

Lesson 10: The Pitfalls of Deceptive Perceptions – Ditches of Error

When it comes to understanding the nature of our personal reality we cannot overlook the matter of perceptions. The act of acquiring knowledge about ourselves and the world we live in is a process that is dependent on the five methods of perception, aka, the five senses: sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch – they are the physiological methods of perception. When our perceptions are not based on accurate knowledge they can cause us to fall into ditches of error. This lesson aims to bring to the readers' awareness not just how we acquire knowledge but to understand the differences of the knowledge we acquire and the effects which are not always very desirable.

As we examine the pitfalls of deceptive perceptions on a personal level we begin by defining what the words deception and perception mean. The dictionary defines deception as being a misrepresentation or a misleading falsehood. Deception is also defined as an act to propagate beliefs that are not true, or not the whole truth. The word perception is defined as knowledge gained by perceiving, attributed to the awareness of sensory information; sensory being the operative word. To understand the pitfalls of deceptive perceptions we must first understand how we acquire knowledge from our perceptions and from there we can begin to see how easily we can fall into ditches of error.

We will begin to unfold the process of acquiring knowledge by taking a brief look at the components of knowledge. Knowledge is comprised of two components which are stated like this: we know *'that'*...and we know *'how'*. Examples would be: we know *that* $2 + 2 = 4$ because we have been taught this fundamental of arithmetic just as we were also taught to know *how* 4 is the sum of $2 + 2$. Another example is that if we hold before us a red apple we all know *that* the apple is red and the reason *how* we know the apple is red is because we were all taught to recognize the color red. These are simplistic examples of collective knowledge that is based on a justifiable, empirical fact.

The 20th century philosopher, David M. Armstrong (c 1926) stated that perception is nothing but the acquiring of knowledge of, or, on occasion, the acquiring of an inclination to believe in particular facts about the physical world by means of our senses (*Perception and the Physical World*, pg 105). The key words in his statement are the act of believing in particular facts...by means of our senses. As we work through the lesson we will see how we are influenced by our sensory experiences. Knowledge acquired by a perception consists of a concept held as a belief which can be propositional or fact. Going back to the arithmetic of $2 + 2$ we can see there is no room for propositional belief because the sum of 4, regardless of how it is arrived at is a fact – it is empirical.

However, a propositional belief would be to say that collectively we agree that it is raining on a day that it is raining but where we part conceptual ways is with our sensory

experience of the rain. We will all view the rain somewhat different from one another. Some people will perceive a rainy day as interfering with their plans; others will see it as a good day to read a book, catch up on the news or just to reflect, some people will have a moody experience – these are examples of a sensory experience that is propositional.

How we perceive our circumstances as well as the world we live in is subject to propositional beliefs that are based on sensory experiences. This is called ‘perceiving as’ when we perceive our circumstances or the world *as* a certain way; consequently, we believe that it actually is that way and then we act on that perception. The problem with perceiving our circumstances or the world as being a certain way is that our perceptions are representational which basically means that what we see is not always the way it really is and this can be quite troublesome when knowledge is based on perceptions that are skewed.

When knowledge is supported by a belief that is fact it is said to be true only if the fact is a justifiable truth as opposed to knowledge that is based on a belief that is not a fact because it is not founded on a justifiable truth – therefore, the belief is said to be false. There are many instances where justifiable truth is empirically proven and other times truth is based on experience but when it is based on experience that truth is always subject to interpretation and differences of opinion where the results appear to be the ‘proof is in the pudding.’ The acquisition of false knowledge leads to things like agitation, anxiety, stress, fear and worry and contributes to what the great founder of Self-Realization; Paramahansa Yogananda called “ditches of error.” These are common attributes of false beliefs acquired by deceptive perceptions - the driving force behind our undesirable experiences.

Under these conditions, knowledge expressed as a perceived fact can be trouble just waiting to happen simply because what one perceives may not be the truth but yet is very real in the eyes of the beholder. It is importance to understand where knowledge parts ways with justifiable fact especially given that perception is reliant on sensory information. This becomes more problematic when perceived knowledge is processed through the emotions and fully exists in the mind of the beholder(s). I added a plural to the word beholder because it is not uncommon for groups of like-minded people to cohere to the same emotional perception believing it to be factual or real which it is but only in their minds. When strong emotions are mixed with deceptive perceptions it can produce a very dangerous and even fatal combustible-like effect.

During the great debate, back in the 1920’s, physicists Neils Bohr and Albert Einstein, argued about the relationship that existed between the observer and what is being observed. Now, while that debate was scientific in nature the same debate exists on the mental and emotional plane of perceiving (sensory). What we observe in our own surroundings as well as what we observe in the world around us may not be real but is

more of an illusion fabricated in our minds. You can hold fast to a belief that was acquired from a sensory experience which may not be accurate or justifiable. Through your thoughts and beliefs you may not only perceive something to be other than what it really is based on your sensory experience with it but you may even act on that false belief which can have some very serious consequences to you and to others.

What is important to know about deceptive perceptions is that they do not stand outside of cause and effect but rather they invoke cause and effect manifested in various degrees of consequences even in the face of what appears to be a reliable belief forming process. This is when you base your perceptions on something that you believe is substantiated or is rock solid evidence because it has the appearance of being reliable information, especially when presented from what appears to be an intellectual source. In my book, *The Dragon of Drama*, I shared how I based my perceptions about why I failed to realize my dreams and achieve my goals on what I believed to be rock solid evidence when in fact it turned out not to be the case at all. I had to learn a most uncomfortable lesson about how my perceptions were actually not founded on justifiable truths but were indeed founded on what appeared to be a reliable belief process accrued from my own sensory experiences that was actually quite deceiving and very harmful to me in the way of experiencing undesirable cause and effect as consequences.

Perceptions alter what we see so it is crucial to examine them and the correlating beliefs we hold fast too. From a psychological perspective, when we choose to see what we see as we see it we generally do so with a preconceived concept. When we create our realities from preconceived concepts we are subject to falling into ditches of error because we are relying on past history, what we already know from experience which can become a very deceptive perception. The reason for this is that our minds have a tendency to correlate new information with old information until the new information has a basis of its own or we give way to taking someone's word for it. In other words we see what we choose to see because of our experience even if that experience isn't even close to the real truth. In that respect we form our own truths which can be a very limiting experience and can carry some very undesirable consequences.

Not all concepts are based on false sensory information. Conceptual knowledge is the means with which we experience our individual lives and the world we live in. The difference is to understand that preconceived concepts formed from sensory experience are to be viewed as not being concrete fact but should be viewed as a means with which to gauge the results of our experiences, past, present and future, especially when our perceptions are not serving us well. Obviously if our perceptions are not serving us well then by all means we should give thought to altering them so that they do serve us well and that they will serve others well. Albert Einstein spoke to the matter of conceptions as such:

Considered logically, concepts are free creations of the human intelligence, tools of thought, which are to serve the purpose of bringing experiences into relation with each other, so that in this way they can be better surveyed. The attempt to become conscious of the empirical sources of these fundamental concepts should show to what extent we are actually bound to these concepts. In this way we become aware of our freedom to create new concepts.

In our everyday life we formulate preconceived concepts that are representational to what we experience from our senses. Those concepts become the framework for our perceptions which then become the beliefs we hold about our circumstances which we express 'as' being this or that. When a perception is deceptive it really does matter. As we have seen thus far deceptive perceptions can cause us a great deal of trouble that is often manifested in the form of personal dramas that are clearly evidenced in our relationships, in the dreams we did not realize and the goals we did not achieve. When our sensory experience tells us that we are not worthy, not good enough, not wealthy enough, not having been born into the right environment, not having enough parental influence, not skinny enough, not pretty or handsome, that we lack the talents or the skills necessary to achieve a desired success, and on down the never ending list – all these beliefs are deceptive perceptions of ourselves and the ditches of error they cause us to fall into are the proof in the pudding - the results which speak for themselves.

The erroneous perceptions that we hold fast to actually serve to sabotage our efforts to manifest our dreams and achieve our goals. In this respect it truly is not worth holding onto such deceptive perceptions. The important thing to remember about perceptions is that they are quite capable of being self-justified and have no true justifiable basis. The biggest obstacle to overcome is when we are confronted with a truth that clearly indicates our perceptions are untrustworthy. Our experiences are subject to what they become by the effect of our beliefs, our perceptions and the way we choose to think about life and the world at large.

I experienced this when I first began to learn that I was not a victim of my circumstances other than to the degree I was willing to see myself as a victim. I had a very difficult time overcoming that hurdle because I truly believed I was a victim, after all, I had names and places to prove my case and I believed my information was quite reliable. Ultimately I learned the advantage of altering those kinds of perceptions and beliefs which was definitely in my best interest. Actually, my perceptions needed a complete overhaul! I can assure you that the proof has been in the pudding ever since I relinquished my victim mentality – once again, the results speak for themselves.

The whole purpose of this lesson was to bring to your awareness that your perceptions of yourself, your circumstances and the world you live in may be not be as real as you think they are. You may be asking, "How will I know this?" The answer is relatively simply although the journey out of the ditches of error may be a little more strenuous. If

you are experiencing any kind of personal drama in the way of broken or dysfunctional relationships, you have failed to realize your dreams or achieve any of your goals or you are caught up in perceiving the matters of life that are not serving you well, that would be a clear indication your perceptions and beliefs need to be altered or overhauled as the case may be. Unfortunately, as I have alluded to, the journey to uncovering those perceptions that are linked to your beliefs as well as your thought process may require some serious self-examination or self-analysis. The second book I am working on, *The Odyssey of Self-Discovery* delves into this matter in greater detail because I am so acutely aware of the pitfalls of deceptive perceptions and the consequences one endures.

There are any number of books available that speak to the matter of perceptions, beliefs and thinking and the effects, many of which I have in my own library and highly recommend them on the My Bookshelf page on the Dragon of Drama website. Of these books I highly recommend reading *The Nature of Personality Reality* by Jane Roberts as channeled through the entity known as Seth. Also there are a few internet movies I recommend as well. The links to these movies are on the Links page on the website.

If you feel like you need some help unraveling these matters please contact me either through the Dragon of Drama website on the Contact Me page or send an email to the following address: lindaj@dragonofdrama.com. I will be more than happy to help you work through the clutter of deceptive perceptions which may have caused you to fall into ditches of error that you may be reaping the undesirable consequences of. However, such an endeavor does require an open mind and the willingness to take on a new way of understanding the nature of personal reality that will be very unfamiliar. Often we don't like what we hear and we will experience a knee-jerk rejection reaction.

I can tell you that it does take some time to learn how to rise above the sometimes limiting sensory experiences before one can arrive on a higher plane of understanding. I was no exception during my journey of self-discovery. Thus, my commitment and dedication comes by way of having been there and having paid a very dear price. I had to dig my way out of fifty plus years of falling into ditches of error which were all related to my perceptions, beliefs and my manner of thinking so I am well suited to assist anyone who would like some help digging out of their own ditches of error. You just have to be willing to embrace a change in how you think.

When I embarked on my journey of self-discovery I really did not know what I needed to dig my way out of. I read lots of books which gave me the courage and the energy I needed to get out from under the cause and effects of my perceptions and to overcome my dragon of personal drama, but I was not fortunate enough to know someone on a personal basis who had gone through what I did so I was left to work it all out on my own. I am here for you not just to lend assistance as a metaphysician but as an individual who actually was down there in the trenches of those ditches of error.

I truly hope this lesson served to help you better understand the nature of your personal reality on another level and in doing so I have helped you by raising your conscious awareness about the matters of deceptive perceptions and ditches of error. I want to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have been sharing with me.

Thank you,

Linda

Resources:

Yogananda, Paramahansa. 1964. Metaphysical Meditations. Self-Realization Fellowship.

Perception: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perception>.

The Epistemology of Perception. The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/epis-per/>

Relativism and the Constructive Aspects of Perception. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/relativism/supplement1.html>