

Self-Awareness is a Key Trait in Presentations and the Workplace

The plane was a 4 passenger, overwing plane. All seats but the pilot's were removed to allow a bigger area in the back of the plane. That area was needed to fit in three skydivers with full parachute packs and a jumpmaster who was similarly equipped. This was not only going to be my first jump but also my first plane flight.

The morning had been spent in intensive instruction and training. The class was motivated and eager. No minds were wandering and thinking about supper or tomorrow's chores.

After practicing entering and leaving a plane mock up, and mastering the harness setup, the time came to climb in the plane, rise to around 3000 feet and jump out attached to a static line to fall back to earth under a full canopy of parachute silk. A static line jump means that a line attached to the plane was also attached to the back of the parachute pack of the jumper. The individual would jump from the plane and the line would engage the parachute, which would deploy and fill leading to a safe landing.

As we were climbing, I was going through the checklist that we had practiced. When told to sit in the door, I scooted forward and prepared for my leap. The jumpmaster grinned and asked me if I had a question for him. I drew a blank and so he asked the question for me, "Is my static line attached?" Wow, I had almost missed the most important question of all. I was stressed, worried, nervous and not self-aware.

That self-awareness is most important. Once I was reminded by the jumpmaster to be self-aware, I could complete a successful first jump.

We can draw from this lesson to help us in all facets of our career. A self-aware person, will have an awareness of her goal in her presentation, of her audience and of her timing. She may have a great checklist, but stress and nerves may cause her to miss the important question of her static line being attached. If she is self aware, she can ask that important question and successfully complete the presentation.

So, is your static line attached? Look for ways to increase your awareness around you in the workplace. Check and make sure you are attached and engaged. Be awake and aware and you will have a wonderful trip and a beautiful landing.