

Reframe your thinking... Improve your planet

By Ashley Brown, M.Ed., Public Information & Event Coordinator
The Center for Management and Professional Development

The office environment is a microcosm of real life – a not-so-distant planet of its own, inhabited by individuals whom you may or may not have chosen to be your neighbor. Nonetheless, these earthlings with their diverse personalities, beliefs and perceptions are sharing your space for a large portion of the day; and for the sake of the greater good, you must learn to work effectively with them.

Success depends on the outcome. If you are or seek to be a leader within your team, it's reasonable to say that you've faced your share of challenges in dealing with one or more of your co-workers or employees. Based on my 20-plus years of experience within both the private and public sector, as both an employee and a manager, personalities and perceptions can be either the greatest architects of - or the biggest obstacles to - the success of an organization.

Leaders get a successful outcome based on the approach taken with an individual or towards a situation. Leaders *know* this. Leaders also understand that true leadership is learned, practiced and polished.

Leaders are learners. I believe I am a leader, and I am also a dedicated student of [Neuro Linguistic Programming \(NLP\)](#). NLP is an internal and external communication model of how we send and receive verbal and nonverbal messages, process that information and how that information puts us in a particular state (i.e., frame of mind). As an adjunct in undergraduate Public Speaking, NLP has helped me become a better facilitator to my students.

NLP has also taught me a valuable exercise called **"reframing,"** which means to change the meaning of something by putting it in a different context or perspective. It allows me to view or "reframe" an experience that may be unpleasant as a "not-the-end-of-the-world" event when put into a long-term, big picture view of life.

Reframing is often referred to as a way to stop self-limiting beliefs. It is frequently used with those suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and is one of the most useful techniques I have found in dealing with circumstances that are less than ideal. *In an office environment, reframing would be useful in finding positive intention that will help you refocus when you are faced with challenges and/or difficulties on your team.*

For example, **"We've always done it this way,"** is one of the most frustrating statements ever heard by those of us who consider ourselves creative thinkers and leaders. With reframing, instead of just accepting this statement, we ask the question, **"why,"** and begin to drill down towards an alternative and, ultimately, better outcome.

Mastering the ability to reframe not only helps reach solutions more quickly, it unlocks and improves upon many team-building skills including creative thinking, innovation and empathy.

By taking action to intentionally stop and consider other avenues, we immediately begin to look at things "in a different light," which translates challenges into opportunities to learn, and transfers focus away from problems and onto solutions. With practice, reframing becomes second nature.

Intention and action are the nutrients with which you grow your planet into a place of productivity. I intend to live on a planet where my work is rewarding and teammates work together for the common purpose of organizational success.

So, I ask you, **"What planet are you on?"**

**"You can't see change,
until you change the way you see."**

Raimy Diaz



Ashley Brown, BA, M.Ed. holds a Bachelor of Arts in English Communications with emphasis in Journalism and Performing Arts, and a graduate degree in Education, both from William Woods University. Her training includes a diploma in Broadcast Journalism from the former Defense Information School at Ft. Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, and certificates in Executive Leadership from the University of Notre Dame – Mendoza College of Business. Ashley currently serves as an adjunct in undergraduate Public Speaking at Columbia College, and now serves [The Center for Management and Professional Development](#) as the Public Information and Events coordinator.

"We inspire current and potential leaders on their journey to excellence."

www.training.oa.mo.gov

To receive this and all other articles by Ashley, [click here.](#)