



4 Common Misconceptions of Self-Awareness – And How to Overcome Them

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Isn't it satisfying when someone shows genuine interest in your life?

In today's time-starved, bustling world, you may long for these connections, now more than ever.

Although nothing will replace an affirming exchange with another person, one more hallmark of a rich and fulfilling life is to show genuine care and interest toward yourself.

What Is Self-Awareness?

Socrates said: to know thyself is the beginning of wisdom. But what exactly does it mean to know yourself and to have self-awareness? Here are a few examples.

- To know what makes you tick
- To know your triggers, so you can support yourself accordingly
- To know and honor your unique needs
- To know what brings you joy and meaning
- To know which people and resources you can count on for strength and inspiration

On the one hand, self-awareness may sound like a helpful idea, leading you to greater clarity, purpose, and resilience. For example, if you're aware of situations when you're apt to lose your patience – and this is something you aspire to do better – you can come up with helpful ways to support yourself before and/or during the event.

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On the other hand, self-awareness may seem like a silly use of your time or energy given your already full plate.

To that end, there are common misconceptions about self-awareness that may lead you to believe it's not worthwhile, maybe even futile, compared to other priorities or responsibilities.

Below, I've outlined four specific misunderstandings of self-awareness and encourage you to think outside the box about what self-awareness is.

4 Misconceptions of Self-Awareness

1. Getting to know myself is boring or uninteresting. Firstly, I've yet to meet a boring human! As a species with a highly evolved brain, we're about as complex and fascinating as they come. Second, on paper, it may seem like getting to know yourself isn't as exciting as, let's say, going for a hike or meeting friends for dinner.

But the cool thing is, knowing more about yourself can add ease and enjoyment to your experience of virtually everything you do. For example, if you know you have a tendency to get anxious in certain social situations, you can mindfully reflect on ways to create a feeling of ease or support.

Maybe you situate yourself next to people who make you feel good and/

or plan exit strategies if you wind up next to a person who makes you uncomfortable. In a nutshell, have fun exploring the ways self-awareness can make already meaningful experiences even more meaningful!

2. I'll be forced to dredge up things about my past that I don't like or want to deal with. Bringing curiosity to challenging aspects of your life is only one facet of self-awareness. But there's not a hard and fast rule saying you need to start – or go – here if it's not interesting or comfortable.

I personally think it's better to gain insight about yourself by exploring what brings you pleasure and joy, at least as a starting point. As you become more familiar with satisfying experiences, including where to find them and what they feel like, your baseline of happiness and resilience naturally increases.

In other words, knowing how to orient your life around joy is just as beneficial as knowing how to identify or manage problems.

3. Taking time to get to know myself is selfish. I can see why you might think this, but let's take a closer look. Investing in your health and well-being, whether that means setting aside time to journal about your day or attend a Mindful Daily session, is one of the greatest ways to honor your needs and show respect for yourself.

As you prioritize your needs, everyone around you will benefit.