



# Change Your Perspective, Change Your World

## THINKING HATS

Here are five different perspectives that are fairly common and can impact your ability to navigate challenging situations.

### THE CATASTROPHIZER

*The Catastrophizer focuses on the worst-case scenario, especially in stressful situations.*

**Catchphrase:** "Expect the worst."

**Focus:** Worst-case scenario.

**Attitude:** Pessimistic.

**Actions:** Swings between extremes of overcompensation and avoidance.

The Catastrophizer focuses on the worst-case scenario, especially in stressful situations. Their end-of-the-world thinking might focus on themselves or the world around them. From a catastrophic perspective, small mistakes or setbacks snowball into large and serious consequences. Catastrophizers can feel anxious, pessimistic, and unmotivated as a result, viewing their own actions as futile. This can lead them to either overcompensate with planning or perfecting or avoiding the situation altogether.

### THE CHILL

*Relaxed and happy on the outside, afraid and doubtful on the inside, the Chill procrastinates on challenging tasks and opts for instant gratification instead.*

**Catchphrase:** "If I don't let myself get attached, it won't hurt when I fail."

**Focus:** Instant gratification.

**Attitude:** Detached, non-committal.

**Actions:** Chases after distractions, downplays the importance of their goals.

The Chill looks relaxed and happy on the outside, but on the inside, you'll often find someone who's afraid and looking for an escape. Under their cool exterior is a person who's afraid to get too attached to the things that matter most to them. They see themselves as incapable of reaching their goals. The Chill believes it's safer not to try than it is to fail. You'll often find the Chill seeking instant gratification while procrastinating on the challenging tasks that would help them achieve their goals.

### THE PERFECTIONIST

*The Perfectionist holds themselves, and often others, to unreasonably high standards, viewing anything less than perfect as a "failure."*

**Catchphrase:** "If it's not perfect, it's a failure."

**Focus:** Unreasonably high standards and expectations.

**Attitude:** Critical, especially of oneself.

**Actions:** Over-doing it or procrastinating, in an effort to avoid failure.



The Perfectionist often holds themselves to unreasonably high standards, viewing anything less than perfect as a "failure." This can stem from an underestimation of their own abilities and worth or fear of rejection from others. The Perfectionist might put maximum effort into everything they do, which leads to becoming overwhelmed, burnout, and time management problems. They might also procrastinate on doing anything for fear of producing something less than perfect. The Perfectionist takes mistakes and setbacks personally and often has difficulty practicing self-compassion.

### THE BLAMER

*The Blamer deflects the pain of failure and struggle by holding other people and circumstances responsible for their performance.*

**Catchphrase:** "It's not my fault. It's yours."

**Focus:** The failings of others and inadequacies in the situation.

**Attitude:** Deflection.

**Actions:** Shifting responsibility away from oneself, especially in the face of failure or struggle.

To avoid the emotional pain that comes with failure and struggle, The Blamer will blame external factors for their difficulties. They might attribute their performance to other people, life circumstances, or substandard conditions. The Blamer's tendencies can arise from parental pressure, overprotection from the pain of natural consequences, or observing others shift the blame.

### THE BRIGHT-SIDER

*Trying to live with "positive vibes only," the Bright-Sider approaches life and its challenges with an overly confident, often dismissive attitude.*

**Catchphrase:** "Yeah, but look at the bright side."

**Focus:** On only the most positive aspects of life, to the point of overlooking key facts.

**Attitude:** Dismissive of anything negative, even when there's something to be learned.

**Actions:** Pushes themselves and others to "forgive and forget" or "look at the bright side."

The Bright-Sider takes a sunny disposition to the extreme. With an overly confident attitude about their abilities and a dismissive approach to life's challenges, Bright-Siders often underprepare for even the most important tasks in life. Easily frustrated by unexpected challenges, the Bright-Sider struggles to learn from mistakes or ask for help. Bright-Siders can have difficulty processing the pain of life's challenges as they push themselves (and others) to "forgive and forget" or "look at the bright side." Their feedback and self-reflection can be experienced as unempathetic and invalidating.

**Explore the Flipside Perspectives ►**



# STRONGER THAN: Change Your Perspective, **Change Your World**

**FLIPSIDE** Taking the strengths of each thinking hat and adding flexibility and adaptivity creates a resilient perspective that better enables you to handle what life throws at you.

## THE CATASTROPHIZER BECOMES THE PROBLEM-SOLVER

*The Problem Solver plans for potential setbacks, focusing on the most realistic worst-case outcome and its solutions.*

**Catchphrase:** "There's always a way through."

**Focus:** The realistic worst outcome and, most importantly, its solutions.

**Attitude:** Healthy caution.

**Actions:** Takes focused steps toward a solution.

Being able to spot a potential crisis and prepare for it is a strength. The Problem-Solver is a big-picture thinker. They can make connections between events and envision the long-term consequences of their actions. Problem-Solvers approach life with a solution-focused mindset. From that perspective, the Problem-Solver plans for potential setbacks, focusing on the realistic worst outcome and its solutions.

## THE CHILL BECOMES THE LEVEL-HEADER

*The Level-Header stays motivated while working toward important goals by striking a balance between enjoying the moment and looking toward the future.*

**Catchphrase:** "Roll with the punches."

**Focus:** What is in their control and what can be learned from any situation.

**Attitude:** Acceptance of challenges and belief in oneself.

**Actions:** Takes deliberate, sustainable steps toward a goal.

Staying calm under pressure is the strength of the Level-Header. A Level-Header stays motivated and composed by striking a balance between enjoying the present and looking toward the future. They know their strengths and have a clear sense of where they want to go in life. This enables them to accept setbacks and failure as part of the journey. The Level-Header responds to stress as it arises. They prioritize self-care and keep external pressures in check even when working toward their most important goals.

## THE PERFECTIONIST BECOMES THE THRIVER

*The Thriver believes that failure is part of living a full life, which helps them think creatively and take risks when needed.*

**Catchphrase:** "It's all progress in the end."

**Focus:** Values, strengths, and meaning.

**Attitude:** Flexibility and patience with oneself.

**Actions:** Takes meaningful steps, even when there's a risk of failure.

The Thriver has big ambitions and the motivation to reach them. Unlike the Perfectionist, the Thriver doesn't base their worth on productivity or perfect outcomes. Instead, they draw upon their values and strengths, the meaning behind their actions, and an appreciation of progress in whatever form it takes.



## THE BLAMER BECOMES THE SELF-ADVOCATE

*The Self-Advocate communicates clearly, identifies their needs and the resources to meet them, and speaks up for themselves and what they believe in.*

**Catchphrase:** "I take responsibility for my own well-being."

**Focus:** What can be learned from any situation?

**Attitude:** Assertive and open-minded.

**Actions:** Clear, respectful communication, using resources, and speaking up for what they need and believe in.

The Self-Advocate evaluates their performance with a mix of open-mindedness and assertiveness. They are open to learning from their mistakes and failures to improve their performance in the future. The Self-Advocate does this while also refraining from self-criticism or blaming others. Instead, the Self-Advocate communicates openly with others, identifies their needs and the resources to meet them, and does not hesitate to speak up for themselves and what they believe in.

## THE BRIGHT-SIDER BECOMES THE OPTIMIST

*With a belief in their own agency, the Optimist understands that good things are possible and challenges are solvable.*

**Catchphrase:** "Where there's a will, there's a way."

**Focus:** On the good things ahead and the solutions to life's challenges.

**Attitude:** Positive expectation, validation, and self-agency.

**Actions:** Finds something to look forward to every day and looks for the solutions to problems that arise in life.

The Optimist sees good outcomes as likely and themselves as capable of making them happen. They approach life with an attitude of positive expectation and a belief in their own agency. Unlike the Bright-Sider, the Optimist does not dismiss or minimize life's challenges. Instead, they understand that challenges and failure are a part of life and view them all as solvable. The Optimist offers themselves, and others, understanding and validation in times of emotional pain, with the encouragement to return to their most cherished values and most authentic strengths. This enables the Optimist to navigate difficult situations with hope, identify their needs, and learn from their mistakes.

## Want to Talk?

The times when we want to isolate ourselves are usually the times when we need the most support. Asking for help is a courageous act and you have the strength to do it.

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