

The Mirror of Perception

By Donna Bishop

The witch stands before the looking glass and asks,

“Mirror, Mirror on the wall
Who’s the fairest of them all?”

The Mirror reflects the witch’s perception.

“You are the fairest one of all!”

The world around us is a mirror of our perceptions. How we experience the world depends on how we choose to interpret what we see, hear, smell, taste or touch.

Small children have limited experience to interpret their world. We share their pure joy as they explore their senses by putting everything in their mouths, smelling each flower, and of course touching everything in sight. What a wonderful playground the world offers. Immediately adults starts teaching the child how to perceive the world. “Don’t put that in your mouth!” “That is dirty – it will make you sick.” “Here, have a candy sucker.”

For several years a child relates to the world based on the beliefs of those near him but with new experiences the growing child begins to make his own interpretations of what he sees, hears, smells, tastes, and touches.

Individually and collectively we have created a beautiful world as our perceptions are reflected in our art, music, literature and architecture. In addition our customs of dressing and the foods we eat, our ways of worshipping and even our languages are based on our perceptions of the world around us.

As technology advances we can share these beautiful aspects of life from a much wider wonderful world perspective. We can all marvel at the picture of our planet, Earth, taken from a spaceship.

Unfortunately, back on terra firma that serene scene changes and we now have front row seats to view the horrors of war, poverty, starvation, refugee camps and terrorism. What does this world mirror to you? Most of us are pretty frightened by what we are seeing and hearing. Our perception that we are not safe means that we are willing to give more control to those that convince us they can provide that security. The choices we make are for more policeman, more prisons, a huge military budget, more border security, and of course Homeland Security along with the FBI, the CIA, and super-secret groups unknown to most of us. Our government spends billions of dollars on foreign aid but our perception is that many of the recipients resent us and distrust our motives.

Perceptions are a way we interpret what we experience through our five senses. Our perceptions vary be individuals and groups of people. Perceptions can change drastically with new experiences. I once perceived as a child. Now more than seventy years later my perceptions are vastly altered, but like a child I still create my world view by what I choose to experience.

