

## Another perspective

By Jasen Obermeyer

?You never really know a man until you stand in his shoes and walk around in them.?

I love this quote from *To Kill A Mockingbird*. It's probably one of my favourite quotes in literature, and just in general.

Trying to see a situation, or understand someone from his or her perspective is something I try to live by. It's not easy though, as no two people are the same. When we are set in our ways, and we want something, or take a stand on a topic or issue, it's hard even just to compromise, let alone reach a mutual agreement.

However, if you come to see the other person's point of view, it can be very powerful. It might even change your position.

There have been times where I changed my stance when I looked at it from someone else's perspective. Not just putting one's self in their shoes and pretending to see it physically from their set of eyes, but feel what they feel, think how they think.

It can be used in everyday life; at work, home, politics, you name it. Of course, that's how several professions operate: criminal profilers, undercover agents, lawyers, and psychologists to name a few, to varying degrees.

The best profession might actually be advertising. Its whole goal is to sell a product, give rise to an issue, and make you feel something. None work better than commercials through the eyes or shoes of a certain individual; a child watching their parents fight over struggling to pay bills; a person sleeping on a park bench. Just some of these help provide a different view of the world.

Movies like *Captain Phillips*, and *Black Hawk Down* have certain moments where characters from different parts of the world interact. When *Captain Phillips* said to the head Somali pirate who captured him, ?There's got to be something other than being a fisherman and kidnapping people,? and the pirate responds, ?Maybe in America,? it was a very powerful moment, because it helped show that other perspective, make us at least understand where the pirates are coming from.

Two friends of mine are on complete opposites of the political spectrum. One is very Liberal, the other Conservative. So in this year's municipal ? and in particularly provincial ? elections, things got heated when the three of us hung out. They would go at each other, trying to explain how their way of thinking and how things should be done is right, but they're so entrenched in their ways it's almost impossible for them to come to any agreement.

And then there is me right in the middle, just listening, taking it all in. I try to be a mediator, argue for and against both of their perspectives. But ultimately, it's up to them to be do it themselves in order to not rip each other's heads off.

In any day situations, trying to see it from another perspective allows you to gain a broader understanding of it. Being able to do this allows you to empathise for someone, which goes deeper than sympathy. Knowing how someone feels and understanding hoe they feel are two very different things.

When I'm with family or friends, either out or at their place, I think of how they live, why they do the things they do. Often it sparks my interest, other times amazes me. Understanding a lifestyle can be even deeper than just a situation.

In today's world, it seems a lot of people don't try to follow this philosophy. It's always a ?me, me, me? mentality. Thinking of someone else once in awhile, understanding where he or she are coming from isn't too much to ask.

Imagine how viewing things from a different perspective would have, and could have changed the world. How many wars could have been avoided? How many have been avoided by using this philosophy?

Unfortunately, this way of seeing and thinking doesn't apply to many politicians and other people in power. Maybe that trade deal reached wouldn't have benefited just one side if that side thought how it would affect the other. Perhaps businesses and politicians are so bad and greedy because they don't use this philosophy even a bit.

I'm not saying to live by this 100 per cent to the maximum all the time. At the end of the day, we can never truly step into someone else's shoes and walk around in them, but we can gain a bit more humility, and an understanding. Try it out. It might give you a deeper appreciation for someone.

Maybe another perspective is just what we need.