Self-Awareness: The Basic Competency of the Influential Leader

The truth is that you cannot improve what you cannot manage, and you cannot manage what you are blind to in your personal habits and behavior.
—Tim Kight, organizational development expert

Self-awareness is an honest understanding of your own values, desires, thought patterns, motivations, goals and ambitions, emotional responses, strengths and weaknesses, and effect on others. This awareness takes years to fully develop, requires commitment, and is supplemented by others’ feedback. Once developed and practiced regularly, self-awareness enables you to manage your behavior, improve your interactions and relationships, and gain or increase your influence.

The level of self-awareness is related to the level of influence and performance: The more self-aware a leader is, the more influential she is and the better her followers perform. As Daniel Goleman, a thought leader in the area of emotional intelligence, explains in his book Primal Leadership, “Leaders high in emotional self-awareness are attuned to their inner signals, recognizing how their feelings affect them and their job performance. Leaders with high self-awareness typically know their strengths and limitations and exhibit a gracefulness in learning where they need to improve.”

Research in business, behavioral science, and organizational development states that influential leaders and peak-performing organizations have a highly developed sense of themselves and
their identities. They understand their behavior preferences, manage their emotions, and are keenly aware of the need to create and sustain interpersonal relationships. Influential leaders are empathic (i.e., they can relate to others’ emotions and experiences) and compassionate (i.e., they are genuinely concerned for the plight of others). Conversely, the lack of self-awareness is a primary cause of ineffective leadership, which poisons the organizational culture. Sadly, most organizations avoid fixing the biggest internal constraint on their success—leaders who are not held accountable for their less-than-desirable interpersonal skills. Mission, vision, and values statements that adorn the hallways of the organization are not meaningful if the daily behaviors of its leaders contradict the moral and spiritual essence that the organization claims to espouse. Self-examination reveals the behaviors that act as barriers and derail performance.

One reason many leaders are reluctant to become self-aware is that they are unsure of what it means to be a leader. As mentioned in the Introduction, many managers do not receive training on how to “do” leadership. As a result, they do not understand that leadership entails far more than budgeting or scheduling, for example; it also involves negotiating with people and preventing dysfunctions. Leadership means inspiring and mobilizing people to accomplish something of lasting value, something that makes a difference in people’s lives. This responsibility for other people must be made clear so that leaders can be convinced of their need to become self-aware. Without self-awareness, leaders will not see that their behavior affects how their employees engage with their work, behave toward each other, and treat their patients.

Another reason for this reluctance about self-awareness is that it holds leaders to their own core values, which then makes it difficult for leaders to adjust to a popular or common belief or practice with which they do not agree. Finding harmony between the self and the outside world is ideal, and conflict is likely to ensue if the values of the self are not aligned with those of the organization. You can only pretend to be something you
are not for a limited time. Ultimately, under a certain circumstance (e.g., fatigue, stress), your real character and beliefs will manifest through your behavior. Regardless of the outcome (negative or positive) of the journey to self-awareness, it is a worthwhile road to take for all leaders.

This chapter explains the various elements of self-awareness, including its most critical component—change. Change not only is inevitable in health care but also is a requirement in an individual becoming an influential leader, so it is discussed extensively in this chapter. The C^4 model, a framework I created, is introduced here to guide readers in understanding and assessing their behavior.

Self-Examination

Self-examination is the fastest route to self-awareness. Yet, a great many leaders do not take a look inside, possibly afraid of what they might find. The irony is that these same leaders are masters at conducting root-cause analyses on the failures of their organization. However, such examinations often do not lead to improvement or change in processes. Still other leaders choose to cope with organizational problems rather than evaluate and then solve them. That is the easy, but dead-end, road to take.

What is true of organizations is also true of individuals. Leaders are not perfect beings, much like organizations are not perfect entities. That truth is reason enough to signal a need for self-examination. Add to this fact the interpersonal conflicts or behavioral clashes that leaders face on a daily basis, and you have all the indicators that something is wrong somewhere and it must be addressed. Do not mistake behavioral conflicts for personality or style issues, because they are different. Behavior is a matter of choice, while personality is an inherent trait. Self-examination is the key to making the right behavior choice and to recognizing poor habits.
Sincerity

Self-examination reveals many things, including our level of sincerity, which is a trait all influential leaders share. Sincerity is synonymous with genuineness, honesty, and authenticity. Gather a group of people, then ask each of them to list the attributes of the “ideal” leader. Sincerity will appear on each list. I know because I have conducted this exercise with various individuals from different organizations.

Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary notes that sincere is from Middle French meaning “honest,” which in turn is derived from the Latin sincerus, meaning “whole, unsullied, pure, honest, and genuine.” A story of unknown origin states that the literal meaning of sincerus is “without wax.” During the Middle Ages, defective marble artwork was commonly repaired by grounding marble chips into dust, mixing the dust with wax, and applying the mixture to the defect, which was thus disguised. Marble artwork without defects was called sincerus or “without wax.”

It is a great story, even if it may be untrue.

The point here is simple: Leaders must all be without wax. Crises, stress, and other difficulties reveal people’s inner character and pretenses. Sooner or later, under the heat of a trying circumstance, the real you will become evident. So ask yourself a reflective question: How whole, unsullied, pure, honest, and genuine am I as a leader, and do I behave accordingly?

Feedback

Do you know what behaviors you display on a daily basis? Are your habits bringing you closer to or preventing you from achieving the high levels of performance necessary to make a significant difference in people’s lives? These questions can be answered by self-examination, using a feedback system.

The very thought of feedback generates an immediate emotional reaction. The reason is twofold:

1. We do not want (or are afraid) to hear how people experience us through our behavior.
2. Other people do not want to give us feedback for fear of retaliation or ruining our relationship.

This emotional dynamic applies to both personal and professional situations. For example, a wife is afraid to tell her husband to control his road rage because she is physically threatened by him, while her husband does not want to hear criticisms about his driving. Likewise, a staff member does not want to tell his boss that her unwillingness to solicit ideas and suggestions from the team is stifling creativity, while the boss avoids communication with her staff for fear of their judgment. Regardless of the awkwardness inherent in giving and taking feedback, all leaders (and staff) need to engage in it to demonstrate their commitment to self-examination and self-improvement.

Influential leaders solicit regular feedback from their colleagues and followers. They are committed to all kinds of improvement and understand that how they think and behave affects the way they lead. Influential leaders fully support the organizational mission and vision, and they ensure that their personal values and purpose align with those of the organization. They serve selflessly, unconcerned about preserving their egos or protecting their authority. They believe in and display transparency in everything they do, and getting feedback is one means of ensuring that this transparency continues and that self-improvement never ends. As German philosopher Johann Goethe said, “self-knowledge is best learned, not by contemplation but by action.”

If you want to be an influential leader, you must seek out and welcome honest and consistent feedback on your behavior. Assure those whom you asked for feedback that they are safe from retaliation and animosity, and encourage them to be as candid as possible. Your response to people who provide you with feedback will demonstrate your level of sincerity and ensure their continued willingness to provide feedback in the future.

Executive coach and author Marshall Goldsmith describes people’s usual reaction to positive and negative feedback. He
says that we all tend to accept feedback that is compatible to what we believe to be true and reject feedback that does not match our sense of reality. This concept is akin to pattern recognition—that is, our brains gravitate toward information that is known, familiar, or concrete. For example, if a nurse executive receives feedback that she is a poor listener, she may become defensive and deem the comment an insult. After all, she may argue, she did not rise to her current position by not paying attention to others’ needs and wants along the way. Thus, she will ignore the feedback altogether, rendering the process a waste of time and effort. This example could apply to all levels of employees in all kinds of jobs.

The way feedback is delivered determines whether the feedback process will be ineffective or constructive. Constructive feedback yields productive outcomes because its intention is to coach and inform, rather than to blame and accuse. Even negative feedback can be turned into actionable goals when the feedback is delivered in a constructive manner. According to Goldsmith, constructive feedback requires the following steps:

1. Ask the right people.
2. Ask the right questions.
3. Interpret the answers properly.
4. Accept the responses as accurate.

Results obtained from constructive feedback may then be fitted into the Johari window and its variant, the Nohari window. Created in 1955 by Joe Luft and Harry Ingham, the Johari and Nohari windows are practical tools for self-examination of one’s interactions and relationships with others. You can find illustrations of both tools and instructions for how to employ them on several Web sites such as the following:

http://kevan.org/johari
www.businessballs.com/johariwindowmodel.htm
www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/JohariWindow.htm
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Many feedback tools are available, with varying degrees of effectiveness and practicality. Regardless of the system you use, do not lose sight of its essence: Change begins with seeking feedback and diligently applying the lessons learned. As a result, we can move from complacency, fear, and doubt to improved behavior, creative thought processes, mental toughness, and discipline—all of which help us to shape or re-create our lives and to make optimal life choices.

Four Approaches to Becoming an Influential Leader

John Maxwell, an internationally known and respected leadership expert, has said “Leading me has always been my greatest challenge as a leader. . . . Acknowledging that leading myself is a challenge brings back some painful memories.” Maxwell suggests these four approaches to becoming an influential leader:

1. Learn to follow before you try to lead. If you submit yourself to the leadership of another, you will become more humble. This experience teaches you to appreciate the hard work, sacrifices, and frustrations of being a follower. In this capacity, you will learn to listen, to wait your turn, and to be open to alternatives you would not consider in normal circumstances.

2. Develop self-discipline. Self-discipline is an exercise in mental and emotional strength. It is not easy to practice in an ever-changing, chaotic environment, and developing it does not happen overnight. Once mastered, however, self-discipline is a powerful ally against all kinds of personal and professional challenges.

3. Practice patience. Overworking or working too fast rarely produces consistent, strategic, and sustainable performance. Instead, it burns you out and gets you too far ahead of your followers and not alongside them. Your pace should be aligned with that of your followers so that you can stay connected. Learn and teach along the way.
4. *Seek accountability.* Leadership is seductive and delusional. It allows people to indulge their ego and forget their convictions. You should demand transparency from yourself and others. You should also remind yourself regularly that you are accountable to everyone around you.

**Initiating Change in Ourselves and Others**

Becoming self-aware means discovering what works, what does not work, and what could use a little or a lot of work. In this process, change is almost always required. Change is neither easy nor popular, whether we want to make it happen for ourselves or inspire others to make a change. It is difficult for two reasons.

First, neuroscience has discovered that physically our brain does not want to cooperate with our decision to change. Once the brain learns consistent patterns of behavior, even dysfunctional ones, it hangs on to those patterns, which are phenomenally strong. The good news is that we can retrain our brain, albeit with a good deal of consistent, hard effort. Second, change is a personal and intimate endeavor. We can order someone else to make a change and, perhaps, even give that person an ultimatum or a list of dire consequences. We can offer full support and encouragement, motivate the effort, teach practical strategies, and regularly follow up on the progress. But we cannot make the person commit to that change if he is not able, willing, and/or ready. Simply, people must have their own desire to change. Without this desire, our behavioral modification and change initiatives will fail.

Let’s illustrate this concept with the actual problem that health care organizations face when they implement best-practice approaches to improving safety, quality, and service in hopes of replicating the outcomes and rewards these approaches have brought to other hospitals. The intention behind this effort is noble—one that nearly everyone can agree on. After all, best
Practice is known to result in higher productivity, effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in all operational and clinical areas. The dilemma starts in the organizational expectation that if the best-practice model is followed exactly or at least closely, then it will yield the same outcomes; that is, if the approach reduced Hospital A’s medical error rate, then it should reduce Hospital B’s medical error rate as well. This expectation is logical, but it does not take into account the variations between the two hospitals.

One such variation involves people—from chief executives to administrators to clinicians to support staff. People of two organizations are not the same, and neither are their thought patterns, attitudes, and behaviors toward the change process. Although “push back” to any change can be expected in all organizations, it is especially toxic in some cultures. Consequently, this resistance and people’s thought and behavioral patterns, as well as their desire to change, alter the outcomes of a best-practice initiative from one organization to the next.

What we know to be true of many high-performing organizations and individuals is that they rarely benchmark or measure themselves against the results of their competitors. They opt to compete against themselves, adjusting their processes, strategies, behaviors, and mind-set to suit their own purpose, objectives, and expectations. They control their performance and outcomes, not the other way around. Marginal performers, on the other hand, follow the herd mentality, choosing tactics and plans developed by others and hoping the results are generalizable to all.

The Three Deadly “Ds” of Change

Resistance to change has three stages: denial, defending, and diminishing. When applied to changing behavior, the stages work as follows:

1. Denial is a person’s natural tendency to dismiss behavior that is disruptive, dysfunctional, or unproductive. To
admit to such a behavior is self-incriminating, so in an effort to avoid others’ judgment, the person resorts to denial.

2. **Defending** is a way to stand up for or justify the existence of the behavior, and it comes after a person is no longer able to refute that the habit is evident. The person is prepared to name the self-perceived benefits or advantages of the behavior and to counter any and all opposing views.

3. **Diminishing** is the stage at which the person turns against those who urge him to change the behavior. This response is a deliberate attempt to deflect focus away from the change, especially when the need becomes undeniable, and to “shoot the messenger.” The person will question and minimize the credibility and character of the other people involved to make the case that his behavior is just fine and the fault lies with others.

At any of these stages, the person’s level of performance is lowered and his judgment is compromised. When these outcomes occur in a health care setting, everything and everyone suffer, including patients. Now imagine that the person who resists change is an authority figure—someone in charge of operations, finances, strategic and tactical plans, clinical care, quality, or community relations. How would this leader guide the organizational efforts if he routinely relied on the three deadly Ds of change? As mentioned in the Introduction, an individual leader’s behavior is the most important predictor of organizational performance. A leader who is unwilling to improve and help himself is unwilling to improve and help his organization.

**The Motivation to Change**

The collective, general mission statement of health care organizations—to provide care and comfort to the sick—should be a sufficient motivator for change. Influential leaders understand, however, that this mission alone is not enough. In fact,
even intolerable outcomes are sometimes insufficient to ignite and propel real behavior change. What is needed is to tap into people’s desire to change—to do something else and to believe they are capable of doing so and achieving results. Chapter 2 further discusses motivations to change, including dissatisfaction and a sense of urgency.

Influential leaders are keenly aware of the need to create an organizational culture in which people are encouraged to take personal responsibility for doing their jobs well and to be accountable for their own actions. In this type of culture, people discover the most effective and efficient solutions on their own and realize that those solutions already reside within the organization; they are not brought in by external “change experts” or copied from “top” organizations. Simply, a culture that trusts and respects its people’s knowledge and abilities as well as inspires, teaches, and expects them to perform at high levels increases the motivation to change and improve.

A word of warning is due at this juncture. Not everyone in an organization has the desire to perform at high levels or to change the status quo, and some people deliberately sabotage change initiatives to avoid doing more work or learning new things. Influential leaders are realistic about these types of followers, opting to let them go instead of waiting for their toxic behaviors to affect the whole enterprise. (See part II for more discussion on this issue.)

The C⁴ Model: A Behavioral Assessment Tool

Self-awareness requires intentional behavior change. To initiate this change, a methodology that incorporates different theories of behavior should be used; this approach ensures that behavior-related factors are examined in a comprehensive manner. The C⁴ model is ideal for this purpose.

The C⁴ model is an integrated framework for understanding and assessing behavior. It questions existing habits; focuses
on areas that need change; and emphasizes the importance of accepting personal responsibility, taking initiative, managing emotions, and committing to continuous learning and development. It poses self-examination questions such as the following:

1. What do I believe is true about me and the world around me?
2. What do I think about my relationships with others?
3. How do I manage my emotional energy, and what script or narrative have I created for myself and for others?
4. How do I choose my relationships, and are these relationships aligned with my thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes?

The C⁴ model can be used for both personal behavior change and organizational change efforts.

The C⁴ Components

C⁴ stands for the four components—conviction, convincing, compelling, and conforming—that must be examined in order for behavior change to occur. Each element can be linked to the three principles of influential leadership—self-awareness, collaboration, and connection. The first three—conviction, convincing, and compelling—are associated with self-awareness (discussed in part I of this book), and the fourth—conforming—is related to collaboration and connection (discussed in parts II and III). For an illustration of the C⁴ model, see figure 1-1. Following is an explanation of each component.

Conviction is the “why” of behavior. Conviction is a strongly held belief that guides actions. By examining our convictions, we can begin to understand how our values inform our daily behavior and identify gaps between the two. In other words, conviction asks “Why am I doing what I am doing?”

Convincing is the “what” of behavior. This component revolves around our mental models—the perceptions, biases,
notions, and other cognitive patterns that enable us to under-stand and deal with the external world. These mental models develop over time, and they either help or hinder change. Convincing requires candid examination of how our thoughts influence our decisions, behaviors, interactions, and performance. The goal is to replace dysfunctional thinking or reframe our mind-set so that we are more open to positive experiences, such as learning, developing creative or innovative solutions, and seeking mutually beneficial relationships and pursuits. In other words, convincing asks “What am I thinking when I do the things I do?”

Figure 1-1. Influential Leadership and the Components of the C4 Model
Compelling is the “how” of behavior. This component assesses our level of emotional control. Our ability to positively engage others and respond to their needs is a direct result of our ability to manage our emotions. This display of interest and care in others serves as a compelling reason for change; conversely, it compels people to resist change. People almost always buy into a leader before they buy into his vision. No proven process, tool, or performance improvement program can trump an effective leader’s connection with people, because change is an emotional act, and the more emotionally engaged the followers are to their leader, the more compelled they are to support him and to mimic his emotional control. In other words, compelling asks “How do I express my emotions, and how do my emotions affect my performance and others’ perception of me and my abilities?”

Conforming is the “who” of behavior. This component relates to the “others”—our team members and collaboration partners, from senior management to staff to physicians. In a collaboration or any team setting, most failures are caused by poor communication, lack of cooperation, and fragmentation of teams. These are all behavioral weaknesses that many leaders do not recognize. Conforming entails learning, teaching, and modeling ideal practices with the purpose of transforming individualist thinking and behavior that are not conducive to the needs of a collaborative culture. In other words, conforming asks “Who on my team display behaviors that either help or hinder collaboration, cooperation, and connection, and what can I do to encourage good behaviors and correct the poor ones?”

The point of the C^4 model is simple: Personal and organizational change requires an understanding of why we behave a certain way (conviction); what mental patterns we follow to justify our behavior (convincing); how our emotions affect our performance and influence others’ perception and support (compelling); and who on our team displays behavior that impedes team functioning, and what must be done to correct it (conforming).
Finding Your Behavior Strengths

Change and chaos are constant in our knowledge- and technology-driven world. Yet, with all this change and chaos, both influential leaders and their organizations continue to thrive. What distinguishes influential leaders from those who fail? Research has found a common denominator among successful leaders: They play to their behavior strengths. Following is a great illustration of this principle.

Patrick Charmel, president and chief executive officer of Griffin Hospital in Derby, Connecticut, plays to his strengths and embodies the principles of influential leadership. Charmel places tremendous emphasis on his strength of building relationships with people. In fact, he is known to spend more time in various departments than in his office. As a result, employee satisfaction at Griffin is high, which in turn drives up its safety, quality, and service results. Griffin has been consistently named in Fortune magazine’s “100 Best Companies to Work For” list, has earned Planetree’s designation as a patient-centered hospital, and has received several honors for its clinical care and leadership excellence. Griffin’s culture is marked by open communication, trust, and integrity.

Influential leaders like Patrick Charmel know that by placing emphasis on building their strengths they can mitigate the impact of their weaknesses. Rather than try to compensate for their own level of performance in an area of weakness, influential leaders build highly functional teams and surround themselves with the right people to compensate for their own performance inadequacies. Influential leaders are so secure in who they are and what they believe that they aggressively seek out team members who balance their strengths and weaknesses.

One misconception about the playing-to-your-strength strategy is that it prevents a person from trying a new approach or imposes a limitation in the event of an organizational or market change. Another fear is that the successes gained from this
strategy are short term and may derail a person’s career because all he knows to do is to stick to what he does well. These beliefs may be true from the technical skills perspective, and I do recommend that leaders continue to learn and expand their technical skills. But behaviorally, this kind of thinking is uninformed. Behavior drives technical skill, and if a leader leverages his behavior strength and leans on other behavior domains to support him, he can bring about improved technical performance, better interrelationships, innovative solutions to problems, and consistent positive outcomes.

Domains of Leadership Strength

The strategy of playing to your strengths starts with discovering what your strong points are. Tom Rath and Barry Conchie classify leadership strengths into four domains: (1) executing (driver), (2) influencing (persuader), (3) strategic thinking (analyzer), and (4) relationship building (stabilizer). According to this model, each of us has a behavior preference represented by one of these four domains, but we also have the capacity to flex toward the other three domains. Peak performance is the optimal blending of all the behavior dynamics within these domains. Your behavior preference (or strength domain) determines how you see the world around you, but it represents only 25 percent of your capacity for problem solving and creative thinking. If you are a “driver” who demands that everyone in the organization think and behave as a driver, you lower the level of organizational performance by excluding the strengths of the other three domains.

Your strength domain increases your potential for success. It shapes the way you function in the critical areas of performance, such as communicating, visioning, processing information, thinking creatively, managing emotions, aligning your core values, and relating to other people. Thus, awareness of the dominant strength as well as other domains is essential under
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Your strength domain increases your potential for success. It shapes the way you function in the critical areas of performance, such as communicating, visioning, processing information, thinking creatively, managing emotions, aligning your core values, and relating to other people. Thus, awareness of the dominant strength as well as other domains is essential under times of stress, change, fatigue, and chaos because it enables us to be grounded on who we are, what we believe in, and how to behave accordingly.

Influential leaders know their behavior strengths and allow them to dominate when they are seeking the most optimal outcomes in relationships and performance. Furthermore, influential leaders understand the power of collaboration and connection (the other two principles of influential leadership), so they create a team composed of people who have strengths in all four domains. In this blend and balance of strengths, influential leaders propel their organizations to a higher level of performance.

Behavior Preference Tools

A number of behavior preference tools are available in the marketplace. These tools can be used to identify your strength domain and may be coupled with a feedback mechanism. I highly encourage you to seek out and use these tools.

Suppose a behavior preference tool identified you as a dominant “analyzer” who is good at strategic thinking. People will experience your behavior as cautious, careful, consistent, and diplomatic. You can have a profound effect on your team with your constant pursuit of getting the details right. But your endless quest for data can cause “analysis paralysis” for your team. The analyzer in this example lacks self-awareness and is oblivious to her behavior’s impact on others. By seeking and receiving feedback, this analyzer can learn to gravitate toward domains that are more accommodating and, in the process, enhance the team’s performance. During this behavior change, other members of the team can become more receptive to and welcoming of the analyzer’s dominant behavior strength.

A person who is at his best in performance, productivity, safety, quality, and service, playing to his strength as an analyzer, needs to function with behaviors that are suited to that domain. Alternatively, a person who is a “persuader,” playing
to her strength as being influential, can flex to the domains of the analyzer, the stabilizer, and the driver. This person can accommodate the compatible strength domains of other team members without having to become like them. Influential leaders embrace the diversity of these domains and create the vision and cultures to leverage the strengths of each person to propel them to higher levels of organizational performance.

**Conclusion**

Self-awareness is essential to changing behaviors that hinder performance excellence. Its three dimensions are (1) volitional, (2) mental, and (3) emotional, and these elements are discussed in subsequent chapters. Self-examination, feedback, and behavioral preference tools can help people assess their habits or tendencies. The C⁴ model is a framework for understanding and making sustainable change. Successes in personal behavior change and organizational change are achieved because people want to change, and this desire is explained by various reasons. Sometimes, the reason may be that they realize the change is simply a better way to operate.

Life is the culmination of the choices we make, and one of these choices is how we behave. When we change what we think, we also change what we believe. When we change what we believe, we choose to change our habits and behaviors. Surprisingly, research has also shown the converse to be true. Sometimes, when faced with a significant challenge or severe problem, we choose to behave differently from our fundamental beliefs because doing so is the only effective course of action available.¹¹ We might say to ourselves “I may not understand why a new behavior produces more effective results, but I know that if I do it, I get better outcomes.” Thus we begin to change our mind. Regardless of how we arrive at our decisions, when we effectively change how we behave, we transform ourselves, our organizations, and the communities we serve.
Key Takeaways

- Self-awareness is an honest understanding of your own values, desires, thought patterns, motivations, goals and ambitions, emotional responses, strengths and weaknesses, and effect on others.
- The level of self-awareness is related to the level of influence and performance: The more self-aware a leader is, the more influential she is and the better her followers perform.
- The lack of self-awareness is a primary cause of ineffective leadership, which poisons the organizational culture.
- Behavior is a matter of choice, while personality is an inherent trait. Self-examination is the key to making the right behavior choices and to recognizing poor habits.
- Constructive feedback yields productive outcomes because its intention is to coach and inform, rather than to blame and accuse.
- Resistance to change has three stages: (1) denial, (2) defending, and (3) diminishing.
- The C⁴ model is a proactive tool for initiating change, questioning existing habits, maintaining focus, accepting personal responsibility, taking initiative, managing emotions, and committing to continuous learning.
- C⁴ stands for the four components—conviction, convincing, compelling, and conforming—that must be examined and understood before change can occur.
- What distinguishes influential leaders from those who fail is that successful leaders play to their behavior strengths.

Applying the C⁴ Model: Self-Awareness and the First Three Cs

The following questions are intended to initiate self-examination of your current way of thinking, behaving, working, leading,
and interacting with others. Take the time to think about these questions, and be honest with yourself.

- Describe your understanding of self-awareness. Do you believe you are self-aware? If so, how do you maintain this awareness?
- Do you actively seek feedback on your behavior and performance? How often, and is the process structured or informal? Who is involved in providing this feedback? Are those people encouraged to be as honest as possible? What do you do with the information you receive? If you do not seek feedback, why not? How do you obtain comments, criticism, or suggestions otherwise?
- List your behavior traits (e.g., talkative) that you perceive cause or may cause interpersonal conflicts between you and your followers, colleagues, and friends. Alternatively, list repetitive habits that have been problematic in the past. How have you dealt with or corrected these traits? What barriers, if any, did you encounter in correcting them? Are you in denial of or defensive about these traits? Why? If not, are you committed to making a change?
- List your thinking patterns (e.g., overconfidence) that you perceive cause or may cause interpersonal problems between you and your followers, colleagues, and friends. Alternatively, list mental models that have been problematic in the past. How have you dealt with or corrected these thought patterns? What barriers, if any, did you encounter in correcting them? Are you in denial of or defensive about these patterns? Why? If not, are you committed to making a change?
- What do you allow your mind to dwell on? What thoughts come to your mind in moments of crisis or stress? Are these thoughts negative or positive?
- How do your thoughts affect your behavior and performance? In what specific ways can you change your
thinking to change your behavior and influence your professional performance? The quality of your personal life? How motivated are you to change for the better to benefit yourself, your family, the staff, the organization, and the community? If you lack motivation, what do you need to stimulate your interest?

• Have you considered that the biggest fault you consistently see in others may be a reflection of your own glaring fault?

• When others share their experiences with you, how do you respond?

• How easily do you forgive yourself when you make a mistake that affects the lives of others? Have you considered that the degree to which you fail to forgive yourself is also the degree to which you fail to forgive others?

Complete this sentence: If I could do one thing differently to improve my relationship with (fill in the blank), I would (describe the new behavior).

References


