



## INTRODUCTION

To build connections with others, you have to understand your moods and emotions. This means getting beyond mad, sad and glad. Someone who is self-aware has control of their animal brain and understands why they do what they do. Self-awareness is the foundation of emotional intelligence, or EQ, as it enables self-management, social awareness and relationship management—the other components of EQ. And EQ isn't just the fluffy stuff; individuals with higher EQ build relationships better, are more resilient and garner higher pay. Building self-awareness creates a stable foundation for a long and productive career.

**Here are some surprisingly simple steps to grow self-awareness.**

## GROW YOUR SELF-AWARENESS



Get moving



Monitor self-talk



Gather feedback



Meditate



Journal



### TAKE A WALK

Getting moving can be a great way to start your day. An early-morning walk activates your body's systems, increases alertness and give you a quick energy hike. A midday hike can recharge your brain and shake off some of the stress that may have built up from a hectic morning. Giving the brain a break can help you reflect on the last 24 hours and gather some input on how you feel. Are you tense? Is your breathing rapid? What are you thinking about? Walking gets things moving and lets you get a "balcony view" to gain perspective.



### MIND THE SELF-TALK

We often have a running dialogue in our heads, but we don't stop to listen to it. What we say to ourselves can influence how we feel, how we react and how we perform. Taking some time to listen to your self-talk can increase self-awareness. This requires introspective thinking and some objectivity, so it can be challenging. A few times a day, stop to listen. Is what you're telling yourself positive or negative? Think about how the balance impacts you.

## >> TRY IT

This one's pretty simple. Get out there. Leave the phone behind, go with a buddy or solo and get outdoors. Pay attention to the moment and get in touch with your thoughts.

## >> TRY IT

Spend five minutes reflecting on your self-talk. What are you telling yourself before the big meeting? What about when you wake up? Write down a few of the themes.



### ASK FOR FEEDBACK

Think about feedback as a gift. Other people can give you some insights and you can see if you are not only self-aware but also accurate in your assessment. Feedback is one of the most powerful tools for building self-awareness. It decreases the gap between your perception and reality. It can be hard to ask for feedback, and even harder to hear it. But without data, you cannot grow. Ask about behaviors that might be limiting. Ask about recent interactions. Ask about relationship health. Keep eye contact as you listen. Thank them for the gift.



### MEDITATE

Meditation can reduce stress, decrease depression and improve job performance. A consistent practice of meditation can increase the distance between stimulus and response so you can better manage your responses in times of stress. Meditation increases awareness of perceptions, sensations, thoughts and emotions by helping you pay attention to your inner state. It's not just about sitting cross-legged saying, "Om" anymore. Some of the most productive people state meditation helped them grow. Give it a try.



### KEEP A JOURNAL

Getting things down on paper increases your self-awareness as you write. Give yourself a prompt, set the timer and see what comes out. Try not to edit or judge your output. Use the writing as processing time. You'll clarify your thoughts and feelings. A journal allows you to articulate things you might never say out loud. It provides a safe space where you can learn about yourself deeply.

#### >> TRY IT

Find someone you trust and ask them a few questions. How would you describe me to someone? How do you feel when you are talking to me? Listen well.

#### >> TRY IT

Check out the free resources on [Headspace](#) and [Calm](#). Or Google five- or 10-minute guided meditation and follow the prompts.

#### >> TRY IT

Get a notebook. For one week, spend five minutes writing down what's on your mind. Write what you are grateful for. Write what you are feeling.