



**Effective Leadership Demands Self Awareness**  
**By Ann Golden Eglé, MCC**  
**September 2017**

Self-aware leaders are vividly aware of their strengths and their weaknesses. Leaders who are unaware of or try to hide their weaknesses only highlight them. This creates a perception of lack of integrity and self-awareness.

Is there a difference in being a self-aware new leader versus seasoned leader? While there are similarities, leaders are wise to pay attention to the nuances.

Self-awareness for new leaders is critical to their success, as up to 40 percent of new leaders fail within the first two years.

New leader self-awareness means you are constantly asking yourself and others for feedback. Do this not once, but daily throughout your first few years as a new leader.

For example, after important interactions or meetings, spend time reviewing what you did right and what needs improvement. At the end of each day reflect upon how people reacted to you, how you worked with other leaders, how you handled challenges. What needs fine tuning?

Ask others for their observations in areas as your language (are you succinct, easily understood); tone of voice (can you be heard from across the conference table, are you too loud or forceful); leadership presence (do you show up as a leader); decisiveness (do you know when it's time to 'decide' as opposed to collaborate); overall suggestions for improvement. "What am I doing right, how can I improve?"

For seasoned leaders, self-awareness is even more vital. It's easy to fall into autopilot. Self-aware seasoned leaders know that what worked for them yesterday may not work for them today. They are presented daily with new challenges, people, surprises. Seasoned leaders must continue to grow and fine tune their capabilities.

Following are a few tools to help seasoned leaders remain self-aware.

Build upon skills needed for your current role. Leadership roles change often. Perhaps you were a detail person in your last leadership position. Then you were promoted. Your new position calls upon you to be a big picture thinker. If you stay down in the weeds, your leadership ability may be questioned.

Ask great questions. Asking the right questions to get what you want is an art. You can accomplish the same goal more effectively through a question than statement or demand, as you're bringing out the wisdom in others. It means more when they hear themselves concluding.

Your ego may say that you need to have all the answers. This is not true. Your job is to grow your people. Help them become aware of their own brilliance. They already know yours.

Listen with curiosity, not judgement. Seasoned leaders know that: 1) everyone has a need to feel heard, and 2) much is to be gained through being open to others suggestions and viewpoints.

Admit when you're wrong. Don't defend your actions. We all make mistakes. Self-aware leaders own up to their mistakes without blame.

If I asked you if you're a self-aware leader, my guess is that you'd say "absolutely", yet studies show that few leaders are as self-aware as they profess.

Ask yourself how you would rank on a scale of 1-10 on the above suggestions for new leaders and tools for you seasoned ones. Be honest. Enhance skills where needed.

Self-awareness of your strengths and weaknesses will gain you not only the trust of others but will increase your credibility. Both of which will increase your leadership effectiveness which benefits your entire organization.

*Master Executive & Leadership Coach Ann Golden Eglé, MCC, has steered highly-successful individuals to greater results since 1998. President of Golden Visions & Associates, LLC, Ann can be reached at 541-385-8887 or subscribe to her newsletter at [www.GVAsuccess.com](http://www.GVAsuccess.com)*