

Podcast series

Leadership in Focus

Episode 8 – Self-awareness and leadership transformation

Discussion guide

The School Leadership Institute's Leadership in Focus podcast series shines a spotlight on school leaders and explores the key issues and challenges they face. This episode focuses on self-awareness as a leader.

[SLI Leadership in Focus Podcast Series](#)

Speakers

Joanne Jarvis: SLI Director and host of the series

Gavin Grift: Founder and CEO of Grift Education, prominent international educational leader and author.

Discussion points

For individuals

- What are the key challenges in developing self-awareness identified by Gavin Grift?
Part 1: 5:07–8:27
- Gavin Grift suggests we can be more intentional about developing self-awareness if we pause and think differently about a situation, using a different lens and considering different approaches. Think of a challenge you have faced where you have been a conscious responder. What were the actions and behaviours you displayed? Now think of a challenge where you have been an unconscious reactor? What were your actions and behaviours? What could you have done differently in order to be more consciously responsive and self-aware in this situation?
Part 1: 8:28–10:45

- Joanne Jarvis links Gavin Grift's ideas on using challenges as opportunities to link to the SLI's Leadership Mindsets, specifically a courageous mindset. Think of a challenge or "pain point" you are currently experiencing. How could you use this situation as a lever for developing greater self-awareness and an opportunity for new ways of thinking?
10:44–11:30
- Consider the Judge or Juror archetype discussed by Gavin and Joanne. Think about someone on your team now, or someone you have worked with previously, who you find difficult to work with. What assumptions are you making about them? How could you be more genuinely curious about their situation?
Part 1: 17:30–22:47
Part 2: 00:21–04:49

For teams

- Discuss the five archetypes Gavin Grift identifies as being those that middle leaders need to bring elevated levels of self-awareness to in order to overcome them.
Part 1: 12:24–15:00
- The Dynamo archetype relates to overcoming not having enough time. Share ideas for how you might reframe your relationship with time so that you are able to overcome the relentless pressure of time and be able to think or focus differently. (14:59–17:19)
- Think about the team you work with and a change you are trying to implement. Can you identify different stages of concern for each team member using the stages Gavin identified (see table on the following page)? What questions and strategies might you use to move them to the next stage?
Part 2: 00:21–03:08

Unconcerned	I'm not concerned about it.
Informational	I'd like to know more about it.
Personal	How does this impact me?
Management	This is taking a lot of time.
Consequence	I can see this has some value. How will it affect my students?
Collaboration	How can I help others do this?
Refocusing	I think we can make this even better...

Discuss your understanding of efficacy in light of Gavin and Joanne's discussion. To help build efficacy, Gavin points to the importance of leaders understanding and editing their own self-stories and getting better at doing that for other people. What might that look like in your leadership practice?
Part 2: 10:54–13:57

References

Grift, G. (2023). *Emerge: the 5 most common challenges faced by middle leaders and how to overcome them*. Hawker Brownlow Education.

Burkeman, O. (2021). *Four thousand weeks. Time management for mortals*. Penguin.

NSW Department of Education School Leadership Institute. (2023). Leadership Mindsets.

[Leadership for Learning Frameworks](#)