

You can't change what you don't know

It is probably an uncomfortable thought but most of our days are spent in a state of self-delusion. **We often excuse our behavior and justify our actions within a twisted internal monologue that feels safe and cosy.** Whether it's something bad or even good, we will defend it with everything we've got without realizing how much deeper into an unhealthy pattern we lead ourselves.

To make things worse, when we do get a chance for self-reflection or critical feedback by others we quickly contest it and get upset. Many people claim to be in favor of constructive criticism but **when it actually comes down to hearing things that wound our egos we simply don't want to know.** We retaliate and, at times, become verbally abusive or defensive only because we are not self-aware and thus unable to admit and accept uncomfortable truths.

Sedikides in 1993, identified three motives for evaluating oneself: ***self-assessment*** (seeking accurate self-knowledge, whether positive or negative), ***self-enhancement*** (seeking favorable self-knowledge), and ***self-verification*** (seeking fairly obvious self-knowledge that is probably true. When research participants were given the chance to select questions on knowledge about themselves, self-enhancement was obviously the most popular while self-assessment the least sought.

"Despite what they may believe to be true, most people do not really want to know more about themselves; rather they want either positive information or information that simply confirms what they already know", (Byrne).

The lies we tell ourselves are the most damaging. They lead to a fake perception of one's self, denial and inability to change and get where we want to be. Without being willing to

acknowledge sides of our personalities and lives which are unpleasant, we keep being dishonest with ourselves. Self dishonesty leads to unhappiness, problematic connections with others, unfulfilling interpersonal relationships, depression, lower self esteem and a sense of 'everyone else is to blame' thinking for what is happening in our lives or how we react to different situations.

A good way to start practicing self-awareness is self-reflection. One of the biggest challenges is to manage and pause our thoughts for one second before engaging into conversations with our default reactions. People who are mindful can discipline themselves and allow for moments of reflection before responding.

Self-reflection allows for deeper understanding of our reaction, words, thoughts and how our behavior affects others. It can take place anywhere and at any times. Allow yourself time to think : 'what was my fault?', 'what is it I refuse to acknowledge?', 'what was I afraid of admitting by welcoming others' criticism'?, 'what is it missing from your life and is getting filled in other, not fruitful, ways?'. These questions will surely bring up insecurities and misconceptions.

Seek to understand, not to be right.

Self-awareness is an emotionally painful process. It is very hard to see things about ourselves that we don't want to admit. As you develop self-awareness you will be able to make drastic changes in your thought process and emotions. Self-awareness is also one of the attributes of Emotional Intelligence which is an extremely important factor of success in every aspect of life.

Having self-awareness allows you to see where your thoughts and emotions are taking you. It also enables you to escape from the bubble you have created and get a more objective, clear and realistic understanding of yourself, specific feelings and thoughts you have and why. **It will give you a**

great opportunity for self-observation, acceptance, self-honesty and openness.

You will, therefore, be able to focus your attention and energy on things that will take you where you need to be in all aspects of your life.

Get real and acknowledge the lies you have been telling yourself. The uplifting sense of freedom you will end up feeling will enhance the quality of your relationships, your life and sense of self.

*“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom” –
Aristotle*