

# self awareness

***The capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically***

Having a good level of emotional intelligence is incredibly valuable in the workplace, especially if you're working within a team of people. Self-awareness is all about knowing your personality, your strengths and (crucially) your weaknesses. Being self-aware helps in all areas of life, but sometimes we forget just how important it is at work. Let's take a look at some of the benefits you get from being more self-aware at work.

**You're better able to deal with stress** Part of self-awareness is knowing what triggers you to feel stressed, angry or defensive. Knowing your triggers means you can respond to them more calmly when they come up. Perhaps taking yourself out for a walk or, if that's not possible, taking a few moments to breathe and collect your thoughts. This can prevent you from making a knee-jerk reaction that may only add to your stress levels (and those of your colleagues). Knowing what helps to reduce your stress is key here too. Having self-awareness means taking care of yourself and resting so you don't burn out.

**You can manage your time better** Knowing yourself well means you should know when and how you work best. If you know you have a lot of energy in the morning for example, then flag in the afternoons, plan to do your more taxing tasks when you get in. If you know you need limited distractions when you work, try working from quieter places if possible or invest in some noise-cancelling headphones so you can get in the zone.

**You understand the impact your emotions have on others** Self-awareness doesn't only benefit you, it benefits those around you. Knowing your moods and emotions well should help you see how they impact others. If you're feeling particularly stressed, for example, you can be aware of the way this may radiate and do what you can to minimize this. As much as we would like to compartmentalize sometimes, it's very difficult - we're only human. There's nothing wrong with bringing negative emotions to work, but if you see it's affecting your work or other people's moods, try talking about it with your manager and get some support.

**You're better able to take on feedback** Receiving feedback can be tricky. One of the benefits of being self-aware is that, chances are - you already know what feedback is coming. You're likely to be more open to constructive criticism and to learn from it. Take it as an opportunity to improve your self-awareness.

**You feel more confident in your ability** Getting to know yourself better includes getting to know your strengths and talents. This can help feel more confident at work. If your role isn't currently geared towards your skillset, consider talking to your manager about ways you can incorporate more tasks that play to your strengths.



*Now you understand how much understanding and knowing yourself can support you at work, it's time to improve your self-awareness. Here are some tips to get you started:*

**Take a personality test:** There are many quality tests online. The Myers Briggs test, 16 Personalities, Who Am I and See My Personality are some fun and yet insightful tests.

**Practice mindfulness:** Finding quiet time where you're not distracted by tasks, social media or anything else can be a great way to get to know yourself better. Try meditation or going for a mindful walk now and then.

**Start journaling:** This can be a game-changer when it comes to self-awareness. Make notes on how you feel, any stress triggers or behavior patterns you spot day-to-day.

**Encourage feedback from colleagues:** Sometimes we need to see ourselves through the eyes of other people to get a clear view. Ask your manager and/or colleagues for feedback and learn from it.



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