

THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

Worksheet for Adam Grant | How to Know the Real You Better (Episode 153)

Whether it's in trying to land a job or impress a date, we spend a staggering amount of time making claims about ourselves. It makes sense: You're the only person on Earth who has direct knowledge of every thought, feeling, and experience you've ever had. Who could possibly know you better than *you*? But sometimes it's that direct knowledge that causes the problem in the first place. Think of it like owning a car: just because you've driven it for years doesn't mean you can pinpoint when and why the engine broke down.

[In this episode](#), we get to the root of this problem with Wharton professor, podcast host ([WorkLife with Adam Grant](#)), and author ([Option B](#) [with Sheryl Sandberg], [Originals](#), and [Give and Take](#)) Adam Grant -- an expert on how we can find motivation and meaning and lead more generous and creative lives. We'll dig deep into why we have cognitive blind spots about ourselves and what we can do to become more accurately self-aware.

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Who Do You Think You Are?

"No one has perfect self-awareness," said Adam recently in [The Atlantic](#). "You probably believe more than a few things about yourself that are false."


Adam told me about time he recently spent in the writers room at *The Daily Show* surrounded by about 30 people who could spontaneously riff -- with seemingly effortless hilarity -- on the news clips of the day without missing a beat.

Eventually, someone told a joke that didn't quite land; my palms sweat as I heard this story, imagining how I'd feel in such a high-pressure situation. But these were professionals who knew how to work as a team to sculpt the fallout into something funny -- bombing a joke was something they'd all experienced, so it wasn't even a big deal.

The difference between the people in that room and me: They *know* they're funny enough to get a consistently positive reaction on a level that landed them their job in the first place. I know I'm funny enough to make friends and family laugh on occasion over dinner, but I wouldn't count on my sense of humor to sustain a successful livelihood.

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What traits do you take for granted about yourself? Do you consider yourself creative or not creative? Do you believe you're bad at math but great with words or vice versa? Are you the nice guy at the office everyone greets or the curmudgeon everyone avoids? Did you become aware of these traits on your own or at the suggestion of someone else? Make a list of your traits and try to identify when you first determined they were an indelible part of who you are. Do you still think they're indelible, or do you feel empowered to make changes according to your own design?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their list of traits and reflections.

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Better than Myers-Briggs

Adam says one area where we truly know ourselves better than anyone else is our emotions. We might wear them on our sleeves, but we're the only ones who can possibly know if we're feeling the emotion we're conveying, or if we're putting on a front to mask what's going on inside.

The problem: we may doubt what we're feeling or even try to hide it from ourselves if we're not confident in our own self-awareness. We might rely on some external validation like the Myers-Briggs Personality Test (which Adam says he's publicly broken up with -- calling it "astrology for nerds") to tell us how we *really* feel instead of trusting ourselves for a more accurate reading. Adam considers conscientiousness to be a much better personality predictor.

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Do you think of yourself as disciplined and hardworking, or spontaneous and carefree? List your memorable life experiences that inform this conclusion, and try to think of life experiences that contradict this conclusion. In reflection, do you estimate yourself to be as conscientious as you'd like to be, or do you have some work to do?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their reflection and list of experiences.

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Reflected Best Self Exercise

The more objective you *think* you are, the more you discriminate -- because you don't realize how vulnerable you are to bias. So any time a trait is easy to observe or hard to admit, you need other people to hold up a mirror for you.

Romantic partners and friends want to see you in a positive light -- perhaps to rationalize their relationship with you -- so may reinforce your inaccurate self-assessments or motivate you to fulfill their expectations. On the other hand, the people with whom you work closely have a vested interest in making you better -- or at least less difficult to bear! The challenge: they're often reluctant to tell you the stuff you don't want to -- but need to -- hear.

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Reach out to 15-20 colleagues, friends, and family members who know you well, and ask them to tell a story about a time when you were at your best.

Analyze the common themes and create a portrait of your strengths through the eyes of others.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to create a portrait of their strengths based on feedback from others.

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Reflected Worst Self Exercise

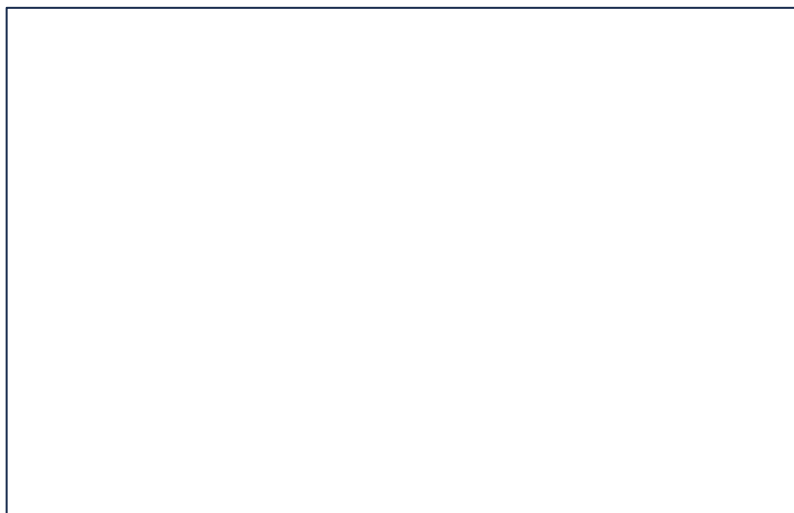
On the obverse of what makes us memorable and worthy of our connection to others, we're also the catalysts of moments for which we're less than proud. We may think back on times in our lives when we said or did the wrong thing and cringe at how embarrassing we're always making life for ourselves.

But what we remember most isn't always memorable to others. In fact, it's likely we beat ourselves up more often for the forgivable -- or utterly forgotten -- faux pas we *know* we made than the misstep that escaped our attention because we were (and perhaps still are) unaware we were offending someone else by our words or actions.

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Reach out to 15-20 colleagues, friends, and family members who know you well, and ask them to tell a story about a time when you were at your worst.

Analyze the common themes and create a portrait of your weaknesses through the eyes of others. Though this probably sounds more terrifying than the last exercise, you'll likely be surprised by the feedback that you're not as terrible as you think you are -- or at least not terrible for the *reasons* you think you are!



Full show notes and resources for this episode [can be found here](#).

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About



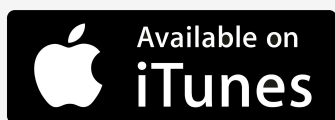
Join us as we get deep into the untapped wisdom of the world's top performers -- from legendary creators to intelligence operatives, iconoclastic writers to visionary change-makers.

We deconstruct the playbooks of the most successful people on earth -- and learn new strategies, perspectives, and insights you can't find anywhere else. Then, take these valuable insights into your own life and live what you listen.

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