

Many People- Many Perspectives

Lalita Yaduvanshi



Generally when thinking or speaking about any theme sometimes it is possible to arrive at a consensus of various viewpoints while sometimes it is not. To look at the world with open eyes everybody has their own perspective. It is according to one's thinking that one looks at the world. Our thinking impacts the extent to which we will be successful in life. We should always look at ourselves, our family and friends with a positive perspective and give them positivity too. In any matter in life, before one adopts a rigid perception it is important to understand the various dimensions and then arrive at any conclusion. When we look for possibilities despite adversity it displays our positive attitude towards life. This is because sitting idle without making any effort is of no use.

If we want to be successful in life then we have to cultivate a positive outlook. The percentage of our success will not increase until and unless we sow the seed of positive thinking in our minds. We often hear around us in some contexts that people say we have not heard much about this situation or that they think in a particular way about it and what you think must be your perspective. During conversations and dialogue we often see that our viewpoint become rigid manifestations of the ego and we find it very difficult to understand other people's ideas and become intolerant to perspectives that do not match ours. For any dialogue to be meaningful it is important for each person to freely express their ideas and then allow open discussion and deliberation on each of those ideas in a way that is productive and positive.

Being a teacher it is impossible for me to talk about something and yet not once mention students or the classroom, thus I wish to share one anecdote from my diary which took place only some time ago when students shared their viewpoints about a certain topic and through that discussion I was enabled to understand their minds and thinking.

This happened on 4th February, 2015 when we were working on a story. The story was narrated through talking-masks and in it illustrations conveying various emotions were drawn. My purpose behind organising this activity was to help children look

at any picture, incident, news, emotion, story or object and by hearing, reading or looking at it understanding the inherent emotion/expression in it and then in simple and clear language explaining their reasons for arriving at that conclusion.

In the beginning everybody closed their eyes. They were given instructions slowly and in a low voice that they should recall any incident or emotion that they went through and would like to share it with the others, and once they had thought of it they could slowly open their eyes and continue to sit without disturbing the other children. The children followed my instructions and in a precise manner shared what they had recalled with the others and also told what that emotion was associated with. While some emotions were associated with marriage, books while others were associated with the house and other things. Then I asked them to link what they said with any of the four mask faces. According to their own thinking they chose a particular face and explained themselves. The children realised that when we hear, read or see something we may have a pleasant feeling while others may not. And behind this everybody may have different reasons.

To take the class forward I started off with the next activity. Two illustrations were drawn on the blackboard. No discussion happened on the illustrations. The children were asked to look at them and think how they felt about them and why. The children were allotted some time for this. I instructed them to associate the illustrations with one mask face and then explain why they had chosen it. Looking at the various perspectives and interpretations of the pictures that the children came up with had amused me. Interpreting a single picture one child said- I like the picture because it shows that the river is close to the school and so the children can have a good time swimming and coming to school while another child chose the face with the sad expression because he thought that the picture resembled children going back after a good day at school.

All the children hear each other and the reasons they gave for their choices and interpretations very

carefully, after hearing them all I asked them to do one last thing. I asked them to think whether they would look at the story as having a happy-ending or a sad one and why? When during the story did you feel happy? When did you become sad? What troubled you? What made you angry? Which aspects of the story did you like the most and which ones were the most disappointing? I asked them all to go back home and also think about all these questions and I said that we would discuss everything next day in the class. I wrapped up the class and just when I was going out of the classroom a child asked- Ma'am, when you drew these illustrations what exactly was going on in your mind?

'Viewpoint/perspective' depends on what we have heard from our childhood, the kind of environment

that we have grown up in. While for some people time and new experiences alter their viewpoint/perspective for many it may remain the same throughout. Everybody has their own way of thinking and even the same situation can be looked at differently by various individuals. Whatever that a person does is the best according to him/her but sometimes we must also try to think from the other person's point of view too. To make our perception of the world strong and clear we have to alter the way that we see, think and understand the world and those around us because it is the way that we see, think and interpret shapes us and influences the way that we lead our lives. It is important that our orientation is positive and optimistic and has space for dialogue and debate.

Lalita currently teaches Hindi and English at Azim Premji School, Tonk, Rajasthan. She has a Bachelor's degree in Education and master's degrees in Hindi and Education. She has been working as a teacher in different institutions since 2005. Her hobbies include reading, listening to music, and travelling. She may be contacted at lalita.yaduvanshi@azimpremjifoundation.org