

Self Awareness:

“Knowing others is wisdom; knowing yourself is enlightenment” ~ Lao Tzu

By Liggy Webb

Self-awareness is a recognition of our personality, our strengths and weaknesses, our likes and dislikes. Developing self-awareness can help us to recognise when we are stressed or under pressure. It is also often a prerequisite for effective communication and interpersonal relations, as well as for developing empathy for others.

Self-awareness is the first step in the creation process. As you grow in self-awareness, you will better understand why you feel what you feel and why you behave as you behave.

That understanding then gives you the opportunity and freedom to change those things you'd like to change about yourself and create the life you want. Without fully knowing who you are, self-acceptance and change become impossible

One of the keys to becoming more self aware is to know yourself better and also be able to show yourself with less inhibition. If you know yourself well enough, you will have the confidence to be more open and share relevant information to improve communication and connect better with others.

Johari Window

One tool to help you with this is the Johari Window, a model named after the first names of its inventors, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in 1955.

It is one of the most useful models describing the process of human interaction. Based on a four-paned “window”, it divides personal awareness into four different types, as represented by its four quadrants: open, hidden, blind, and unknown.

We have to begin with an “open” pane which is our “arena” which is what you know about yourself and so do others. Our second “closed” pane is our “façade” which is what others don't know about us, but we do know about ourselves.

Essentially it's your secrets, the things you keep to yourself because you either want to keep them private or you fear letting other people know about them in case they judge or reject you.



Our third “blind” pane is our “blind spot” which is what others know about you, but you don't know about yourself; this could be something obvious like physical behaviours or mannerisms. The final “unknown” pane is our personal potential which is what we don't know about ourselves and neither do others. It is our Unknown Self waiting to be discovered. Our potential waiting to be unleashed.

Trust

So, in order to understand ourselves better and to feel the confidence to show ourselves more, we need to trust in order to be more open and accept feedback to learn more about ourselves from other perspectives. Trust is something that requires a certain amount of confidence and also the ability to occasionally move out of our comfort zone.

“To have greater self-awareness or understanding means to have a better grasp of reality.”

Dalai Lama

Receiving feedback can also be challenging. It is the food of progress, but, like some foods, while it may be good for us, it can also not be so pleasant to digest. However, the more we can let our guard down and open up, and the more we see feedback as free information that can add huge value, or be dissuaded (it is our choice after all) the more potential we have to grow and see ourselves more clearly in the metaphorical mirror.

Emotional Intelligence - EQ - is a relatively recent behavioural model, rising to prominence with Daniel Goleman's 1995 book called Emotional Intelligence.

The skill of self-awareness forms a large part of emotional intelligence and, by being more self aware, we are better equipped to understand why we react in certain ways to certain things – which helps us to take more personal responsibility for ourselves on an emotional level.



The more we understand about ourselves, the better equipped we will be to deal with the challenges we face and this, in turn, will boost our self confidence and help us to maximise our personal potential.

Self Awareness - Useful Tips:

- Encourage feedback about your blind spots.
- Reach out of your comfort zone.
- Learn to trust more and open up to others.
- Don't be afraid to make mistakes.
- Be interested in who you are.
- Listen to yourself and challenge your insecurities.
- Identify your personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Take a psychometric test.
- Be open to self improvement – nobody is perfect!
- Learn to love yourself – warts and all!

Life is what YOU make it!

The above article is an extract from *The Happy Handbook - A Compendium of Modern Life Skills* by Liggy Webb which is out now.



Liggy Webb is widely respected as a leading expert in the field of *Modern Life Skills and Workplace Wellness*.

As a presenter, consultant and author she is passionate about her work and improving the quality of people's lives. She is the founding director of The Learning Architect a consortium of niche industry experts. Liggy has developed a range of techniques to support individuals and organizations to cope more effectively with modern living and the demands and challenges of life in the twenty tens and beyond.

As a consultant with the United Nations she travels expensively and has recently returned from Afghanistan which she describes as biggest life education to date!

For more info visit:

www.liggywebb.com

www.thelearningarchitect.com

email: info@liggywebb.com

call us: + 44 (0)1242 700027