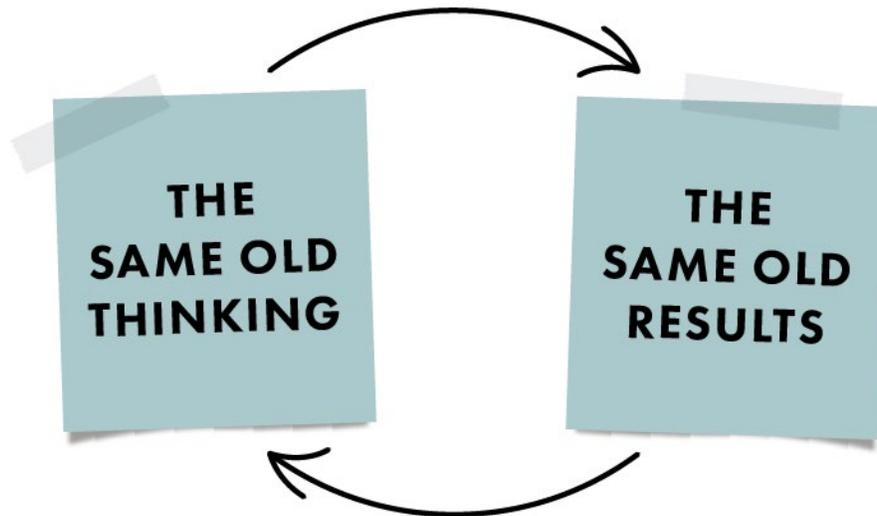




Reflect and Learn

When we think of collaboration as a process, it makes sense that there should be a feedback loop to enrich the quality of the process over time. Without a feedback loop, here's what happens:



Cultivate a growth mindset instead by making it a priority to do some reflection and analysis after an experience that matters. Reflection is a skill that can be improved over time.

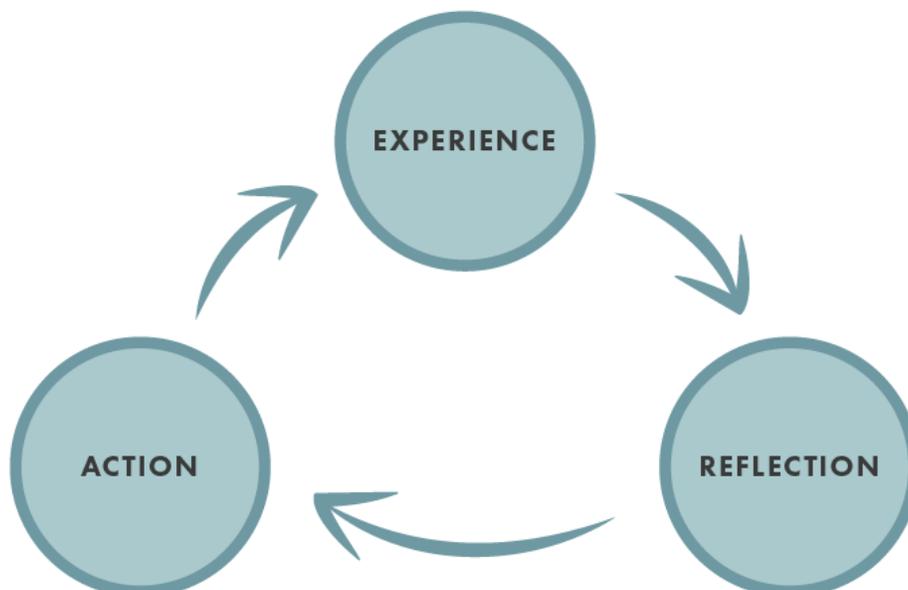
Here's a simple cycle for reflection and learning:

After having an experience, take a little time to reflect on how it went, and then identify what action to take next time to create a different experience.

This action is best framed as an if-then statement:

If I do x, then I expect that y will happen.

When you have the next experience, you'll bring a new level of awareness and curiosity to see how your if-then statement works out.





REFLECT AND LEARN WORKSHEET

Keeping a simple learning journal or online notebook is a proven best practice to support ongoing reflection and learning. Writing will help you keep track of your growth and lessons learned over time. Writing also helps embed learning so it sticks.

You can use the questions below to get you started.

1. Choose a specific experience to reflect on.

Start with a simple one as you learn the process. As your confidence grows, examine more complex ones about collaboration. You can do this process for life events as well as work events. Having a specific focus helps you manage your attention and your intention—the two pillars of making change that sticks.

2. Reflect on the experience.

Reflection is used to help you develop more self-awareness. Answer the questions below without blame or harsh judgments about yourself.

» What was the situation? What are the facts about what happened?

» What were my victories? Disappointments?

» How do I feel about what happened?

» What thoughts and beliefs are contributing to those feelings? What's underneath that emotion?

» What were my assumptions?

» What do I want to have happen next time I'm in the same situation? (Desired outcome)



» What new thoughts, skills, or behaviors could I try out to get this outcome?

» What strengths could I leverage to achieve this outcome?

» What may be in my way to achieving this result? How could I address that potential obstacle if it occurs?

3. Action: What’s my plan?

Having a clear plan that is achievable, even if it is a tiny step, is what converts desire to real-world action. The more specific the better.

- » My desired outcome is:
- » When will I implement this plan?
- » My if-then experiment: If I do _____, I expect that _____ will happen.
- » If (obstacle) occurs, I’ll do _____ to address it.

4. Repeat.

Learning and growth are evolutionary processes. Each time we learn, we’re building a new pathway in the brain. Repeated attention to that new pathway makes the pathway become a bigger “highway,” so the new behavior gets easier each time.

During your next experience, notice what happens when you try your new skill, behavior, or if-then experiment.

After your next experience, come back to your journal and repeat this process. You’ll learn something new each time! You’ll find yourself being more aware of and intentional about your strengths as you stay with this process.



Group Reflection and Learning

If you're working with a team or network over a period of time, you can help them cultivate a growth mindset as well. A growth mindset is a practice that supports greater resilience, so it's a double benefit: You'll make your team smarter, and each individual will be fueling their capacity for resilience.

This process is the same approach as above: repeated cycles of experience, reflection, and action.

- » Set aside some time periodically for team reflection.
- » Capture the lessons learned in a document stored where everyone can access and contribute over time.
- » Create if-then statements as a team around a shared desired outcome for your work.
- » You can then establish an ongoing learning practice by returning to your group's if-then statement and repeating the reflection and action steps together.
- » If you use an online whiteboard, you can capture the key themes in a graphic form. Here's an example of a well-known "Emergent Learning Map."

(from <https://thesystemsthinker.com/emergent-learning-taking-learning-from-experience-to-a-new-level/>)

