How to Expand Self-Awareness

Here are areas that merit exploring in order to expand your awareness of how you respond to situations:

- **Emotions:**
  - How do you handle emotions, both your own and others’?
  - Do you know your “hot buttons”? What are they?
  - Are you aware of your feelings as they arise? Do you have a strategy in place to handle these?
  - How well do you pick up on the feelings of others?

- **Situations:**
  - How well can you read situations, climates, contexts?
  - Are you able to grasp the nature of a problem and analyze key points?
  - How curious are you about things you don’t know much about?

- **Failure:**
  - How well do you handle your own and others’ mistakes?
  - How do you assign blame?
  - Are you open to hearing feedback?
  - Do you play devil’s advocate, willingly examining your assumptions?
  - Can you own your responsibility in a problem?

- **Ego:**
  - Do you try to keep your ego in check?
  - Do you encourage the success of others?
  - Do you express gratitude regularly?
  - Do you try to express more positive thoughts than negative ones?
  - Are you neither too harsh nor too lax with yourself?
  - Do you try to suspend judgment of other people, places, and things?

Self-awareness requires sensitivity to both inner and outer realities, knowing full well you can never perceive things without your own biases and filters. By keeping a growth mindset, you can ask the questions needed to listen and learn.

It's hard to know how you come across to others if you don’t ask for feedback, which requires taking a risk and feeling vulnerable. With a growth mindset, however, you can open yourself to learning through conversations with trusted peers, a mentor, or a coach. Then how do you make the changes you want to make – see below.

**Process for Personal Change**

- Recognize the need for change
- Have a model to define what needs to be/can be changed
- Undergo an assessment (gain feedback) to create an accurate image of your strengths and weaknesses. Until you see yourself as others do, you cannot work to shift your behavior
- Increase self-awareness of the behavior – what are the triggers that set you off and what is the imp-act of you going off? Understand why you have a different view, personality style.
- Set and implement goals for change
- Work individually or with a mentor or coach to evolve or manage the chosen behavior
- Continue to seek feedback and look in the mirror
- Check to see if the self-awareness and developmental work is leading to new levels of EQ.

Always stay aware!

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