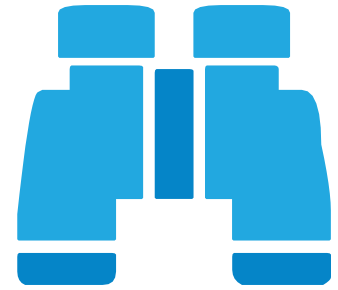


UPGRADING YOUR AWARENESS



When you observe in the Reality Phase, the key choice is between Validate and Challenge. You can look for validation that you are successful and that things are what you expect, or you can challenge yourself to get the most accurate data.

Seeking to validate that you are correct follows the Status Quo Cycle. It may seem to make sense but it often leads to Confirmation Bias—the tendency to see only those things that confirm what you want to find or already believe to be true. It tempts you to rationalize your success to justify your actions and the choices you have made.

WHEN YOU ARE NOT AWARE: INNOVATION FAILS

What goes wrong...

- Bad information
- Corrupted data
- Untested assumptions
- Blind spots
- False confidence
- Undetected failure, challenges and opportunities

What happens as a result...

- Misunderstood customer problems, needs and expectations
- Missed opportunities
- Illusory success
- Low self-awareness
- Delayed response

When you challenge yourself to get the most accurate data—even when it tells you that you have failed—you are following the Innovation Cycle. Without careful observation and the awareness that creates, innovation breaks down because your actions don't fit the realities around you. You risk misunderstanding your customers or your technology or things like the nature of the marketplace and the challenges you face.

It's not that you don't want to be successful; it's that you want to be sure that your success is real, and that you notice anything unexpected. The things that surprise you are often the best opportunities to gain new insights and make discoveries. You should strive to get the most reliable information possible and humbly accept it, so you can make appropriate adjustments.

GOALS

The Reality Phase can be both a starting point and a destination. You should have two goals:

1. Accurately determine the current situation.
2. Gauge your impact.

AWARENESS HABITS OF AN INNOVATOR



- 1) Focus on specific high value outcomes to guide where you direct your attention.
- 2) Recognize how easy it is to miss things, even when you are paying close attention.
- 3) Engage your imagination to try to anticipate what you may not expect.
- 4) Seek negative feedback, anything that indicates you are wrong or don't fully understand something.
- 5) Seek the perspectives of people who see things differently and may notice things you don't.
- 6) Gather measurable data when you can.
- 7) Separate the facts of the situation from your interpretation of those facts.
- 8) Highly value integrity, so you don't corrupt the data.

ASK YOURSELF

- Am I genuinely curious about this?
- Am I observing with integrity?
- How am I looking at this from more than one perspective?
- How willing am I to humbly admit that I'm wrong or that I have failed?
- How am I actively seeking negative feedback?
- How am I assuring that I have objective data?
- How am I challenging my own observations?