

SELF-AWARENESS: YOUR NARRATIVE. YOUR STORY

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What comes to mind when you think of self-awareness ? What adjectives or phrases do you think of when you think of someone who is self-aware?

David Geren, counselor to four US presidents says that, " When you're in trouble and all your defenses get stripped away, you realize what matters and who matters. That's when you need to get back to your roots, to your values."

Our life story as Bill George says, it is the foundation for our leadership. Understanding our story and it's impact on our lives- positive and negative, gives us the foundation for our values and our principles. In many ways it gives us the foundation for understanding our motivations behind our leadership.

There is an ancient Jewish proverb which says , 'Without a vision the people perish'.

This is true on a personal level as well as a professional level. If we don't have a vision for our lives we tend to die inside. Having a vision for our future- having a vision of what we want to accomplish- of what type of person we want to become, is key for instilling in us the desire to move ahead in life.

Especially in the face of trauma and disappointment, we need our vision to survive.

One of the most powerful tools for becoming a leader is our self-awareness.

It is in this process of self-awareness that we need to look closely at our life story, Our Narrative.

It doesn't mean that these events have defined us , nor are they to have the power over us. However, they do impacted us in a profound ways. Over the past 10 years, a study was done , where 125 corporate executives were given questions and a face to face interview, related to how they become successful. Over 90 % said what affected them the most in becoming successful in their careers, was examine their 'Life Story', their narrative.

Go back and look at your life line- the story you created, of life events. Is it possible that one or two of the crucibles, may have eventually created a strength? **Not that good comes from abuse or exploitation. But, out of that pain, that difficult season in your life, what new strength was developed in you? What new outlook on your life did you receive? Often, it is from that event that we discover a new talent, a new perspective, a new skill.

An event that meant to disempower you has now EMPOWERED YOU.

~ Take two events in your story that were 'crucibles' devastating, and ask yourself, if you can see a strength that come out of that event?

(a). the event: _____ . The strength: _____

_____. (b). The event: _____
_____. the strength: _____
~ Knowing what you know about yourself today, how can you take this crucible and make it a strength?

Our story is our foundation to our vision, our goal in life. A leader is developed through genuine self-awareness where we recognize our strengths and gifts. Often times we miss what we actually possess maybe because of our own blinders, things people said to us early in our life. I have a friend who cannot run. She literally cannot run. She's in great shape, but as a child she was told over and over that is she ran she would fall and hurt herself. When she tries to run she becomes dizzy and falls. Her early messages have limited her.

The pain in my own family growing up has developed in me a 'Peace Maker', a Mediator.

Then, as you look at your strengths, maybe you are a detailed person. That's a gift, you don't let things fall through the crack. You notice things that others might not. Maybe as a peacemaker you notice someone who's unhappy, or you notice someone who has not been around for a while. So, you reach out - you connect and you investigate because you care.

In your Power, you Empower Others.

Another characteristic concerning self-awareness -- is understanding your motivations. There are Internal and External motivations. External can be, seeking prestige, status, financial wealth, Influence and power. Internal can be a sense of justice, a sense of accomplishment, a sense of pride in what you've accomplished, personal development and growth, along with love and affection.

The goal here is not to take away the desire for attention or money or power. It is not in any way to diminish those desires. Instead, it is to recognize what does motivate us, so we can find a balance between an internal and external motivations.

We would want to use that power and influence not just for ourselves, but for empowering others, those whom we love. So that they too could see their gifts and greatness for fulfilling their own vision.

- ~ Looking at your narrative, what event was positive and powerful? _____
- ~ How has that impacted you today? _____
- ~ What are some of my External motivators'? _____
- ~ What are some of my Internal motivators'? _____
- ~ Where might I need to be more balanced? _____

Self-Awareness: Your Story.

“ Our Life story- our narrative is our Foundation for being a Leader. Understanding our past, and its impact on our lives – positive and negative, gives us insight into why we have the Values and Principles by which we operate today. ”

One of the most important TOOLS for becoming a Leader is Self –Awareness.

~ Create a Life – Line.

~ Circle 3 of the most positive events in your life line - and 3 of the most painful.

--- Take one of each of those categories and write about it. Start with the positive.

~ Positive: “What was the event? _____.

“ What strength/ or character trait did I gain as a result of this event? _____

_____.

“What did I learn about myself? _____.

~ Negative: “What was the event? _____.

“What strength or skill might have come from this event? _____

_____.

“What has it taught me about myself today? _____.

Sometimes we have Blinders about our talents, our “ GIFTS “. ~ Make a list of your skills, talents, and strengths: _____

_____.

COMBINING our PASSION with our TALENTS & STRENGTHS leads to knowing our Purpose. This is our COMPASS.

This in turn EMPOWERS us to LEAD - and moves us therefore to Empower OTHERS, to fulfill their Vision and Purpose.

~ Write down 3 things you are PASSIONATE about, that you love and believe to be important to you.

1. _____ 2. _____

_____ 3. _____.

~ NOW, bring together One of your passions along with 2 of your strengths, combine them. “ Is there an area of your life that reflects this combination, an activity ? If Not- what Activity or PURSUIT does fit that profile? _____

_____ . This is your COMPASS.

Finding our SWEET SPOT means combining our strengths with our passion in order to change our world, fulfill our dreams and bring others along into discovering their greatness.

Becoming an Authentic Leader means understanding our Narrative and how it fits into our life today.

This Journey of greater Self-Awareness , leads to our empowerment and empowering others.