

## Self Awareness

### Read and Learn:

- 5 Aspects Critical to Leadership Self-Awareness
- Leadership Self-Awareness Phases
- Am I Self-Aware: Self Assessment Tool

### Summary

The topic of leadership and, more specifically, training for leadership development is constantly under debate. There are many claims or reasons for “why do it?” No hard benefits, a soft science, too ambiguous a topic, resource constraints, not enough training time or dollars...the list goes on. And

there is that ultimate paradox where countless leaders of endless organizations have stood up and loudly proclaimed,

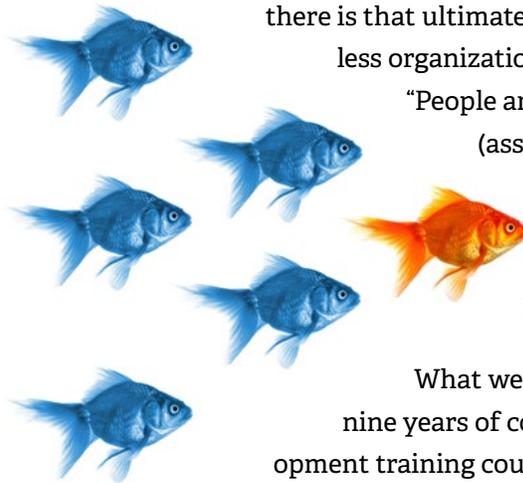
“People are our most important fill in the blank

(asset, product, to make the mission a success, etc.),” only to cut or even fail to allocate

any resources to develop themselves,

or these same “people,” to better lead

in the work environment.



What we in the Leadership Foundry have realized in nine years of conducting hundreds of leadership development training courses to over 25,000 participants is that one powerful and commonsense approach to developing good leaders

is founded in the concept of self-awareness. To some it would seem obvious that when individuals know themselves they are better able to act with integrity, yielding the ever-important byproduct of inspired influence. Or, obvious that the benefits of leadership self-awareness to individuals, teams and over-arching organizational culture bring a unity, which is a powerful motivator to be successful. For us, we believe it because we've seen it.

# Hard Reality to Self-Awareness

CEOs today are judged to be adequate on a single point; maximizing profits. Makes sense, as leaders are here to drive profits and shareholder value for the businesses they represent. This is how they are judged and subsequently rewarded. But what is critically important to a CEO is their own recognition that it is the *people* they surround themselves with, and indeed the people they employ throughout the organization, that will either make or break them when reaching for that bottom line.

A recent backed study helps to prove the value of self-awareness and its direct correlation to the bottom line:

“Public companies with a higher rate of return (ROR) employed professionals who exhibit higher levels of self-awareness.” [A Better Return on Self-Awareness, Zes and Landis]

By knowing who they are and what they want to be, leaders are better able to understand the correlation to their own work (business at hand) and the primary objectives of the company (business overall mission).



Leaders have the opportunity to become equipped to take their companies all the way through to mission accomplishment by understanding the **Five Critical Areas of Self:**

## 1. Strengths and Weaknesses

Effective leaders are masters of maximizing strengths and overcoming weaknesses. From this knowledge they are able to make intelligent decisions, identify formidable hires, facilitate innovation and generate sustainable change.

## 2. Thoughts, Emotions, and Behaviors

What makes a leader tick can only be uncovered by getting inside their mind and heart. This is where the root of their behaviors stems. The primary basis lies within leaders own values and beliefs.

### 3. Motivation

To inspire greatness leaders must make it a point to be a role model worth following. When the bar is set high, a leader's influence to reach the goal at hand is best achieved through authentic drive. A true purpose.

### 4. Habits

Consistent actions that become engrained in a leader are more likely to establish themselves as part of a company's culture.

### 5. Values and Beliefs

There is no substitute for earning trust, which is a byproduct of conducting oneself with the highest integrity, and through compassion and empathy for others.

## Why is this important?

Paybacks for organizations are substantial according to a study referred to in Forbes article on [Return On Self-Awareness: Research Validates the Bottom Line of Leadership Development.](#)

- 79% of employees in poor-performing companies were more likely to have low overall self-awareness.



A larger percentage of self-aware employees in a company outperformed companies with a lower percentage.

## Commonsense Approach to Self-Awareness

Why does this powerful skill remain elusive to leaders? For example, top athletes are renowned for looking at their performance not only critically but also through various lenses. Self-awareness is an invaluable point of reflection. Lacking in self-awareness costs athletes big in the heat of competition; without it they miss important cues that can create real change in their level of performance. This is the defining place where there is a clear distinction between winning or placing somewhere back in the nameless ranks.

Still, asking a leader for self-awareness is difficult, because they must be vulnerable—not the most comfortable place for tough exterior-ed fearless leaders to go. This process requires courage, and is it not for the faint of heart. On the path to self-awareness, there are specific phases to master this area you must dedicate yourself to working through. And the fact is, this is just the tip of the iceberg.



# Leadership Self-Awareness Phases

## Reflection

To learn self-awareness you must first open your eyes and look deep into the mirror. Knowing your weaknesses and strengths is critical. Only from here can you uncover the most effective path to get you to your mission. Knowing the meaning behind your personal leadership style is a defining quality of great leaders.

## Accountability

Once you understand what **motivates** you to make the decisions you do, the landscape of your business and its ranks retain new contours. This becomes critical in today's competitive environment to help you better navigate the company into a place of optimal performance.

## Commitment

Being aware is an active state not a moment in time. Exercises alone act as prominent signposts to get you on the right road, but these are events that are quickly left to collect dust in notebooks of leaders past. Self-awareness is a characteristic of leadership that needs to be nourished with an open mind extending all the way out to inspire and **engage** your people and yourself to execute effectively.

## Conclusion

None of this should be surprising, but we have all seen those around us that are out of touch with their own company...and why shouldn't they be when they haven't yet taken the time to know themselves? Being a leader with principles sounds right to all of us; however, it is much more than setting the intention. The real follow through comes from the continuous commitment into utilizing self-awareness to drive the right actions.

Take the leadership within your organization into a realm of optimal performance by looking at a Self-Awareness Leadership Program with true grit.

Call **800-539-7312**  
E-mail [info@leadershipfoundry.com](mailto:info@leadershipfoundry.com)  
Visit [www.leadershipfoundry.com](http://www.leadershipfoundry.com)

Not ready yet? Well then why not take a moment to dig a little deeper....

# AM I SELF-AWARE

## SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL

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To learn self-awareness, you must first open your eyes and look deep into the mirror. Knowing your weaknesses and strengths is critical. Self-awareness allows you to understand other people, how they perceive you, your attitude and your responses to them in the moment.

Take a moment and read the following phrases and mark where you fall on the scale as it relates to your current state of self-awareness.

1. Do you notice your feelings (happy, sad, anger, fear, etc.) when under stress?

**1** –Never / **2** –Rarely / **3** –Sometimes / **4** –Often / **5** –Most of the Time

**Tip:** Keep track of your emotions and feelings that are triggered by situations or specific people. Using a journal can help keep yourself accountable and committed to growing your sense of awareness. As well, it will easily help you identify recurring stressors.

2. Are you aware of the impact of your emotions on others?

**1** –Never / **2** –Rarely / **3** –Sometimes / **4** –Often / **5** –Most of the Time

**Tip:** Stop and take the time to reflect on your actions with others. Block 15- 30 minutes for reflection each day. Disconnect from technology or turn off the radio for your commute home and drive in silence. Think about things like: who you are as a team member, how others perceive you, your values, the impact of your actions on others, etc.

3. Do you solicit feedback from trusted friends or colleagues regarding your behavior or actions?

**1** –Never / **2** –Rarely / **3** –Sometimes / **4** –Often / **5** –Most of the Time

**Tip:** A great way to gain self-awareness is learning through someone else's eyes. While it takes courage to ask a friend, he/she may offer insight that you might not have otherwise figured out. This feedback allows you to take off your blinders, face reality, and grow as a person and leader. Your commitment might even inspire someone else to reflect on their own actions.

4. Have you completed formal self-assessment tests such as: personality tests, discovering your values, your skills, your abilities, etc.?

**1** –Never / **2** –Rarely / **3** –Sometimes / **4** –Often / **5** –Most of the Time

**Tip:** Formal self-assessments are a great way for you to better understand why you might have hit certain roadblocks in your career. They can also provide information on how you take in information, how you prefer to make decisions, what motivates you, etc. Examples of these types of tests include: Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, FIRO-B, DISC Profile, Influence Style Indicator and the CLI 360.

5. How often do you schedule yourself for down time, or block your calendar out from others?

**1** –Never / **2** –Rarely / **3** –Sometimes / **4** –Often / **5** –Most of the Time

**Tip:** We all have limits and can only do so much in a day. Do you know what your breaking point is? What are you doing to ensure that there is some “me” time, on the calendar, not just “them” time?

6. How easy would it be for you to list your top 3 workplace strengths? What about the top 3 development opportunities?

**1** –Never / **2** –Rarely / **3** –Sometimes / **4** –Often / **5** –Most of the Time

**Tip:** We always accomplish more when we can leverage the things we do well. Always have a few times at the top of your mental “toolbox” that you can quickly rely on when needed. Conversely, how can we expect to improve if we are not readily aware of a few items we need to be working on? Rather than turning away from areas that need improvement, we should look for opportunities to practice these skills.

## Scoring:

Add up the total points for the 6 questions.

**5 to 15:** Don't be afraid to take that first peek inside. You are missing out on growth opportunities and the chance to understand yourself better. Give us a call at Leadership Foundry—we can help chart a starting course.

**16 to 24:** Good progress! Keep up the efforts and soon you will be on your way to maximum self-awareness. Need a detailed plan? Leadership Foundry can help.

**25 or more:** Impressive effort. Bet it feels nice to know so much about what makes you tick. Every day is a new horizon for you and you are ready to break new ground. Looks like someone paid attention in their Leadership Foundry course!

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For over 35 years, Rich has been a change architect and has led large multi-faceted organizations and multi-functional teams. Rich is an effective communicator and negotiator. He has been able to lead, motivate and bring diverse interests together. A dynamic speaker, Rich is consistently rated as a top presenter at multiple national and local forums including the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) national leadership event.



## Expertise:

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