The thin line of perception



Perception is in the eye of the beholder

There you are; focused & determined and people start saying you are blinkered & stubborn

Or, maybe you are enthusiastically pursuing a challenge and people see you as impulsive and reckless

Alternatively; there you are, calm and understanding but being criticised for being passive and acquiescing

What about the days when you have mustered up your discipline only to be seen as dogmatic and rigid?

Regardless of all your positive intentions, people aren't seeing it.

As Carl Jung said,

"*It all depends on how we look at things, and not how they are in themselves*"

We all have our personal filters and we all interpret the behaviours of others

Walking boldly into the room and giving a firm and assertive handshake can easily be seen as arrogant and domineering – but how are you to know that?

Not only that, but no two people will perceive you in exactly the same way, the more aggressive may see you as weak and the

more passive may see you as overbearing

Communicating and managing perceptions is not easy; if you want to have an impact on others' perceptions, you need to take control of your communication and the messages you send

"*You cannot not communicate*"

Paul Watzlawick

Most people's communication is "implicit"; if you are heads down and focussed on getting stuff done, you probably expect people to understand that. However, if you don't, "explicitly", tell people what they need to know, their brains will fill in the gaps, and create a perception that was not intended – this person is "ignoring me because they are not interested in me"

People's perception of you are never "wrong"; it's their perception, it may not coincide with your perception of you, but theirs is not wrong – just different

Some hints & tips for managing perceptions

Do:

- Increase your own awareness
- Be aware of the effect you have on others
- Know the effect that stress has on you and how this looks to others
- Encourage feedback from people you value, without making unreasonable demands
- Give yourself adequate time and make perception management part of your personal development

Do Not:

- React emotionally to the feedback you receive
- Act defensively
- Behave aggressively and try too hard too quickly

- Embroil others in your views of yourself
- Pester people for feedback

“*There are things known and there are things unknown, and in between are the doors of perception*”

Aldous Huxley