



Roadside Reflection: Self-Awareness: Your Foundation for Growth and Impact

Self-awareness is the ability to recognize and understand your own thoughts, emotions, values, and behaviors—and how they affect others. It's about being honest with yourself, noticing your strengths and blind spots, and understanding how you show up in different situations. When you know yourself well, you make better choices, communicate more effectively, and respond rather than react.

Why It's Important at Work

In Extension and similar collaborative environments, self-awareness is essential. It helps you:

- Build stronger relationships by understanding how your actions impact others.
- Improve communication by aligning your words and tone with your intentions.
- Manage stress and emotions—you can't control every situation, but you can control how you respond.
- Adapt to change by recognizing what energizes or challenges you.
- Enhance teamwork and leadership—self-aware people are more empathetic, confident, and consistent.
- Stay aligned with your purpose and values, even when workloads or priorities shift.

Tips to Build Self-Awareness

- Pause before reacting. Take a moment to notice what you're feeling before responding. Ask, "What's really going on for me right now?"
- Seek honest feedback. Invite trusted colleagues to share what they see in your communication or work style—without getting defensive.
- Reflect regularly. Keep a simple journal or use quick check-ins at the end of the day:
 - What went well?
 - What challenged me?
 - How did I contribute to my team today?
- Observe your patterns. Notice recurring situations that trigger frustration or joy. What do they reveal about your values or needs?
- Align your actions with your values. When you act from your core beliefs, your work feels more meaningful and your decisions clearer.
- Practice empathy. Self-awareness and other-awareness go hand-in-hand. Try to see situations from others' perspectives.

Action Steps

1. Identify one strength that consistently helps you succeed—and one habit or behavior you'd like to improve.
2. Ask one colleague for feedback on how you communicate or contribute to the team. Listen fully, thank them, and reflect before responding.
3. Create a "pause moment." Before a meeting or big decision, take a breath and check in: How do I want to show up right now?
4. Set a personal growth focus for the next month (e.g., "I will listen more fully before offering my opinion").
5. Celebrate growth. Self-awareness is a skill—acknowledge progress and keep adjusting as you learn.

Final Thought

Self-awareness is not about perfection—it's about presence.

When you understand yourself better, you lead yourself better.

And when you lead yourself better, you strengthen your impact—on your team, your community, and the people you serve.