

Your Essential Guide to

EFFECTIVE REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Improving Practice through
Self-Reflection and Writing

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 **Sage**



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Christian writes:

To Cathia and Christian Jr, with love and admiration.

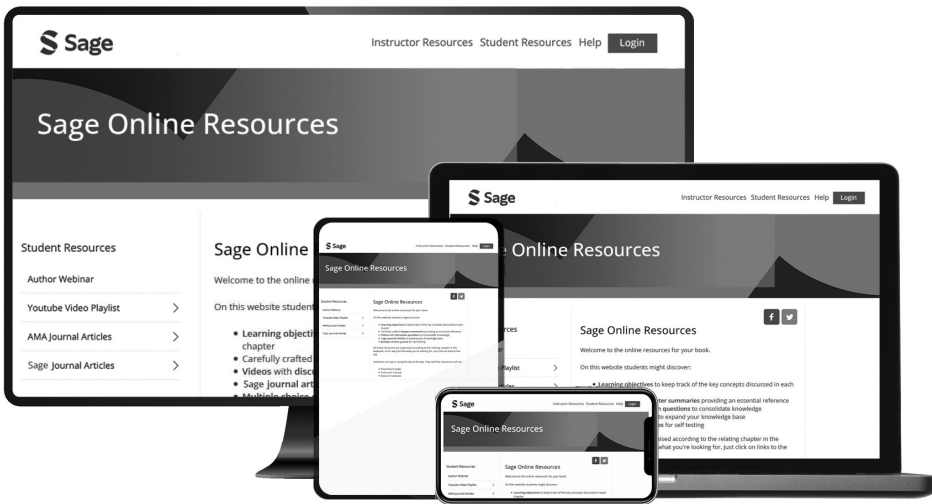
David writes:

To Alba, Rowen, Tom, Sara, Ben, Bernie, Pam and Digby – for being a constant source of joy and inspiration.

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ONLINE RESOURCES



Your Essential Guide to Effective Reflective Practice is supported by a wealth of online resources, which are available to access at:

<https://study.sagepub.com/nieuwerburghlove1e>.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Templates to provide students with a clear example of expectations and structure, guiding them in their own work:

- Template for reflective practice plan.
- Template for reflective writing, including worked examples.

Assessment to give students a concrete understanding of the criteria and standards required, helping them to better prepare and perform in their evaluations:

- Examples of marked assignments with marking guide.

Colour versions of figures are available:

- 9.3 Revised inauthentic leadership cartoon
- 9.4 Image created by David Love to reflect on his Dracula-like inner critic
- 9.5 A collage created by David Love focusing on moving forward in his career
- 9.6 Arranging cards
- 9.7 Painting over cards
- 9.9 Face or mask?
- 10.1 The place of art in professional practice
- A3.6 Annotated image suggested by original doodle
- A3.8 Modelling
- A3.9 Modelling completed
- A3.11 Creating impact through cartooning.

LECTURER RESOURCES

PowerPoint Decks to help lecturers organise their teaching in a clear, logical sequence, making it easier for students to follow along:

- Overview of the Effective Reflective Practice framework
- Assessment briefing on the Effective Reflective Practice framework

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Prof. Christian van Nieuwerburgh (PhD) is an academic, consultant and executive coach. He is Professor of Coaching and Positive Psychology at the Centre for Positive Health Sciences at RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences (Ireland) and Consulting Professor for Growth Coaching International, a provider of coach training and consultancy for the education sector. In recognition of his contributions to the fields of positive psychology and coaching, he is Principal Fellow of the Centre for Wellbeing Science at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education of the University of Melbourne (Australia) and Honorary CollectivEd Fellow of the Carnegie School of Education at Leeds Beckett University (UK).

Christian was born in Lebanon to a Belgian father and Japanese mother. He grew up in Beirut, attending the American Community School there before completing a BA in English Literature and then an MA in Shakespeare Studies at the American University of Beirut (Lebanon). He completed a PhD in Elizabethan Drama at the Shakespeare Institute of the University of Birmingham (UK) and an MSc in Psychology at the University of East London (UK).

In his varied professional life, Christian has worked as a taxi driver, waiter, box office assistant, marketing officer, bookseller, business development manager, assistant librarian, journalist, translator and academic. In England, he worked for the Royal Shakespeare Company, local authorities in England (Warwickshire County Council and Essex County Council), Waterstones, Henley Business School of the University of Reading (UK) and the School of Psychology at the University of East London (UK).

Christian is a certified executive coach through the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (Master Practitioner) and the International Coaching Federation (Professional Certified Coach). Christian is well published in the academic literature on the topics of coaching and positive psychology. He has authored, co-authored and edited numerous books: *Coaching in Education: Getting Better Results for Students, Educators and Parents* (2012); *An Introduction to Coaching Skills: A Practical Guide* (2014, 2016, 2020); *Coaching in Professional Contexts* (2016); *Coaching Educativo* (2016, with Andrea Giraldez-Hayes); *Coaching in Islamic Culture* (2017, with Raja'a Allaho); *The Leader's Guide to Coaching in Schools* (2018, with John Campbell); *Advanced Coaching Practice* (2019, with David Love); and *From Surviving to Thriving: A Student's Guide to Feeling and Doing Well at University* (2022, with Paige Williams). He enjoys writing and is currently working on books on radical listening, Zen and the art of coaching, and coaching in higher education.

Christian is passionate about the integration of coaching and positive psychology to improve outcomes and enhance wellbeing in educational, health and corporate settings. He regularly speaks at global conferences and has given presentations and delivered training in Europe, the US, South America, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. He enjoys spending time with family, travelling, writing and riding his Harley Davidson. He is riding some of the greatest motorcycle roads of the world. Follow Christian on his motorcycle adventures on Instagram (@coachonamotorcycle) and on his website (coachonamotorcycle.com).

David Love is a qualified and experienced leadership coach who works with senior and middle managers in the UK National Health Service, local government and other public services. He has extensive experience of organisational, leadership and management development and was a senior manager himself in further education for many years. Other past lives have included roles as a youth worker, an advice worker, a community worker, a teacher of English for Speakers of Other Languages, a communication and race equalities consultant and a university teacher. David is also a trained and experienced coach supervisor, working with individual coaches, networks of coaches and in-house coaching cadres. As a coach educator he designs and facilitates advanced coaching skills workshops. He views coaching and supervision as essentially forms of facilitated reflective practice.

After a period of ‘academic fatigue’ at school and higher education David went on to gain a B.Ed. as a mature student and then an MBA with the Open University. He holds an ILM Level 7 Diploma in Executive Coaching and Leadership Mentoring and Henley Business School’s Professional Certificate in Coaching.

David is an art-based practitioner, bringing the creation of images and cartoons into his coaching and supervision activities and believing strongly in the power of creative methods for enabling people to generate the deep insights and learning which underpin personal and systemic change. He is one of the first coaches to complete the pioneering art-based coaching qualification, achieving the award of the Diploma in Art-based Coaching from the Association of Coaching. The creation of visual images through collaging and cartooning has long been a feature of David’s private life where, for example, he enjoys creating with and for his two young granddaughters. In addition, David is the ‘resident cartoonist’ for the Association for Coaching’s *Coaching Perspectives* magazine.

David is deeply committed to working to improve outcomes for citizens by enabling senior managers to become better leaders through coaching. He is particularly interested in the place of reflective practice in improving personal impact and performance, seeing coaching as a highly effective way of blending organisational priorities with leadership learning. David sees this work as encompassing leaders’ responsibilities for making a difference with the ‘big issues’ facing humanity such as poverty, inclusion and the climate catastrophe. He works to build clients’ capacity to self-coach and use coaching approaches with their colleagues as one way of

building cultures where individual and team reflective practice contributes to improved service provision and business operations.

As an author, David collaborated with Christian to write *Advanced Coaching Practice: Inspiring Change in Others* (2019). He has also contributed pieces about the use of creative methods in coaching to *WeCoach: Coaching Tools and Techniques* (2022, 2023). Other publications include: *You've Got to Laugh: Cartooning in Coaching and Supervision* (*Coaching Perspectives*, April 2023); *How Can I Use GROW to Help My Coaching Clients? Insight Guide No. 7* (Henley Business School, 2019); *Coaching* (NHS Improvement, 2017); and *A Short Guide to Workplace Coaching Conversations* (NHS Improvement, 2017).

For Henley Business School, David designed and filmed 'Creative Techniques in Coaching', a series of ten short videos, with an accompanying workbook (2020). He is also a regular contributor to webinars and podcasts such as: 'Are You Having A Laugh – Cartooning in Coaching?' (Association for Coaching's Creative Festival, April 2024); 'Achieving the State of Flow' (Brain Fuel webinar, 2022); and 'How Can Coaching Help Me To Be More Creative?' (British Psychological Society's Special Interest Group in Coaching Psychology podcast, 2021).

David is a committed lifelong learner who continues to be intrigued by human beings, their relationships with each other and the world. For many years he has seen his own reflective practice habit as central to his continuing professional and personal development and has adopted an art-based approach which he uses routinely to explore topics related to his work and life.

PROLOGUE

WHY CHRISTIAN WANTED TO WRITE THIS BOOK

When each of us is living our best lives, I believe that we are better at looking after each other. Reflective practice is an opportunity for people to take a step back from the busy-ness, ugliness, excitement, noise or dullness of everyday life. Human beings are uniquely able to reflect not only on the present, but also the past and the future. This very human ability allows us to be more intentional about what we want for our own futures whilst also thinking about our desired impact on others.

Having grown up in Beirut, a city devastated by conflict and then living my entire adult life with conflicts taking place in different parts of the world, I am committed to exploring how individuals can make things better for themselves and others. To change the world is an impossible dream – but we each make small changes to the ways that we live and interact with others. If each of us is more intentional about how we live our own lives, we are more likely to experience greater levels of well-being. And if we are having our basic needs met and feeling more positive about our lives, we are more likely to be interested in the lives and wellbeing of others.

I have had a long-standing curiosity about human beings at their best – always fascinated by how kind, considerate and inspiring humans can be. That led me to make a career transition into academia to study human beings at their best. By engaging with the emerging fields of coaching and positive psychology, I sought to understand and study the conditions that would encourage people to be kind, considerate and inspiring. Learning about coaching, teaching it, being coached, coaching others, and supervising coaches have only increased my faith in the essential tendency towards goodness in human beings. As far as I can tell, most people are trying to do the right thing. Many hundreds of hours of coaching conversations back this up.

This is how I started to think that the process of reflective practice can have a role to play. But there are already reflective practice models out there. What was the need for a *new* framework? David Love and I wanted to highlight the importance of *positive intention* as the starting point for reflective practice. In other words, the practice should lead to better outcomes. We thought it was important to emphasise that the reflective practitioner's attention should be on the *impact on others*, rather than simply on a notion of 'self-improvement'. And we are convinced that reflective practice should *enhance* wellbeing rather than detract from it. We call for greater self-compassion when engaging in reflective practice and raised awareness of the

wellbeing of those who are impacted by the professional. The real question driving this book is not ‘how can we live better?’ but ‘how can we live better *together*?’

Another incentive for me to take on this project was the opportunity to work with my good colleague and friend, David Love. We enjoyed being co-authors on another book for SAGE, *Advanced Coaching Practice*. That process was thought-provoking, fun and enriching. I learnt so much about the topic through the process of thinking and writing with David.

WHY DAVID WANTED TO WRITE THIS BOOK

Reflecting is about pressing the pause button and taking time out to make sense of where things are at. That might be the sole purpose. Simply to take stock. Additionally, the purpose might be to gain insights about how to move forward or make changes, particularly in a professional context where we want to perform at our best in the service of others. However, while creating an action plan might be a valuable outcome from some reflective activities, that is by no means the only benefit of reflective practice, which can have, for example, profound insights for our self-awareness, identity and wellbeing.

I am a person with an extremely strong preference for a reflective learning style, coupled with an inwardly focused approach for recharging my batteries. As a result, in writing this book I want to explore the quality of the ways we enact that pause for the purposes of reflection. *How* we enter the pause feels important. This is not about grabbing five minutes out of the hustle and bustle of a busy life to do a quick review of where things have got to before jumping back into the fray. Rather, the pausing needs to be a positive, deliberate action, implemented with the intent of truly taking time out for ourselves and creating an appropriate space for deep reflection in the particular ways that work best for each of us. How we do this will be influenced by, amongst other things, our backgrounds, experiences, preferences and passions, which all come together to create the optimal conditions for effective reflection to take place. I want this book to be a contribution to enabling you, the reader, to make your own decisions about the most effective approaches you can come up with for developing and sustaining a reflective practice habit.

For you to find your own effective reflective practices it feels essential to first have a core framework for creating and embedding the habit, as well as for capturing and recording the outcomes. I want this book to provide that strong foundation, from which it is then possible for you to incorporate any adaptations which personalise your reflective practice approach. Just as the core framework can be adapted in this way, your personal adaptations may also evolve over time to accommodate new interests or circumstances.

Over my years as an educator (of young people, leaders and coaches) I have seen how learners’ capacity to do reflective practice well, and to write about reflective

practice cogently, does not always come to people easily. Indeed, in my own career and life I have had to learn how to be effective in my own reflective practice and in getting my reflections down in print. For example, I have frequently found a tendency for professionals to focus purely on the facts of a situation, rather than the emotions those facts stimulate, the impact those emotions generate and the knock-on effects to relationships with others. I want this book to make a contribution to sharpening up both the ‘doing’ and the ‘writing up’ of reflective practice across a wide range of professional fields.

As an artist and cartoonist I want to explore the power of playfulness in Effective Reflective Practice. Perhaps counterintuitively, reflection is not just about *thinking*. The most powerful reflective outcomes often arise from creative activities like painting, poetry and music, which tap into how we experience and *feel* about a topic. For example, starting the reflective process with a mindfulness or visualisation exercise is a very effective way of creating that all-important initial pause and freeing the mind from focusing on thoughts. I am keen for this book to encourage you to engage in serious play as a way of providing radically different lenses through which to reflect on matters of importance in your work and life.

Finally, my co-author, Christian and I have a long-standing and strong relationship which has built up over many years and has profound significance for me. In 2019, we wrote and published a book together about our mutual professional passion, coaching. The experience of researching, thinking and writing together involved many thought-provoking, humorous and sometimes appropriately challenging conversations around real or virtual flipcharts covered in words, diagrams and sketches in myriad colours. I am eager for this, our next publishing venture, to replicate the same excitement of reflecting and learning together about how to be an effective reflective practitioner. I know for certain this experience will stretch my professional, and personal, thinking and capabilities in the service of others – and will involve a great deal of fun!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CHRISTIAN AND DAVID WRITE

First, we are grateful to you, the reader. Without you, this book would have no purpose.

Second, we thank all the interviewees who graciously gave their time to talk about their experiences and understanding of reflective practice:

Nick Andrew and Tanya Hinton, Artists

Daraius Cooper, Cranial Osteopath

Kate Cuthbertson, Social Worker, Practice Educator and Supervisor

Prof. Ashley Duggan, Social Scientist and Communication Expert

Di Henning, Senior Consultant and Coach Supervisor

Dr Nelly Nyugen, Executive Coach and Leadership Expert

Prof. Ciaran O'Boyle, Director of the Centre for Positive Health Sciences

Dr Jummy Okoya, Academic and Interim Dean of Office for Institutional Equity.

Each of them was invited to participate as a role model of someone who uses reflective practice effectively in their professional capacity whilst also integrating it positively into their personal lives. They were generous with their time and insights.

Third, we are grateful to the incredibly supportive team at SAGE publishers, particularly Jai Seaman, Commissioning Editor; Becky Oliver, Editorial Assistant; Martin Fox, Production Editor; Jane Fricker, Copyeditor; and Derek Markham, Proofreader. This book would not have been possible without their belief, ongoing support and encouragement. We are appreciative and proud of our association with SAGE.

CHRISTIAN WRITES

It is an incredible privilege to have the opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate people in this way. This list is necessarily selective because I have learnt so much through my interactions with so many people.

It seems appropriate to start by acknowledging my educators. My first grade teacher, Nancy Reynolds at the American Community School of Beirut, has had a

lifelong impact on me by simply including me. The teachings of Dr George Khairallah and Dr Jean-Marie Cook at the American University of Beirut were foundational and conversations with them inspired me to develop my critical thinking. I am grateful to them and all the academics at AUB whose commitment to the education of students was steadfast despite enormous challenges. Later, as I worked on my PhD at the Shakespeare Institute of the University of Birmingham, I had the good fortune of being supervised by a world-leading specialist in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, Dr Martin Wiggins. He put his heart and soul into supporting his doctoral students. Dr Jim Knight has been an inspiring educator and mentor to me. He has taught me how much can be achieved by focusing on good work, having strong convictions and approaching people with kindness.

During my years working for the education department of Warwickshire County Council, I was fortunate to learn from amazing facilitators and teachers. Sue Herdman, Mary Johnson and Miles Tandy showed me how to bring a human touch to teaching and learning. Watching them deliver workshops was an important part of my own professional learning. Although I did not fully appreciate it at the time, they were living examples of reflective practitioners who continually sharpen their practice because they care so deeply about the outcomes for their clients.

In my academic career, I am grateful to Prof. Anthony Grant and Prof. Jonathan Passmore for their support and mentorship. As leading figures in the field of coaching psychology, I was inspired by their work and their generosity of spirit. During my time at the School of Psychology at the University of East London, I was fortunate to work with colleagues who were deeply committed to our students and what we taught. I am particularly grateful to my colleagues Dr Kirsty Gardiner, Dr Rona Hart, Dr Kate Hefferon, Dr Itai Ivztan, Dr Hanna Kampman, Dr Ho Law, Dr Tim Lomas, Dr Ana Paula Nacif, Julia Papworth, William Pennington, Dr Nash Popovic, Dr Sok-Ho Trinh, Cecilia Yardley and Dr Julia Yates.

During my time at Henley Business School of the University of Reading, I learnt so much from my colleagues as we taught on the MSc in Coaching and Behavioural Change. I would like to particularly mention Prof. Patricia Bossons, Prof. Alison Hardingham, Ann James, Denis Sartain and Tracy Sinclair. We created positive learning environments together.

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Alongside my academic role, I have been lucky enough to be part of the leadership team at Growth Coaching International. I am grateful to my colleagues on the

leadership team, Chris Munro, Debbie Knoke and Claudia Owad and members of the GCI Board: Vicky Campbell and Roy Ditmarsch. We are an organisation full of people who are deeply committed to supporting educators and it has been such a pleasure and a privilege to be part of the team which includes Jan Alen, Lizzie Bayliss, Susan Bentley, Marisa Burda, Ben Calleja, Lucy Carroll, Viv Cherry, Mandy Dunn, David Ellery, Mandy Fisher, Jackie Frankland, Marian Grant, Cath Grealy, Marilyn Gwilliam, Robert Hadchiti, Roween Higgie, Jan Hill, Georgina Holloway, Tom Hullena, Jess Joils, Dr Nicky Knight, Emma Kriketos, Debbie Lowe, Andrew MacDonald-Brown, Dr Julie Mathews, Tammy McCartney, Paul Meacock, Kath Morwitch, Jason Pascoe, Grant O'Sullivan, Sophie Paterson, Tima Pechous, David Price, Richard Reid, Sue Richards, Gray Ryan, Edna Sackson, Julie Schumacher, Theresa Sheehan, Brenda Sinclair-Jones, Dan Steele, Sonja Stubbs-Mills, Av Swami, Sharon Taylor, Anne Tonkin, Maria Tsavaris, Penny Verdich, Debbie Ward and Melinda Zanetich.

I learn so much through co-writing with others. I am grateful for my time with Raja'a Allaho working on the ground-breaking book, *Coaching in Islamic Culture*. The experience was full of learning and insights. Working with Dr Andrea Giraldez-Hayes on *Coaching Educativo* was an instructive and joyful experience. Collaborating with Dr Paige Williams on the book *From Surviving to Thriving* was a positive and uplifting experience, even in the midst of a pandemic.

I have been lucky throughout my professional life to have empowering leaders who encouraged me to pursue more of my potential. I am particularly grateful to Barbara Brown, my manager at Warwickshire County Council, who saw potential in me that I did not; Prof. Aneta Tunariu, Dean of the School of Psychology at the University of East London, who was a role model of graceful dignity and resilience; John Campbell, Founding Director of Growth Coaching International, a passionate leader and trusted mentor who has become a lifelong friend; Prof. Ciaran O'Boyle at the Centre for Positive Health Sciences at RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences, an inspiring role model of a visionary leader who is kind and warm-hearted.

My reflective practice depends on having a network of supportive, thoughtful and inspiring colleagues that I am able to reach out to for conversations and advice. I would like to thank the following people for being part of an enriching network of friends and colleagues: Margaret Barr, who is an exemplar of the 'coaching way of being'; Dr Robert Biswas-Diener, who is an inspiring colleague, respected thought leader and valued friend; Prof. Ilona Boniwell, who is an inspirational leader and trusted colleague; Prof. Ashley Duggan, who is able to connect people and ideas; Prof. Suzy Green, who inspires through her wisdom and zest for life; Dr Diego Hangartner, who teaches through his presence; Prof. Andrew Hobson, who is a trusted thinking partner; Dr Aaron Jarden, who seamlessly combines rigour and fun; Prof. Rachel Lofthouse, who is deeply committed to doing the right thing; Sander Markiet, who is an inspiring thought partner; Dr Nell Nyugen, who combines a passion for change with kindness and humility; Prof. Lindsay Oades, who is a visionary leader; Dr Jummy Okoya, who is a model of

passionate determination; Brittany Rehal-Singh, who is an inspiring educator and changemaker; Wendy-Ann Smith, who is committed to making things better; Prof. Michael Steger, who gracefully combines great wisdom, humour and humility; and Prof. Bob Thomson, who has taught me so much about non-attachment.

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While I am immensely thankful to my coaching clients, corporate clients, students and learners, there are too many of them to list here. I do not want to offend by listing some and not others so I will just say that I appreciate my interactions with each one of them. Supporting others to achieve better results and experience greater levels of wellbeing is what makes my work so meaningful.

Finally, I am grateful to my wonderful co-author, David Love. David first introduced me to coaching nearly two decades ago and has been a mentor and wise counsellor ever since. Working with David is always an enriching and positive experience.

DAVID WRITES

As I start to reflect about the people who have influenced my thinking and approach to reflective practice in professional contexts, I realise the immense number who have been involved. It will prove impossible to include them all here, so I intend to pick out those people who have been the most influential.

I have had the good fortune to work in a number of innovative organisations over the years. I was part of a team that set up a neighbourhood advice centre in London and an array of associated community projects in the 1970s. Making things up as we went along in order to initiate novel ideas, respond to clients and their circumstances, and address the political implications (with a small 'p') of sometimes radical community action involved a great deal of continuous reflective practice – though we did not call it that, or even know such a thing existed. I am immensely grateful to Liz Alderton, Agnes Alexander, Phil Baker, Frances Barnett, Simon Brown, Kaz Burek, Marion East, Dave Ellis, Sara Grossman, Chris Haskett, Colin Langton, Vera Mitchell, Alan Stanton, Marie-Francoise Tollemer and Jonathan and Sushila Zeitlyn.

In the 1980s at Pathway, although in a different field, the team I was part of was adept at coming up with new ways of encouraging debate and action around race equality matters in organisations. Again, I'm not sure we would have recognised the term but looking back now I can see both individual and group reflective practice were key elements of how we approached important challenges. For their insights

I am indebted to Phil Baker, Sheila Cogill, Daphne Crossfield, Denise Gubbay, Zahida Hussain, Amarjit Khera, Helen Marchington, Jane Saunders, Arvind Sharma, Jaswinder Sidhu, Christine Smith and Pete Wilson.

I spent the 1990s in middle and senior management roles in further education, in part contributing to the creation of a new institution out of the merger of four colleges. Once again, although we did not use the terminology, I can see there were facets of reflective practice in how we went about creating a new organisational culture. I owe thanks to Sandra Chalmers, Arvind Sharma and Hilary and Ian Wallis.

In 2000, I joined the Office for Public Management, the UK's first public interest company and an employee-owned development organisation working exclusively with public services. It was here I first encountered the concept of reflective practice both in our work with clients and in our own individual and collective development. With increasing interest in executive coaching, reflective practice became part and parcel of how I approached my work. My thinking and practice were shaped by Sophie Ahmad, Peta Barnes, Ann Bennett, David Bryan, Sheba Cheung, Elaine Clough, Simon Courage, Andrena Cumella, Jude Cummins, Robin Douglas, Anna Eliatamby, Ewan King, Yee-Mai Koo, Hywel Lloyd, Paul Lloyd, Catherine Mangan, Andrew Mann, Clive Miller, Jasmine Miller, Greg Parston, Jonathan Passmore, Ian Roberts, Deborah Rozansky, Sonal Shah, Shannon Shuemake, Paul Tarplett, Carol Ward, Sonia Watson and Sharon Wright.

As a coach, I have a strong commitment to supervision, which embodies reflective practice, and have therefore learnt a great deal about the benefits from the expert supervisors I have worked with over the years, as well as peers in supervision groups. For insightful support and challenge I thank the following supervisors: Jenny Bird, Sarah Goldsworthy, Alison Hodge, Gil Schwenk and Anna Sheather. For engaging in open and honest reflective practice I am extremely grateful to fellow coaches: Bob Baker, Helen Baker, Helen Brown, Lesley Campbell, Stefan Cantore, Sue Goss, Richard Field, Liz Goold, Anita Grabarz, Tamsin Hewitt, Alison Kilduff, Claire Lazarus, Jacqui Moller-Larsen, Munira Thobani, Hilary Samson-Barry, Hilary Thompson, Tim Whitworth and Jude Williams.

In order to teach on the programme, I undertook the Henley Business School Professional Certificate in Coaching, which majors on reflective practice as both a coach development method and a way of being with clients. For stretching my capabilities I am thankful to: Dirk Anthony, Tracy Barr, Julia Carden, Alison Hardingham, Ann James, Jonathan Passmore, Aboodi Shabi and Tatiana Rowson.

In 2023, I was one of the first coaches to take part in the Association for Coaching accredited Diploma in Art-based Coaching, which is designed and led by the artist and coach Anna Sheather of ART in Coaching. Reflective practice and art-based ways of approaching it are central to this programme and I am indebted to Anna, and Sabrina Ahmed and Zita Culkin, my fellow learners, for our many insightful conversations. As part of the coaching practice hours required for this programme, I have had the pleasure of working with a number of impressive coaches, who have

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Of course, reflecting on my many encounters with clients has also sharpened my reflective practice capabilities – as a coach and supervisor, I learn something from every interaction.

In drawing this consideration of the people who have contributed to my development as reflective professional to a close I want to pay tribute particularly to those people who have each had a profound and enduring impact:

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Anna Sheather (ART in Coaching) – for opening my eyes to the demonstrable power of art in professional settings and for being a role model as a creative reflective practitioner.

Joanna Williams (Flourish) – for expanding my horizons about neurodiversity through our collaborative reflections.

As we emphasise towards the end of this book, reflective practice is not just for work. There is zero doubt that my personal life has benefitted from engaging in reflective practice about matters beyond my professional needs and aspirations. Conversations about politics, humanity, the arts and life in general with those closest to me often involve strong elements of reflection, making the insights all the richer. For that enduring richness I am thankful to friends: John, Barbara and Nancy Bains, Chris Haskett, Julia Holmes, Sue Jarvis, Ian Martin, Vera and Kim Mitchell, David Reading and Rich, Marion, Amy and Peter Seal.

My creative spark, amongst other things, is inspired and nurtured by my close family and I am eternally thankful to Martyn, Julianne, Lauren, Daniel, Beki and Finlay Love, Cic, Bob, Rachel, Phil, Peter and Ann Thorpe, Kathie and David Garfath

and David and Judy Brown. In addition, special mention (if only for their toleration of my relentless cartooning about their lives) needs to go to my lifelong partner, Pam, our daughter, Sara, and son, Tom, Ben (Sara's partner) and Bernie (Tom's partner). Without their unconditional love and support none of this would be possible. Last but assuredly not least are my delightful granddaughters, Alba (aged 7) and Rowen (4) whose creativity and playfulness is a true inspiration.

The process of writing this book has been one of continuous reflective practice-in-action as Christian and I have, individually and together, explored in depth what it means to be a reflective practitioner. This has involved working out and road-testing what we think in the first place, grappling with ways to present our ideas cogently and backing out, while all the time learning, from the various cul-de-sacs we have strayed down. For his patience with my highly reflective nature and associated tendency to take my time coming to conclusions, and for his wit and wisdom Christian would have appeared in the list of major influencers of my thinking and practice above – but wielding my power as author I chose to write about him here.

3

THE EFFECTIVE REFLECTIVE PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

This chapter will cover:

- The framework of Effective Reflective Practice
 - Intention
 - Outcome
 - Strategy
 - Experimentation
 - Evaluation
 - Insights
- An example of the framework in practice

Building on existing learning theories and reflective practice processes, we have set out a new framework for reflective practice. It responds to the increasing demand for effective strategies for supporting intentional change in professional contexts. We have integrated recent positive psychology theories and strategies to ensure an explicit focus on wellbeing. The Effective Reflective Practice framework comprises six stages. It aims to facilitate reflective practice that is impactful and effective. The framework is designed to make it easier to write about its application. It is our contention that reflective practice can only be considered *effective* if it leads to better outcomes for the professional, their clients and key stakeholders. In other words, it is more than a process of just *thinking* about professional practice. That is only part of it. The process of reflection should lead to improved professional practice, the improvements should be experienced by clients and stakeholders, and undertaking reflective practice must not be detrimental to the wellbeing of the professional.

SETTING OUT THE FRAMEWORK

The Effective Reflective Practice framework (see Figure 3.1) encourages professionals to follow a cycle of Thinking, Planning, Acting and Reviewing. This cycle captures the purpose and intent of reflective practice. Within the cycle, there are six discrete stages that should be followed. When demonstrating Effective Reflective Practice in writing, professionals can describe their engagement with the cycle by providing a commentary about each of the stages described below.

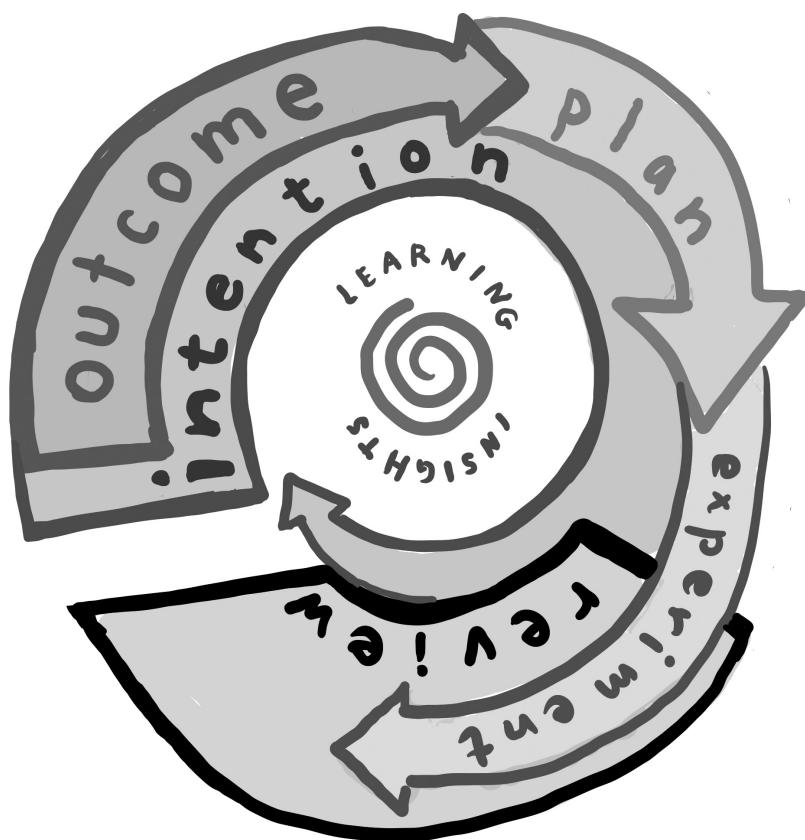


Figure 3.1 The Effective Reflective Practice framework

Stage 1: Intention

The start of Effective Reflective Practice is a positive intention relating to one's professional practice. It is necessary to emphasise that the intention should be *positive* because the process of reflective practice is about making things better. When setting an intention, professionals are invited to think about a number of stakeholders. First, what is the positive intention towards clients or colleagues? It is important to

resist the very normal inclination to focus solely on what the professional would like to change about themselves. The Effective Reflective Practice framework *starts* with others in mind: what would the professional like *others* to experience? Second, what does the professional hope will be better for their context or organisation? This is an invitation to think more broadly about the impact of any changes within the wider system. Third, what positive intention does the professional have for themselves? Once the intention has been clearly articulated, the last step before moving to the next stage is for the professional to reflect on their level of commitment to the intention. How committed are they? What is important to them about making this change?

Stage 2: Outcome

The positive intention sets the scene and the basis for Effective Reflective Practice. As suggested above, it is important to ensure that there is likely to be sustained commitment to making things better. For Effective Reflective Practice, the desired outcome should be made as clear and explicit as possible. It is helpful to identify a situation, interaction or event that you would like to improve. The desired outcome should be set out positively. In other words, how would the professional like the situation, interaction or event to be in the future? This should be described in some detail, including how they will know the outcome has been achieved. What does success look like? Then it is helpful to consider how things are at present. Exploring how the professional would like things to be, and then taking some time to assess the current situation will raise awareness about what may need to happen to make progress. Once the gap between the current situation and desired future state has become clear, it is time to move to the next stage of the framework.

Stage 3: Strategy

The strategy stage focuses on what the professional is going to *do* in order to move towards their desired outcome. The required actions should be specific and focused so that forward movement can happen and the results can be evaluated. The strategy should be aligned with the stakeholder and organisational interests identified in Stage 1, as well as with the professional's own values. The professional will benefit from considering the support needed from others in the system in order to implement the actions effectively. The following questions are important to consider:

- Who else needs to be consulted and involved?
- How will you go about engaging the interest and participation of others with diverse backgrounds, expertise and experience?
- What learning will you need to take the strategy forward, and how will this be acquired?

While the strategy should be aspirational, it should also comprise practical, implementable steps and include a contingency plan for any anticipated early setbacks based on reflection-in-advance.

Stage 4: Experimentation

In implementing their strategy, the professional should be open to experimentation, trying out new ways of doing things. While the professional should be able to take calculated risks as part of experimenting, clients and other stakeholders must not be exposed to undue hazards or negative unintended consequences. Experimentation will help the professional be mindful of how well the implementation of their strategy is working, enabling them to make adjustments as they proceed. It will be essential to create space to stand back from the action and notice the thoughts and feelings that emerge as experiments progress. What is the professional learning about themselves in the process? Finding a way to record these reflections will enable the professional to recall these observations for use in later stages of this framework. Regular journaling to capture your current thinking, feelings and seemingly random impressions can prove very fruitful at this point in the process.

Stage 5: Evaluation

This stage is about how the strategy has worked out in practice. Of crucial importance is the question of whether it has made a difference. At Stage 2, the professional will have established an idea of what a successful outcome would look like. This can be used as a starting point for evaluating how things have actually turned out. Some thought will be needed about what data will enable the professional to make a sound judgement. This is likely to include constructive feedback from others – clients, colleagues and other relevant stakeholders. These questions can be helpful for reflection:

- Does the review of progress suggest the need for further experimentation?
- What has been the impact for the client, the organisation and the professional themselves?
- Has the wellbeing of the people involved, including the professional, been maintained or improved?

Stage 6: Insights

At this stage of the framework, the professional is able to capture the key learning points and insights from the process. This requires a review of the original intention, the identified outcome, the chosen strategy, the results of the experimentation and an evaluation of the whole process. In reviewing these stages, the learning that took

place throughout the cycle should be captured and celebrated. This learning, along with any other insights, should be recorded, and will inform further improvements to professional practice. Throughout the cycle, and particularly at this final stage, it can be invaluable to have conversations with significant others who can act as a powerful sounding board to test out the professional's reflections and learning.

Illustrative Case Study

Jasbir is a teacher of English in a school working with 15-year-old students. This is her first teaching post following graduation with a degree in English followed by a professional teaching certificate. Here are some extracts from her reflective diary.

1 October

Really struggling with one of the students in my class, B, who is not engaging with the content of the lesson – disrupting her own and others' learning. What to do?

3 October

(INTENTION – OWN & STAKEHOLDERS)

(THINK) I want to ensure B gets the most out of my classes and succeeds with her English exam. Talking with other teachers it's clear she is also disruptive in other lessons – though it seems not quite as much. If I can help her engage better, hopefully there will be a knock-on benefit for my colleagues too. Also need to crack this problem for myself – I need to be better at engaging with a wide range of students. No doubt I'll encounter similar problems with other groups – I need to be prepared. Really committed to making *something* work!

(PLAN) Talk to colleagues – what do they do? Read up about dealing with disruptive behaviour (google?).

(ACT) Raised the issue in a staff meeting. Colleagues helpful and supportive.

(REVIEW) Got some useful tips from colleagues and the internet – e.g. don't take it personally, tackle the behaviour not the personality. I'll bear these in mind.

4 October

Have B's class again today! Have to say I'm rather dreading it today. Not sure how much longer I can put up with B's bad behaviour ...

... Argh! – the lesson was awful. The lesson was focused on poetry and B was particularly disruptive. It's really getting to me. Affecting my motivation day-to-day.

(Continued)

5 October

(OUTCOME)

(THINK) Given a bit more thought to the issue - what would life be like if this issue were resolved? Would be great if B showed more interest in what I'm teaching, showed some progress with her learning - and just approached my lessons more calmly. Have to make sure she doesn't interfere with others' ability to engage. I need to feel I can handle this.

So what's causing the current issue?

- She's turned off by the lesson content (??)
- She's had enough of school and doesn't want to be here anymore (??)
- It's me! - my relationship with B is not right in some way (??). That would be very worrying.

(PLAN) Explore the situation with B.

(ACT) Have set up a conversation with B after next week's class.

(REVIEW) Feel good that I've taken a first step towards resolving things. Nothing's happened yet but it feels good to be at least trying to move forward.

7 October

(STRATEGY)

(THINK) ... so what are you going to do, J? Start with the 'lesson content' issue - that feels like something I can do something about more easily. It's important to me that all my students benefit from my teaching - down to me to be responsible for making that happen.

(PLAN) Key action points:

- Try to find out what's bugging her - really listen to what she has to say, and acknowledge her feelings
- Find out what interests her outside of school - make links to the lesson content?
- Spell out the impact of B's behaviour before reinforcing the expectations around appropriate behaviour (NB re-read school policy + google dealing with disruptive behaviour in class). Be firm about the expectations but help her to work out how *she* can meet those expectations.

What support do I need with this?

- Talk to my mentor
- Talk to my Head of Year
- Share my thinking with other affected colleagues.

Remember: this is not just *my* problem.

What's 'Plan B'? Say B doesn't engage in the conversation with me??:

- Get more senior colleagues involved (??) - want to try to avoid this - potentially weakens my position
- Involve her parents (??) - ditto, avoid this too ideally - might impact my relationship with B longer term.

10 October

(ACT) Took the plunge! Spoke to B after class today. She was a bit reluctant at first but when she realised I was listening and interested, she opened up a bit. Finds English lessons 'boring'. Not sure how 'stupid poems' are going to help her in her life. Told her I'd pretty much felt the same thing at one point at school. She mentioned in passing that she (and some of the other students in my class) are interested in rap music. They get together most days after school to make up lyrics. Was able to make the point that this is poetry - which rather surprised B and could see that made her think. Note to self: bring this into a lesson?? Then a useful conversation about behaviour. B could see the point I was making and agreed things needed to be different.

(REVIEW) Felt like a really useful conversation. B engaged (eventually) and made all the right noises about her behaviour - not convinced that will stick though, but let's see. Gained some valuable insight into B's interests.

17 October

(EXPERIMENTATION)

(THINK) It's time to take a few risks - give something new a go today.

(PLAN) Have planned a lesson on poetry. Main activity will be encouraging class to write their own poems in whatever style they fancy (including song/rap lyrics). Will use their creations as starting point for illustrating the emotional power of poetry - and its connection to real life.

(ACT) Was brave and stuck to the lesson plan. Got the class writing poetry and all the students seemed to enjoy it.

(REVIEW) B really got into it - got a bit wild when reading out loud to the class (!) but at least this disruption was out of exuberance not boredom. Could this be a break-through (??). Felt more confident and in control of things today. Still need to emphasise appropriate behaviours - so need to speak to B again about that (she was still a bit over the top at a couple of points!).

20 November

(EVALUATION)

(THINK) What did I set out to achieve? Here's my earlier diary note:

(Continued)

'Would be great if B showed more interest in what I'm teaching, showed some progress with her learning - and just approached my lessons more calmly. Have to make sure she doesn't interfere with others' ability to engage. I need to feel I can handle this.'

(PLAN) What info do I need to check my progress?

- My observations of B's behaviour - has it changed? Is she more engaged now?
- Colleagues' feedback about B in other classes
- Indications of a stronger relationship with B.

(ACT) Raised issue again in staff meeting and spoke to some colleagues individually. Re-read my notes about B's behaviour and engagement. Thought about the various conversations I've had with B over the last month.

(REVIEW) Colleagues have noticed an improvement. Plus B is definitely more engaged in my classes - contributing much more to discussions and her essays are generally more thought through indicating learning is taking place. Less disruptive, though she still has her moments! As for me - I'm feeling more connected with B, and also the whole class. Feel less anxious and more motivated.

27 November

(INSIGHTS)

So what have I learnt from all this? And how can I apply that in the future?

A conversation with my mentor helped me identify my learning points:

- My relationship with each student is the key - getting closer to B has been helpful. Going forwards need to make sure this isn't at the expense of relationships with other students, though.
- Having meaningful conversations with students strengthens relationships and gives insights into what makes them tick and how to enable them to access lesson content.
- Lesson planning is important - but so is thinking about how content *lands* with students. Have tended to focus on the planning, rather than the student experience.

I need to keep up the momentum that's been created. Under no illusions - B can still be a handful and will likely need continuing clear and consistent guidance about her behaviour.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we set out a new framework for reflective practice. It has been designed with two purposes in mind: undertaking reflective practice and demonstrating

reflective practice through writing. In the following chapters, we will consider each of the six stages in more detail.

Find Out More

For a sneak peek of a completed write-up of a piece of reflective writing, see Appendix 1 on p. 131.

