










# Perspective

My partner always stops me and wants to change things			I dive in and don't come up for air till the job is done	
I am embarrassed that our project is a mess			We are out of time and can't stop now for anything	If I have to explain, I lose track of what I was doing
	I resent others commenting on my work project	I don't know how to tell them when they have made a big mistake		
	Once we start the project, it is very hard to stop and talk		We make each other nervous when we talk - so we don't	

## Perspective

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**I love wallpapering.** Probably because that is where my renovating began with my father when I was a little girl. It taught me early on about gaining a new perspective, even when part-way through a project.

We are transformed by our projects – just as we are changed internally as soon as we make a decision to change. It is so neat when we have a physical representation of this marvelous truth – that decision-making is the pivot upon which our future reality rests. I just love to notice how change is evident, and is seen so clearly when hanging wallpaper, because after hanging only a few strips, you can look at that section of wall and see how the identity of the room has changed! That is a moment to savor, and so let it be a banquet for your eyes.

As you perceive the change and let it in, several things will happen:

**You will become calmer**

**It will increase your motivation to continue and finish the project with confidence**

**You will have a lighter mood – and will be happy with the chosen change**

**And – you may have piggyback inspirations!**

As you can see, it is well worth it to pause during any project. A worthwhile break in most projects can be taken when practical: for example, when tiling, while you wait for the Thinset to set up (15 minutes); or when you are framing, while on a lunch/beverage break. Take a breath, look, and savor the view!



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### ***Impulses and desires –***

When framing I usually have a paradoxical desire to leave the studs and rafters just as they are – I always fall in love with the open rafters that you can look through and see the beautiful blue sky and clouds. I then say this to my husband, who quickly reminds me that it is only nice on a lovely day, and that the rain will come & NH snow won't be as much fun – not to mention the heating bills. (Sigh, ah well.) It is still a lovely moment and I feast on it. I would not trade those moments away to anyone. They are enchanting.

You might wonder, with all these awesome moments to cherish, if we ever finish a job. Well – yes. These experiences shape our attitude while working, resting, or immersing ourselves in the activities of the task at hand. No one works nonstop like a buzz saw – we all must pause. So look, savor, and learn.

### ***Perspectives on level & plumb***

Then there is the great corrective perspective that you get as you look at the project from a different angle, walking around it as you get another wind. Often you can pick up on a backwards angle, a bubble off-plumb, a mismatched grain. It is great to take such mini-breaks often to check these elements of your progress, and they are easier to fix earlier than later. You may be able to compensate in the next row, and regain the momentum of the task quite easily. If there are nails to take out, the sooner the better. If wall-paper needs to come off – it removes quite easily while still wet. So, breathe and look, then get back to work.

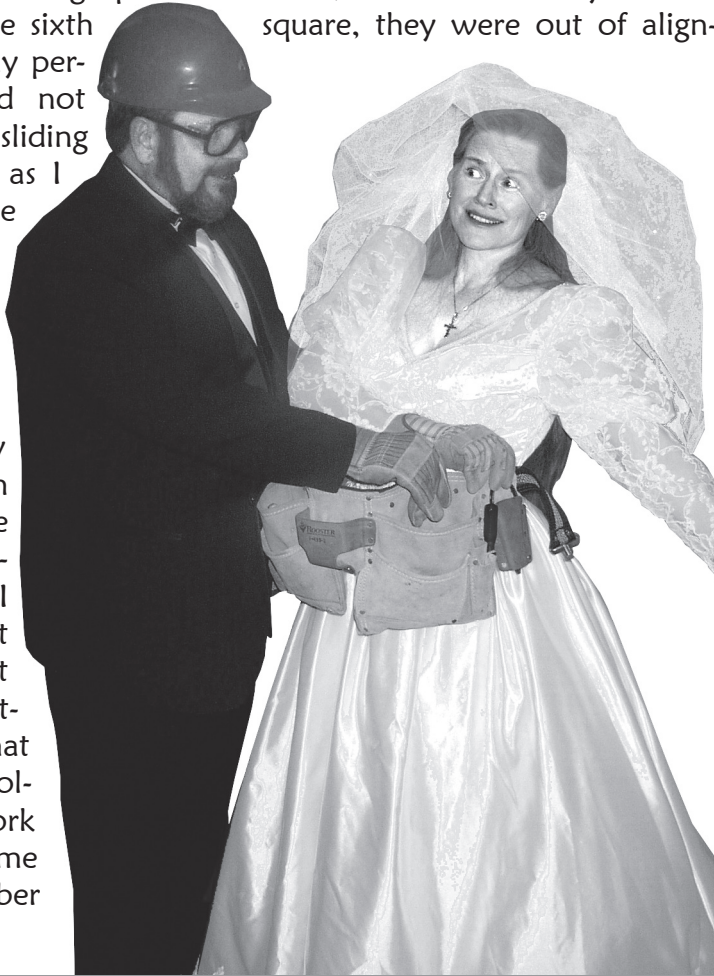
### ***Rethinking schedules & order of tasks***

As you take your perspective breaks, you may notice that some parts of the task will work better if you do them in another order. For example, in tiling, as you look at the cutting waste, you may notice that they are all the same angle as the pieces you are cutting for the other side of the room and, with a bit of adaptation, you can do half the cutting! It's so sweet when that happens!

**Changing pace makes sense.** You may also notice that you really should not do as much work on the project as you have planned in one push, even though you have time for it. You might be forced to break it into much smaller chunks due to material constraints.

I found this to be the case when laying parquet flooring. I was delighted that it was lovely and lining up so well, as it was exactly cut for precise fit. But by the sixth square, they were out of alignment! Until I took my perspective break, I had not seen how they were sliding on the slick adhesive as I knocked the next one into place.

I needed to then carefully plan how I would be able to do it in smaller portions. The task suddenly transformed itself from a simple Lego-style placement to a sliding jigsaw puzzle. I needed to figure out which pieces I could put down in this initial setting to dry in place that would maximize my following progressive work sessions and allow me to fit the proper number each time.



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I decided on a T-shaped arrangement for this day, but realized I needed to be especially careful in making it square so that I would not wind up with gaps or wedge-type holes if I strayed from the square alignment at all. That took a bit of mental time to figure out, but after checking my measures, I was confident, and settled on a plan that would distribute such errors evenly across the whole floor. I managed to do it all before the adhesive was dry, and I was satisfied. The floor turned out lovely after 6 short daily work sessions, and I used the rest of the time those days happily working on other projects.

## **Communication about our perspectives – practical & profound**

Sometimes in our domestic adventures, we stumble upon the work site of our partner. As we look, we see the project taking shape, the organization of materials, the set-up of their work area on the scene, the one we love involved in intense focus – unaware of our eyes.

We also might notice some materials applied that are misaligned, a tool in poor condition, a forgotten safety precaution. Such practical matters may well need to be communicated. Yet you are entering the special, noisy, isolated place of the busy worker. Their mind is probably in another dimension as you enter the scene. The things they are focusing on have little to do with words or people. Entering this zone can be like landing on another planet.

You need to approach cautiously for safety reasons, as startling someone who is holding a tool can cause injury, and because their brain is not going to be positioned within the context of social interaction. You need to get their atten-



tion, let them re-enter the social world, and then tactfully deliver your message about the observations you have.

If you have any negatives at all, it is essential that you use tact and also stick to the specifics. If the work site is disorganized and you fear they may get hurt, saying it broadly in this way could bring defensiveness and make them feel criticized and put down; and they will be mad or ignore you. But instead you could say, “You might not have noticed, but this table saw is vibrating that pile of wood and it may fall on you any moment.” You get the idea.

Your approach in making this comment needs to be softened with care to lessen the jolt you are likely to deliver to the person on the other end. You want them to hear you and be safe.

## **Seeing beyond the “Forest for the trees”**

***Benefits of stepping back:***

**Gaining a new focus**

**Feedback for plans & decisions**

### **A great assignment for kids pertains to perspectives:**

The children can be asked to draw pictures, or take photos or videos of the day’s work, and even write about the day’s events and the processes in this book for your family.

If you are home schooling, there are even more tremendous possibilities. If we give them a chance, children can provide some great perspectives and even comic relief in their chronicling of the adventures and mishaps of the renovation experience.

Their record and the interactions it prompts will be like holding up a mirror to help us see our reflections. We can see ourselves and how we handle our dreams and our failures in a new way, through their eyes. Sometimes this is a profound perspective.

Yet altogether, the long view is: how does our project or even our habitual pattern enhance the family in its environment? If we need to, we can then adjust our course.

Children can learn about handling dreams and adversity through us. If we don’t take ourselves too seriously, if we allow mistakes to teach and not to defeat, if we involve each other with love and caring through thick and thin, we teach them much and we are all enriched.

## *Perspectives of visitors*

We love to have people come to visit. It is always fun to take them on “the tour.” The perspectives they offer in this process are great, and especially if they are returning visitors, they can notice the progress over time. It really encourages you to have someone notice transformations your own eyes could not see. Read more about this in the Company! chapter.



## Notes from Perspectives

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**Ready for a new perspective?**

**Walk around your project site alone and notice:**

**Three things that are beautiful** - that will not remain that way once the project is completed:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**A safety tip that can be fixed**

- 1.

**Two alternative ways that it could have been built, but ok, it wasn't.**

- 1.
- 2.

**One aspect that still can be changed**

- 1.

**And, the 3 next steps on your plan**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Consider your perspectives on these items**

Notice if there were any that might feel negative to your partner

**If there are any difficult (negatives) to share - pause and think about how you can best say them - be extra tactful even in your head**

**Communication time ~ yep**

**Now, review these together - take some time to listen to each other**

Pay attention to the tone of this discussion - make sure you each maintain more than 70% positives.

Take at least 15 minutes to do this and you will enjoy a lift in your communication skills

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