

Changing Perspectives

By Suze Hargraves

As the first month of the new year winds down, we're going to take a look at a simple word that influences everything you do, think or say; perspective. The Cambridge Dictionary of American English defines perspective as "a particular way of viewing things that depends on one's experience and personality." In other words, perspectives are self-made roadmaps to how we live, think and feel. Perspectives on health, for instance, influence how healthy we are by influencing what care we seek and how we think about health care issues. The good news about these little road maps is that they aren't carved in stone. You can change the way you perceive your world. Developing positive perspectives on health issues involves two simple elements: introspection and education.

Introspection is the simple (but by no means easy) process of taking a long hard look at ourselves and why we feel the way we feel about certain things. If you grew up in a house where comfort and security was defined by food, you might find that as an adult your perspective on eating and your eating habits are colored by those past experiences. By looking within, we can recognize the pattern and take steps to redefine our perspectives in a healthier way. I'm not saying it's an easy process, but it's something everyone can do that will allow positive change to happen. Some of us can do this alone, some with friends and others may find themselves more comfortable with professional help, but no matter which method of introspection you decide is right for you, you'll reap tremendous benefits. A good online resource to help start the introspection process is changing-personal-habits.suite101.com/.

Education is paramount to changing our perspective on any issue. The more you know, the more with which you have to work. Often we think we know what we need to know about a subject and form ways of thinking based on that information. The problem is that we may not have complete or correct information. For instance, if you always thought yoga was not a viable exercise option for you because your perspective is based on some pictures you've seen or a book you scanned at the store that looked impossible, you need to find out more and make a truly educated decision. Get a beginner class under your belt. Talk to instructors and other practitioners. Build your perspective based on facts and personal experience. You may find that what you thought you knew isn't the case at all. Develop your perspectives by educating yourself before you dig into a point of view.

Your perspectives on health issues, like diet and exercise, affect how health will manifest in your life. If you approach every hurdle from a negative perspective your outcome is likely to be negative. Use the tools of education and introspection to make sure your perspective is rational, positive and based on well-researched facts. Don't let yourself just fall into a certain way of thinking because "that's just the way you are."

You can change your world from the inside out by changing your perspectives. Take control and give yourself the power to make positive, long lasting changes.

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