

Develop your self-awareness

- Awareness. If you want to develop your leadership skills, enhance your career progression, or focus on your personal development, building self-awareness is critical. And there are some simple steps that you can take to achieve this. Hello, I'm Gemma Leigh Roberts, a childhood organizational psychologist, executive coach, and leadership expert. In this course, I'll take you through how you can learn to really understand yourself by getting clear on your beliefs, values, and motivations. I'll teach you how to use the power of perspective to create an impact and gain a deep, personal insight. I'll also take you through five tried-and-tested strategies which you can implement to enhance your own self-awareness. At the end of this course, you'll have your own action plan to help you put what you've learned into practice to see results. It's time to take a deeper dive into what you can do to enhance your self-awareness, to create the kind of success you want to see in your personal and professional life.

Identifying beliefs to enhance self-awareness

- Often, we find ourselves in situations where we feel something is right or wrong in an instant. Perhaps you've seen a colleague be treated unfairly and you feel the situation is completely unjust. Or maybe you've been asked to complete a project at work and you immediately know the best course of action. At one point to another, we all feel that we just know something to be true, despite not having all the facts about the situation. This feeling of truth of knowing the right way to do something is based on beliefs. Your beliefs are your trust, faith or confidence in someone or something. They have an acceptance that something is true. Your beliefs are so strong, they'll often cause you to react to situations quickly, almost like a reflex. What's surprising is we don't always know how to identify our beliefs, or we don't always take the time to dig below the surface and find out what's going on. Why is it so important we understand our beliefs? Because the first step in building your self-awareness is understanding and identifying your beliefs. Enhancing your self-awareness will enable you to make accurate self assessments, manage your emotions and understand how you come across to others, whilst building yourself confidence. Your beliefs will impact how you behave and interact with

others. Your beliefs also direct your emotions. If you believe something to be right or wrong, that will cause an emotional response for you. If you want to build yourself awareness, you need to make a conscious effort to identify and understand the strong beliefs that you have. You can download the Belief Identifier worksheets in the exercise files, or you can work through the exercise with me and using the ABC model, which is a simple coaching psychology tool that I use with clients. I'd like you to think of a time when you've had a negative experience lately. Firstly, what was the activating event, the situation that you found yourself in that led to you reacting negatively. Write down as much as you can about the event but try to be objective with no emotional attachment to the scenario or people involved. If the activating event was someone pulling out in front of you in the car on the way to work, this would be what you would note here. At this stage, don't delve into how you feel about the event or how you reacted. Next, identify your beliefs. What do you believe to be true about the situation? In this example, your belief may be that the other person's behavior is inconsiderate, dangerous and wrong. You may have even stronger beliefs and think the person driving the other car is an idiot or shouldn't be allowed to drive a vehicle. Finally, what were the consequences of your beliefs? What's happened in this situation because of your beliefs? How did you behave? What was the impact of your behavior? In the example of the driver, maybe you felt anger start to rise and you couldn't stop thinking about the unjustness of the situation. Perhaps you found yourself in a bad mood after the event, snapping at colleagues or ranting about your experience, which affected your productivity at work. This exercise has two purposes. Firstly, you'll delve into identifying key beliefs. Secondly, you can clearly see the effect of your beliefs, and not the activating event, have on your behavior. It's often not the event itself that causes us to react. Rather, the beliefs we have about the situation. Complete this exercise, reflecting on a positive event also, as this will help you identify positive and negative beliefs. When you find yourself in challenging situations, take some time to complete this task after the event, reflecting on your beliefs and the impact they had on the situation. This practice will help you to enhance your self-awareness over the long term.

Self-awareness drivers

- Why is it, sometimes we're incredibly motivated to complete a task, say building a new table or a bookshelf. Despite the fact there were no tangible rewards for doing so. And yet other times we struggle to complete a task. Even when there are tangible rewards, such as a bonus or other recognition, riding on the completion of these tasks, it doesn't seem to make logical sense, does it? Well, actually it does make sense. And it's all to do with the psychology of motivation. We're taught to focus on external rewards to encourage ourselves and others to complete tasks, focusing on the end goal, such as getting good grades, being paid a good salary, achieving recognition or a reward. These factors are thought to encourage us to enjoy a task and the challenges associated with it all to achieve a reward at the end. But it's what psychologists tell us is actually these external rewards, aren't all that motivating. In fact, internal motivators are much more likely to encourage us to complete tasks. These are the factors such as problem-solving, taking part in activities because you find them enjoyable and playing a game because you find it exciting. External or extrinsic motivators rely on you being rewarded by someone or some thing outside of yourself. Internal or intrinsic motivators are driven by feeling a sense of achievement, of wanting to complete a task or activity with no encouragement from any factor outside of yourself. What's you may find is at times you're motivated by intrinsic rewards and others extrinsic. For example, when you're starting out in your career, you may be motivated to earn as highest salary as you possibly can to pay your student loans or save to buy a property or go traveling. As you progress in your career, you may find that once you have enough money to live comfortably, actually you're more motivated by feeling challenged and stretched at work and becoming an expert at what you do. Download the Motivation Identifier handout from the Exercise Files. Take some time to think about the main tasks you complete at work. Jot each task down and think about your motivators. What drives you to complete the task? Is it purely because it's part of your job and you are obliged to complete an activity? In that case, that would be an external motivator. Are there some activities that you take on because they provide you with a sense of achievement. Maybe you take on extra projects or you go above the basics of what's required in your role because you feel like you're

making a difference. Maybe you feel you're helping others, or you're doing something that has meaning for you. That's would be an internal motivator. The psychologist Daniel Pink in his book "Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us." Draws on extensive psychological research to identify three key drivers, mastery, autonomy and purpose. We're hardwired to be driven by these three factors. Mastery refers to getting better at a task, learning more and becoming an expert. Autonomy relates to the freedom to make decisions, decide how tasks are completed and independently figure out your next steps. Purpose is working towards a goal that benefits more people than just yourself, feeling rewarded for helping others and working towards a sense of the greater good. Now again, using the Motivation Identifier tool, note the activities you take part in that creates a sense of mastery, autonomy and purpose for you. These can relate to your working or home life. Think about your motivation. Are you motivated more by internal or external rewards at work? And does this change in different circumstances? Take some time over the next week to think about what motivates you in your professional and personal life.

The value of knowing your values

- Have you ever had the experience of walking into a new environment and pretty quickly knowing whether it's the kind of place where you'd fit in, or whether it's definitely not the place for you? You may have worked in an organization which seems to fit you like a glove or just doesn't feel right at all to you. The chances are if you're feeling a good match, it's because actually your values are aligned with the situation. On the flip side, when you feel intensely that a particular environment isn't for you, the chances are there's a conflict, and a scenario could actually be activating what we call your anti-values, which are the opposite of your values. Your values are a core part of who you are. They're like your psychological fingerprint. Values are your beliefs about the world, your personal judgment about what's important in life. They direct much of how you interact with others and how you fit into situations. Understanding your values helps you to become clear on what's important to you, enhancing your self-awareness. We all have values, some we share with others and some we don't. Decisions you make and being happy are very much based on your personal values, so it's important to

understand your values and live by them if you want to create a successful career fit and if you want to build strong and fulfilling personal and professional relationships. Ultimately, it's very hard to be happy if you're living in a way that doesn't align with your core values. But how clear are you on your values? If I asked you right now what your values are, would you be able to answer? To get clear on what your values are, join me in the value identifier exercise. Download and print the Value Identifier Exercise File and start by reviewing all the potential values noted. Take some time, go through each of the value examples, and tick each one that relates to you. The value may stand out for you, or you may feel drawn to that particular word. Next, out of all the values you noted, highlight your top 10 values. This may take awhile, and it may feel a little uncomfortable to only choose 10 words, but stick with it. Now, out of those top 10 words, mark your top five. This is where we're getting to your most important values, which will help you to make important decisions and feel drawn to specific situations and people. Take your time if you need to. There's also a box to jot down any additional values you may have that aren't included on the list. And so the final step is to take into account any additional values you may have and note your overall top five values. Once you've completed this exercise, jot down your anti-values. These are factors which are the complete opposite of your core values. If one of your top five is honesty, it's likely that an anti-value will be dishonesty. Think about what you've learnt about your values and where you're using these in your life. Is there an opportunity to use your values more, both in your working and personal life?

Impression, impact, and self-awareness

- Picture the scene. Mohammed is Danielle's manager, and he needs to have a conversation about how Danielle's performance and motivation seemed to have slipped lately. Mohammed is very clear about the impression he wants to make. He wants to come across as supportive and sincere, helping Danielle find a way to rectify the situation. He has a list of ideas and suggestions, which he runs through with Danielle. What Mohammed doesn't know is Danielle doesn't see his eagerness to solve the issue as helpful. Danielle feels that Mohammed is dictating how she should change her behavior, rather than helping her to reach a solution herself. She feels

that he doesn't have a grasp of the real challenges she's facing, and the reasons why her performance has slipped. Mohammed may have been clear about the impression he wanted to make, but the impact he actually made was completely different. How often do you take the time to think about whether how you intend to come across is actually how you come across to others? In the case of Mohammed, he has good intentions. He's trying to be supportive and find solutions, but he's actually coming across as controlling and overbearing. You can't assume that others see your behavior as you intended it to be seen. Assuming you know how you come across to others can create a blind spot, which broadly speaking is an area where your view is obstructed. Just like when driving a car, we'll have blind spots, areas we can't see everything going on around us. The same can occur when it comes to communicating with others. Our blind spots hinder self-awareness. You may be in control of the impression you intend to make, but you're not totally in control of the impact you make. Impact is how the other person perceives you. So how clear are you on how others perceive you, your behavior, your intentions, and your character? The only way you can find out how others see you is by asking for their perspective. You can imagine, you can speculate, but you can't know. By asking others for feedback about how you come across, you can review where you come across as intended, where you don't, and most importantly, you can find out why and adjust your approach. Developing self awareness isn't just about how you think about yourself, it's also about understanding how others perceive you, which can provide an insight into your personality, character, and behavior. If Mohammed had sought to find out how Danielle thought about that interaction, he would have the opportunity to understand why there was such a difference between his intentions and the impact he made. He'd also have the chance to discuss this with Danielle and assure her of his supportive intentions, whilst finding ways to minimize the chances of him coming across as controlling or overbearing in the future. So how confident are you that you're clear about how others see you? Is there an opportunity to enhance your awareness by asking people around you for feedback in how you come across.

The self-awareness feedback cycle

- The term, kaizen, literally translates from Japanese to English as change, kai, and good, zen. The term, kaizen, is used to describe continuous improvement. And in the process of building self-awareness, this refers to creating a feedback loop with the sole intention of enhancing performance and improving. Creating a kaizen mentality and feedback cycle can help you to improve relationships, productivity, motivation, and working practices. Let's look at an example of continuous improvement in action. Recently, I worked with a client who's a chief operating officer in a large financial institution. This client was very adept at creating positive change within her function, growing the function and increasing profits, enhancing employee productivity, and overseeing the development of a product to create significant cost savings. The client used methods to continually improve the working environment, creating tangible business outcomes. But she had so far failed to do the same when it came to building strong relationships with others. And this was mainly due to a lack of self-awareness and lack of feedback from others. When we initially started working together, I asked the client how her team, colleagues, and managers viewed her. She was right in that she knew she was seen as someone who was effective at creating positive change in the business. But she wasn't aware that others thought, in her quest for perfection, she could be overly critical and dismissive of her team, often getting frustrated when they weren't clear on next steps on a project, rather than guiding and supporting them through the process. This explained why, at times, the client found it hard to get others on board when working towards a common goal. She quite often experienced some resistance from her team. So how is it this key piece of feedback was unearthed? Very simply, because I asked her colleagues, manager, and team for feedback. The one simple act of asking for their perception of my client provided us with an invaluable insight, which we could work with during our coaching sessions. If you don't gather feedback, you can't improve. And if you can't improve, you're creating a blind spot, which is where your vision is obscured. In this case, your vision of yourself isn't accurate, which is the opposite of developing self-awareness. Continuous development of yourself can be as simple as a three-step process. Firstly, review how you come across. This could mean asking for

feedback, reflecting on the outcome of situations, taking the time to think about how people responded to you and why that is. It's also about being clear on your beliefs and actions in a situation. The next step is to refine your approach with others. What small tweaks can you make to ensure you're coming across in a way that builds strong and collaborative relationships? How can you match your intentions and how you interact with others and make the impact you actually want to make? Finally, repeat the process. If you want to be continuously developing, both personally and professionally, you have to maintain a practice of continuous development. This could mean gathering further insights into how others perceive you, learning new ways to enhance your emotional intelligence, and creating your own feedback process. So what could you do to create or hone a continuous development approach to enhance your self-awareness?

Stepping outside of yourself

- When did you last have a conversation with a friend and discover you perceived the exact same situation in a different way? Sometimes the differences can be so extreme, we wonder if we're even talking about the same situation. How can two friends who have so much in common see a scenario in completely different ways? The answer is perspective. Everyone has their own perspective, their individual opinions, values, ideas, and ideals. We all have our own history and unique way that we process information in our heads. Our perspective feels like the truth. It's the way we see the world and it dictates how we interact with others. But the fact is, my perspective is no more truthful than yours, it's just a difference in the way that we see the world. I remember very early on in my psychology career, I had a realization that there were no right answers when it comes to how individuals view the world and make decisions. We're all so unique in how we think and behave that it's hard to find the correct way to do things because it doesn't exist. I have to admit when I first realized that, I found the thought completely overwhelming. How was I supposed to help people develop as a performance and coaching psychologist without knowing exactly what the best version of a human looked like? Of course, this wasn't a helpful attitude. And as I grew into my coaching career, I realized working with

unique individuals is the point of being a psychologist and we're all individuals. There's a lot to be said for appreciating the differences between our points of views and in understanding the power of perspective. So much so that I work with nearly all of my coaching clients on helping them really understand their own perspectives and to take a step back and understand how others may view a situation. Looking at situations from other points of view is one of the most effective ways you can enhance your self-awareness. It will broaden your perspective, allowing you to see alternative opinions and opportunities. In fact, it's very hard to be self-aware without stepping outside of your view of the world. Next time you find yourself in a tricky situation where you can feel the tension rising and your emotions start to come to the fore, pause and stop what you're doing. You want to pretend you're watching a screen with a scenario unfolding in front of you and you're freezing the frame. Take a moment to step outside of what's going on in your head. You may be angry, frustrated, annoyed, disappointed, or upset. Stop focusing on that for a moment and picture the scene as a completely objective reporter. If you could see the situation unfolding in front of you and you didn't know anyone in the scene, how would you describe the encounter? You'll focus on facts, things people say, behaviors, body language, and scenery. You won't know anything about how people in the scene are thinking. Next, take a moment to imagine what the other person could be feeling and thinking. Why might they be behaving as they are? You won't have the right answers here, but that's not the point. The point is to consider other possible perspectives. This exercise will help you to see challenging situations from other perspectives, potentially changing how you respond and react because you've taken a step back and considered views other than your own. You'll become more self-aware and this will lead to a deeper personal insight. I challenge you to take part in this freeze frame exercise the next time you're in a difficult situation. It may not be easy and it's not necessarily a quick habit to form, but the self-awareness that you'll build will be worth it.

Reflecting and enhancing self-awareness

- Reflection is an important step in building self-awareness. This is the most simple self-awareness strategy you can use, and you don't need to rely on

anyone else to practice reflection. It's something you can do alone at any time. What is it I actually mean by reflection? It's taking the time and space to consider where you are, events that have happened around you, and your feelings and thoughts. Whether you're feeling very positive or experiencing negative emotions, either way, reflection will help you to understand where you are right now and your role in the situation and what you can do to move forward. You may want to print the reflection tool from the exercise files, or jot down some notes. Some people find it helpful to have a notepad dedicated to this exercise so you can reflect on what you've written over time. If you look at the reflection tool document, you'll see a blank wheel. For every section, write an area of your life that's important to you. As an example, you may want to focus on areas such as career, finance, or relationships. This list will be completely personal to you. The key is to include areas of your life that are important to you right now. Next, for each segment on a scale of one to 10, rate how satisfied you are with that part of your life. One would be not satisfied at all, 10 would be extremely satisfied. Now join the lines up to see how balanced your reflection wheel is. The chances are you'll be satisfied in some areas of your life and not others. The final step is to reflect on what you want to change and how you can do this. You may want to enhance a specific relationship. So how would you go about doing this? Maybe you will ask that person for feedback on what's working and not working in the relationship. Perhaps you can make an effort to see that person more frequently. Maybe you need to let other parts of your wheel slide a little to enhance your relationship, creating more balance. Write down or fill in the box stating what you'd like to change. Next, write down the steps you'll take to achieve this change. Finally, note how you'll know when you've started to make progress. What will that look like for you? You can create a reflection habit by using this strategy frequently. So now it's over to you to build your reflection habits. I encourage you to complete this exercise once a month so you get a really good sense of how you're feeling about different aspects of your life.

Identifying the ripple effect

- Imagine you witness your manager publicly berate your colleague in a team meeting. Even though it's not you on the receiving end of the critique, you can

feel the negative ripple effect wash over everyone else in the meeting room. Your manager, however, isn't thinking about the impact a public reprimand will have on the rest of the team. Following the interaction, you and your team experience a low mood, and you start to worry that you'll receive the same treatment in the future. People start to play it safe, and fear how they'll be treated if they make a mistake at work. The parts we don't often consider is how this ripple effect starts to make its way towards other people. The ripple effect is when someone's actions affect someone else, which in turn affects other people. Think about dropping a pebble into a pond. The ripple starts to move out from the point where the pebble was dropped. The person that was berated in the meeting may have a negative interaction with other colleagues or family members later in the day, and their self-confidence and mood has been impacted. Those that witnessed the exchange may become fearful about making a mistake in the workplace. So they interact with colleagues and clients differently, taking a cautious rather than friendly approach. It's easy to get caught up in your own emotions, especially if you're passionate about a situation, or if the stakes are high. When you're experiencing pressure, it can be tricky to regulate how you come across to others. But regulating your emotions is essential if you want to enhance your awareness and boost your emotional intelligence. We often notice the ripple effect that others create. But how often have you observed your own ripple effect? The best way to do this is first to notice how the process works in other situations by being an observer. As you reflect on this, you'll become aware of how emotions can derail or enhance a situation. As you become more skilled at observing this, you'll start to notice the effects in your own life, too. You can use the ripple effect documents in the exercise files. The next time you experience a highly positive or negative interaction, jot down the name of the person that created the ripple effect, followed by those the interaction impacted. Finally, jot down how the impact of that interaction has an effect on secondary people who may not have even been part of the initial interaction. Next, write down how the event started and who was responsible for creating the ripple effect. Then note who was affected and how they were affected. Finally, write down how the people impacted passed this effect on to others. Your final challenge is to apply this to yourself. Once you've reflected on situations you've witnessed, take on the

challenge of noting your own ripple effect, both positive and negative. You can completely the exercise in exactly the same way for yourself.

The impact of stress

- Have you ever wondered whether anyone leads a completely stress-free life? The truth is, most of us experience stress at one time or another. In fact, the American Psychological Society recently found that 75% of adults reported moderate or high levels of stress in the last month, and these statistics are replicated all around the world. As a global society, we're actually more likely to experience stress now than we've ever been. Sometimes we become so used to experiencing stress, it just becomes the norm, or other times, something in our life causes us stress and it spills over into all areas of our life. Changing your stress levels requires you to get clear on what pushes your buttons, so you can create strategies to deal with these situations in a different way. We're going to jump into an exercise to help you do this. You may want to print the Stress Identifier tip sheets to use. Firstly, it's important to understand how stress affects you. How do you know when you're stressed? How do you feel when you're stressed? Second, identify the sources of your stress. Think about the events or situations that trigger stressful feelings. Maybe it's your family, work, health, or relationships. Try to be really honest here, what is the real root issue that's causing your stress? Third, learn your stress signals. What is it that happens to you when you're stressed? Do you retreat into yourself or do you lash out? Does it become more difficult to make decisions or concentrate? Can you feel angry, frustrated, irritated, overwhelmed, or out of control? Or maybe you have physical symptoms, such as low energy, headaches, or muscle tension? Fourth, recognize how you deal with stress. Think about how your behavior is affected. Do you find yourself indulging in unhealthy behaviors, such as drinking alcohol, overeating, or overexercising? Do you have coping mechanisms in place that help you, such as moderate exercise, socializing with friends, taking part in a hobby? Are there specific situations that result in specific behaviors for you? Once you're clear on the signs, you can put strategies in place to cope with these situations effectively. Finally, some quick tips for dealing with stress, although you can find some more detail in the Stress Identifier tip sheets. Get active. Exercise

can increase positivity and enhance your focus. Create a support network. Connecting with others helps to make stress feel less overwhelming. Take control. Commit to finding a solution, however small, and taking control to make positive changes in your life. Focus on helping others. A sense of working towards a purpose that's greater than you gives you a different perspective, and helps you to think outside of your own problems and issues. Accept what you can't change. There's no point fighting with a situation you have no control over, you'll only work yourself up, and there's no solution. Take some time over the coming weeks to reflect on what you've learned about how you react in stressful situations, and what you can do to minimize the impact of stress on your life.

Seeking feedback to boost self-awareness

- If you don't ask for feedback from others, you're missing out on valuable information. If you want to enhance self-awareness, you need to understand how others see you. Otherwise, you're working with a very narrow perspective, which is just your own view. Asking for feedback can be easy if we expect the news to be positive. It can be a different story, however, if you're not sure what kind of feedback you'll receive. It's really easy to fall into the trap of feeling apprehensive about asking for feedback from others. But there are ways that you can make the process more comfortable and effective. Here's some top tips for asking for feedback. Make it regular. If you constantly put off asking for feedback, it can turn into a special event, becoming an action you want to avoid. If asking for feedback becomes a habit, something that you do regularly, then asking for ideas of how to improve just becomes second nature. Ask for feedback in real time. Don't wait for specific events, such as your end of year review to ask for feedback. Ask for suggestions about what else you could do to create a better outcome in real time, as you're tackling tasks or challenges. Pose specific questions. Sometimes it pays to be specific as this will make it easier for others to provide feedback. If you want to find out how you can improve your leadership style, to make a project run more smoothly, or how you can improve relationships to create a more collaborative working environment, then ask for that specific advice. Ask a wide range of people. Often, we think of feedback as something our manager gives us. This

shouldn't be the case. We have colleagues and friends around us who can provide an interesting insight into how we can achieve goals. Ask different people that you respect for their perspective, to give you a broad, rounded view. Make it informal. Sometimes feedback may be a formal process, such as during an appraisal or as part of a 360-degree feedback process, but asking for informal feedback, or suggestions over a coffee, or during a casual meeting can have huge benefits. Don't skip these opportunities. The quality of feedback may be more useful and actionable than formal feedback that you've received. Listen without judgment. Remember, the feedback you receive is one person's perspective. Try to listen, not get defensive, or judge the feedback you've received, especially if it's not what you want to hear. The key is to balance taking on board challenging feedback, but not focusing on feedback that isn't useful. The most critical step in the process is to decide what to do with the feedback you receive. Once you've asked someone for feedback, how will you use that information to improve your performance and relationships? How will you take on board a new perspective? And what does it teach you about yourself?

Getting comfortable with being uncomfortable

- Think about a time recently when you faced a big challenge at work. Were there parts of the situation that made you feel uncomfortable, nervous, or overwhelmed? No matter what the outcome, chances are you face some kind of uncertainty which often leads to negative emotions. Challenges often involve some kind of change, and while that may feel disruptive, change is actually the only thing that is constant in life. Our circumstances are always developing. We find ourselves in new scenarios, navigating uncharted territories. But the thing to remember is challenges occur for all of us at one time or another, and if handled well, it can actually be an opportunity to grow and develop, encouraging you to learn new lessons along the way. Challenging situations can cause all kinds of emotions for us, fear, excitement, anger, sadness, joy. Quite often, you may experience a mix of emotions, some positive, some negative. You can learn to become more accustomed to dealing with challenges and changes, enhancing your resilience along the way. But if you're not quite there yet, when emotions are running high, it can be hard to remain positive. So how can you deal with the

emotional discomfort that can be a side effect of dealing with challenges? Accept that challenges will occur. The key is to accept the situation, understand what you can and can't control, and be patient in riding the challenge wave. When you're feeling emotional discomfort, remember that feeling will pass over time. No matter how intense that feeling is right now, that feeling will subside at some point, and you just have to learn how to ride it out until you reach that point. Become adaptable. Change will happen for all of us. Challenges will threaten to throw all of us off course. You may not like the situation you find yourself in, but you can learn to see challenges as an opportunity that will help you develop, enabling you to become adaptable. You can then choose your approach to situations and deal effectively with a scenario that you find yourself in, whether you like that situation or not. You may be in the middle of a challenging time right now, but it may not always be like that. The key is to learn to deal with the emotional ups and downs that challenges can create. Rather than focus on how you feel right now, think about what you want to achieve in the future. Hone your perspective. Just looking at challenges as a negative experience help you to move forward, or where taking a positive approach, and viewing these situations as experiences you can use to learn and grow, be more useful. It often isn't the situation itself that causes us to feel and behave in specific ways. It's more to do with how we view the situation. Build your support network. Who can you rely on to help you face challenges? Maybe it's a mentor who can advise how they tackled similar situations. The key is to take challenging situations and turn them into positive experiences. You will encounter ups and downs, but you can learn to ride the challenge wave, if you take a step back and choose how you respond to challenges. What can you do to make dealing with challenges a more positive experience for you?

Choosing your self-awareness strategies

- Have you ever read a really interesting article and filed it away somewhere to put the suggestions into action later? Maybe you've attended a training event or a seminar, had some great ideas about what you can do to improve your performance, but then you didn't actually do anything with that knowledge. We've all been here at one time or another. And the reason you don't put your new knowledge into action isn't because you don't want to or

because you're being lazy, it's because we often miss the critical step of creating a practical action plan. If you want to enhance your self-awareness, you need to create a plan detailing how you will do this. It won't just happen on its own. Let's take a look at how you can do this. You might like to print the Developing Self-Awareness Action Plan from the exercise files. For the purpose of this exercise, I'm going to ask you to focus on three strategies that you can implement to enhance your self-awareness. Possible strategies include reflecting regularly, noting the ripple effect of your actions, reducing stress, seeking feedback and learning to ride the wave when you come up against challenges. For your first strategy, write down your action step. What is it you want to do to enhance your self-awareness? Be as specific as you can be, honing in on one particular strategy which can help you. Do you want to broaden your perspective about how you come across? Maybe you want to build confidence when facing challenges or perhaps you want to reduce the impact of stress. Next, write your target. What is it you want to achieve? Maybe you want to enhance your perspective by getting into the habit of asking for feedback more frequently. Perhaps you want to deal with challenges more effectively by being more adaptable or understand your stress warning signs. Now write down your success criteria. What will good look like? This could be gaining feedback from three people a month or not reacting in a specific way when faced with challenging situations. Maybe you want to get better at being able to notice your stress warning signs and deal with a stressful situation before it becomes a bigger issue. Next, note down the support you will need to take this action step. Maybe you'll need support from your family, friends, colleagues or a mentor. Remember, you don't have to work on these strategies alone. A support network can help you to achieve your goals. Finally, write down when you will take this action step and achieve your goal. It's important to have a time goal to work towards to keep you on track. Once you've completed this for your first strategy, choose two others. As you work through these strategies and they start to form habits, you can take on further strategies in the future. It's important to note your action plan is only useful if you use it, so when will you take charge and start putting your action plan into place?

Reviewing your self-awareness action plan

- If you were a scientist and you wanted to test a new approach, you'd devise a strategy, put your plan into action, and then review what worked and what didn't work. When you're building a new skill, such as enhancing self-awareness, the same principles apply. You can't assume that your initial approach will be the answer to creating results. You need to test whether this is the case and adjust your plan accordingly. Reviewing your plan of action and the impact it's had is a critical part of the personal development process. All too often, we focus on taking some kind of action, but we don't determine whether it's the right action to create results. Without this review, you may be missing a key step in creating the results you'd like to see. You can use the developing self-awareness action review document to help with this exercise. Possible strategies you could implement include: reflecting regularly, noting the ripple effect of your actions, reducing stress, seeking feedback, learning to ride the wave when you come up against challenges. Note down your reflections on the outcomes of these improvement strategies that you've put in place. Did you see results? Did you achieve what you wanted to achieve? Did things not go quite to plan? Why is this? Next, note the challenges you faced. Was it harder than expected to put your plan into action? Did an obstacle you hadn't factored in get in your way? With the best will in the world, when you implement something new, it may not go to plan immediately. Now detail how you can overcome these challenges in the future. What can you put in place to make sure these obstacles don't hold you back in the future? This is all about learning as you go, making future success more achievable. Next, jot down your new adjusted approach. The tweaks you can make to your original strategy. You may find that things run smoothly and you don't need to change anything. Or you may find that if you make even small adjustments, you'll see even better results. Finally, set your next review date. This is important as you need to test your new approach and review what's worked or not worked until you find a plan that works for you. Some of what you put in place will be trial and error, and you'll learn as you go. That's the key to creating a successful plan, keep reviewing and tweaking until you've created a strategy and action plan that works for you. Once you've done this for one strategy that you've put in place, complete the exercise for other strategies that you've

implemented. Your action plan is your first step. Your review is your next critical step. What can you do to ensure you focus on the review process? It's a really easy step to miss, but this can be the difference between success and mediocre results. How can you commit to creating your own review process? What steps can you put in place to ensure this process becomes part of your self-awareness development plan?

Top tips for self-awareness success

- Think back to the last time you acquired a new skill. Maybe it was learning to drive, maybe learning to play an instrument or sport. Perhaps you have deep technical skills that you use at work. Now, be honest. Did you acquire these skills overnight or was it a longer process? To learn any new skill, to get better at anything, you need to dedicate time and you need to practice. The first thing to remember about developing self-awareness is to expect success. If you're thinking that nothing will change no matter what you do, you're setting yourself up for a fall. Developing self-awareness is a process. It doesn't happen immediately. No matter where you are on the self-awareness scale, you can always be developing. You can always be learning more about yourself. As you face new situations and challenges, or as your work or home life changes, you have a prime opportunity to focus on learning more about yourself and developing your self-awareness. It may take time. It may take focus. But developing your self-awareness is in your control. Expect to have the ability to build your self-awareness, but know it may not happen immediately. The next top tip is to keep practicing different self-awareness strategies. If you don't keep practicing, you'll fall into a rut and you'll see your self-awareness start to plateau or decrease. It's not overly beneficial to be self-aware at one point in time and then let it drop off. Instead, you want to keep practicing so becoming more self-aware becomes a habit and starts to feel like second nature. This will help you to continually develop. You may have to develop your patience, also. As you practice your strategies, test what works and then adjust your approach. Patience and practice go hand-in-hand. Finally, measure your progress. If you want to see a change, you need to have a measurement. As with all goals that you set yourself, you have a lot more likely to achieve success if you're measuring your

progress. We're hardwired to focus on what we're measuring as humans. So make sure you're clear on the difference you want to see in your self-awareness and the impact you want to make by developing your self-awareness. Developing your self-awareness can enhance relationships, help you to build emotional intelligence, support you in your personal and career development, and provide you with an insight about how others perceive you.

Staying focused and committed

- Congratulations on finishing this course. Building your self-awareness takes commitment and focus. In return, you can improve relationships, helping you to react positively to challenging events, turning obstacles into opportunities, boosting confidence, and helping you to be happier. Of course, you'll experience ups and downs, as you would expect with learning any new skill. This is entirely normal and I encourage you to stick with it and go back and review the strategies in this course if you need additional support. If you commit to taking control and developing your self-awareness, you can see the results you want to see and create the impact you want to create in your life. Good luck on your journey. Feel free to visit my website for more information or to connect with me. Stay focused and committed. And remember, even if it's challenging, I have every faith you can find a way to get the most out of a situation and keep developing your self-awareness.