



Depth Perception™

Commentary from Design For Ministry™

Los Angeles - Milwaukee - Philadelphia

I perceive you are mistaken

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Waiting for a flight from Indianapolis to Denver, a gate agent announces the long flight to Denver is about to board. You get on the flight and the lead attendant welcomes everyone to the "short flight to Denver." What gives? Who is wrong?

Obviously, these two people working for the same airline and the same two-hour flight perceive matters differently. The great temptation is for us to take sides based upon our perception, or to consider both persons in error because we are certain two hours is a flight of middle length. In the end perceptions, even for something as simple as describing flight length, can land all over the map.

To bridge varying perception differences requires taking a moment to think through the definition each person is using, and their reasons why. Perhaps the gate agent doesn't fly very often and thinks short flights are puddle-jumpers to a hub airport. Perhaps the flight attendant is fresh off a

series of international flights, so two hours seems short indeed.

Understanding these differences in perception, now whom would you say is correct? Even if you still think the flight is long or short or middling, do you still think of one or both of these persons is wrong?

Bridging perception differences also requires thinking through why you choose your own perception. Are you afraid to fly? Do you fly often? Are you normally busy working when you fly or are you bored out of your mind until the plane lands? Are you a pilot? Knowing why you make your choice gives you better understanding of why another person makes theirs.

Normally, a little time like this helps you continue a conversation without disagreement. Normally, we don't take the time. Normally we experience more disagreement than we would need.

-mark l. vincent