

The Four Lessons of Self-Knowledge

(Bennis, 2009)

Bennis says that *“Knowing thyself means separating who you are and who you want to be from what the world thinks you are and wants you to be.”*

He goes on to say that *“All of us can find tangible and intangible rewards in self-knowledge and self-control, because if you go on doing what you’ve always done, you’ll go on getting what you’ve always got – which may be less than what you want or deserve.”*

Bennis created his four lessons of self-knowledge:

1. You are your own best teacher
2. Accept responsibility. Blame no one
3. You can learn anything you want to learn
4. True understanding comes from reflecting on your experience

How can you be your own best teacher? What can you learn to help you be the best version of you that you can be? What can you learn so that you be the leader that each of your team members need you to be?

How can you accept responsibility for your own success – what can you do? What will you do?

Every situation is a learning situation. Have you got a *Growth Mindset* or a *Fixed Mindset*?

How do you create new experiences that you can reflect on and learn from? Marty Kaplan, ex Disney Productions’ Vice President says that learning is more than just reflecting on experience, it is having the appetite to have experience, because people can be experience averse and therefore not learn. Unless you have the appetite to absorb new and potentially unsettling things, you don’t learn.

Marcia Reynolds refers to allowing yourself to go into your discomfort zone to bring new insights, awareness and learnings.

How well do you reflect on experiences and gain new insights and awareness from them? Do you justify your behaviours and find fault with others and their impact on you? Do you reflect with blameless discernment?

Here are some questions to use:

What really happened? (Blameless discernment)

Why did it happen? (Blameless discernment)

What judgements are you making about yourself, others or circumstances?

What did it do to me? (Blameless discernment and empathy with self)

What did it mean to me? (Blameless discernment and empathy with self)

True learning might mean that we also have to *unlearn*.

Reflection is asking the questions that provoke self-awareness
Kaplan

References

Bennis, W. (2009). *On Becoming a Leader*. Basic Books.