



Best Practices to Practice Reflection

Practicing reflection is a skill that you can do on your own, or in concert with a trusted mentor, advisor, wise counselor, or friend. It's a sneaky skill, in that there is not necessarily an outward demonstration of achievement. But it is critical to learn how to practice reflection if you are going to move forward in your life and your career with intention. Practicing reflection means collecting the data that you need, through feedback conversations and relationship building, so that you can set effective goals to apply what you are learning to your next steps.

Practicing reflection requires:

Critical assessment of past accomplishments and challenges

Bias towards curiosity about yourself, others, the world around you

Growth mindset and commitment to lifelong learning

Humility, honesty, and emotional intelligence

Practicing reflection allows you to:

Connect past experience to future goals

Scaffold learning and skill development

Identify gaps, challenges, strengths, and opportunities for growth

Build effective relationships with mentors and wise counselors

Here are some tips for regularly practicing reflection:

ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL!

There is no one right way to practice reflection. **What's important is to do what works for you.** For some, that means journaling. For others, it means going for a walk or meditating or doing yoga. Whatever helps you to get into a place of honesty, learning, and growth is right where you need to be.

DEVELOP THE HABIT!

Try to build in an ongoing practice to develop the habit of practicing reflection. That may mean blocking out time on your calendar each day and holding that time sacred.

ASK "WHAT, SO WHAT, NOW WHAT"!

Try the What, So what, Now What method. This is an active practice of identifying actions, feelings, and learning after experiencing something. After you complete a project or assignment, ask yourself:

- **What:** What just happened? Write down as many action items as you can.
- **So What:** How do I feel about what just happened? Describe those feelings.
- **Now What:** Now what do I do with what I learned about myself? Connect the learning to next steps.

TALK ABOUT IT!

Share your reflections with a trusted mentor or wise counselor, if you feel comfortable doing so. Sometimes, another person's perspective can deepen our understanding of what we are feeling or learning about ourselves.

So, What's Next?

