

“Intolerance of Intolerance” Diversity Corner



Beyond This Place... There Be Dragons!

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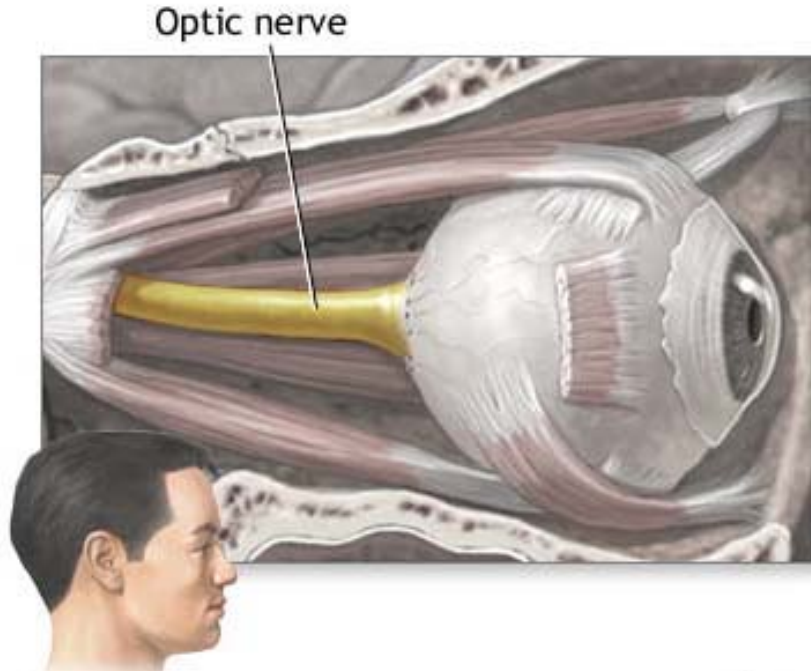
PERCEPTION: CAN YOU TRUST WHAT YOU SEE?



If you stare at the magician with your right eye while closing your left eye, then slowly move the page toward your nose, the earth will disappear into your blind spot.

WHAT IS *YOUR* PERSPECTIVE?

DO YOU TRUST WHAT YOU SEE?



This is your eye. Notice how it is constructed. At the back of your eye, somewhere around the center, your optic nerve attaches to your eyeball. It is at this point where all of the various nerve endings in your eye come together. As a result, since all of these nerve endings are coming together at this point forming the optic nerve, you cannot see anything from this part of your eye. In other words, where your optic nerve attaches to the eye ... **THAT** is your blind spot. You cannot see **anything** in this part of your eye.

So, you would think you would have a big black spot, or a blind spot, in the center of everything you see, but as we all know, that is not the case. So, why don't we all have this "blind spot" in the center of our vision?

Because our brain just makes up what it thinks **should** be there. If you look at a woman in a red dress, you see the red dress, not a red dress with a big black hole in the center of her body. Why? Because your brain just "fills in" everything that it thinks should be there ... which is a red dress.

That is how we perceive things when we see them: Our brains just fills in various details in relation to what we think should be there. In other words ... **We just make stuff up!**

This is why the earth disappears in the previous illusion. As you move the paper closer and closer to your face, the earth slowly moves into your blind spot. That is when it disappears and the page turns white in that spot. Of course, the earth did not really disappear. It moved into your blind spot area, so your eye could not see it. So, since no one wants a big black dot in the middle of their vision, your brain looks at the rest of the page, sees a white field, and just assumes this area entire area is also white because it can no longer see the earth. So, in other words, your brain ...

JUST MAKES UP WHAT IT CANNOT SEE AND FILLS IN THIS AREA WITH WHAT IT THINKS IS THERE!

Our brains deceive us in this manner all the time. So, getting someone else's perspective on a certain issue is a *really, really* good idea if you want to have a more realistic view of a situation.

Like wise ... what you remember is most often not accurate either. Have you ever taken a vacation and then months later looked at the photographs or video from the trip and said, "Wow! I had forgotten all about that! That was fun!"

Why do you suppose you did not remember? You were there, weren't you ... and the memory came right back as soon as you saw the picture? Why? Because that is how our memory works.

Our mind simply is not able to remember everything that happens verbatim. It is not a video recorder that is able to just "replay" the events of our lives. Instead, we remember "postcards" or "snapshots" of what we experience. In other words, we recall the more "emotionally stimulating" experiences and let the other events slip into the background.



So, if our memories only remember different "snap shots" of what happened, how is it that we can seem to remember entire sequences of events? Because in between these various snapshots, our brain just makes it all up based upon what *we thought* happened or how we viewed what happened. That is why our perspective only holds a portion of the truth of what really happened. Our own personal perspectives shape what we remember, which explains why some people see the glass half full while others see it half empty.

Discussion Questions

- **Do you listen to the perspective of others ... or do you mentally argue with everyone, convinced yours is the proper point of view?**
- **Did you realize that your perspective could be so flawed ... yet so real in your mind?**
- **Does understanding how flawed our perceptions are make it easier to admit that you might be wrong?**
- **Does this make it easier to appreciate the perspective of others?**

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