

Lecture: 6

SELF-AWARENESS

Self Awareness is having a clear perception of your personality, including strengths, weaknesses, thoughts, beliefs, motivation, and emotions. Self Awareness allows you to understand other people, how they perceive you, your attitude and your responses to them in the moment.

We might quickly assume that we are self aware, but it is helpful to have a relative scale for awareness. If you have ever been in an auto accident you may have experienced everything happening in slow motion and noticed details of your thought process and the event. This is a state of heightened awareness. With practice we can learn to engage these types of heightened states and see new opportunities for interpretations in our thoughts, emotions, and conversations. Having awareness creates the opportunity to make changes in behavior and beliefs.

Why Develop Self-awareness?

As you develop self-awareness you are able to make changes in the thoughts and interpretations you make in your mind. Changing the interpretations in your mind allows you to change your emotions. Self-awareness is one of the attributes of Emotional Intelligence and an important factor in achieving success.

Self-awareness is the first step in creating what you want and mastering your life. Where you focus your attention, your emotions, reactions, personality, and behavior determine where you

go in life. Having self-awareness allows you to see where your thoughts and emotions are taking you. It also allows you to take control of your emotions, behavior, and personality so you can make changes you want. Until you are aware in the moment of your thoughts, emotions, words, and behavior, you will have difficulty making changes in the direction of your life.

Self-Awareness in Relationships

Relationships are easy until there is emotional turmoil. This is the same whether you are at work or in your personal life. When you can change the interpretation in your mind of what you think you can change your emotions and shift the emotional quality of your relationships. When you can change the emotions in your relationships you open entirely

new possibilities in your life.

Having a clear understanding of your thought and, behavior patterns help you understand other people. This ability to empathize facilitates better personal and professional relationships.

Develop Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is developed through practices in focusing your attention on the details of your personality and behavior. It isn't learned from reading a book. When you read a book, you are focusing your attention on the conceptual ideas in the book. You can develop an intellectual understanding of the ideas of self-awareness from a book, but this is not the same. With your attention in a book, you are practicing not paying attention to your own behavior, emotions and personality.

Think of learning to be mindful and self-aware as learning to dance. When learning to dance we must pay attention to how and where our feet move, our hands and body motion, what our partner is doing, music, beat, floor space, and other dancers. Dancing isn't learned from books and Self Awareness isn't either. A dancer needs awareness of their body movements. Self-awareness is what you develop when you pay attention to your expressions of thought, emotions, and behavior. In my years of study and working with clients I have discovered many useful techniques that accelerate this learning.

In the process of these sessions, I am not telling anybody what to believe, how they should think, or what they should do. I am basically sharing with people exercises in raising their self-awareness. When you become more self-aware you instinctively begin to see aspects of your personality and behavior that you did not notice before.

If you have an emotional reaction of anger or frustration, you notice many of the thoughts and small triggers that build up towards those emotions. You also notice moments when you can change the interpretations in your mind, or not believe what you are thinking. In this heightened awareness you instinctively make better choices in your thought process long before an emotional reaction or destructive behavior.