

Hello, this is Jayme Dill, and welcome to this week's Mindset Monday. Of course, you know, this series is all about helping you to create a success mindset and the tools and skills that go with that so that you can create the business and life that you've always wanted.

The leader within, that's what we've been talking about, and I'm going to continue that theme today with the topic of self-awareness. It's been said that self-awareness is actually the meta skill for leaders in the 21st century. And I actually agree, I was so happy to see that little catchphrase because I love catchphrases and I'm not good at creating them. So thank you very much whoever created that. But it is really true, from my perspective, I look at self awareness as the foundational skill for the leader within, and I spoke last week or a couple weeks ago about how important I think that developing leader within is. It's the foundation I believe, of great leadership in general.

The good news about self-awareness is we all have it. The bad news is we also all lack it.

And I think about it as creating the ratio, right? Increasing my own awareness so that I can be more aware of my impact of how I'm behaving, how I'm showing up and decreasing my blind spots. And again, blind spots are a little kooky. We don't know what we don't know, and I'll talk in a few minutes about how to increase self-awareness and therefore decrease blind spots.

When I'm looking at and working with a new leader, that's one of the things that I look at is not, do they have self-awareness? Like we often look at it like, yes, it's a check, yes or no, but I look at their ratio or their depth of self-awareness. I'm also looking at what are the blind spots or the gremlins that they have and how impactful are those, because some are not quite as egregious in their impact as others.

Before we dive too far down this rabbit hole, let's talk about what the heck am I talking about? What is Self Awareness? Because there's all kinds of terms out there. Self-awareness, woke (I'm not going to get political on anybody I'm talking about leadership skills here), consciousness, there's all kinds of phrases out here.

Let's boil it down to something pragmatic and simple. And self-awareness is really an awareness of, I think first and foremost our internal states. What are our emotions? What is our thinking? What's going on inside of us? Including feelings, emotions, and bodily sensations, because these drive our actions.

Then the next stage I think of within self-awareness is our behaviors, our speech, and what impact is that having in the world around us. On people, on circumstances, on results, et cetera.

So that all boils down to that old saying, no thy selves, right? Noticing what's happening within yourself at any given moment so that you can increase choice and decrease reactivity getting off of autopilot. So when I was thinking about this, I have all my own definitions, my own ideas and stuff, but I also like to do a crosscheck with Websters, and I thought it was really interesting. It talks about knowledge of one's own characters, feelings, motives, some of the things that I was just speaking about, but it also talks about the process of developing self-awareness can be painful. I think of it more as humbling

sometimes that humbling feels a little bit like humiliating, especially when we see a blind spot. I think we all know that experience, but it's worth it, I believe.

So why? What's the payoff of doing all this? Being aware of yourself. Well, again, another quote, this one from HBR Harvard Business Review, and that is self-awareness is more valuable, a more valuable business skill than getting an MBA. So developing self-awareness is more valuable than an MBA. That's someone's opinion. That is not a scientific fact as far as I know. However, it points to business skills aren't enough. We need to be able to have those emotional, this is the whole root of emotional intelligence, relational intelligence. We need to be able to utilize our business skills in a way that brings other people along.

And if we don't have self-awareness, it is really pretty damn easy to get in our own way. I see this all the time with leaders. I've worked with some incredible leaders who will do 95% of things and well, they're almost like by the book business leaders, right? Really awesome. And then once a month or once every six months, they will just go off the rails and berate people and have a really angry outburst. And then when I talk about them, talk about that with them in their coaching session, they'll be like, oh yeah, no big deal. Oh yeah, no big deal. So they're acknowledging it happened pretty easy, but they're dismissing it. That's an incredible lack of self-awareness around something that has incredible impact on your capacity as a leader to get results, right? Trust and credibility are foundational. You blow up once every six months and then dismiss it then don't go back and correct it or acknowledge your behavior. That is a very undermining of credibility and trust within a team. But those kinds of behaviors happen all the time.

There times where we tell jokes, this is one of my favorite unconscious behaviors. I'll tell a joke at a time that's inappropriate. So we all have the capacity to be self-aware, but also to get in our way.

I want to be really clear. As I said earlier, it's about a ratio. It's not about being perfect. Don't put that pressure on yourself. Instead, play a game of creating self-awareness. Play a game of being in choice so that you can work from your strengths and know your best and then be your best, as opposed to being on autopilot where some of your gremlins or sneaky lack of best comes out.

That's part of why, but what results can you expect when you increase self-awareness?

First off, you can expect more choice, right? There is a moment of choice that sometimes can feel like a nanosecond, where I call it in myself, where I'm just off to the races. I'm off on an automatic behavior that I know is not my best. We'll leave it there. So with self-awareness and with awareness, that moment of choice moves from a nanosecond and it increases. It increases and increases and increases. So you have more choice, which leads to greater impact. It can lead to more confidence from others and within yourself, better decisions because you're able to take a moment and not just react, but instead consider all the data, consider all the information that will also really can very much contribute to better results within the organization, more trust within yourself and from others. So it can really move from a neutral or negative spiral into very much an upward spiral.

So if you're like "I'm in Jayme", and I hope you're saying, "I'm in Jayme". How the hell do you go about this? Right? Well, I'm acknowledged earlier. We all have blind spots. I've been playing this game of developing self-awareness for 20 years. I still have blind spots, I still have autopilot behaviors. I still have this. So how do we go about developing this and continually increasing our self-awareness and our knowledge? Well, that's the first thing I think, is to acknowledge this is a continual evolution. It's continual growth. As I said at the beginning, we all have self-awareness, and I haven't met anybody's fully self-aware who doesn't lack some blind spots.

How do we go about developing a self-awareness? Well, there are tools like 360, which gives feedback from others, often anonymous feedback from others. There are other survey tools where you can get feedback from others. You can ask directly for feedback from others and be open to that. Coaching is something that can very much develop self-awareness.

But what I want to give you as a takeaway this week is something that you can do yourself today, tomorrow, this week, whenever. And that is set some kind of timer. There's all kinds of apps out there. Create some kind of timer where a bell or something goes off in your environment on a regular basis. I'd suggest every hour, some people do it every 15 minutes, whatever you like. But set some prompt to happen. And then notice and ask yourself, what is happening inside of me right now? So we're all, as business leaders, we are focused on the outside, we're focused on other people, we're focused on data, right? Awesome, great. That's a big reality for you. We want to bring some of that focus internal. So the timer goes off. You notice, you ask yourself, what's happening inside of me right now? What thoughts am I having? What are my current thoughts right now? What narrative is happening about myself, about the other, the circumstances I'm in? What's my story? What feelings do I have? What bodily sensations? Sometimes with leaders that I work with that haven't done any of this kind of work before, they're like, I don't have any feelings. I'm like, okay, well just notice body sensation. So I got tension here. I've got tightness in my chest. I've got a feeling of relaxation. What are the sensations in your body that will start to give you information about your self-awareness?

And then also notice others, but notice them from the lens of how are they responding to me? What impact am I having here? Is it my desired impact or is it not so much my desired impact? So noticing what kind of response you're getting from others. And in this particular instance, when we're developing self-awareness, we're asking ourselves, how am I contributing to their response? We're not kind of going, "well, that's them. That's how they always respond" Or, "well, you just can't really get them to listen to you or whatever". We're not playing that game right now. There's time and a place to look at others. Right now, we're looking at ourselves. How am I showing up? How am I speaking, acting, looking, behaving in a way that is impacting or contributing to their response to me?

So that's it for this week. We will continue with the leader within series, and I will look forward to seeing you next time. Thanks so much for being here.