

The self-awareness gap

Why 95% of people get it wrong (and how to get it right)

Eliminate blind spots, raise team performance and turn awareness into measurable results

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In the late 2010s, Dr. Tasha Eurich rocked the boat when she revealed a leadership paradox: **95% of people believe they’re self-aware, yet only 10-15% actually are.**¹



It’s a gap that silently undermines performance, trust and growth in every organization.

Now, a new generation of leaders is taking that insight seriously. Investing in self-awareness is a preventative measure and a powerful driver of organizational health and innovation.

This eBook is designed to help people harness the power of awareness to advance their careers and the organizations they serve.

Why awareness matters

When people misjudge their impact, teams stall.
Decisions take longer, coordination breaks down and conflict lingers.

In contrast, there’s a correlation between revenue and self-aware leadership².
Recent data suggests that people with higher self-awareness...



The question isn’t whether self-awareness matters.
It’s how wide the gap is between who you think you are and how others actually experience you...

- Self-awareness goes beyond knowing your strengths and recognizing your preferences. Real self-awareness goes deeper. It means:
- ✓ **Knowing how others see you** (positive and negative)
 - ✓ **Recognizing your blind spots** (and how they impact others)
 - ✓ **Understanding how your behavior changes outcomes** (positive and negative)
- Self-awareness is a necessary business and leadership skill. And like any skill, it requires deliberate practice and reflection to develop.

The different sides of self-awareness

Self-awareness has two sides: How well you understand yourself and how clearly you see your impact on others.

“We meet ourselves time and again in a thousand disguises on the path of life.”

Carl Jung

Let's look at the different sides of awareness and what they mean for us in the workplace:

Internal self-awareness

Knowing yourself and being at ease with expressing it

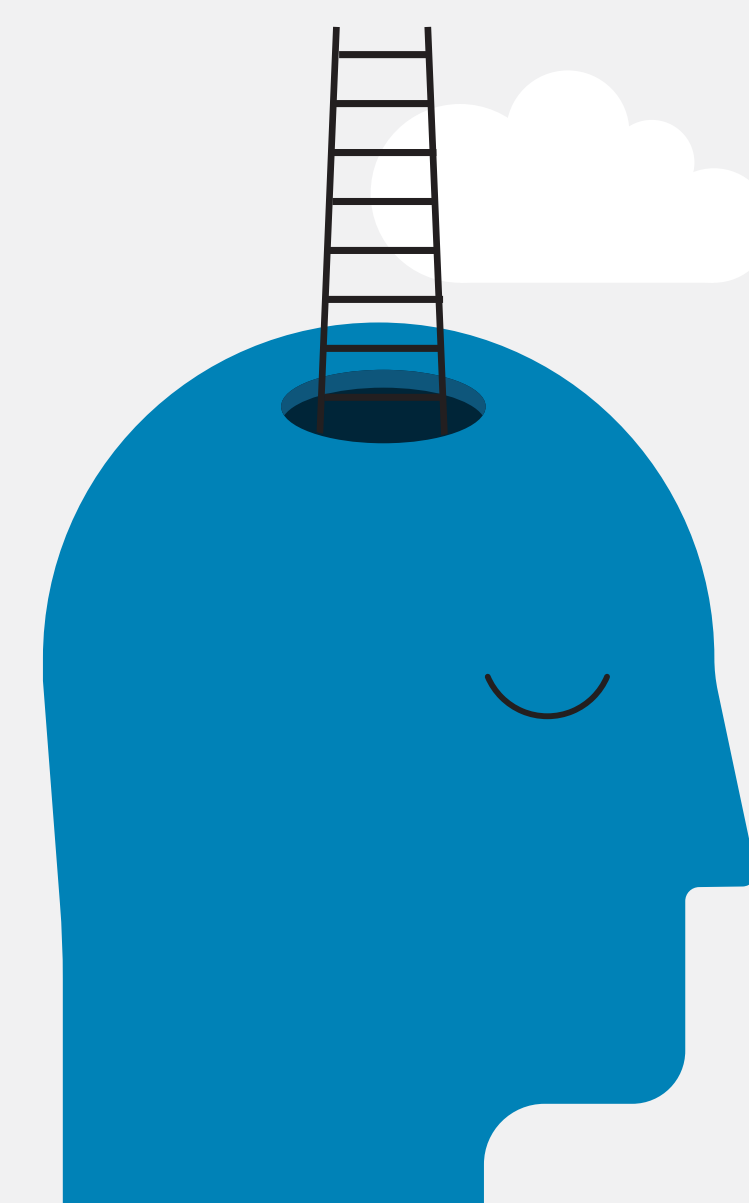
- It means understanding what drives you, what matters to you and how you want to show up, so you can live and work purposefully.
- When you build this level of clarity, you can answer questions about your values and working preferences without hesitation.
- You acknowledge strengths and weaknesses, and when challenged, use them as a foundation for learning, rather than letting ego or fear take over in the moment.
- As awareness expands, you see the gaps. The difference is that you approach them with honesty and objectivity.
- Instead of slipping into self-criticism or denial, you treat them as opportunities for growth.



External self-awareness

Seeing yourself through the eyes of others

- We all carry a picture of who we think we are, yet it rarely matches how our colleagues experience us.
- This gap shows up in both strengths and weaknesses.
- Simple exercises, like asking colleagues to describe you in three words, can be eye-opening. They often highlight qualities we overlook or blind spots we don't notice (or don't want to acknowledge).
- Accepting these perspectives isn't about fixing yourself or chasing approval; it's about understanding the signals you give off, and why others experience you that way.
- This side of awareness is not always easy, but it's essential for leaning into your authenticity, and accepting and valuing who you really are.



Why self-awareness is important professionally and personally

Self-awareness is a cornerstone of growth. It shapes how we think, lead and respond to challenges...

When we recognize our blind spots, we see how our actions land with others. That awareness becomes the foundation of **agility**; the ability to adjust how we think, act and communicate in real-time to connect with the person in front of us.



Self-awareness
is more helpful to
leaders than earning
an MBA⁴

With the right level of self-awareness, we can flex, pivot and adapt without losing our authentic self

The results of investing in awareness is felt personally and professionally...

Personally

Builds stronger, more authentic relationships (you show up as the real you, not the version you think you should be, and people are likely to respond in kind)

Increases resilience (greater awareness helps you recognize triggers and manage stress more effectively)

Deepens empathy and compassion (seeing yourself clearly helps you understand yourself and others more fully)

Creates fulfilment and authenticity (you live more in line with your values and strengths)

Professionally

Improves decision-making and problem-solving (leaders who are more self-aware make clearer, faster decisions)⁵

Boosts promotability and adaptability (research links self-awareness to being rated as more promotable and better at handling change)⁶

Enhances team trust and collaboration (others know what to expect from you, reducing friction and conflict)

Drives measurable performance outcomes (teams with higher self-awareness achieve better coordination and conflict resolution)⁷

According to a 2022 Gartner study, leaders with strong self-awareness were 10% more effective than those with lower self-awareness⁸

The science is catching up to what Insights has known for over 35 years: Self-awareness is a major predictor of leadership emergence and performance.

How to leverage the quiet force behind great leadership...

Insights Self-Aware Leader helps individuals bridge the gap between how they think they show up and how they're truly experienced.

Through guided reflection, coaching-style conversations and practical exercises, participants learn to adapt with authenticity and turn awareness into real-world results.

For example: With awareness, a manager who dominates discussions can adjust their approach, creating space for others' ideas and team effectiveness.

The program is built around the **Insights Discovery Transformational Leadership profile**, a next-step profile after Insights Discovery that highlights eight core dimensions of effective leadership. Leaders acquire:

- Clearer understanding of their values, behaviors and impact
- Action plans to put awareness into practice
- Greater agility and emotional intelligence in how they lead and collaborate

Trusted by **48% of the Fortune 500**, organizations that invest in Insights programs, including Self-Aware Leader, see measurable gains in collaboration, trust and organizational performance.

Contact Insights today to learn more about Self-Aware Leader



About Insights

Insights builds high-performing teams using the **power of awareness.**



The world's most trusted L&D system, we are the people partner **of choice for more than 48% of Fortune 500s.**

With a focus on personal, team and leadership effectiveness, Insights flagship program, **Insights Discovery**, regularly scores above **90% in accuracy ratings based on learner feedback.**

In 2023, The ROI Institute confirmed that **every dollar invested in Insights Discovery returns \$20.63.**



With an easy-to-remember four-color model, Insights is accessible, impactful and practical. We help employees at all levels understand themselves and others more deeply; improving communication, collaboration and engagement across teams.

By combining simplicity with robust science, Insights transforms organizations, making learning memorable and immediately applicable.

To learn more about Insights, visit us at **www.Insights.com**

¹ [Only 15% of people are self-aware. Here's how to change](#)

² [Return On Self-Awareness: Research Validates The Bottom Line Of Leadership Development](#)

³ [Effective Leadership Starts with Self-Awareness](#)

⁴ [Self-awareness is more helpful to leaders than earning an MBA](#)

⁵ [Defining self-awareness in the context of adult development: a systematic literature review](#)

⁶ [A Better Return on Self-Awareness](#)

⁷ [The Power of Percipience: Consequences of Self-Awareness in Teams on Team-Level Functioning and Performance](#)

⁸ [Gartner HR Research Identifies Human Leadership as the Next Evolution of Leadership](#)