



Assignment 2: Perspective Taking

Background:

This exercise is inspired by themes and practices I've encountered through mindfulness and compassion training, though the principles and procedures are not unique to those realms. Similar approaches are founding in counseling, social work, and many other domains. The idea is, as the cliché goes, to be able to put yourself in someone else's shoes. However, I ask that you do more than just think through a couple of logistical details. Instead, really consider the full array of thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations we each have.

Learning Objective(s):

- Gain practice considering the perspectives of beings other than yourself
- Engage in an imaginative process that involves thinking, emotions, and even body sensations
- Practice writing in a non-academic format

Core concepts/terms:

- Perspective Taking
- Storytelling

Evaluation Criteria: You will be graded based on your demonstration of your ability to:

- Try and write out of what may be your comfort zone.

Your task is to engage in an exercise that involves considering the mental, emotion, and physical experiences, in the context of our changing climate. You will complement the work of assignment 1 by taking a slightly different approach to considering your own perspectives. You also will learn about one of the many amazing youth climate leaders around the world and consider their perspective. And, you'll push your imagination out into the future.

Step 1: Look in mirror for 30 to 60 seconds and then reflect about your own life in our changing climate.. Notice your thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations as you look and reflect. Then answer the following three questions in three to five sentences, writing in the first-person present tense:

- How is climate change affecting your life right now?
- What motivates you to do the work you are doing?
- What keeps you awake at night about the future?

Step 2: Select one of the youth climate leaders featured here

(<https://www.vox.com/identities/2019/10/11/20904791/young-climate-activists-of-color>) or here (<https://www.earthday.org/19-youth-climate-activists-you-should-follow-on-social-media/>), preferably one whose life is quite different from your own. After reading about their background and perhaps reading some of their original writings or listening to some of their digital speeches if available, spend 30 to 60 second closely looking at their picture. Then, imagine that you are the youth climate leader you've

selected, bringing up as best you can the types of thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations that person might have. Then, answer the following three questions in three to five sentences, writing in the first-person present tense:

- How is climate change affecting your life right now?
- What motivates you to do the work you are doing?
- What keeps you awake at night about the future?

Step 3: This time, instead of taking your own perspective or the perspective of one of these youth climate leaders, you may pick any perspective, so long as you stay within the spirit of the exercise. For instance, you might pick a young child you care about, like a niece or nephew, and imagine them fifty years from now. Or you might pick a non-human being instead, like an animal, a plant, a place, or something else entirely. From my view, the dimensions to consider altering are the point of view (your own, someone you care about, someone you do not know) and the time in history (now, near future, far future.)

Once you've spent some time reflection on – and trying to imagine the thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations – of the perspective you've taken, answer the following three questions in three to five sentences, writing in the first-person present tense:

- How is climate change affecting your life right now?
- What motivates you to do the work you are doing?
- What keeps you awake at night about the future?