

Zoom In and Out of Experience

Imagine being in a plane. Up in the air a couple thousand feet, safe, comfortable and looking out the window. Down below you see a large amusement park. You can see the various thrilling rides and carnival tents. From your vantage point you notice the rollercoaster - several coaster-cars joined together, quietly gliding, smoothly and gracefully, creating elegant arcs along parallel tracks. As you get comfortable in your seat for the duration of your flight, the movements of the rollercoaster appear colourful and effortless.

Now, zoom in.

Imagine being on that rollercoaster. As a passenger you've just rode up a steep angled track for what feels like at least a couple hundred feet, listening to the consistent metal clicks of the rollercoaster track clasps, while being squished against the side of a hard metal car by your screaming friend. From your vantage point the noise of the total environment is crowded with piercing shrieks, frantic shouts, and ridiculous cries, combined with the bleeping, buzzing and whistling of the amusements. Loud obnoxious music of some bizarre style keeps the scene tweaked in excitement. The warm summer night air is brushing against your skin as you vaguely are aware of the sweat building on your forehead and palms. Flashing colors of psychedelic proportions populate the lights, structures and costumes to an over-exaggerated level of engagement.

Suddenly, the dependable clicks of rising machinery stop, as the coaster reaches its pinnacle and lurches over into a plummet towards the ground. Speed increases rapidly as you and several other screaming individuals are driven towards a bottom turn that causes your stomach to quickly remind you about the greasy over-priced dinner you woofed down just twenty minutes earlier. As the car hurtles up and over a small slanted rise you feel both the pressure of your friend's full body weight forcing you into the front metal bar and an intense throbbing of blood coursing in your head.

Now, zoom in even more.

Imagine you are a blood cell coursing through a body. You've just streamed by a thin layer of alveolar lung tissue and collected an oxygen molecule on both your top and bottom surfaces. You feel full. You are gracefully moving along a familiar route through the pulmonary artery into the turbulent rhythmic beats of the heart. From your vantage point you note that the increased speed at which the heart is pumping correlates to the increased rhythm that the lungs are

breathing. At this speed you know you will be back to the heart quicker than normal. You swirl in and out of the corners of the heart's left chambers, up, around and down the aortic arch. Due to where you are in the stream you bypass the renal and colonic arteries. It appears you are heading into the lower extremities. You calmly drop off your molecular load as you fluidly cruise through a capillary, deep within the calf of somebody's leg.

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Every experience you have is the outcome of a specific perspective. From a particular vantage point you encounter the world, and it's from that vantage point that you face limitation. Since each individual perspective is limited, your experience of the enormity of life becomes exceedingly partial and small when you chose to look at the world from only one perspective. In that fragmented place, contraction comes easily. You may find yourself defending your point of view, feeling alone or stuck with no where to go. This feeling of limitation and of being trapped is the cause of suffering.

Usually it appears so important to hold on to your limited perspective. However, the truth is...the freedom of an authentic life arises from the ability to hold multiple perspectives. The more vantage points you can access, the greater clarity you will act with since your insight will come from more than one small perspective. An easy way to start is to zoom in and out of a situation.

A rollercoaster can be a wild ride. Its overwhelming qualities can lock us into forgetting everything else, experiencing only the adrenalized excitement. Yet, you can zoom in and out of this experience. While riding the rollercoaster your awareness can zoom out to take the whole scene in, like watching from an airplane. Take the entire scene in. View it from an over-arching vantage point. Do so, and your initial experience begins to loosen up. Suddenly, you aren't just a person having an intense experience, you are aware of that intense experience *plus* so much more that is also going on. Zooming out into space provides the space to experience the scene from a very different vantage point, one of freedom and possibility.

Similarly, you can zoom into the microscopic. Each part of what you call *you* has its own unique perspective. What is your hair's perspective? How about your tongue's or your liver's? Each red blood cell pumping through your body is on that rollercoaster too. Is it experiencing something different than it normally does? Can that red

blood cell tell if you are on a rollercoaster or going for a jog? Its experience is going to give you a new insight that will be very different from what you were calling your own. And yet, you were able to access that perspective as well.

The next time you are in a movie theatre, enthralled and watching the enticing drama unfold, take a moment to shift your outlook. Even if the movie is very good you can choose to change your focus. Pull your attention from the screen and zoom out to become aware of the full audience as well. Look around at the people intently watching the movie. You haven't lost track of the movie, yet you have created space between you and the movie. You now have a sudden freedom, increased movement, and greater possibility. If you can do that, you are also capable of pulling yourself out of other limited perspectives.

Practice this in varying situations.

Having coffee with friends, zoom out and let your awareness fill the coffee shop. Zoom in and feel the warm liquid on your tongue, flowing down into your stomach. Sitting in a boring business meeting. Zoom in and feel the sweat under your arms. Zoom out and experience the meeting as if viewing it from behind a glass wall. In every moment that you can zoom in and zoom out of your primary experience, you are opening yourself up to greater freedom and possibility.

By tweaking your lens of perspective taking you are training yourself in the unending form of an integrated awareness – the ability to take multiple perspectives while staying freely functioning. Staying stuck on the rollercoaster of life will always be limiting. By enhancing your ability to take multiple perspectives you will eventually find yourself able to take any perspective. Your experiences will no longer be limited to a thin slice from the infinite magnitude of life.

Zoom in and out of conflict. Zoom in and out of pain. Zoom in and out of joy, confusion, pleasure and all experiences positive or negative. Practice this especially in times when you feel most overwhelmed or intense. By doing this in as many situations as possible you'll gain new insights, and a creative lightness of being only possible when you can unstuck yourself from fragmented views. The only thing you lose is a limited, contracted experience. What kind of lens do you wish to experience your life with?