

SELF AWARENESS

Self-awareness is the ability to recognize your emotions and how they affect your thoughts and behaviors.



INTERNAL SELF - AWARENESS

Internal Self-awareness is the ability to recognize and understand your own emotions, beliefs, motivations, values, desires, and responses.

Understand who you are and what matters the most to you.



EXTERNAL SELF-AWARENESS

External Self-awareness is the ability to accurately self-observe and understand how others perceive you.

Understand how you are perceived and how you show up in the world.

SELF AWARENESS IS VITAL (FOR/TO)

- Authenticity
- Mental Well-Being: health, happiness, and fulfillment
- Emotional Intelligence
- Personal Growth
- Leadership
- Professional Development

SELF-AWARE INDIVIDUALS ARE BETTER ABLE TO:

Observe Self:	Assess and understand your own strengths, weaknesses, desires, fears, and behavior patterns.
Regulate Emotions:	Recognize your emotions as they arise and respond rationally and constructively rather than reacting impulsively.
Proactive Change:	Recognize undesired habits or behavior patterns and take proactive steps toward change.
Grow Personally:	Understanding your internal processes can pave the way for personal growth and transformation.
Build Empathy and Relationships:	Understand and engage your own vulnerabilities and emotions. This builds greater empathy for others and deeper and more fulfilling relationships.
Reduce Stress:	Recognize stress and engage in healthy coping mechanisms.
Experience Better Health:	Attune your body and emotions to lead to better health decisions.
Learn and Grow with more ease:	Engage feedback to adapt and grow more efficiently.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO LACK OF SELF-AWARENESS



Cognitive Biases

- **Confirmation Bias:** It can be challenging to see yourself objectively. It's common to seek information to confirm your existing beliefs and dismiss information that disproves them.
- **Self-Serving Bias:** Self-esteem is protected by limiting self-awareness. Positive events are correlated as personal achievements, while negative events are attributed to external factors resulting in an imbalance reflection of self.



Emotional Self-Protection

- **Defense Mechanisms:** The psyche develops defense mechanisms like denial, repression, and projection to protect from painful truths or uncomfortable emotions.
- **Fear of Vulnerability:** Acknowledging flaws or areas of ignorance causes feelings of exposure and vulnerability, resulting in avoidance of uncomfortable situations. So, we might choose to avoid these self-realizations.



Social and Environmental Factors

- **Cultural Conditioning:** Some cultures prioritize communal values over individual introspection, which can diminish the emphasis on personal self-awareness.
- **Social Pressure to Conform:** Standing out or admitting to unpopular beliefs or feelings can lead to social isolation, so individuals might suppress or remain unaware of their true selves to fit in.



Overemphasis on External Validation

- **Approval Seeking:** If you are overly focused on seeking approval from others, you may lose touch with your own desires and feelings.
- **Material and External Success:** Societies focused on external achievements (such as wealth and status) often deter individuals from inner exploration.



Misunderstanding of Self-awareness

- **Equating with Introspection:** While introspection is a tool for achieving self-awareness, it doesn't always lead to accurate self-awareness. Over-analyzing without external feedback can lead to rumination or false self-beliefs.



Lack of Education or Awareness

- **Limited Exposure:** The concept of self-awareness and its benefits are not common knowledge to all, especially, especially if it's not part of mainstream education or discourse in one's environment.
- **Perceived as Self-Indulgent:** Some individuals see introspection as a form of self-absorption or navel-gazing and, therefore, not a worthy pursuit.



Time and Effort

- **Requires Dedication:** True self-awareness requires time, effort, and sometimes guidance (such as therapy or coaching). The resources and patience required for a journey of self-awareness are not afforded to everyone.
- **Evolving Nature:** Our beliefs, feelings, and values often change over time. Keeping up with this constant evolution requires continuous effort.

Fostering greater self-awareness is an invaluable lifelong journey.

EIGHT WAYS TO FOSTER GREATER SELF-AWARENESS



Introspection

- Engage in silence and disconnect.
- **Meditation and Mindfulness:** Engage in practices encouraging you to focus on the present moment, recognize your thoughts and emotions, and accept them non-judgmentally.
- **Journaling:** Writing about your experiences, feelings, and thoughts can help you process and understand them better. It can also highlight behavior patterns over time.



Seek Feedback

- **360-Degree Feedback:** This is a feedback process where you get insights from superiors, peers, and subordinates.
- Tools like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, StrengthsFinder, or the Enneagram can provide insights into your personality and behavior.
- **Honest Friends and Family:** Ask for candid feedback about your behavior to support your growth.



Get Professional Guidance

- **Therapy or Counseling:** Therapists can offer objective insights and give you tools to delve deeper.
- **Coaching:** Coaches can help you align your actions with your goals and values, further promoting self-awareness.



Question Your Beliefs and Assumptions

- Challenge and dissect your long-held beliefs. Ask yourself why you hold certain views and where they originated.
- Avoid becoming defensive. Seek colliding perspectives as an opportunity to learn and grow.



Practice Active Listening

- By truly listening to others, you understand their perspectives and become more aware of your own reactions and biases.



Engage in New Experiences

- Travel, take up a new hobby, or simply change your routine. New experiences can offer fresh perspectives and challenge existing worldviews.
- **Attend Workshops or Retreats:** Participate in programs designed to enhance self-awareness and personal growth.



Practice Humility and Empathy

- Recognize your ego and its influence on your perceptions.
- Observe with grace your imperfections and growth opportunities.
- Seek a better understanding of others to not only learn more about them but also to learn about your own biases and emotional reactions.



Set Goals and Review them Regularly

- Cultivate a curious mindset. Ask "Why?" and "What can I learn?" more often.
- By setting and revisiting personal goals, you remain aware of your values, desires, and the trajectory you wish to follow.

The journey to self-awareness is ongoing. Your understanding of yourself will evolve as you grow and change, so continuing these practices and staying open to self-discovery is essential. With dedication and intentionality, the depth and breadth of your self-awareness can expand significantly over time.

While desirable, cultivating greater self-awareness can be challenging. It may feel abstract, elusive, lonely, confusing, and distressing.



WHY YOU OVERLOOK SELF-AWARENESS

- **Urgency of Immediate:** Day-to-day responsibilities, challenges, and concerns can overshadow the perceived luxury of self-reflection. (Some day I will...)
- **Lack of Tangible Measurement:** It can feel abstract, difficult to measure, and deeply personal.
- **Discomfort:** Confronting your fears, biases, and imperfections is hard work.
- **Distractions:** Mindless activities are tempting and abundant, such as social media scrolling or bingeing Netflix.



FORCES WORKING AGAINST SELF-AWARENESS

- **Identity:** Your identity roots you. It gives you a sense of belonging and creates purpose. However, identity may also hinder your growth if you become too rigidly attached or fixated on an idea of who you think you are.
- **Egoic Defenses:** Ego is the self that is presented to the world. Ego protects you from perceived threats such as negative feedback or challenging self-realizations.
- **Stress or Rumination:** Without the skills to manage or cope, the risk of getting stuck in a negative feedback loop is greatly increased.
- **Complementary Skills:** Requires the ability to regulate emotions and foster resilience and positive coping strategies.



THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF SELF-AWARENESS OVERTIME:

- **Lifecycle Evolution:** As one progresses through life's stages (youth, adulthood, elder), priorities and self-perceptions shift - demanding a recalibration of self-awareness.
- **Adversity as a Crucible:** Challenging times often force introspection and reevaluating values, beliefs, and behaviors - making adversity a potent tool for deepening self-awareness.
- **Aging and Maturity:** While age can bring wisdom and a broadened perspective, intentional reflection is necessary to ensure it leads to enhanced self-awareness.



REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:

- Who are three self-aware people you admire?
- What are three actions you could take to practice greater self-awareness?
- Get leverage: How will greater self-awareness be valuable to you personally and professionally? What is your why?

REMEMBER: Developing self-awareness is a lifelong practice. Investing time to know yourself better provides infinite dividends over time, both personally and professionally. The more you foster self-awareness, the greater access you will have to be agile and impactful with your responses.

Please share how you are generating greater Self Awareness and what questions arise.

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