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Homepage von Peter J. Reichard

05 – Happier with Reframing

Changing points of view help you and others

 → [German Version](#)

Useless rebukes



photo: pixabay

An example: A person close to you persistently stubbornly insists on his opinion. You find that *"impossible!"* because it *"annoys"* you again and again. That's why you accuse him of this behavior several times: *"Your constant stubbornness terribly annoys me!"* - You notice: That is of no use. On the contrary: the stubbornness seems to increase, the relationship gets into danger to finally rock up to mutual rejection. And this despite the fact that the person close to you is *"actually dear and important"* to you.

Please remember: **you cannot change your fellow human beings**. Everyone can only do that for himself. So you can only change the situation if you change your own attitude.

You could argue that you see no reason for this at all, because the behaviour of your counterpart is the stone of offence. Even his constant, rejectionally intoned *"M - m"* makes you angry. *"Now stop it at last! That is not bearable!"* bursts you the collar. And the answer could be a repeated *"M - m!"*

Unhappy consequences

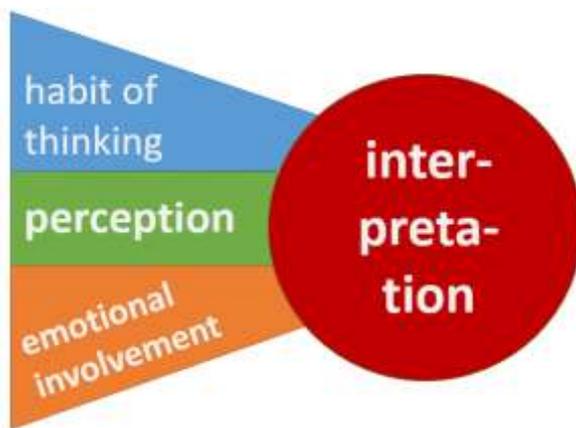


Apparently a hopeless cul-de-sac. Some relationships fail because of repeated reproaches, however understandable they may be. As a result, it is usually both people who suffer: They, to whom their fellow human being was *"actually dear and important"*, and the person who has to do without your affection. Countless divorces are caused by the failure of fruitless reproaches. As a result, however, a divorce is usually experienced as painful by both partners

Causes

Your anger seems to be due to the fact that you have your own repeatedly disappointed expectations in mind. But your disappointment is based on a negative interpretation and evaluation of your fellow man's behaviour: you find it "*unacceptable*".

Although you learn and practice the rule "First the observation, then possible interpretations" in language lessons, it often fails to be heeded. There are two reasons for this:



On the one hand, it is our habit to think in cause-effect contexts.

On the other hand, the emotional involvement caused by a behavior or incident. Both can lead to the fact that interpretations and evaluations are not at all conscious to us as such. Adults who are in conflict or psychosis as a result need professional advice.

Proposal

In such situations, behaviour therapists direct their clients' attention to their counterparts:

"Ask yourself,

- what your counterpart is trying to do for himself with his behaviour, or
- which gives him **reason** to behave like that, or
- within which situation this behaviour can benefit himself, or
- what **positive effect** his behaviour (also) has (or can have). «

With the first three questions you turn your gaze from yourself to your counterpart, with the fourth to the effects of his behaviour. This [1] **change of perspective** opens up a different perspective for you. The change of perspective gives you a different interpretation of his behaviour.

Turn

You can see that perhaps - even probably - **not at all is directed against you**, which is affecting you so much. As soon as you have recognized this, a completely different impulse comes along with your rejection: How **can you help** the other person **to feel** being **well understood and accepted**?

What can be described in a few lines is, however, a very difficult path. Your *"holy anger"* must smoke, your head must be capable and your heart must be ready to change perspective and to make a sustainable reinterpretation with the answers found. The longer you have been in trouble, the more difficult this becomes. But you still have the key in your hand: your fellow human being is worth it to you because he is *"actually dear and important"* to you. This should motivate you to get to the bottom of the behaviour therapist's questions.

Statement

In the "NLP Dictionary" by Ötsch/Stahl, **"reinterpretation"** is explained with the following example:

"A father calls his daughter stubborn. The therapist says: "Imagine your daughter being harassed by a man. Wouldn't it be very useful if she were stubborn?"



In this example, the third of the above questions is used: it shows that the behaviour "stubbornness" is useful in another context (here towards a stranger). The behaviour in this context is obviously completely ok. By this positive interpretation of the behavior the generalization *) of the father "You are always so stubborn" is invalidated with a counterexample. This is demonstrated by the illustration on the left.

The father can see that his daughter's stubbornness also has a good side. Both will feel more comfortable afterwards.

*) A later chapter will deal with the handling of generalizations.

Reframing

The German NLP trainer [2] [Stephan Landsiedel](#) explains the background of this reinterpretation as follows:

Reframing means:

reinterpret something or place it in a different frame in order to bring about a change in the experience of the person concerned with this change of meaning or perspective.

The "meaning of an event, a statement, a behaviour, a conviction or a belief, a trigger or a stimulus depends on the **context**, on the **frame**, on the **point of view** of the observer / listener or reader, on the frame in which it is placed".

He calls the "process of **reinterpretation** by taking a new perspective and reinterpreting an event, saying or fact "**context reframing**".

The Anglophone term "reframing" is literally used as well in German-speaking countries for the reinterpretation of a perception: In another, new "frame", the image surrounded by it unfolds a different impression. In analogy to this, a critical perception, for example, allows another, also a positive (re-)interpretation. This is illustrated by the following pictures. They show the same motif in different frames:



Landsiedel uses the following example to illustrate what he understands by "**content reframing**":

If a mother acknowledges her anger about the footprints on the carpet with the complaint "*No one respects my work*", the reinterpretation could help her: "*The footprints testify to the fact that loved ones are in the house*".

The fourth of the above-mentioned questions from the behaviour therapist could lead to this interpretation.

The examples make it clear: Disturbing behaviour is made more understandable through reinterpretation and is thus perceived as less disturbing. The understanding given to the troublemaker can cause him to change his behaviour on his own:

Disruptive behavior → **Interpretation** → **Understanding** → **Behavioral change**

Then they're both happier.

Trigger - not cause

The annoyance about the stubborn behavior of a fellow human being also requires the hint that the annoyance is triggered by his disturbing behavior, but is not caused. Even if you want to reject the sentence as an imposition, it remains true:

"You are solely responsible for your emotions, nobody else!"

To the question "*Who or what annoys you?*" is the correct answer: "*I'm angry.*"

With emotional intelligence you get your emotions under control. Then it will also be easier for you to answer the behavior therapist's questions without inner rebellion.

Your sovereignty of interpretation

It might also be helpful if you become aware: You have full **interpretive sovereignty** over all your perceptions and feelings. You alone decide whether something tastes good or not. Likewise, whether something disturbs yourself.



A [3] [video clip](#) shows a toddler (photo left) eating an onion as if it were an apple. The child makes impressive use of its sovereignty of interpretation.

So you can also summon up angry **understanding** by exercising your interpretive sovereignty. No, you do not have to "**excuse**" everything. But you may even show understanding for inexcusable behaviour.

That should be worth to you dear, important fellow human being. Compassion and understanding are healthier than rejection and rebuke - for both sides!

Mistakes as learning opportunities



Photo: pixabay

Another scenario marks the record:

"Nothing is as annoying as your own imperfection."

In such a situation they are not angry at a fellow human being, but at themselves.

"That shouldn't have happened to me!" accuse yourself. But reinterpreting it also helps: "Mistakes are learning opportunities! - Give yourself an account of what led to the mistake. Think about and remember how you can prevent repetition. Then you have worked through your lesson well.

If you use the learning opportunity, you no longer need to blame yourself for its cause. He will then be happier - and more successful.

Finding an exit out of failure

Failures are worse than mistakes, regardless of whether they are caused by one's own failure or by someone else's fault. It is difficult to deal with them because the distress tempts one to ponder and raise accusations.

But failures cannot be undone by complaining about them or by indulging in **self-pity**. Looking back can only teach you what to avoid in the future. But looking forward opens up asking yourself the silent **exit question**: ***"What is possible anyway?"***



Active Optimism

Those who ask themselves this question even in apparently hopeless situations practice **active optimism**. He takes the key in his hand with which an exit can be found and the future better shaped.

My advice: Memorize the **exit question** "*What can you do anyway?*" so that you can find a way out of a seemingly hopeless situation. This question is your mental "duplicate key" to finding new perspectives and new possibilities for action. It transforms hopelessness into confidence, thus making you happier. These days I read a headline: [4] "*My worst defeat was followed by my greatest success*". Isn't that proof of the effectiveness of active optimism?

Stress and Eustress



Photo: pixabay (excerpt)

Continuous hardship at work or in everyday life creates **stress**. Persistent stress makes you ill and eventually leads to **burnout**. You should ask yourself whether the distress you feel can at least be alleviated by reinterpretation. It is normal that not every job is fun. The same goes for the fact that no work is always fun.

But:

**You have the power of interpretation
over the emotional evaluation of your work!**

If you carry out an activity that constantly goes against your grain, the stress is unbearable. If, on the other hand, you have a job that you like and usually enjoy, there is not only the stressful but also the "**Eu**" **stress** (i.e. "good stress"), in which effort inspires you to "**flow**" and peak performance. Then this is an immaterial but essential part of the "salary" for your work.

Excessive demands

If, on the other hand, you suffer predominantly from the conditions and demands of your work, you should bear in mind that no remuneration comes close to compensation for pain and suffering. That is why it is extremely important to look for a job that gives you a lot of pleasure. Before you accept that an unpleasant job makes you ill, ask yourself the question "What goes instead?"

Displeasure

With regard to **temporary overload** or in a currently unpleasant situation, you should bear in mind that your **expectations** have a great influence on your feelings in this regard. Those who go to work with **displeasure** will not enjoy their work.



On the other hand, those who ask themselves what they would like to do today on their way to work have a better chance of being satisfied at the end of the day. The supposedly "self-fulfilling prophecies" are largely based on the inner expectations of the person concerned.

This interaction of experience and expectation expresses the proverb in a memorable way:

***"As you make your bed, you lie on it,
and as you call into the forest, so it echoes out."***

Don't complain about it, make use of it. Then you are happier!

Frustration and stress

If you experience **frustration and stress** as distressing despite positive expectations at your place of work, the question will help you - or even the colleagues concerned - :
"What wish can be fulfilled to increase your well-being?"

The effectiveness of this question is based on a general experience: **Who feels well is healthier!** And those who feel good are more resilient. A boss who gives a noticeably overburdened employee a few days off to relax not only acts in a philanthropic manner, but also wisely.

Bereavement



Photo: pixabay (excerpt)

At the end of this chapter some thoughts about dealing with **grief** e.g. about the loss of a loved one.

A **reinterpretation**, which tries to take the possibly meaningful into consideration, is forbidden to sympathize with relatives and friends. It is not accessible to the mourner. At most years later the feeling of mourning may be softened that the mourner himself becomes aware of the meaningful development which the painful change has brought about. After the loss **mourning** can paralyze the mourner first of all. He finds his situation hopeless. The loss suffered cannot be healed. The grief about it is pitiful.

Grief needs **grief work**. You will find thoughts on this in my essay [5] "[Trösten ohne zu vertrösten](#)" (i.e. "Comforting without putting off").

For the mourner, the question to himself "*What is good for me now?*" will be helpful. Because with it he directs his gaze from loss to the improvement of his condition. In addition your question "*What does you now well?*" can perhaps support him. With empathetic handling of the mourning he feels understood and also you feel relieved if you succeed.

Bottom line



Photo: pixabay

With a clear distinction between observation and interpretation, it becomes clear that each observation allows a variety of interpretations.

**You can choose the interpretation you want,
that best serves your well-being
and that of your fellow human beings.**

In particular, you can change an unreflected interpretation with this in mind. By "**reinterpreting**" you provide the observation with a "**new frame**", which gives it a more pleasing meaning for you and possibly also for your fellow human being. The **exit question** "*What is possible anyway?*" helps you in apparently hopeless situations.

Reference

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator

LINKS



German Version:

<https://p-j-r.de/publicationes/bildung/selbstkompetenz/239-reframing.html>

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[1] Video "**Perspektivwechsel**" (German)

<https://youtu.be/klidyJQlykk>

- [back to \[1\]](#)

[2] *Stephan Landsiedel*, **Reframing**: (German)

<https://www.landsiedel-seminare.de/nlp-bibliothek/practitioner/p-05-00-reframing.html>

- [back to \[2\]](#)

[3] YouTube **Video-Clip** "Toddler eating an onion":

<https://youtu.be/Lj8Oo7QRjcQ>

- [back zu \[3\]](#)

[4] *Dr. Bernd Storm*, "My worst defeat was followed by my greatest success":
(German)

<https://www.xing.com/news/klartext/auf-meine-schwerste-niederlage-folgte-mein-grosster-erfolg-3093>

- [back to \[4\]](#)

[5] "Trösten ohne zu vertrösten" (i.e. "Comforting without putting off"): German

<https://p-j-r.de/publicationes/wissen/psychologie/65-trost-spenden.html>

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Teaser:

Happier with Reframing

"Reframing" can help to give a positive interpretation to unpleasant situations or behaviours. The principle, use and benefits of this NLP method are explained in this article using examples.

Keywords:

Reframing, change of perspective, optimism, exit question, sovereignty of interpretation, stubbornness, reproaches, frustration, disappointment, consternation, mistake, failure, listlessness, stress, burnout, mourning, bereavement.