

How to Put Things in Perspective

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Life can sometimes seem very overwhelming. This feeling can be normal, although it may be debilitating to routines and lifestyles. You should try and develop your own methods of putting your life in perspective, no matter what it is that has shaken you. From big-life events to the everyday, life has a way of throwing us off-kilter. The goal is learning how to put it all in perspective.

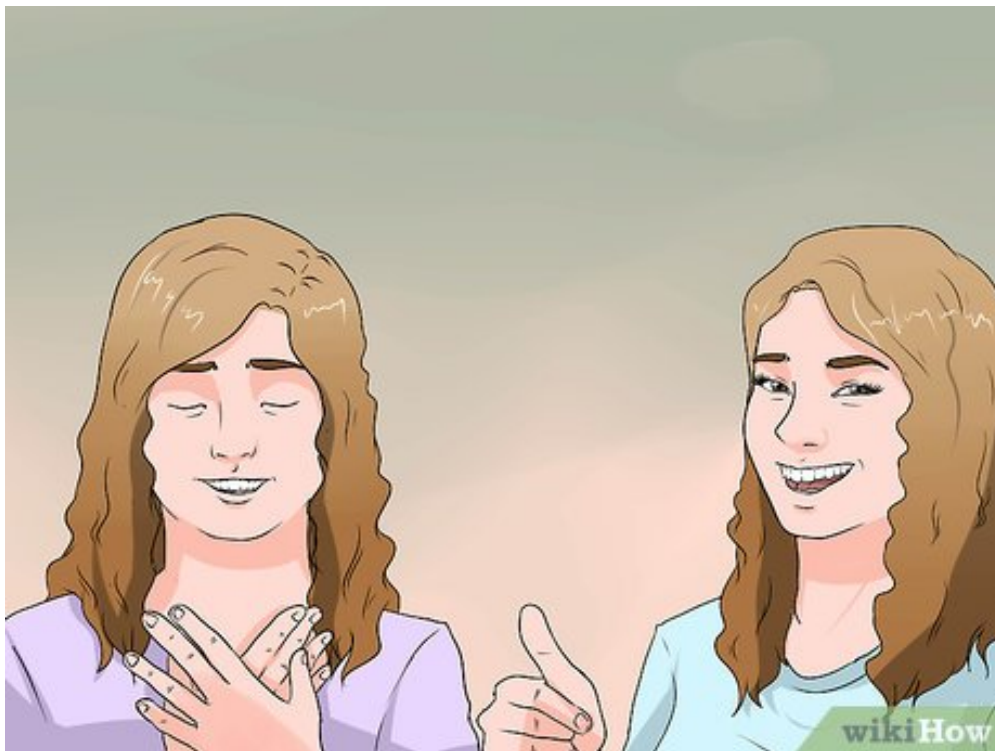
Method 1

Method 1 of 4: Questioning Your Actions (and Reactions)



1 Stop and consider. When you feel like that you aren't able to put things in perspective, or that life seems too much, stop whatever you are doing and reflect on the situation. Taking some time to ask yourself some simple questions and become more mindful of the situation may help you to see things differently.^[1]

- Ask yourself: "What, exactly, am I struggling with?" Pinpointing the specifics can help identify how you can assess and change.
- Consider: "How do I really feel about this situation?" If your emotions are turbulent, you are more than likely unable to put things in a clear perspective.
- Ponder: "Why do I react this way? What are the causes, and are they appropriate?" Sometimes, we can overreact to a situation. Stopping to think about the reasons why we might be doing this can help put our thoughts in a clearer perspective.



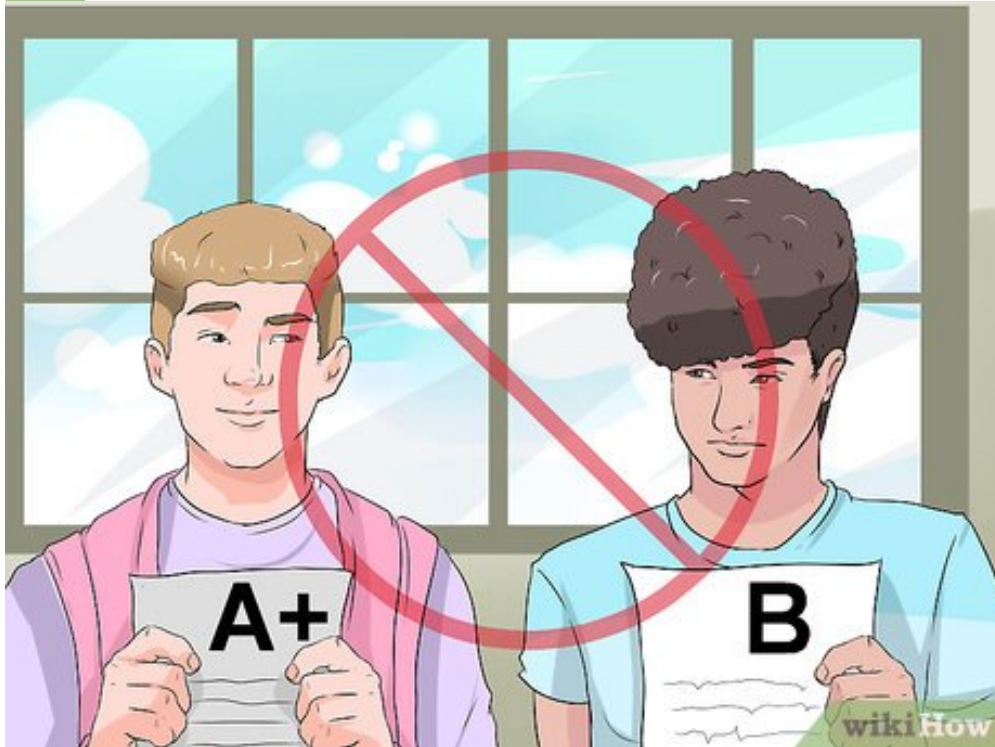
- 2 Accept things you cannot change.** Worrying about things out of your control can be futile and infuriating. This can definitely lead to a muddled perspective on life. To work toward a habit of accepting things that cannot be changed, do the following:
- Recognize your role in the situation. Is the situation out of your control, or can you do something to change it?
 - Stay positive. If you're in a situation that you cannot change, at least try and find something positive about it. This will help you cope.
 - Move on.^[2] If find yourself in a recurring situation in which you have no control, analyze the steps that got you there and consider an alternative route.



3 List and evaluate your perspectives. This will help you become more honest with yourself. It will also provide a tangible list to consider when trying to evaluate your values and perspectives.

- Consider perspectives. How do these perspectives shape you and your relationships with others. This will help you develop perspective on your life and your relationships. Ask yourself:
- "Does my view on [x] affect the way I treat [y]?"
- For example: "Does my view on Judaism affect the way I treat my Christian friends?"
- Do my parents unhappy marriage affect the way I treat my significant other? Is it fair?

Method 2 of 4: Examining Things Differently



1 Stop comparing yourself and your actions to others. Comparing yourself to others -- in any way like job, looks, talent, intelligence, etc -- is unfair. You live an entirely different life than others, and it has affected and shaped you differently.^[3] This will help ease expectations you set yourself, and help put your own life in perspective.

- Remember that you are unique; no one else has the same exact history as you.
- For example, do not compare your looks to your friends. They have had different experiences than you.
- If you feel like you are not as smart as your classmates, consider the fact you have a different educational history and experiences than them.



2 Learn from history and from others. Whatever you are struggling with, a great way to put your life in perspective is to consider what has come before. Consider what has happened in history and think about your problems in relation to that.

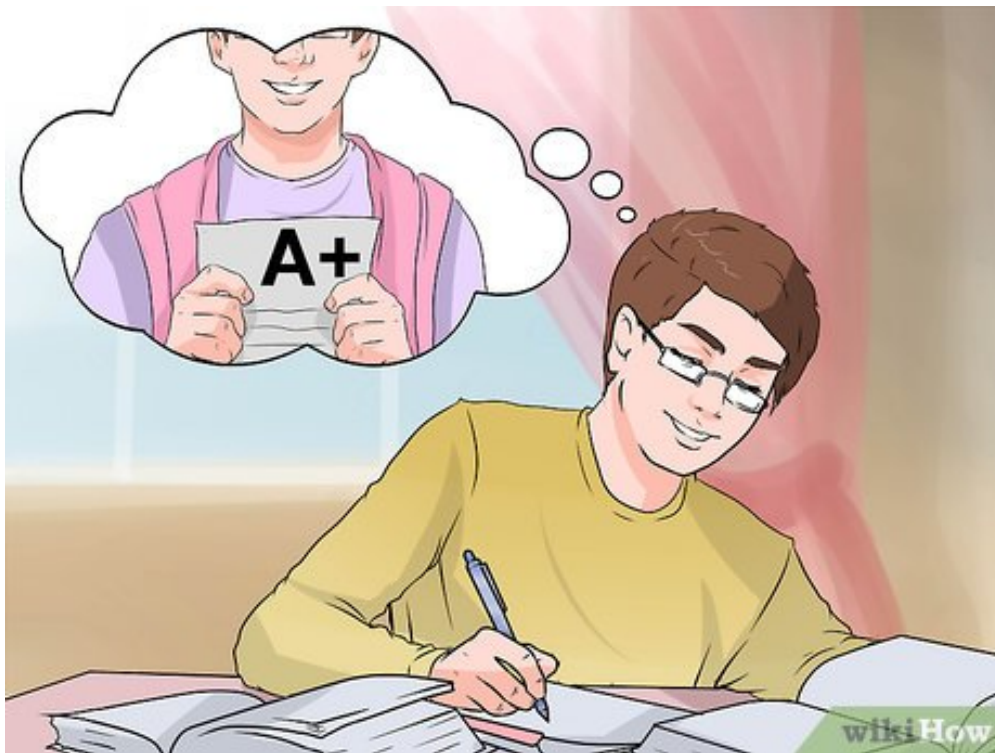
- Your problems and your life may still cause you to feel strong emotions. It is very important not to discount your emotions even if you think that you might “not have it that bad.” Reflecting on historical facts is meant to consider change, not to discount your thoughts.^[4]
- Read books on history or take a class about a culture that might interest you. There are also great history podcasts that are offered for free through very reputable institutes and organizations.



- 3 Talk to others.** A great way to find perspective is to talk to others. They can help you consider new view points or acknowledge your viewpoints and opinion.^[5]
- Always be polite and respectful to people's perspectives, even if they are different from your own. Perspectives and stances can be personal.



- 4 Focus on what you can do.** Seeing a situation as hopeless can make it hard for you to get anything done, but you can change that. If you feel like you are not capable of changing something, then try to identify something small that you could do.^[6]
- For example, if you feel like you are not capable of finding a job, then try to identify what you might do to start the process. Perhaps you could identify three jobs that you would like to apply for or fill out one job application at a place that is hiring.



- 5 Look to the future.** A negative outlook may make you feel like things will never change, rather than viewing the future with hope and possibility. Try to reframe any negative thoughts that you have about the present with positive thoughts about the future.^[7]
- For example, if you think to yourself, “I am never going to finish this project,” try asking yourself something like, “When I imagine myself completing this project, what do I see happening to reach that goal?”



- 6 Identify your feelings rather than focusing on others.** Fears about how other people view you may also interfere with your ability to have a positive outlook. Instead of focusing on how other people may or may not see you, try to focus on how you see yourself.^[8]
- For example, if you find yourself thinking, “No one likes me,” try asking yourself, “What do I like about myself?”

Method 3 of 4: Considering Your Place in the Universe



1 Remember that things change. Life is in constant motion, and, like the seasons, things change. Studies have shown that those who can adapt and accept changes in life, live a happier life (and sometimes longer) life.^[9]

- A great way to do this is to look at old pictures. You can see how you've changed physically to put things in perspective.
- You can take pictures of yourself in the moment to create a baseline of what you want to change. This "before" picture can be a great motivator and really help to focus on the now.



2 Envision the world around you. You are one of more than 7 billion people on this earth.^[10] This can be a comforting thought if you think you may be the only person who struggles with a specific problem.

- You are one person in this universe. You will not be able to conquer all of the world's problems on your own.
- Another great way to gain perspective is to watch documentaries to learn about the world around you. Your local library may have some great ones to get you started. Learning about other cultures or history can definitely put your life in perspective.



3 Put yourself in someone else's shoes. ^[11] If you are struggling with your own problems, consider people less fortunate than you.

- One way to do this is tap into your own empathy. Think about how many children go without food or do not have families. Use this empathy for good and consider giving to charity.



- 4 Acknowledge that you are only a small part of this universe.** As with the world's population, it is sometimes comforting (although sometimes awing and scary) to think about what a vast universe we live in.
- For example, the sun, which is so small in the sky, is 93 million miles away.^[12] When we consider this, it is easy to see how small we really are and how small our problems can be.
 - To do this, stargaze. The sky can look endless.
 - Check out pictures of the universe. There are great free images available to showcase just how beautiful and vast universe is.^[13]

Method 4 of 4: Maintaining Perspective



- 1 Create attainable goals.** One step to maintain perspective is to to create attainable goals, rather than focusing on too big or unreachable goals.^[14]
 - For example, if you need to lose 100 lbs and you can not quite put that in perspective or believe it, try breaking it down into smaller goals. For example, try starting with losing 5lbs a month.



2 Forgive yourself. You cannot move on and put your life in perspective without first forgiving yourself. Acknowledge what you struggle with, and then work toward forgiving yourself.

- For example, if you feel like you are holding on to a past mistake, you can try writing down what it is you need to forgive yourself for. After this acknowledgement, think about the associated feelings with this past action. Take small steps from this to let go of these feelings and get a fresh perspective.



3 Avoid the dramatic. If you find yourself stressed and out-of-perspective because of drama in your life, try and remove yourself from dramatic situations.

- Avoid hanging out with friends who like to cause personal drama.
- Consider changing careers to maintain a healthy outlook on life.
- Surround yourself with people who make you feel good and encourage the positive.



4 Acknowledge that you are your own person. To maintain a healthy perspective, you should always remember that you are your own person. You, and no one else, are responsible for your own actions and reactions.

- Take time to pamper yourself. Take a day off and do something you enjoy. This will help you realize you can make it on your own.
- Think about what YOU want to achieve out of life, and not what someone expects you to do.



Expert Q&A

Question

How does perspective affect my life experiences?



Sandra Possing
Life Coach
Expert Answer

A different perspective helps you stay curious and open to new people and experiences.

Helpful ☐ Not Helpful ☐

Question

How do I open my perspective?



Sandra Possing
Life Coach
Expert Answer

Reach out to new people and ask them about their stories and experiences so you can learn more about them.

Helpful ☐ Not Helpful ☐

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This article was co-authored by **Sandra Possing**. Sandra Possing is a life coach, speaker, and entrepreneur based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Sandra specializes in one-on-one coaching with a focus on mindset and leadership transformation. Sandra received her coaching training from The Coaches Training Institute and has seven years of life coaching experience. She holds a BA in Anthropology from the University of California, Los Angeles. This article has been viewed 52,269 times.



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