

## STRENGTHENING YOUR FOUNDATION

*“There is no need to run outside for better seeing. Nor to peer from a window. Rather reside in the center of your being. The more you leave it, the less you learn.”*

Lao-Tze

Self-awareness is the very keystone of emotional intelligence. Research has shown that it is the make-or-break factor in supporting our competence in self-management, social awareness, and relationship management abilities, all of which differentiate outstanding performers from average performers.

Recently, I’ve become aware of just how critical self-awareness is, as I’ve reflected on my own challenges in achieving the results I want. In particular, how we respond to thought and emotion.

Why is it that so many of us, at least some of the time, experience resistance to spending time and engaging in activities that allow us to increase our self-awareness?

Of course, there are external reasons and internal reasons. In the US, and increasingly other parts of the world, we are so achievement- oriented that there is a strong cultural norm around productivity, which is commonly misunderstood as busyness or activity.

The research behind the MBTI Personality Preference Inventory, reveals that American society is more extraverted than introverted, which creates a further pull for us to focus our attention externally, on events and people outside of us, rather than internally. The opposite is true in other societies, such as Asian cultures, where meditation and reflection are a more integral part of the culture.

And then, we each have our own particular concerns and resistance to change. All of this makes it a challenge to go inside, on a regular basis, and to take reflective time.

However, the real truth, and sometimes bitter pill, is that we have to go slower to go faster, if we truly want to understand how to improve and create sustainable results rather than settle for quick fixes that don’t last.

The bottom line, in terms of what we can control, is us, and only us. Our assumptions, beliefs, and emotions - that's what we have control over and what we have the power to change.

If you're not getting the results you want, ask yourself "What's the cost of not changing" and "What am I willing to commit to?"

Our leverage for change, always lies in understanding how we are thinking about something. The challenge is that our beliefs are often invisible to us - they're like the air we breathe. Most of the time, we're not even aware of the air nor do we think about it unless we don't have enough and we're suffocating.

Our assumptions and beliefs are what drive our actions. They impact our effectiveness and well-being, often negatively. Furthermore, they also impact others and how people experience us, for we project or resonate a particular energy and qualities based on our thoughts and feelings.

When you have once again confronted the reality that there is no place to go but inside, what do you focus on, now that you're ready to make the commitment to your personal development?

There are two invaluable places to start:

1. Choose any area in your life or business where you're not happy with the results you're getting, and write down all the assumptions and beliefs you hold about that issue - it might be success, money, prosperity, how you learn, how you change, how change happens, relationships (work or personal) - pretty much anything that's relevant to the area where you want to create a shift.

After you've written that list, write down the beliefs your parents had about the same issue. After looking at both lists, how much of your reality reflects your beliefs?

Once you've realized which assumptions and beliefs aren't serving you, write down an affirmation or goal that counteracts the belief. Some examples:

Belief: "I can't lose weight"

Affirmation: "I allow myself to easily achieve and maintain my ideal weight."

Belief: "The economy is slow and there isn't enough business."

Affirmation: "There are plenty of customers for my/our services."

Next, you need to energize these new belief goals by writing them, saying them, or listening to them on a daily basis. Choose a couple to focus on initially, and then continue to add or change your belief goals as necessary.

A safety tip: We often have to choose and re-choose our beliefs repeatedly over time until our outer reality shifts and truly reflects what we want.

2. Becoming conscious of one's beliefs is not enough by itself. Additionally, one must also become mindful of what emotions you're experiencing and learn to let go of them.

To the degree that we are either suppressing emotion or expressing our feelings (but still attached to them) determines just how open and present we can be to making new choices in the present moment.

This is where the power to create reality occurs. The more proficient we become at releasing emotion, the more we are able to make new and adaptive choices in each moment of the present as it unfolds. To learn a simple and powerful methodology that teaches you how to release negative emotions and thoughts, click on <http://www.sedona.com>.

The power of these practices lies in the fact that we are neither our beliefs nor our emotions, yet much of the time we act as if we are and we fail to see how we create a particular reality based on our beliefs.

Once you start working with these practices, you'll be amazed at how things change, some quickly, some more slowly. You'll see lots of gains including improved energy and mood, greater focus and productivity, better health, and of course, greater results in your desired goals.

Self-awareness is critical for self-efficacy.