

Module Overview: Developing self-awareness

This module encompasses a variety of approaches to enable students to increase their self-awareness. There are compelling reasons why both leaders and followers benefit from developing self-awareness. For example, they need to understand their own strengths so that they can try to put themselves in situations in which they can play to their strengths and collaborate with others who can compensate for their weaknesses. In addition, there is research that demonstrates that identifying people's strengths (what they do right) and then building on them creates more benefits than identifying people's weaknesses (what they do wrong) and trying to correct them. See Whetten and Cameron for a review of some of this research.¹ In short, people who are given feedback on their strengths are more likely to feel engaged and productive than people who are given feedback on their weaknesses. Of course, critical comments are important and necessary, but they often have the most beneficial effects when they are given in a context of positivity.

This module provides a variety of approaches to developing self-awareness, which can be used individually or in concert.

- Dan Harris, a former ABC journalist who anchored "Nightline" and co-anchored the weekend edition of "Good Morning America," provides a video on how journalists can proactively address stress through getting adequate sleep, exercising regularly, giving attention to nutrition, appreciating nature, building positive relationships, and practicing mindfulness and meditation. Importantly, Harris demonstrates meditation in the video.
- The Reflected Best Self Exercise is an approach developed at the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan,² which helps people identify their strengths and unique capabilities. Students solicit and analyze feedback from at least 10 people who know them well enough to identify and write about one to three times when they saw them at their best.
- The [CliftonStrengths Top 5](#) is a self-assessment that identifies a person's top five strengths from an inventory of 34 strengths. Because the inventory addresses strengths, no one receives bad news from the results. It costs about \$25.
- The Values Exercise helps students identify the values that are most important to them and prompts them to articulate the reasons why these values are important, and to begin to be purposeful in using these values as a lens to their everyday choices, actions and lives.
- The Exercise on Understanding and Communicating About Group Identities and Differences helps students become aware of their own group memberships and how they affect their own perceptions, experiences and assumptions, as well as how the group memberships of others affect their perceptions, experiences and assumptions. Students explore the similarities and differences between different types of group identities (cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, social, functional, etc.) and gain experience in talking about them.

Supplementary materials

Brayne, Mark (2007). ["Trauma & Journalism: A Guide for Journalists, Editors & Managers."](#)

Rath, Tom, and Conchie, Barry (2008). "Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow." Gallup Press.

Whetten, David A., and Cameron, Kim S. (2020). "Developing Self Awareness." In "Developing Management Skills" (10th edition, pp. 37-82). Pearson Prentice Hall.

Whetten, David A., and Cameron, Kim S. (2020). "Managing Stress and Wellbeing." In "Developing Management Skills" (10th edition, pp. 83-130). Pearson Prentice Hall.

¹ Whetten, David A., and Cameron, Kim S. (2020). "Leading Positive Change." In "Developing Management Skills" (10th edition, pp. 445-486). Pearson Prentice Hall.

²Whetten and Cameron (2020), 10th edition, pp. 446-448.