

THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

Worksheet for Tasha Eurich | The Surprising Truth About Insight (Episode 296)

To discover whether the science of self-awareness supports the hype of its buzzword status in the business world, Tasha Eurich spent six years studying the topic in great detail, which resulted in her *New York Times* bestseller *Insight: The Surprising Truth About How Others See Us, How We See Ourselves, and Why the Answers Matter More Than We Think*.

How we see ourselves and others, both at work and at home, has been shown not only to provide leaders with better teams in the office, but also helps unlock happier marriages, have stronger relationships, and even raise less narcissistic children. **On this episode** we explore how self-awareness is related to personal and professional success, how we can get more self-awareness, and perhaps most important for many of us, how we can encourage other people to develop more self-awareness.

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Are You Self-Aware?

Most of us think we're self-aware, but we're actually not. Or, as Tasha and her team came to discover, 80 percent of us are lying to ourselves about lying to ourselves!

"Self-awareness, I think, is one of the most important things any of us can ever work on," says Tasha. "It's a skill that almost nobody prioritizes because they think they're already there. But what we found in our research is that when we do, and when we can even just incrementally improve how clearly we see ourselves, the benefits touch every part of our lives."

How self-aware do you think you are? Jot down your initial snap self-judgment here, and then return after listening to the entire episode and going through this worksheet to see if your answer has changed and what you've learned between then and now.

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Self-Awareness Unicorns

Tasha and her team discovered over the course of their research that, in 50 adults who agreed to develop their self-awareness from a beginning point that was low or virtually non-existent, they came to improve incrementally rather than all at once. In other words, it's like going to the gym: you don't burn fat and build muscle overnight. You work up to it — and the more your work pays off, the more you want to keep working at it.

“We discovered that those people, these self-awareness unicorns, as we called them, actually worked harder on their self-awareness than almost anyone else,” says Tasha, “and they were objectively the best at it. There were a lot of times where we found that our self-awareness unicorns actually spent less time in things like introspection or self-examination and got more results. And so that's one way I encourage my clients to look at this is this doesn't have to be a time suck. In fact, if it is a time suck, you might not be taking an approach that's going to give you the benefit you're looking for.”

Do you know anyone you might consider to be a self-awareness unicorn? If so, in what ways have you noticed them improving in their own self-awareness? If not, do you think you have the capacity to become one yourself? Why or why not?

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The Right Amount of Self-Awareness

“Here’s a good analogy that I think kind of helps demystify the right amount of self-awareness,” says Tasha. “Imagine you’re driving a car and you’re cruising down the highway; you’ve got somewhere to be. If you have no self-awareness or an incorrect assessment of, let’s say, how much gas you have in the tank, you’re going to drive until you eventually run out of gas and you’re not going to see it coming. You’re going to be surprised. You’re going to be pissed off. There’s kind of a bump in the road for you trying to get where you are. But the solution is not to go to the other side of the spectrum and drive while constantly looking at your gas gauge. That’s unproductive for a different reason. That’s when the process of self-examination becomes almost like a self-imposed prison, where we become self-absorbed and self-conscious.

“Self-awareness unicorns have these sort of twin pillars. On one hand, they’re highly self-aware, but at the same time, they’re very self-accepting. And what those two things do together is they allow us to every year learn a little more — you are able to correct.”

Are you the non-introspective type who runs out of gas unexpectedly more often than you’d like, the hyper-introspective type who can’t stop looking at the gauge long enough to see the world around you, or somewhere in between?

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Parallel Journeys

When it comes to self-awareness, Tasha says, “We kind of come to two categories. There are the people that are very focused on internal self-awareness [and] know who they are. Introspection might be one of their habits or their practices, but they have no idea how they’re coming across. I call these people introspectors. Their relationships might be limited. They might have a ceiling on their success because they’re not getting everything done they want to get done. But on the other hand is an equally bad problem, just an opposite one, is the people who are focused on external self-awareness, but not internal. They’re so focused on knowing how other people see them or thinking how other people will react to their choices, doing things often to serve others and make them happy, but they haven’t done the work and they don’t have the clarity to make decisions in their own best interest and for their own fulfillment and happiness. So it sort of makes sense that these two things, they’re almost parallel journeys we have to take in self-awareness.”

Toward which category of self-awareness do you think you lean, and why?

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A Foundational Skill for Success

When I mentioned that it's tempting to envy the self-unaware for going through life blissfully believing they're right about everything and that everyone else is an idiot, Tasha countered:

"Instead of talking about why it's bad to not have the skill, what would it mean for your listeners if they improve their self-awareness 10 to 15 percent, even just keeping the bar low? What the data tells us on self-awareness is that people who are self-aware, they're more promotable, they perform better at work, they get more clients, they build better relationships. They're better leaders, they're more innovative, they're more confident, they're better communicators. One more that is actually kind of amazing to me is there's a financial impact of self-awareness. There've been a couple of studies that have shown the companies made up of large numbers of un-self-aware employees were 79 percent more likely to show poor financial returns. So if you think about like the sum total of unawareness, that's a kind of a good example. Another one has shown that leaders who are self-aware tend to lead more profitable companies.

"There's actually almost nothing that you can have a more across the board improvement by working on than your self-awareness, but it's actually not just at work. It's at home as well. So people who are self-aware are happier in their marriages. They have stronger platonic relationships. They even raise less narcissistic children. It's such powerful stuff, and it's something that I think more of us should focus on."

Nobody is at 100 percent self-awareness, which means there's always room to improve. Could you commit to improving your self-awareness by 10 to 15 percent this year? Why or why not?

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With Great Power

“The more prominent we become, the less self-aware we tend to be,” says Tasha, “even if we don’t start out as less self-aware. Nobody’s going to come up to the CEO and say, ‘You know, sir, I don’t think your five-year strategic vision is really a good one.’ Where maybe as a first-line supervisor there might be a little bit more honesty built into that relationship. And so what I tell people is your team, your clients, your board are talking about how they see you and you have two choices. One of them is you can know what people are saying and therefore have control. Be able to make a decision. Or do you want to live in ignorance, which might feel great until there is a critical piece of information that you’re going to be missing that could really get in your way in a profound sense?”

If you exist at the top of a social hierarchy, do you feel your subordinates are being as honest as they could be with you? Is there any way you could invite feedback without consequence as a way to increase your own self-awareness? If you’re lower in a social hierarchy, do you feel welcome to share feedback with your higher-ups?

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Ask “What?” Instead of “Why?”

“One of our unicorns was a marketing manager,” says Tasha, “and he had this brand new boss that he just could not stand. They were like oil and water. He was sort of at the end of his rope, but where most of us would have asked an introspective question somewhere along the lines of “*Why* are we like oil and water?” He asked himself a very different question with a very different outcome. He asked, “*What* can I do to show her that I’m the best person for this job?” And immediately you can see the different path that took him down. So *why* are we like oil and water? Well, A, it doesn’t really matter. B, I’m going to find an answer that feels right that probably isn’t. And C, it’s probably just going to drag me down and unfocus me on the problem. But if I say “*What* can I do?” it’s more action-oriented. It’s more logical. It’s more future-looking. One word change. Swapping out *what* for *why* can mean the difference between true actual insight from introspection and leading ourselves down [a] rabbit hole.

“One of the most powerful what questions, especially in times of stress, is as simple as ‘*What* am I feeling right now?’”

Are the questions you’re asking yourself propelling you forward to action and insight, or are they misdirecting you and getting you stuck? Try switching out “What?” for “Why?” to prompt more useful answers and note your findings here.

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The Cult of Self

“The Cult of Self is a surprisingly consistent phenomenon all around the world that is tempting us to become more self-absorbed and therefore less self-aware,” says Tasha. “It’s really important to emphasize that this is not just my generation, the Millennials. This goes back since the 1970s and the 1980s. We’re not all narcissists, but we are, as a whole, gaining more narcissistic tendencies — and that really flies in the face of our self-awareness journey. If we’re self-absorbed, it means we think we’re awesome regardless of the objective reality versus being self-aware, which is knowing the objective reality and kind of choosing to accept ourselves anyway. If you were a member of the Cult of Self, how would you know?”

Try to view yourself impartially from the perspective of an outside observer. From this view, do you seem more aligned with the self-aware, or the Cult of Self? Name three reasons for your answer.

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Informers vs. Meformers

An antidote to the Cult of Self is to become what Tasha calls an “informer” as opposed to a “meformer.” What’s the distinction?

According to Tasha, a meformer is someone who spends the majority of their time talking about themselves and their accomplishments — research shows an average of 60 percent in real life and 80 percent online. An informer is someone who may spend 30 percent *more* of their time online than a meformer, but they use that time to focus on improving other people’s day-to-day experiences. “Their entire lens that they look at social media through is not about them. It’s about other people.”

The next time you go to post something on social media or tell a story to your group of friends, think about your motive for doing so. The questions Tasha recommends asking yourself are: “What’s at the heart of this?” and “What am I trying to accomplish?” By being mindful of your motivation, you can better cultivate an informer mindset and avoid perpetuating meformer tendencies. Use this space to explore how you might have turned past meformer interactions into ones more befitting an informer.

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How Not to Raise Monsters

Trying to keep tabs on our own self-awareness is difficult enough. So how can we ensure we're giving our children a healthy foundation for the development of their own self-awareness?

“There was a study where the researchers asked a bunch of parents of young children to answer: ‘Is your child more special than the other children?’ And then six months later they went and they actually measured how self-absorbed the children were behaving from an objective standpoint. They asked them questions like, ‘Do you deserve more than other kids deserve?’ And what they found was the parents that said their child was special tended to have children who behaved in a more self-absorbed, narcissistic manner. But what they found was when the parents, instead of emphasizing the specialness of their child, emphasized the love that they have towards that child and showed them warmth — so instead of saying, ‘You are the smartest kid in the class,’ you would say, ‘I love you and I believe in you’ — and that small change of warmth versus specialness, those kids tended to have not just less self-absorbed behaviors, but they were more self-accepting.”

When you interact with children in your life, how might you reinforce their self-esteem without introducing a dynamic that brings others down?

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The Dinner of Truth

Getting honest feedback from others — whether they're loved ones or people who might rely on us for a paycheck — can feel like pulling teeth. But we have to remember that humans evolved to work within societies from times when being exiled from them meant almost certain death. Volunteering potentially unsettling truths about people in our social circle doesn't come naturally. So what can we do to solicit feedback from others in order to improve our self-awareness?

Tasha recommends having someone over for a Dinner of Truth, as coined by Gonzaga University professor Josh Misner. "You find someone who you're close to, with whom you want to improve your relationship, and you invite them to dinner," says Tasha. "But in the dinner, you ask them the following question: 'What do I do that is most annoying to you?' And then you listen and then you bask in the insights. There is no question that whatever we're going to hear is useful, but almost every time what we hear is not a reflection of our worst fears."

Who would you invite to your first Dinner of Truth? How would you expect them to answer this question? After having this dinner, come back here to remind yourself of what you thought would be said and compare it to what was actually said. Do they match, or are they completely different? Was it a more positive or negative experience than you were expecting? What did you learn?

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Loving Critics

How do we know that, when we ask for feedback, we're not just getting a projection of someone else's issues or opinions? What can we do to separate the wheat from the chaff and ensure we're appropriately processing the feedback we get?

"Almost all of our unicorns had about three to five people that they regularly asked for feedback from, and they were really picky and they basically had to fit two criteria," says Tasha. "One was they had to believe that person had their best interest at heart. And number two is they had to believe that person would tell them the truth, even if it was hard — so we named them *loving critics*."

These loving critics come in handy when you want to verify or get a second opinion on feedback you've received elsewhere. "You go back to them and you say, 'Somebody told me that I was overbearing in a meeting today. I know that you'll always tell me the truth and you have when I have needed you to. Is that something you've seen me do?'"

Instead of accepting all feedback (especially unsolicited feedback from random strangers) as gospel, assemble a crew of loving critics who can help you filter out the nonsense that comes your way. Who would you recruit?

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Three Daily Check-Ins

"I've got all these clients who are busy, successful people," says Tasha. "They don't have time to go to therapy once a week unless they have made time. But what can they do in five minutes or 10 minutes? And as it turns out, a lot. Almost every unicorn we talked to had some type of daily check-in that they did at the end of the day. So whether you're driving home from work, whether you're getting into bed and kind of trying to shake off the day, they asked themselves the equivalent of basically three questions."

Try asking yourself these three questions every day:

- **"What went well today?"**
- **"What didn't go so well?"**
- **"What can I do to be smarter tomorrow?"**

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Compare and Contrast

While meditation has been making the rounds for the past couple of years as the must-do practice for self-improvement, not all of us are inclined to do it. But this doesn't mean we can't reap the benefits of mindfulness in other ways. This is why Tasha developed what she calls her compare and contrast tool.

“The essence of mindfulness is noticing new things. So noticing how I feel about something, noticing what's different today than it was yesterday. And the compare and contrast tool is very simple. What we do is when we're noticing something — when we're saying “I'm angry,” or “I'm happy,” or “I feel unfulfilled,” we can ask ourselves, “What about what I'm feeling right now is similar or different to how I felt in the past?”

Too busy to meditate? Try using the compare and contrast tool to cultivate your own moments of mindfulness and note what you discover here.

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Helping the Unaware

“Our research has shown that 99 percent of people work with at least one [un-self-aware] person, and almost half of us work with at least four,” Tasha says. “Everyone’s like, ‘Yeah, yeah, yeah. I’ll be more self-aware, but really, how do I deal with these people?’”

Tasha has these two questions to ask yourself to determine if it’s worth intervening.

“Am I the right person to have this conversation?” (If not, maybe someone closer to that person or in a different power dynamic should do it.)

“Am I willing to accept the worst case scenario?” (Being yelled at, fired, etc.)

Who should you be asking these questions about?

What are your conclusions?

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The Laugh Track

Thanks to watching reruns of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* as a kid, Tasha noticed the way a laugh track could not only soften the blow of whatever borderline abusive boss Lou Grant had to say on the show, but actually make it funny instead of traumatic.

“What I decided I was going to do is the next time I was in a situation where I was probably about to go cry in my office, I would imagine that there was a laugh track behind what my boss was saying at the moment, whatever asinine thing he happened to be saying,” says Tasha. “And what I discovered was it wasn’t completely perfect. I didn’t say, ‘Oh, I love my job and everything is wonderful.’ But what I was able to do was snap out of it and that moment and sort of reframe the situation. Most of the time, that made it a lot more easy to deal with and it made it less emotionally taxing, and sometimes actually, it made it really funny! It’s not going to do everything we need it to, but I think as a stop-gap measure, that’s something that all of us can start using right away. And if you’re like me, you’ll be surprised at how effective it is.”

Who is your Lou Grant? Will mentally adding a laugh track to your interactions with this person help ease the grief they dole out? Give it a try and note your results here.

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Five-Minute Insight Quiz

Are you as self-aware as you think (or hope) you are? **Take the free *Insight Quiz* here to find out!** You, and someone who knows you well, fill out a five-minute survey to give you a high-level picture of your own self-awareness and a few things you can do right away to improve it.

Make sure to drop Tasha (@tashaaurich) and me (@JordanHarbinger) a line on Twitter to let us know how this quiz and these exercises have helped you — or not — in your journey to becoming more self-aware!



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

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About



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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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