
Three position technique

This tool helps develop empathy and improve understanding of different perspectives on a situation. It can be a powerful tool when used with two or more people but can also help develop individual thinking skills.

Position two chairs facing each other, a couple of metres apart.

First sit across from the other person (or group). Develop your pitch and try to convince them, tell them your story, broadcast your message. (If you are doing this alone, imagine that you are talking or presenting to your audience – another person sitting in the empty chair opposite you).

Now get the audience to tell you how they ‘receive’ you, your message, your way of delivering, what comes across to them? And importantly how do they feel about it? What are their reactions, feelings, concerns or questions? Try and get from them how they are perceiving you.

(Once again if you are working alone imagine you are sitting where they are, the recipient or a member of the audience. What are you hearing, feeling, thinking and how do you react to what the first you is saying?)

Then move to a third, neutral position, mid-way between the two and to one side. Imagine the interchange of perspectives that you now know about – how they ‘receive’ the message being delivered by the ‘you’ sitting in the other chair. Given what you now know about this, what advice might you give to yourself to improve the delivery, make your message clearer, allay their anxieties – how might you build in your knowledge of their world to help make your presentation to them more acceptable.