



## Understanding World Views - Facilitator Guide

### Slide 1: Quote

*"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view ... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it." ~ Atticus Finch, in To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee.*

As educators and leadership development practitioners, we have a responsibility to create space in which our students learn to reflect on their own world-view and the world-view of others, so that as they become leaders, they have the capability to express greater compassion toward others.

Reflective practices assist us in gaining greater clarity into our belief systems and to imagine the belief systems of those with which we interact.

The ability to understand our own worldview and the worldviews of others are two essential competencies of the *SQ21: 21 Skills of Spiritual Intelligence* by Cindy Wigglesworth. This workshop is based on Wigglesworth's developmental model and addresses the development of these two skills.

### Slide 2: What do you see?

Invite students to stand in a circle.

Place an asymmetrical 3D object in the middle of the circle.

Ask students at different points of the circle to describe what they see of the object.

Now ask everyone to step three steps to their right.

Ask the same students as before to describe what they see of the object.

Invite students to reflect and comment on their experience.

[Their view and understanding of the object depends on where they stand in the circle. In the same way, how we see and understand the world varies with our "position" in relation to the world. Our "position" is our worldview]

### Slide 3 - 5: What influences one's worldview?

Invite students to think of what could influence a person's worldview, then show next 2 slides to discuss influences.

### Slide 6: Self-Awareness Exercise

#### Self-Awareness Exercise:

Spend 5 minutes to write down answers to the following questions:

- What country or countries did I grow up in, and what languages do I speak fluently? How has this affected the way I see the world?
- What is my historical context? What local or world events have I lived through, and how have they affected the way I see the world?



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- What other aspects of my life, such as gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, race, and ethnic identity affect the way I see the world?

### **Partner Share:**

[Have partners talk through their answers with each other, 3 minutes each]

### **Debrief:**

[Discuss each question – ask for examples from participants, reminding them to share only their own examples, not their partners' examples - 5 minutes]

Point out how each person in the room may have had different experiences and therefore see the world differently than their friend or colleague.

### **Slide 7: How does each person's worldview affect an organisation's culture?**

Additional question for the class:

How do you incorporate awareness of your own worldview and other's worldviews to create a conscious culture?

### **Close:**

Can you see how understanding your own worldview and the worldviews of others helps you to set the stage for compassionate relationships and conscious culture?

Mention homework and additional exercises.

You get to choose: Will I deny, defend, or minimize differences in worldviews? Or will I choose to accept differences and adapt to differences?



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### Handout for Homework Assignment

Write a reflection on what you learned about your worldview. What are some of the key aspects of your life experiences, historical context, and identity that influence the lens through which you see the world? Draw a picture of the lens. What colour(s) is the lens? What colours do you see through the lens? How does the lens modify what you see in the world? Be prepared to share some of your insights during group discussion.

Examples of aspects that influence one's worldview:

Historical context

Life events

Socio-economic experiences

Religious belief system

Psychology/ Personality

Physiology

Identity: gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation

Cultures: family, ethnic, national, organisational



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### Additional Activities and Homework Assignments

#### *Imagining Another's Worldview Exercise:*

Spend 5 minutes to write down answers to the following questions:

1. Think of someone with whom you work regularly, or a close friend. Consider the cultural, history, and geographic contexts that may apply to this person. What other aspects of their life, such as gender identity, sexual orientation, race, and ethnic identity might affect the way they see the world? Write them down here:
2. Imagine what feelings and thoughts you might have if you had had the same experiences. If you know anything about this person's life experiences or current life and work situations, add that information to your imagination process. Use some of the questions above to help your imagination process. Write down how you imagine their worldview to be.

Spend a few minutes to share what you imagined about your friend's or colleague's worldview. Reflect any observations back to your partner by asking questions.

*Homework:* Spend time in dialog with this person to understand their worldview. Use phrases like "tell me more" to encourage storytelling and deeper conversation. This can be an informal process and can take place over one or more conversations. Be willing to reveal your own personal experience and reflections of your worldview. The conversation will be very rich if you each share personal worldviews.

Ask questions such as:

- What was it like growing up in [fill in the blank]?
- Where did you go to school? What did you enjoy about it? What did you not like about it? How did it affect the way you see the world?
- How did [fill in the blank - local or world event] affect you?
- What was your family life like, and how did that influence the way you live your life now?
- (Only if you know them really well and have established trust): How did your gender/ race/ ethnic identity/ religious identity affect your life experiences? How did those experiences affect the way you see the world?

Compare your imagined answers with the actual answers you heard during your conversations with this person.

What did you learn about your perceptions of another's world views when you imagined them in comparison to your understanding of their worldview after your conversation with them?

### **Additional Model and Exercise for Consideration:**

**Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity by Milton J. Bennett, Ph.D.**



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Stage 1: Denial of Difference “As long as we all speak the same language, there’s no problem”.

Stage 2: Defense Against Difference “When you go to other cultures, it makes you realize how much better our own culture is”. Defense/Reversal: Tendency to see another culture as superior while maligning one’s own.

Stage 3: Minimization of Difference “I have this intuitive sense of other people, no matter what their culture”.

Stage 4: Acceptance of Difference “I always try to study about a new culture before I go there”.

Stage 5: Adaptation to Difference “I can maintain my values and also behave in culturally appropriate ways”.

Stage 6: Integration of Difference “Whatever the situation, I usually look at it from a variety of cultural points of view”.

### **Pre-Class Homework:**

Think of examples of a time when you were in each stage of this model. Write a short description of each example. If you cannot think of a personal example for a later stage in the model, imagine what it would be like to be in that stage and write down an imagined example.

**Class Exercise:** Talk with a partner about a time when you were in each stage. Take turns to describe to each other how you behaved when you were in stage 1. Next, each person tells how they behaved when they were in stage 2. Move through the succession of stages in the same way. Include imagined examples of later stages and get your partner’s feedback on their perceptions of those stages.

**Debrief:** Facilitate a discussion with the whole group to hear some of the examples and explore the learning about each stage in the model.