

The Value of Self-Awareness Handout

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE YOUR SELF-AWARENESS

Observe Others' Actions and Reactions Around You

Examine others' reactions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the facial expressions of others. • Listen to their tone of voice. • Study their body language for clues on how you're being perceived.
Look for patterns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for patterns in their facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language. • The more often you see the pattern, the more attention you may want to give the feedback you're receiving.
Reflect on your observations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After interactions with others, ask yourself the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What were my actions? ○ How did I intend to come across? ○ How did the other person react? ○ Why might the person have reacted in that way?

Identify Your Strengths and Developmental Needs

Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Army offers many opportunities for leaders to improve their self-awareness using formal means, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project Athena assessments ○ Performance evaluations ○ Skill tests ○ Tests from resident and non-resident schools ○ Personality assessments
Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After an exercise, training event, briefing, or other operational experience, consider the feedback you received. It will help you determine what you're doing well (areas of strength) and what you need to work on improving (areas of developmental need). • Also, ask yourself what you did that helped the situation and what can you do differently next time.
Self-developmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete the following statements as they relate to any part of your life-work or home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The skill or ability I am best at is... ○ The personal quality that I rely on most for my success is... ○ The activities I look forward to include... ○ A situation that causes me a lot of frustration is...

- I am most hesitant when I try to...
- Answers to the first three items provide insight into positive aspects or your strengths. Answers to the last two items provide insight into possible limitations or developmental needs.

Use the Johari Window

The Johari Window is a tool you can use to compare your view of yourself to others’ perceptions of you. It can identify open, blind, hidden, and unknown areas of your self-awareness.

Directions: Select five to ten adjectives that best describe you, then collect information on others’ perceptions of you. There are multiple ways to collect data from others for this exercise. Select the one that works best for you. You could draw up five to ten note cards with your name on them and the words “strengths” and “limitations” on it and give it to peers, subordinates, and leaders for feedback. If you use this option, make sure you find a way for the comments to be submitted anonymously, maybe by having a mentor collect them all. Another option would be to ask friends, family, and trusted colleagues or mentors to provide five or six adjectives each that best describe you.

After you’ve collected this information, compare your lists. Any similar adjectives that you use as well as others should be placed in the Open Area/Arena quadrant. Any adjectives noted by you but not others go in the Hidden Area/Façade quadrant. Adjectives used by others but not yourself go in the Blind Area/Blind Spots quadrant. The Unknown Area represents any adjectives that you and others don’t know about you. Since they’re unknown, you won’t be able to fill in this section of the Johari Window.

The larger the Open Area/Arena quadrant is in comparison to the others, the more self-aware you are. You may choose to address either your blind spots or façade adjectives as you plan your leadership growth and enhancement of your self-awareness moving forward.

	Known by self	Unknown by self
Known to others	Open Area/Arena	Blind Area/Blind Spots
Unknown to others	Hidden Area/Façade	Unknown Area

Identify Gaps Between Your Actual Self and Desired Self

Use the table to document the gaps between your actual and desired self. Characteristics of your actual self should go in the left-hand side of the table, and the corresponding desired characteristics should be placed in the right-hand side of the table. You may find it helpful to focus this activity on characteristics that are most required in your current position or may be required for promotion. View the sample in the first row for an example of how to complete the table.

Characteristics of Your Actual Self	Characteristics of Your Desired Self
<i>Sample:</i> Hasty decision maker who sometimes regrets decisions that were made too fast without all of the available information	<i>Sample:</i> Critical thinker who makes sound decisions in a timely manner

Create a Plan

Directions: Print and use the document to help you in creating a plan for meeting your goal and milestone as you bridge the gap between your actual and desired self.

Goal: _____

SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time bound)

Milestone: _____

Create a Plan

As you evaluate your plan, consider the following:

- Does your plan address the need to meet your milestone and enhance your self-awareness?
- Did you break down the size of your goal and milestone into realistic pieces?
- Are timeframes associated with each piece of the plan?
- Is your plan designed to make the best use of your time and other resources?
- How will you know if your plan is on track?

Items to Consider	The Plan
Actions to Take	
Resources (e.g., time commitment, materials, space, equipment, personnel)	
Timeframes	
Possible Obstacles and Solutions	