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Want to Succeed? First, Become Self-Aware

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“Yes, but, it wasn’t my fault...”

“Yes, but, I didn’t know...”

“Yes, but, they said...”

That’s what Julie’s manager heard whenever he gave the new junior software engineer feedback. Whenever he would suggest a way she might improve her work, she’d respond with a “yes, but” and some defensive excuse. While the young engineer’s technical skills were acceptable, they weren’t stellar -- unlikely to improve if she couldn’t handle hearing constructive feedback, let alone criticism.

So when the company president called for staff reductions, her manager remembered Julie’s “yes, but” responses. After being told her position was terminated, Julie tweeted to her friends, “I just got fired! They expect too much! It’s not fair!”

When I heard about Julie's defensiveness, I wondered if Julie knew the real reason she was fired. Did she understand that engineering skills weren't the issue? Was she aware of her defensive 'yes, but' habit?

Emotional routines like Julie's operate below the level of our conscious awareness. Think about what happens when you take a photo with your smart phone. You provide the "trigger" of pressure on the phone, the device does the rest with information it has stored. The same happens with habits. An emotional trigger occurs and you respond using the routine stored in the [part of your brain called the basal ganglia](#). For Julie, when she heard "criticism," her brain kicked into its automatic "yes, but" defense.

To change your phone, you need to know what happens after you press the button. Then, you must modify the software it triggers. The same is true for our habits. Before you can change an automatic emotional response, you have to be aware it exists. You need self-awareness.

### **Why Self-Awareness Matters**

For Julie, lack of awareness of her defensive reactions cost her a job. Self-awareness, one of the [four key components of emotional intelligence](#), underlies the other three. Without knowing what we're feeling, we can't take steps to control those emotions. Such self-management is the second component. Lacking self-awareness, we can't have the third, social awareness. We don't understand how we impact other people and can't tune in to what others feel. Moving beyond awareness of others to interaction, without self-awareness, the fourth – relationship management – is impossible.

### **How to Develop Self-Awareness?**

Does Julie want to develop self-awareness? Do you? That's the first step, to have a desire to be aware of your emotions. Perhaps ask yourself why, then take these steps.

**Stop:** Practicing [mindfulness](#) is a superb way to develop self-awareness. Recognizing that our minds wander about [50% of the time](#), "mindfulness" refers to that move where you notice your mind wandered. With mindfulness, you monitor whatever goes on within the mind. It sounds simple, but it is more

meditating, sitting quietly, stepping back from a busy brain to focus on the present moment. I've shared several techniques for mindfulness in my audio CD [Cultivating Focus](#).

**Look:** Once you've stopped, notice and name what you're feeling. It's helpful to practice this at different times of day, in different situations. Take a few moments to tune in to yourself. Our counter-productive habits, like Julie's improvement-blocking kneejerk defensiveness, come up over and over. One key signal we're in their grip is the bodily sensations they trigger. Notice, for example, are you breathing slowly or holding your breath? Does your pulse feel slow or fast? Are you sweating? Do your muscles feel tense?

**Listen:** One of the best ways to become aware of yourself is to ask others how they perceive you. That's the value of [360-degree feedback tools](#). You fill out a survey about your behavior and ask trusted others to fill out the same survey. A good coach can help you review the differences between your perceptions and the experiences of others.

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If you'd like to learn more about developing self-awareness and how to change self-defeating habits, I encourage you to join Tara Bennett-Goleman and I at Omega Institute in August for [Connecting Emotional Intelligence with Mindful Habit Change: A Gentle Path to Awakening](#). Tara is a teacher, psychotherapist, and author of *Mind Whispering* and the *New York Times* best-seller *Emotional Alchemy*.

Management Development, Leadership Development, Emotional Intelligence

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Written by Daniel Goleman

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**Lee Koren, PHR**

Recruitment, Selection, Career Transition

Yes and it is a two way street. Managers need to become self-aware and be able to coach and mentor employees in a positive way. It did not necessarily have to end this way.

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Associate News Editor at LinkedIn

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## Nasscom Paints a Gloomy Picture for IT sector, 788 Exporters To Be Probed Over Black Money And Other India News

Jul 22, 2016 | 53,154 views 302 Likes 11 Comments |

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**Gloomy picture:** Nasscom [has predicted a bleak future for the IT sector](#) in India. The news comes at a crucial time as major companies like Wipro, Infosys and TCS have recently reported their June quarter earnings, and they don't look too impressive. Nasscom believes hiring by these companies will decline this financial year as they are facing pressure on margins. The firms will focus on automation for higher productivity despite reducing manpower. Even as coding jobs will be cut, skills such as robotics, AI, digital space, biotech, nanotech and others will be in demand. Nasscom also stressed that Brexit will definitely have a lasting impact on India and it will be reflected in the next two quarter results of the IT firms.

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**Total control:** The state governments in India may soon be able to cap fares and check surge pricing by [ride-hailing services](#) like Ola and Uber. The Centre is mulling over tweaking the Motor Vehicles Act as recently Uber challenged the Karnataka government's authority to regulate its services. While Ola has accepted the rules, Uber claims that it does not come under the Motor Vehicles Act as it is just a technology platform. Other states such as Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan have also planned to take similar steps against the taxi aggregators. Uber is the most valued privately held company in the world and it has raised \$12.51 billion venture funding till now. Soon, Uber may strike a deal with Didi Chuxing in China, where both the companies are spending billions of dollars to rule the region.

**Green signal:** Just a day after the National Green Tribunal ordered de-registration of all 10 to 15-year old [diesel vehicles](#) in a phased manner in Delhi, the state government has decided to issue fitness certificates to them. The certificates will allow the vehicles to ply outside the Delhi-NCR region. A final decision on if 15-year old diesel vehicles will get NOCs to ply outside the Delhi-NCR will be taken after considering the opinion of the majority of people.

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**Black money woes:** The [special investigative team](#) probing the issue of black money has informed the enforcement directorate that about 788 exporters, who have more than 1000 million rupees in export earning, have not brought back the money to India within one year. The RBI rules state that all exporters must bring back export proceeds to the country within one year, and failing to do so would mean violating the Foreign Exchange Management Act.

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**ITC makes profit despite blow:** Cigarette major [ITC reported](#) 10.1 percent of standalone net profit for the June quarter. The atmosphere in the cigarette industry has been stressful, but analysts had expected a considerable growth in volumes. Now, investors will hope for the sales to go up as margin has improved.

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**New VC wave:** With UBS Group AG expecting the [online retail market](#) in India to grow to \$48-60 billion and Morgan Stanley believing it will touch \$120 billion by 2020, new investors are testing the waters in India. Iron Pillar, Maverick Capital, Stripes Group and Harmony Partners are among such investors.

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**Change of plans:** To comply with the new laws set by the government to allow [100 percent foreign direct investment](#) in the e-commerce sector under the marketplace model, the online retailers are now making some changes to their corporate structure. Even as Jabong, Flipkart and Amazon India have altered their businesses, Myntra is yet to do so.

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Written by  
Nirajita Banerjee

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