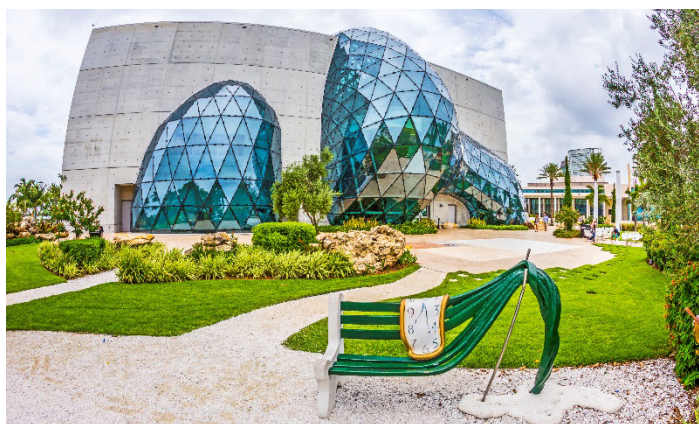


Gaining Perspective

Chances are if you have spent any amount of time in the Tampa Bay area, you've probably been to the Dali Museum in St. Petersburg. Salvador Dali was a famous surrealist artist who created brilliant and complicated masterpieces of art. If you have ten people looking at the same piece, you may have ten different interpretations. Where you stand in the museum, the lighting in the room, and the information you know about the piece all affect what you see when you look at one of his intricate pieces of art. Dali was a master at bending your point of view.



Your perspective is just that — your point of view. And your point of view changes based on where you are standing. Not just physically standing but where in life you are standing. This is influenced by any number of things — an experience you've had, maybe a hardship you've overcome, an influence from another person. Your perspective is the lens through which you view things.

Having too narrow of a perspective can cause you to view things only one way and perhaps continue to do things only one way. Broadening your perspective can help you identify multiple aspects and impacts of an issue. It can help you to think outside of the box and perhaps be more creative in looking at practices and processes.

Being able to change your perspective is difficult, even more so if you've been seeing things the same

way for a long period of time. Truly being able to do that is one of the most important competencies of effective leaders. Being able to change how you view a situation or an individual can be beneficial to you and create new scenarios and possibilities for you and your team. It can make you more adaptable, coachable and resilient.

Some things you can do at work to help broaden your perspective:

1. Be aware of any unconscious biases you may have. Are you making decisions about situations or people based on assumptions? Ask yourself, "Do I know this to be true?" and "What else might be true?"
2. Expand your view when people are telling you, "There is no way we can do that" or "This is the way we've always done it." Ask yourself the question, "What else might be possible" or "What else might work?"
3. Ask for other opinions. When you are stuck, ask someone from the outside or someone with limited information about the situation. Sometimes fresh eyes offer great solutions to old problems.
4. Keep an open mind. Don't be afraid to answer the question "Why?" This is an important question and if you can't answer it, maybe you need a change in perspective. As a leader, your vision is powerful and can greatly influence those you lead beyond what you may even realize. Make changes when you need to.

You make a choice when you decide how to view yourself, your life, and your relationships. That choice can determine your success so choose your view wisely. If you feel as though your point of view could use a change or you need some fresh perspective, peruse a few of Dali's works; that should do it.

***"The manager has a short-range view;
the leader has a long-range perspective."***

~ Warren G. Bennis