

Television is a wonderful invention, and everyone nowadays spends some time staring at a screen that displays a variety of scenes, whether for entertainment or work. Producing such displays at wavelengths beyond red light (the infrared) is a much more difficult task.

One of my jobs in recent years has been to work in a special lab viewing an array of tiny heating elements with an infrared camera. This system can map the radiation output and location of each emitter with great precision. We use it regularly to ensure that the scene projection arrays continue to perform as they should.

To make accurate measurements, the camera has to be calibrated with known radiation sources. A spatial calibration is also essential so that the alignment or positions of the elements could be determined.

The camera has to be used with a calibration that was appropriate for the temperature range of the heating elements on which it was acquiring data. If we cooled the array down for the measurements, for instance, we had to recalibrate the camera. If we used a different lens, we might have to perform a new spatial calibration. The point is, we had to react to the operating conditions of the device we were testing to set the camera up properly.

When I was working with this camera one day, I realized that I had a similar task when I interacted with people (especially my wife). I might be traveling down a certain path in our discussion, and suddenly realize that I was encountering some resistance. I could choose to proceed on as I was and thus possibly damage something in the process, or I could choose to recalibrate myself so that I could better interface with them as they “warmed” or “cooled”.

Thinking about the spatial dimension makes it a little clearer. We must be able to connect at all of the right points, and if I let myself drift off track we would have a disconnect. Once again, the potential for damage is there.

So, I must choose to recalibrate myself whenever I feel that it is needed. In doing that, I can keep my relationships properly connected.