



Self-Awareness Tools

The goal of these first three exercises is to help you identify what pressures, expectations, and influences you're carrying, and help free you from feeling bound by them. We all actually get to pick and choose what we want to aspire to, and how we define "acceptable" or "okay" or "success" for ourselves. But it's easier to do that if we can first unpack and name what that baggage we're already carrying *is*.

1 Pressures and Expectations

Name the Voices in Your Head: Make a list of the pressures and expectations you feel that have to do with who you think need to be, how you need to behave, what you need to achieve, etc., in order for you to be judged "okay. Beside each one, list where those expectations or pressures came from (e.g., family; whatever ethnic, racial, regional, or religious culture you were raised in; the media; peers; the work culture you're in, etc.)

Reflect on what you've written. Now make a list of what YOU think should make you okay.

2 Influences

Think About Who and What's Influenced You, and How (for better or worse):

- On the left side of a piece of paper, list people and events that were influential in your life.
- On the right side, list how they influenced you; what those influences were.

Reflect on what you've written. Now sort your list of influences into two groups:

1) Influences I want to embrace; and 2) Influences I want to lessen.

3 Ideas of Success

List, and answer, five questions: 1) What do I think my father's idea of success is for him? 2) What do I think my father's idea of success is for me? 3) What do I think my mother's idea of success is for her? 4) What do I think my mother's idea of success is for me? And... 5) What is my belief about what success should look like for me?

Reflect on your answers. Then ask: Is there another vision of success I could create for myself that would be more aligned with what I value and think would make me happy?



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The goal of these last two exercises is to help you identify personal traits, skills, values, and needs that can help you make good job and career choices, as well as help you “keep your eyes on the prize” by identifying what elements are most important to you, and which battles are the important ones to fight.

4 Strengths and Weaknesses

List strengths and weaknesses you believe you have. For each trait or skill, add an anecdote or story that illustrates how you realized you had that strength or weaknesses.

5 Values and Needs

Make a list of what your highest values are; what you care about most; what you need in a job, or what you most need a job to give you; what you will sacrifice all else for, if need be. For each item, explain how or why you realized that was true.

There are many additional exercises and questions that can build self-awareness. The important thing is to question and explore. Question, explore the source and validity of the answers, and then contemplate what alternative answers might be more aligned with what’s really true for you, or might make you happier, in the end.

Information and confidence about who you are, and who you still might become, is also built through experience. So seek out new experiences with an explorer’s mindset: ask how well they do or don’t resonate with you, or what they’re showing or teaching you about who you are or what you can do!