



Lesson Three

Top 10 Ways to Develop Self-Awareness

To recap from your last lesson, self-awareness is having a high degree of knowledge about yourself. ***It's awareness of your habits, emotional tendencies, needs, desires, strengths, and weaknesses.***

Having a high level of self-awareness is a powerful tool. It allows you to change your life more effectively, since you know how you tick. Those that lack self-awareness find life to be frustrating.

Develop your self-awareness:

1. **Notice your thoughts.** Unless you've been meditating for years, your mind is constantly churning through ideas and endlessly providing commentary. You can't just look at a tree and admire it, your mind has to comment, "That's a beautiful tree." Then it's off to the races.
 - Notice your thinking patterns. What are you thinking when you're feeling nervous? Bored? Interested? Walking down the street? ***Notice that similar situations result in similar thought patterns.***

- Do you judge people and situations? Do you spend a lot of time thinking about the past or the future? Do you expect the worst to happen or the best? Or do you adopt an attitude of, “Let’s just see what happens”?
2. **Notice your feelings.** What are you feeling throughout the day? What do you feel while you’re eating? Driving to work? Lying in bed? Waiting in line?
- Once you’ve notice your emotion, question it. What am I feeling? Why? What do I need right now? How do I normally react in this situation? Is that smart?
3. **Understand how you deal with frustration or emotional discomfort. A huge chunk of your time is spent trying to make yourself feel better.** If you feel slightly frustrated or uncomfortable, then you may spend a tremendous amount of time and energy trying to change the situation or the others around you to resolve those negative feelings.
- Do you try to control others? Do you attempt to distract yourself? Is your first instinct to leave the situation? Do you surf the internet or eat a big bowl of ice cream?
4. **Examine your friendships.** Where do you find your friends? Are most of your friendships long-term or short? When your friendships end, what is the common cause? What types of people do you prefer to be friends with? What types of people do you avoid?
5. **Examine your intimate relationships.** Do you see a pattern in the type of people that you’ve been involved with? What are the negative characteristics they all share? Why do you think those people appealed to you?
- What were your shortcomings in your relationships? Are you clingy? Jealous? Too focused on work? Failed to communicate your needs? Think about how you contributed to the failure of your relationships.
 - Have you changed your approach from relationship to relationship, or do you continue to repeat your mistakes?
6. **Keep a journal.** There’s no better way to learn about yourself than to record your thoughts, feelings, and experiences each day. **Studies have shown that we don’t remember our past very accurately, so record it while it’s still fresh in your mind.** Be sure to include your high and low points for the day.

- Note how well you ate and slept, too. You might find some useful information.
 - Create a habit of writing in your journal for at least 15 minutes each day. You'll start to notice patterns and learn a lot about yourself.
7. **Write your own manifesto. *Think about and then document your views on life, your goals, and your intentions.*** You might be surprised by what you write. This is a great first step for understanding yourself and your beliefs.
8. **Make a list of your strengths and weaknesses.** How do you know? Are you certain? Avoid jumping to conclusions. You may have always believed that you're a hard worker, but are you? To whom are you comparing yourself? Provide yourself with proof before you make any decisions.
9. **What would others say about you?** Consider how your partner, children, friends, family, co-workers, and boss would describe you. What would they suggest you improve about yourself? Then ask them and see how accurate you are. Do you know how others perceive you? Find out how perceptive you are.
10. **Meditate.** Meditation is all about developing a better awareness of the present moment and yourself. ***Meditation is an ideal activity for enhancing self-awareness.***
- Meditate at least once each day. Spend the rest of the day paying attention to yourself, others, and your surroundings. You can develop a higher degree of self-awareness by just paying attention.
 - Question yourself throughout the day. *“What am I attempting to achieve?” “What emotions am I currently feeling and why?” “What are the people around me feeling?”*

Understanding yourself might be the most important part of becoming and living authentically. The next lesson guides you through pondering your personal identity.

Here's what you need to do today:

Spend the rest of the day noticing your feelings. Do you see patterns emerging in similar situations?