

PRACTICING PERSPECTIVE TAKING

Whenever you speak to someone, and especially someone you disagree with, seek to understand their point of view. This is called perspective taking – literally taking another person’s perspective into consideration. Try to keep your tone curious, not combative, when engaging across differences. You might be surprised by the meaningful conversations that follow. There is always something to be learned about others – and even ourselves – when we dive a little deeper.

Below are some questions to help with perspective taking. If you notice the person is open to listening, try sharing your own answers to some of these questions (you can note them here). See if you can work toward mutual understanding.

How did you develop your beliefs? Who taught them to you?

What life experiences shaped your current perspective?

What fears do you have about other’s beliefs?

What is most meaningful to you? How do your beliefs reflect those values?

You can also practice active and reflective listening with someone you already know and trust. Try asking them a few open-ended questions and see what you learn. Here are a few to get you started:

What are some religious or spiritual practices that are most meaningful to you?

Can you tell me something about your upbringing that shaped the way you view the world today?

Who had the greatest influence on your life? How does that shape the way you view your own life?

