

# PARALLEL LEADERS

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### 5 STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE SELF-AWARENESS IN LEADERSHIP

#### EPISODE NOTES

When leaders are self-aware, they can recognize how their emotions and behaviours impact others, helping them build stronger relationships and create a more positive work environment. Understanding your strengths, weaknesses, and motivations allows you to make more informed decisions and communicate more effectively with your team.

#### 1. KNOW YOURSELF.

It's essential to know yourself. Improving self-awareness in leadership requires a deep understanding of yourself, including your strengths, weaknesses, and blind spots.

You can narrow down and identify your sweet spot by asking yourself questions such as "What do I do well?" and "What is my strength within that strength?". You aren't just great with people; why or in what area are you great with people? Remember that the more specific you can get, the better.

Avoid trying to display qualities that you don't possess. Awareness of your limitations is equally vital, as it can help you identify areas where you need improvement.

"Almost every man wastes part of his life in attempts to display qualities which he does not possess." ~Samuel Johnson

Utilize tools like the DISC personality profile, Strengths Finder, 16 Personalities, and Enneagram, and practice self-reflection to understand your strengths and limitations clearly.

#### 2. IDENTIFY HOW OTHER PEOPLE REACT TO YOU.

To improve self-awareness, it's essential to recognize how others react to and around you. Observing or reflecting on people's reactions to your actions can help you understand your impact on them. You can better prepare your responses by identifying the

factors that cause them to respond in a certain way.



For example, as the Lead Pastor visiting one of our campus locations, some of the congregation have only seen me on screen. When I'm in person, they may be intimidated, uncomfortable or excited and want to monopolize my time in an effort to connect. This allows me to be prepared as a natural introvert to be extra available and approachable.

If someone seems nervous or apprehensive when called into your office, it could be due to past experiences, and starting the conversation by acknowledging their feelings can help put them at ease.

Pay attention to both negative and positive reactions to gain a better understanding of your strengths and limitations.

### **3. GATHER FEEDBACK FROM TRUSTED CONTACTS.**

Self-aware leaders understand the importance of gathering feedback from trusted contacts rather than just anyone and everyone. Not all critics are experts, and not all opinions are trustworthy. It can be challenging to assess ourselves objectively, so seeking honest input from others can provide a broader perspective on who we are and how we interact with others.

Self-aware leaders may ask trusted friends, family members, or coworkers to provide insight into specific traits as they work toward self-improvement. It's important to seek feedback from those who will give us not just what we want to hear, but what we need to hear in a kind manner. Everyone has blind spots and having someone we trust to provide feedback can be incredibly valuable.

### **4. FIND WAYS YOU CAN SHOW MORE EMPATHY.**

Self-awareness is closely tied to emotional intelligence (EQ). Unlike IQ, EQ involves recognizing emotions in oneself and others. To grow in emotional intelligence, it is essential to recognize your own emotions and those of others and to consider the feelings of others as you communicate and make decisions.

One way to act self-aware as a leader is to pay attention to the emotional needs of those you lead. Consider their body language and how they respond to you to gain insight into their emotions.

## 5. PRACTICE SELF-EVALUATION.

Those who are self-aware consistently process and reflect on their situations, doing so before, during, and after a conversation. They utilize their emotional intelligence and empathy to assess how they affect others through their personal characteristics. It's important to look for patterns and take note of the positive and negative responses you receive from your team when communicating and taking action. If a negative reaction occurs, take the time to understand why it happened and work to improve those traits as much as possible. Regularly reflecting and evaluating yourself in this way is an effective method for enhancing your self-awareness.



### RESOURCES + LINKS

- [Book: Multipliers by Liz Wiseman](#)
- [Book: Emotional Intelligence by Daniel Goleman](#)
- [Personality Test: Enneagram](#)
- [Personality Test: Meyers Briggs|16 Personalities](#)
- [Personality Test: Strengths Finder](#)
- [Personality Test: DISC](#)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS + ACTION STEPS

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What things have you learned about yourself over the years based off of criticism you've received? (Samples: I am not a great listener. / I am impatient. / I am unrealistic about the time things take and how difficult the process is. / I don't like to spend a lot of time on people's emotional issues. / I overestimate the ability of others and delegate responsibility too quickly. / I assume too much. / I don't care about rules and restrictions. / I make decisions quickly and expect others to do the same. / I process issues quickly and want to move on even when other people aren't ready.)

**LEADERS**

