

Inner and societal roadblocks disrupt the journey to self-awareness.

It's not uncommon to encounter the kind of boss who truly believes they're a visionary leader when everybody else in the office just sees an incompetent jerk. This is because many people are utterly delusional about their own abilities. But how does this come about?

The author believes there are three inner roadblocks to self-awareness – knowledge blindness, emotional blindness and behavior blindness.

Knowledge blindness occurs when you assess your competencies not on how you actually perform, but on general beliefs about how you should perform. An experiment conducted by American psychologist David Dunning demonstrates this well. Participants were asked to take a geography test. Those who thought they were generally good at geography believed they had scored particularly highly, even though, as a group, their score was average.

Emotional blindness is being oblivious to your own feelings. Say somebody asks you how happy you are. You may think your answer is rational, based on an evaluation of your circumstances. But in all likelihood, how you respond will be a gut decision made in that moment.

Behavior blindness is the failure to see your own behavior through the eyes of others. The author gives the example of a talk she once delivered. She thought it had been a disaster. However, it turned out that the audience loved it, proven by the fact that she had a record number of sign-ups to her monthly newsletter.

And it's not only these three obstacles that get in the way. The cult of self in our society is another barrier to self-awareness.

Have you ever wondered why there's a growing craze for novel names in America? Names like Izander, Luxx or Sharpay? These are examples of a growing cult of self, where people become

convinced that they, and therefore their children, are special. It's part of the age of esteem that we're entering, where everybody thinks they're unique. But be careful. You may feel special, but that doesn't make you superior. If you behave as if you're better than everybody else, you'll soon find yourself the object of other people's resentment, and you'll find it challenging to cope with even minor mistakes you make.
