

Knowing Yourself-Journey to a Great Discovery

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Relevance

At one time or another we have all asked ourselves, “Why is this happening to me?” “Why do I keep having the same problems?” “Why am I so frustrated?” These difficult but important questions nudge us closer to a better understanding of ourselves and others. If they go unanswered, we become stuck in a cycle, continually repeating the past and forever on the defensive. Taking control of our lives requires that we find the answers. Thus it is essential to know oneself for being successful in both personal and professional life.

Key Concepts

- Ways by which you can enhance your self-knowledge to know yourself:
- Be aware of your strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes
- Observe and be aware of your moods, reactions and responses to what is happening around you
- Become aware of how these moods and emotions affect your state of mind
- Examine how you interact with others
- Observe how your environment affects you

Introduction

The first step to gaining a good understanding of yourself is to identify your values and strengths. Your values reveal themselves when you feel strongly about certain things and your strengths are evinced in activities which you are naturally drawn towards, excel in and feel good about. To gain a better sense of self-awareness, examine and reflect on your thoughts and actions in the past, although don't forget to observe your behaviour in the present. Some introspection and reflection will also help you decide if these notions are accurate.

Strategies to Know Oneself

Introspection-You can pay attention and take note of your own experiences, actions, and reactions. Your own observations are invaluable sources of information about who you are and what makes you tick. Paying attention to how you feel inside while you participate in a variety of activities can give you some insight into your own behavioural preferences.

- Do you feel happier when working in a group, or alone?
- Do you feel satisfaction when you accomplish a difficult task?
- Is it easy or difficult for you to tell others what to do?

Your body language can also offer helpful clues. Paying attention to what is going on when you start to feel bored and tired — or lively and interested is an indicator. If your body is responding positively to the situation, it is likely there are elements there that agree with your personal preferences.

Observation- In addition to what you see in yourself, the observations of others can also be helpful. Sometimes others see behaviours in us that we don't see, especially when we are too involved in activities to pay attention.

Feedback (giving and receiving) - Sharing observations with others is a responsibility and a privilege. This kind of information can be given in a helpful or a harmful way. Sharing an observation is an interpretation of reality. This is true whether you are observing your own behaviour or that of others. So, be kind - and real - to yourself and to others when sharing your observations.

Assessment Tools-Putting some structure around observations, inner thoughts, feedback and specific examples helps to make sense out of all this information. That's where assessment tools come in. They are valuable instruments that you can use in your quest for self-knowledge.

How does knowing yourself help you to do better in life?

- The beauty of living consciously is that it increases the likelihood of creating the results you desire.
- Learning and developing your passions provide you with tools for tapping into your happiness.
- Learning what you hate can be just as powerful. The personalities and things that make your hair stand up on end hold lessons!
- Self-knowledge helps you figure out what you want to work on and what you are willing to let go.
- If you understand how you are most likely to react when you things don't go well, you can then identify which thoughts and behaviours are serving you, and those that are not.
- You can then choose to learn better ways of managing conflict or improve communication skills.
- Really getting to know yourself, moves you to a place of self-acceptance and increased self-worth – acknowledging that we all have weaknesses and imperfections and that we can be totally ok about it. Or, we can change!
- The world is a better place when we take the best of ourselves and make it better. That's what self-improvement is about.

Group Activity: Ice Breaking Session To know yourself and your team mates

The trainees are assembled in the classroom; in most cases the trainees do not know each other. This activity facilitates in creating a friendly environment by ice breaking and can be a fun activity.

Make a list of pairs, depending on the number of trainees available. The examples for the pairs could be as follows

1. Tom and Jerry
2. Antony and Cleopatra
3. Adam and Eve
4. Karuthamma & Parikutty

5. Jack and Jill
6. Kuttusan and Dakini
7. King and queen
8. Laurel and Hardy
9. Romeo and Juliet

Now keep chits ready with the name of the pair written on them. Each trainee comes and picks up a chit, once the final trainee picks up his chit, the trainees start searching for their partner; say, the person who has got “Tom” searches for the person who has got “Jerry”. Once everyone has found their partner a time ranging from 15 to 20 minutes is given to the pairs to discuss about themselves with each other.

Once the time is up, the partners are split and have to sit separately. One member of the pair is given a set of three questions to answer; the member writes down the answer and hands it over to the organiser. Now the partner of this member is called upon and asked the same questions, if his/her answer matches with his partner points are given. The questions to be asked could be simple ones, such as

- Favourite colour
- Favourite food
- Favourite picnic spot
- Boring subject at school

The entire process helps in breaking inhibitions in talking to strangers and helps in providing an outline to the trainees present.