**Third Person Perspective**

The Third Person Perspective (TPP) exercise involves reappraising a recent event or argument that elicited negative emotions. The purpose of this exercise is to think about the event or argument in a more balanced, productive manner that reduces negative emotions and improves one’s ability to regulate emotion. This exercise has been shown to improve relationship quality, reduce distress, and strengthen brain areas associated with emotion regulation.

**To practice TPP, follow these steps:**

1. Spend about five minutes writing down a summary of a recent distressing event or argument. In this summary focus on the facts only, describing what was said and done, as opposed to focusing on your interpretations or feelings about the incident.
2. Now think about this incident from the perspective of a neutral third party, a person who wants the best for all parties involved. Who might this third party be? Ideally, it will be someone you respect, perhaps someone very wise that you know or have known in the past. Spend approximately 10 minutes writing down what this third party would say to you regarding this situation or argument. Some questions to consider include:
   1. How might this person think about the situation?
   2. What would this person say to you?
   3. What advice would this person give to you?
   4. How might he or she find the good that could come from this situation?
   5. How might this person reassure and support you, while also staying neutral?
3. After completing this exercise, consider the following:
   1. What obstacles did you face in trying to adopt a third-party perspective?
   2. Are there important relationships in your life that could benefit from you occasionally taking a third-party perspective?
   3. How might you be successful when trying to take a third-party perspective in the future?
   4. How might taking this perspective help you reduce the distress you feel during disagreements in your relationships?

**A few TPP tips:**

* If possible, complete this exercise quickly after the distressing event or conflict.
* As you complete this exercise, be patient with yourself when you find it difficult to maintain a third-party perspective, since this can be quite challenging for most people.
* Try to practice this exercise frequently, as practice makes progress!

(Adapted from methods described in Finkel, E. J., Slotter, E. B., Luchies, L. B., Walton, G. M., & Gross, J. J. (2013). A brief intervention to promote conflict reappraisal preserves marital quality over time. *Psychological Science, 24*(8).)