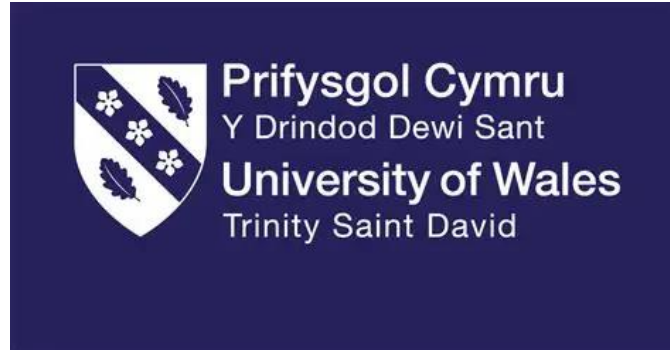




REFLECTION ON THE SELF-AWARENESS

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I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work.

- I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

1. Introduction

This reflective report is requested by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Cardiff, for all level six students of developing leadership and management. The paper starts by answering the question of what self-awareness is, why emotional intelligence is crucial for every manager, and what the consequences of self-awareness are. It continues why managers need to practise gratitude, journaling, spend time in nature, solitude and have good time sleep. Finally, my reflection on the three challenges of gratitude, journaling and spending time in nature, and my action plan.

2. Main body

2.1. What is self-awareness?

According to Wallbridge (2023), “self-awareness is the ability to recognise and understand your thoughts, feelings, and emotions”. The University of Warwick (2022) also states that self-awareness refers to the ability to recognise and understand your personality. This includes knowing your strengths and weaknesses, your thoughts and beliefs, what motivates you, and how you feel. When you are self-aware, you can also gain a better understanding of other people and how they see you, as well as how you act and react to them at any given time.

Therefore, by recognising and understanding your emotions, you can be a better person who manages their emotions, communicates well, is more confident, leads by example, strengthens their relationships (Aronov-Jacoby, 2022), and is happier than ever, as happiness is the outcome of your strengths and qualities (Klussman *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, Eurich (2018) states that we will become more creative; we will not lie, cheat, or steal, and we will be the type of workers who receive more promotions and great leaders who meet their employees' needs and drive greater satisfaction profitability.

2.2. Why is Emotional Intelligence important to leaders and managers?

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the understanding and management of oneself and others' emotions. Therefore, building the skill of emotional intelligence has positive outcomes in fields that require expressing self-emotions and managing people (Martynenko and Karandasheva, 2021). Emotional intelligence is a different kind of smart. It's important for doing well, especially in leadership. Instead of just measuring your IQ, it focuses on how you handle your feelings and your interactions with other people (Goleman, 2025).

While the person with high self-awareness claimed to have better decision-making, profitability, and reliable leadership, it is one of the essential skills every leader and manager needs to develop for a better personal and organisational satisfaction (Carden, Jones and Passmore, 2021). Also, Simpson (2024) states that EI is a concrete asset with assessable influences on organisational performance. Managers with high EI are more likely to encourage open communication and collaboration to build trust-based relationships with their employees. Also, they are driven to make better decisions to build their employees' morale and commitment by aligning with organisational needs and employees' well-being. Additionally, according to Jain and Ackerson (2023), Emotional intelligence helps managers stay calm when things get tough, which leads to better decisions based on data. Knowing how emotions work can lessen tension at work, helping to create a space where problems are solved positively and disruptions are kept to a minimum.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) causes stress and burnout for healthcare workers because of the extra workload, and EI was an important factor in building resilience and overcoming the stress (Hashmi *et al.*, 2024). COVID-19 has had a significant effect on the

organisational culture as many organisations and workers have adapted to remote working during the pandemic era, and many employees feel comfortable working on their own (Loreto *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, after the pandemic era, managers have faced many challenges in building trust and collaboration among teams that adapt to working in their own space, as well as in understanding and managing relationships with their remote employees (Yang *et al.*, 2021).

2.3. What are the consequences of a lack of self-awareness?

Being self-aware means understanding what you are good at and what challenges you have. People often see themselves differently from how others see them. They might think they are better or worse at something because of their own biases or lack of honesty (Perry, 2025). According to Simon (2024), not being self-aware can seriously hurt your effectiveness and well-being. It can lead to bad decision-making, goals that don't match up, and less productivity. It can also harm relationships by causing misunderstandings, low empathy, and unresolved issues. Additionally, Editorial Staff (2024) states that it can cause to increase in stress, burnout, and emotional pain; weaken leadership skills and team collaboration; and in the end decrease life satisfaction and hold back personal and professional growth.

2.4. Why should managers need to practise the challenges?

As a manager, you may often come across advice that encourages personal well-being practices like journaling, showing gratitude, spending time alone, enjoying nature, and getting enough sleep. These practices are often said to be important for good leadership and resilience. However, upon thinking it through, I believe it is essential to look closely at how relevant and practical they are in the busy life of a manager (Urrila and Eva, 2024).

For instance, journaling is often praised for helping with self-awareness and emotional intelligence. While I can see how writing things down might help with decision-making, I also understand that it can take a lot of time and might not always be helpful, especially if it turns into a repetitive task that just reinforces what I already think. Additionally, writing about sensitive matters raises privacy concerns (University of Liverpool, 2025).

Gratitude is often highlighted for its role in building positive relationships and improving emotional well-being. However, I have noticed that if it is not genuine, it can feel meaningless. More troubling is the possibility that it could prevent critical thoughts or the expression of real concerns, leading to a culture where problems are overlooked in the name of being positive (Harvard Health, 2021).

I have experienced the benefits of solitude, especially when I am looking for clarity or doing strategic planning. However, I also know that too much alone time can cause me to feel disconnected from my team. In a job that heavily relies on teamwork, I need to find a balance; too much introspection can isolate me from the very people whose ideas are essential for good decision-making (Tzivanakis, 2023).

Spending time in nature is another common suggestion. While I do feel refreshed after a walk outdoors or a break from technology, not every manager can easily access natural places. This makes me wonder if such advice sometimes comes from a privileged standpoint that does not consider the realities of urban life or high-pressure environments (Liebenguth, 2025).

Sleep is perhaps the most basic of all these recommendations, but it is also one of the hardest to manage. The constant demands of being a leader, travelling, and needing to be available across different time zones often make the idea of getting eight hours of sleep seem unrealistic. It is frustrating to hear that sleep is crucial for better performance when the expectations of the workplace often make that impossible (Van Dam and Van Der Helm, 2016).

2.6. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle is a model that helps people think about their experiences in a structured way to learn from them. It starts with the Description, where you explain what happened during the event. Next is Feelings, where you think about how you felt and what you were thinking at that time. Then comes Evaluation, where you look at what went well and what didn't. In the Analysis stage, you dig deeper into understanding why things happened the way they did, possibly using theories or context to help. The Conclusion stage asks you to consider what you have learned and what you might do differently next time. Finally, the Action Plan is about how you would deal with a similar situation in the future. This cycle encourages ongoing learning and improvement through careful reflection (McLeod, 2025).

2.6.1. Engaging in Journaling

Even though it was my first time, Journaling has helped me understand my feelings better. When I sit down to write, it gives me a safe space to express what I am going through. I can find patterns in my emotions and see how they connect to my daily life. I have noticed that writing about my worries and stressful times reduces my anxiety. When I get my thoughts down on paper, it feels like I'm letting go of some of the heavy feelings that weigh me down. This process helps me feel lighter and clearer in my mind (Newman, 2020).

Through journaling, I become more aware of who I am, and I start to see not just how I feel, but also what I believe in and what I want in life. I have also discovered certain things that trigger my strong emotions, such as specific situations or comments from others. Knowing these triggers has allowed me to come up with better ways to handle them, so I can stay calm even when things get tough. Through journaling, I have gained a better understanding of myself and how to grow as a person (University of Liverpool, 2025).

2.6.2. Practising Gratitude

During the challenge, I realised that being thankful helped me change my feelings of stress into feelings of happiness. I started a daily habit of writing down the things I was grateful for. This included the support of my friends and family, who were always there to

listen or help, as well as simple things like enjoying a warm cup of coffee in the morning sunshine or listening to the rain on the window (Smith, 2023).

I noticed that on the days I took time to think about these positive things, I felt much better. I became more positive and found it easier to bounce back from tough situations. This practice also helped me get along better with other people. By focusing on the good parts of life, I learned to appreciate what I have instead of worrying about the negative things (Reid, 2024).

2.6.3. Spending Time in Nature

Spending time outdoors has made me feel better and lifted my spirits. My journal clearly shows how I feel happier, calmer, and more focused after being in nature. Even a quick walk along a path surrounded by tall trees and colourful flowers, or just sitting on the soft grass in a sunny park, makes my heart feel lighter. The soft sounds of the leaves in the breeze and the happy songs of birds create a peaceful atmosphere that helps me forget my worries. This experience has opened my eyes to how helpful nature is for my mental health, especially when I think about how stressful it can be to be around screens and busy environments. Being in beautiful green spaces gives my mind a break, helping me feel refreshed and see life more positively (Writer, 2024).

Looking back at my journal entries from these three challenges, I noticed some common themes. I experienced more self-awareness, better emotional balance, and improved overall well-being. Each activity helped in its way, but together, they made me more mindful and stronger in dealing with everyday life. As I move forward, I will continue to practice these activities as important parts of my growth journey.

2.7. Action plan

What do I need to learn?	What will I do to achieve it?	What resources will I need?	What will my success criteria be?	Reviewing date
Even though there were obstacles, the outcomes of the second quiz indicated that I still have room for growth in my self-awareness. Self-awareness refers to the capacity to recognise your emotions in real-time and to comprehend your behavioural patterns.	I will keep a journal to write down what situations make me feel strong emotions and how I react to them. After a month, I will look back at what I've written. Journals can help me see myself better and understand my reactions.	I will use my current journal, the book I got from my lecturer, Julie. So, I am not going to spend a penny on a book.	Writing in a journal will help me notice what makes me feel certain emotions and how I usually react. I can use this information to manage my feelings better in the future.	Reviewing will take place in two months.

3. Conclusion

Reflecting on the importance of self-awareness, understanding ourselves plays a crucial role in achieving success both personally and at work. When we recognise our thoughts and feelings, we become better at handling our emotions, improving our relationships, and making thoughtful decisions. For leaders and managers, this self-awareness is even more crucial. Strong emotional intelligence helps them connect with their teams, promote open communication, and create a positive work environment. On the other hand, not being self-aware can lead to many problems. It can cause misunderstandings, poor decisions, and feelings of stress and unhappiness. Therefore, managers need to practice self-awareness through activities like journaling, being grateful, and spending time outdoors. These practices can boost their emotional intelligence and help them lead more effectively.

At the end, self-awareness and emotional intelligence are key ingredients for success. By understanding ourselves better, we can improve not just our own lives but also the lives of those around us, making the workplace a better place for everyone.

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