

## How to become more self-aware



**1. Schedule a “dinner of truth”.** Although this may sound like an episode of *The Sopranos*, it’s really just an intimate dinner where you get feedback from someone you trust. “Find someone in your life you trust 100%, who has your back and will tell you the truth,” Eurich said. “While you may want to ask a family member, there’s too many feelings and emotions tied with family. Rather, choose a peripheral friend who doesn’t have a complicated history with you.”

Make sure you prep your friend in advance about what you are seeking and don’t be afraid of what they’ll say. “The person asking for the feedback probably anticipates that the other person is going to say something horrible, like that they are a rotten person, but when they receive the actual feedback, they

realize it’s not so terrible.” Typically, the behavior is something that can be addressed and changed, and not an inherent character flaw.

If the feedback you receive seems to be out of left field, let the other person know you are surprised and then ask for examples. Ask for an example of the last time you exhibited the behavior: For example, “Was there a specific time you felt I wasn’t listening carefully enough?” That may help take the sting off any unexpected criticism because it narrows it to some specific events as opposed to feeling like an overall character flaw.

**2. Decide what you want to do (if anything).** Take a few days, a week or even a month or so before you determine what or how you want to react. Generally, there are three ways you can address the information:

**Make a big change:** If the feedback can improve your life across the board, move forward with making changes. “For example, someone who has emotional outbursts at work most likely has them at home, too,” Eurich said. “So taking steps to resolve this area makes sense. You can start with addressing this at work, but then you’ll see it come through at home, too.”

**Make a small change:** The information may not impact every aspect of your life, but will allow you to make improvements in small ways. “Perhaps you tend to lose your temper easily at work, so when you start to lose your temper you can take a breath and realize when it is occurring,” Eurich said. Recognize when you feel your temper acting up and then take a beat.

**Do nothing:** In some cases, the phrase “I am who I am” applies. If you are a manager and your employees tell you that you are a poor communicator, you may decide that is not something you want to (or can) change. “If you are just wired this way, rather than trying to change your behavior, be more open with your employees and tell the team that although you aren’t a good communicator, you will take certain steps to be more supportive,” Eurich said.

**3. Forgive yourself and move forward.** You probably won’t like everything you hear. But feeling bad about criticism is only human. Acknowledge how you feel, whether it’s angry, sad or ashamed, and then work on self-acceptance. “We are so focused on building self-esteem when what we should be doing is looking at self-acceptance,” she added. “Once you can give yourself permission to not be perfect, you can identify what you can control and do something to change that behavior.”