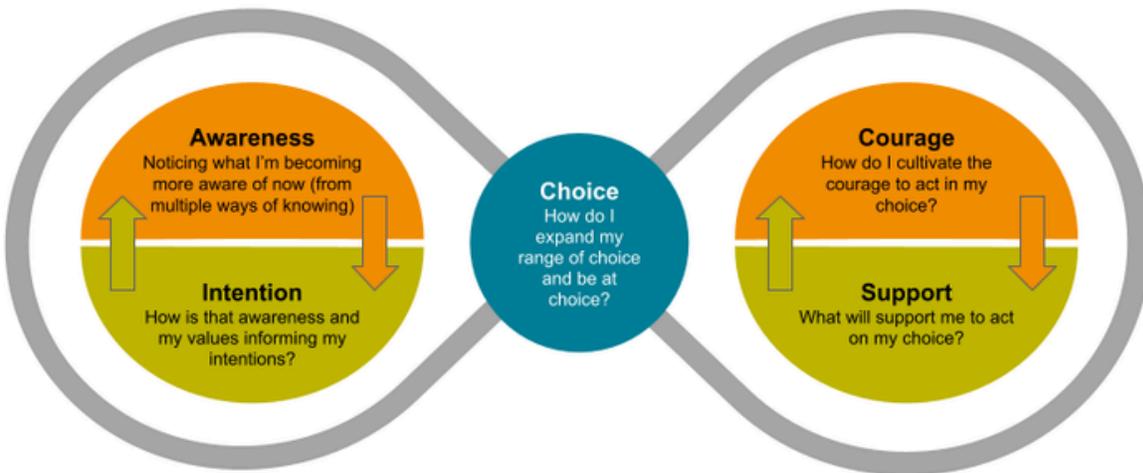


Awareness-Based Leadership

Ever heard of "Use of Self"? It's the idea that we can use ourselves as powerful instruments of change in service of a greater good. But what is Use of Self, and how do we cultivate powerful Use of Self? This resource describes five key elements.

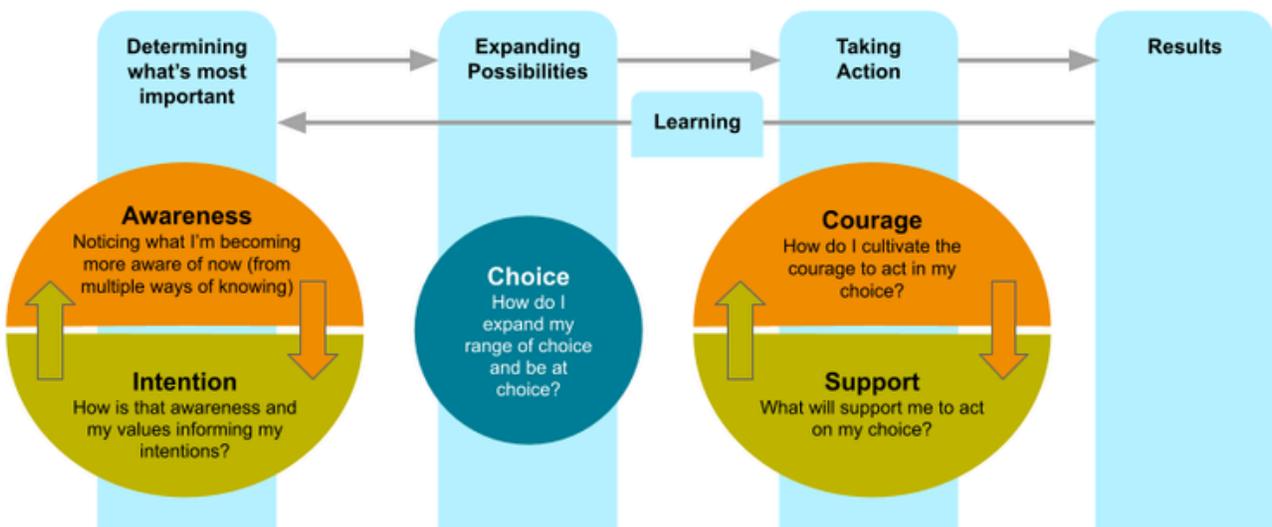
The Model

Awareness-Based Leadership is a five-element framework designed to make Use of Self more integrated and more actionable. The five elements are Awareness, Intention, Choice, Courage, and Support, and they function not as a linear sequence but as a dynamic flow.



The Cycle

Awareness precedes and informs action, but the cycle runs the other way too. When we clarify our awareness and intention, we expand our sense of what's possible. When we build the courage and support to act, we take action. And when we act—when we actually try something new—we get results, which in turn inform our awareness.



Awareness-Based Leadership



Developing Awareness

helps us work from multiple levels of insight about what's going on inside ourselves, with others, and in larger systems.

Key Questions

- What's happening in the larger context of our work together?
- What's happening with other stakeholders, both cognitively and emotionally?
- What am I sensing and experiencing?

Key Outcome

When I am aware of what's happening at multiple levels of the system, I'm more able to choose where, when, and how to intervene.

Practices

- Scanning at multiple levels
- System mapping/Interviews
 - Soliciting feedback
 - Meditation

Barriers

- Desensitization, lack of inquiry, lack of empathy
- Reactively deflecting a message, concern or feedback, to avoid having to engage
- Habitual internal biases and narratives that create blind spots



Clarifying Intention

helps us act with congruence and integrity toward the ultimate desired future state for ourselves and others.

Key Questions

- What action or response will serve the greater good for moving our work forward?
- Given what I know about my role in this work, how can I make the biggest difference?
 - What do I want?
 - What do we need?

Key Outcomes

Based on my awareness, I am clear about how to connect my own analysis, interests, and priorities with the needs of others and the larger system.

Practices

- Grounding & centering practices
- Connecting to the greater purpose of the work

Barriers

- Introjecting biases, beliefs, and assumptions from significant others without question
- Avoiding conflict or being confluent with others in order to "get along"



Identifying Choices

involves seeing "choice points" rather than reacting out of habit, bias, or fear to what's happening around us.

Key Questions

- What implicit assumptions are we, and I, making about this situation?
- Where are the intervention points to shift the system?
 - At which level of system should we intervene?
- What is the range of options?

Key Outcomes

In any given situation, I am "at choice" and able to create pathways and options to move forward, even through seemingly immovable barriers.

Practices

- Noticing and interrupting habituated responses
- Identifying attribution of my choices to others

Barriers

- Projecting responsibility onto others
- Making the analysis and/or options overly complex
 - Framing a decision in black-and-white or pass-fail terms

Awareness-Based Leadership



Cultivating Courage

helps us “take the leap” when we need to lead ourselves and others through uncertainty, which builds courage for all.

Key Questions

- What’s the worst possible outcome if I do nothing?
- What’s the best possible outcome if I do act to change this situation?
- If I don’t act to change this situation, who else will?
- What am I willing to risk?

Key Outcomes

I am willing and able to take risks with myself and in my relationships with others in service of the greater shared purpose of our work.

Practices

- Practicing vulnerability
- Building a support system
- Working from the gut
- Grounding practices

Barriers

- Acting solely based on rationale analysis to the neglect of heart, soul, and gut
- A lack of willingness to take risks because I’m trying to appear perfect or in control, or because I fear rejection



Cultivating Support

involves actively building the relationships needed to sustain ourselves through the demands of complex change work.

Key Questions

- Who can help with perspective, encouragement, or accountability?
- When and where am I carrying the work alone?
- What are my sources of support in addition to people?

Key Outcomes

I am embedded in a web of mutual support that sustains my capacity to lead effectively, and I actively contribute to that same web for others engaged in the work.

Practices

- Building and tending peer networks
- Regular reflection on personal capacity and sustainability
- Offering and requesting support explicitly

Barriers

- Equating independence with strength
- Fear of appearing incompetent
- Giving support to others while neglecting to receive it