself right now.

MR JONES: I do not know how to do this. This is so stupid.

ME: It's okay. The test is very easy. There are directions in the box, including pictures. Most of our visitors are able to test quite easily. I do have to ask you to step outside and test in your car. After you have completed the test, you need to wait 10 minutes for the results and then come right back in and I will get you in to see your person.

MR JONES: (sigh) Great. I only have a few minutes to see my mom and now I have to test. (sigh) Alright. I will be back.

ME: (upon Mr. Jones' return 15 minutes later) How did you do? Let me check your test. Oh, good. You are negative.

MR JONES: I knew I was negative, but you have to waste my time with this test.

ME: I am sorry, but it is required by the Dept of Health. Now that we have that done, go ahead and sign in.

MR. JONES: I do not know what room my mom is in.

ME: I can help you with that. When you are done signing in, I will take you right to her room. She was up and enjoying her breakfast when I went past her room this morning.

MR. JONES: Great. Thank you.

In this scenario, which is typical of my interactions throughout a weekly period, I feel great about my input. I have welcomed the visitor, assisted them with getting a test completed, assisted with the sign in process, gave him positive information about his mother, and showed

him to her room. No matter how negative he was, I rocked this exchange! I go back to my desk with a sense of accomplishment.

Mr. Jones, however, has a completely different version of this story. He gets to his mother's room and tells her that he was late because the lady at the door was rude and made him take a covid test even though he knows he does not have Covid, and he did not need one two days to see her in the hospital.

Imagine my surprise when my manager approaches me and tells me I have to do better with customer service. What? I was helpful, engaging, checked all of the boxes, and got in him just as soon as I could. How could I possibly do any better? I examined the exchange and reviewed some materials that I had accumulated about customer service. In my file was a piece about perspective, and understanding that my perspective is only one half of the picture. In order to understand the other side of perspective, I have to put myself in Mr. Jones' shoes.

It will take a bit of soul searching and a bit of eating crow to put yourself in the other person's shoes and imagine a realistic perspective of how they view your interaction. You really have to be open to self-reflection.

If I were to imagine myself as Mr. Jones, I would imagine that I am partly excited, partly doing my duty, and partly feeling put upon to have to go visit my mother. Regardless, as a good son, I make some time to do so. I get to the facility and am immediately stonewalled by being told I have to take a covid test when I am barely six feet into the lobby. And then, I am told that I have to sit in my car to do it. This is not very welcoming, or accommodating to my schedule.

Upon examining perspective in any situation, business, personal or otherwise, perhaps the biggest lesson to be learned is understanding that other perspectives exist and that those perspectives must be visualized in order to fully understand the complexities of the interaction. Understanding that there is another perspective does not mean accepting that as the better vantage point, but rather employing a comprehensive model from all perspectives to gain optimum understanding.

Easier said than done, right? Welcome to my world.

*Make peace with your broken pieces.*      *Smudge*