

All leaders and the teams they manage should engage in the practice of reflection. Reflection is a form of dialogue with oneself from which new questions arise, problems are solved, improvements are made, and the process spirals naturally upward. Reflection is an important and often overlooked aspect of not only personal development but also teamwork and leadership.

CONVERSATION STARTER:

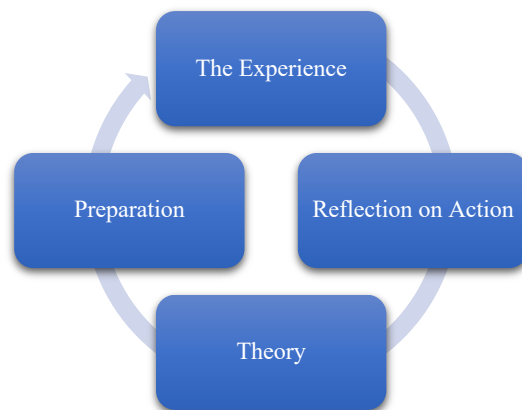
Are you a human being or a human doing? Do you find yourself sometimes just trying to stay busy so you do not have to think about how things are going?

Key Objectives:

Identify the steps in the reflection process.
Reflect critically on a personal or a professional experience.

The Integrated Reflective Cycle is a model of reflection that will guide you through four steps to make sense of and learn from an experience. The model will allow you to explore feelings, assumptions, and your own professional practice.

- **The Experience:** Describe the experience
- **Reflection on Action:** Look at the experience and identify what went well and could be improved. It is here you explore your thoughts, feelings, and assumptions, and ask yourself why.
- **Theory:** Think about the experience in larger context of your own learning and personal experience.
- **Preparation:** Using your reflection to prepare yourself for future experiences.



This is just one model of reflection. Test it out and see how it works for you. If you find that only a few of the questions are helpful, focus on those. However, by thinking about each stage you are likely to engage more critically with your learning experience.

Reflection Questions

The Experience

Here you should describe the situation in as much detail as you find necessary. Think about whether it is for yourself or for someone else to read. If it is for someone else, it is important you define the context clearly. Helpful questions:

- What happened?
- What were the contributing factors?
- Who else was there?
- What did I/others do?

Reflection on Action

Here is where you start to make sense of what happened. You should question yourself and your assumptions to understand what led you to your actions – this will allow you to challenge the status quo of your actions and assumptions. Helpful questions:

- What was I trying to achieve?
- Why did I act as I did?
- What assumptions did I make?
- What were the consequences for me and the other people involved?
- How did I feel?
- How did the other people feel and how could I tell?

Theory

Here you can conclude on your learnings. You can use both your own realizations and theoretical literature to make sense of the experience. It can be useful to discuss how your experience has influenced your understanding of your professional or theoretical knowledge. Helpful questions:

- What has this experience contributed to my professional or theoretical knowledge?
- What have I learned that I can apply to a similar situation in the future?
- What have I learned in general?

Preparation

Here you can take all of the things that you have discovered in the previous sections to create a plan for how to become better prepared for the future. Helpful questions:

- What will I do next time in a similar situation?
- How could I do better next time?
- What will I now consider for next time?
- What other strategies could I adopt to move forward?

CONCLUSION

When you engage in self-reflection, they gain perspective, learn more, and respond more effectively to the world around them. True courageous reflection galvanizes your willpower. It promotes continuous self-awareness, empowers you, ensures you are valued, and gives you the self-awareness needed to accelerate achieving your potential.