Self-Awareness: Knowing Yourself to Be a Better Leader

Stefanie Giannini
Affiliation or Financial Disclosure

• Stefanie Giannini
  • Assistant Director of Food & Nutrition Services
    • Marquardt School District 15
    • Glendale Heights, IL

• Nothing to Disclose
Objectives

• Understand what Self-Awareness is & how to practice it
• Identify our own strengths and weaknesses
• Understand the connection between self-awareness & leadership
• How to improve upon our own strengths and weaknesses as leaders
What is Self-Awareness?

self-a·ware·ness [noun]
conscious knowledge of one's own character, feelings, motives, and desires.

-Oxford Dictionary Definition
Being Alert is Not the Same as Being Aware

We live most of our life on autopilot
Why is Self-Awareness important?

“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.”

~Aristotle
Why is Self-Awareness a Hard Skill to Learn?

• You must face your mistakes & shortcomings
• Out of sight out of mind
• Takes practice & effort
• Change is hard

“Being self-aware is not the absence of mistakes, but the ability to learn and correct them.”

-Daniel Chidiac
Is Your Perception of Yourself a Reality?

False perceptions = stunted growth

Most Detrimental Self-Perceptions:
• Much **Worse** than reality
• Much **Better** than reality

How can you ever grow as a person if you are building from an imaginary foundation?
Double-Edged Sword: Strengths & Weaknesses

For (almost) every strength there is a weakness both directly & indirectly related to that strength
### Exhibit A: Stefanie Giannini

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTH</th>
<th>WEAKNESS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>Messy/Disorganized</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personable</td>
<td>Hard to be authoritative at times</td>
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<tr>
<td>Millennial (Techie)</td>
<td>Always Tapped into Phone/Computer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant Thinker (New ideas)</td>
<td>Scatter Brained/Forgetful/Daydreamer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extremely Loyal</td>
<td>Not Always Open to New Relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excels in Working Alone</td>
<td>Avoids Groups Projects &amp; Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tunnel Vision</td>
<td>Hard to Focus on Projects Not Passionate About</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good Sense of Humor</td>
<td>Uses Humor/Sarcasm at inappropriate times</td>
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<td>Loves to talk</td>
<td>Forgets to Listen</td>
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<td>Excels in Writing</td>
<td>Struggles With Clear Verbal Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensitive &amp; Compassionate</td>
<td>Cries Easily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comfortable in my own skin</td>
<td>Don’t always look the most professional in my day-to-day job</td>
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Your Turn!

Activity: Think of 2-3 strengths you have and weaknesses that correlate with each strength.
How Do Your Strength & Weaknesses Affect You in Your Day to Day Job?

• Emotions
• Quality of work
• Productivity
• Stress Management
How Do Your Strength & Weaknesses Affect Your Team?
Being A Self-Aware Leader

Self-awareness isn’t just about you!

- How you treat and interact with those around you
- Quality of relationships depend on it

- **Social Intelligence:** “ability to understand one’s own and others’ feelings, behaviors, and thoughts and act appropriately”

-Peter G. Northouse, Western Michigan University
Verbal Communication

i'm hearing what you're saying, i'm listening 100% and i get it, i promise

but let me play devil's advocate

what if... the exact opposite of everything you said, so i can be right?
Non-Verbal Communication

Eye-Roll
Facial Expression
Eye Contact
Body Language
Sigh
Position
It Doesn’t Matter How You Meant It

Be sensitive to who you are communicating with
Perceptions

Past experiences change the way you view the world around you

Have you ever had a bad experience with a person and from then on, everything they say or do annoys you?
Perceptions Continued

Society, the media, and misinformation change the way we view the world and those around us

STOP with stereotypes; view each team member as an individual
Assumptions

“…An assumption of positive intent relies on the core belief that people are doing the best they can with what they’ve got, versus that people are lazy, disengaged, and maybe even trying to piss us off on purpose”

- Brene Brown, PhD, LMSW

From her book *Dare to Lead* (2018)
Understanding Others

I want, by understanding myself, to understand others. I want to be all that I am capable of becoming.
--- Katherine Mansfield
Understanding Others

View others with an **empathetic and analytical mind**.

Always search for the WHY
“At a very minimum, it is crucial to state that leadership involves values, and one cannot be a leader without being aware of and concerned about one’s own values” (Northouse, 2019, p. 354)
Trust

“Organizations are no longer built on force, but on trust”
(Drucker)
Motivation

What motivates YOU?
What makes you go the extra mile to accomplish your goals?
What makes you get out of bed each day?
What Motivates YOU May NOT Be What Motivates Your Team

“Leaders need to take into account their own and followers’ purposes while working towards goals that are suitable for both of them”

(Northouse, 2019, p. 351)
Learning Style

Are you teaching or training your team how YOU learn best or how THEY learn best?

If you don’t know, ask!
Self-Awareness = Self-Improvement

Being self-aware means nothing if you don’t utilize it to improve as an individual and as a leader.

Question #1: What are my strengths and weaknesses?
Question #2: How do I want to improve upon these?
Question #3: What steps will I take to improve?
WHY Do You Want to Improve?

You need a reason to change in order for the change to stick.

You have to WANT to improve, not only for yourself, but for those you lead

Write your WHY down to remind you!
Now...The Important Part:
Critically Reflect

• Reflection = Acknowledgement
• Critical Reflection = Acknowledgement, Analyzation, Action
HARD TRUTH: you can’t control or change other people. You can only control and change yourself.
Stop Making Excuses

Be vulnerable

Stop getting defensive

It is never too late to improve.

Past experiences aren’t an excuse.

There is ALWAYS room for improvement.
Accept That Perfect Doesn’t Exist

“Give up being Perfect for being Authentic.”

~Hal Elrod
### Step 1: Lay It All Out

- List out your strengths; think outside the box!
  - Emotional, physical, mental, skill-set, relational etc.
- List out correlating weaknesses
- Circle top 3 greatest strengths (or that you find most valuable)
- Circle the top 3 weaknesses you would like to improve on

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Step 2: Take Notes of Patterns & Physical Cues

DON’T IGNORE these physical cues!
You can always change your course of action from the “auto-pilot” reaction!

Feeling

- You’re frustrated because your coworker and you aren’t agreeing on how to approach a new project.
- (Patience when working with someone of opposite views maybe a weakness of yours)

Physical Cue

- Heart starts beating faster
- Body temperature rises
- Foot starts tapping quickly
- Can’t sit still in chair
- Negative facial expressions

Reaction

- Physically shut down. Stop trying.
- Tune coworker out when she speaks.
- Cut coworker off when she speaks.
- You “explode” and yell out “FINE! Do it your way then!”
Step 3: Set Realistic Goals & Don’t Waste Your Time

Focus on both strengths AND weakness

Be **specific**; start small

“I want to be more organized & productive”

vs

“I will start every day by creating a to-do list”

**Don’t** waste energy trying to drastically improve traits that are engrained within your being
Step 4: Create the How

- Cheat Sheets
- Calendar
- Post-it Reminders

- Quotes/Affirmations
- Books
- Podcasts
- Talk to Your Team
  - Learn from others

- Alarms Reminders
- Positive Self-Talk
- YouTube/Internet
Step 5: Check-in, Review, Analyze

Check-in at least once a day
1. Moments or situations of opportunity during the day?
2. What happened? Are you happy with how things went?
3. Room for improvement?
4. What did you learn?

*Critical Reflection!
Step 6: Practice & Repeat

Less Effort Over Time

Practice, Practice, Practice

Ex: Wow I really lost my temper & snapped at the staff out of frustration. I haven’t done that in months. I wonder why this time?

At least 66 days to form a new habit
Give Yourself Credit

Embrace feeling uncomfortable or weak in certain areas of your life

Own & enhance your strengths

Be PROUD: If you don’t toot your own horn no one else will.
CEUs

1.0 CEU

Key Area 3 – Administration
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