

## 24. Perception vs. Reality

**JUST THE FACTS:** Perception is one's ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through our senses. It is a way of understanding or interpreting something. Sometimes the way we perceive the actions or statements of those around us may or may not reflect what is actually intended. This is generally due to our previous life experiences and/or what we believe. The purpose of this activity is to get participants to reflect on and consider different perceptions and how to be proactive in making decisions based on those perceptions.



### Time

15 minutes



### Materials

- Activity 24
- Optional: Flip chart and markers



### Directions

Write the following on a flip chart OR have one copy of the sentence for each participant:

**FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED  
WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS.**

Ask the group to count the number of "Fs" in the sentence (allow 15 seconds). On average, most people will only spot three or four of the Fs in the sentence. There are actually six. (The brain tends to skip the word "of," or perceive it as "versus"). Point: One's perception may not always be correct.

Read the following short paragraphs aloud (or ask a youth participant to read):

1. Bob's daughter is on the basketball team, but she doesn't get to play much. His daughter works hard and never complains, but Bob believes this is yet another injustice in his life and his daughter is not getting a fair shake. Bob becomes annoyed and irritated. He angrily confronts the coach, embarrassing his daughter.
2. John's daughter is on the basketball team, but she doesn't get to play much. His daughter works hard and never complains. John believes that the coach wants to win and most likely plays the girls that will help him reach that goal. John feels proud of his daughter's commitment to the team despite not getting to play very much. John offers to help his daughter improve her basketball skills.

Is there any difference in the events as they were described? What is the critical factor in the different ways each person reacted? PERCEPTION! Bob believed the coach's actions were totally unfair - and John believed the coach was generally fair. Why might each person perceive the situation differently?

Now, discuss the four situations listed in Activity 24. How might different people react to these situations? What might their reactions be based on? If a friend found him or herself in one of these situations, what advice would you offer?



### Conclusion

As a group, discuss some of the strategies you might use when faced with a situation similar to the ones in this activity. Is there always a right or wrong way to respond? Are there certain things you should always try to do? If so, what are they?



### Journaling Activity

Think about how you perceive yourself and how others perceive you. Do you think both are the same? Explain. What are some things you can do to change others' perception of you?



### Extension Activity

Use Google Images (or a similar search engine) to locate different posters or illustrations of perception vs. reality. Print them out and offer reasoning as to why perceptions and realities might not always be the same.

## Activity 24 – Perception Vs. Reality

### WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

1. Your boss is talking to another employee as you walk into work. You have reason to believe they are talking about you. This makes you feel uncomfortable and upset.
2. A close friend gets to go on a senior trip, all expenses paid. You are jealous that this friend does not have to pay a dime - his or her parents are paying for everything. You consider not going because you have to pay for part of your trip and do not think it is fair.
3. At work, you developed a new way to organize the filing system that makes it easier for the office staff to find documents. You think your supervisor is going to take all the credit.
4. You are a nurse. The patient you are working with is ungrateful and rude, is always finding fault in everything you do, and is making your life miserable.