Reflective Practice: A Catalyst for Aligned Action

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1. Why Reflective Practice?

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Taking aligned action[1] to achieve a common result presents opportunities for awareness and growth. Aligning actions requires an awareness of one's impact on others and a willingness to consider and commit to changes in behavior. Leaders can learn to take the time and space to examine their experience and gain greater awareness of how their actions reflect their:

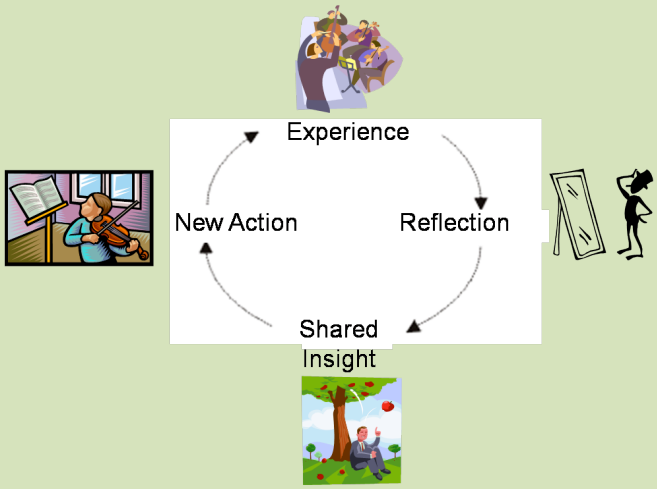
- Values,
- Beliefs, and
- Perceptions of role.

Taking the risk to share these insights with other leaders catalyzes the mutual discovery of what changes in behavior might create the possibility of aligned action and contributions to a common result. This process of examination, insight, and mutual discovery leading to new action is called reflective practice.[2]

2. Practice Method

To begin the practice, stop what you are doing and give your self a moment to breathe, slow down, and pause to reflect on what is happening. Take a few minutes to think and feel more deeply. Write down your reflections and insights– either in a journal or on a piece of paper.

Journaling is not something everyone is comfortable with, however, it is a critical, as it allows you to pause, read what you have written, and then gain insights from your reflections. Journaling becomes easier and more valuable over time.

Reflection to Action Practice Cycle	Reflection Questions for Aligning Action
	1. *What is your <u>experience</u> of being together with others to achieve a common result?* 2. *<u>Reflect</u> on:* ○ *What is happening,* ○ *Your role,* ○ *The role of others,* ○ *Your feelings and those of others,* ○ *The impact of your behavior on the capacity for aligned action.* 3. *<u>Make note of and share your insights</u> about how what you are doing reflects your values, beliefs, assumptions, mental models, and perceptions of the limitations and opportunities for action.* 4. *What will it take to move to aligned action? What might you need to change? <u>Choose to act</u> and after experience reflect again.*

[1] Pillsbury, Jolie Bain, *The Theory of Aligned Contributions,* 2008.
[2] Schon, Donald, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner (1987)*

3. Practice Guide

☑ Carry and use a journal to jot down reflections, insights, and commitments to action

☑ Share your insights with other leaders, be curious about their insights

☑ Make choices about new actions and give your self permission to be awkward as you try new behaviors

☑ Be willing to continue to learn from experience and use the power of reflective practice over time to discover what it will take to move to aligned action

☑ Overtime notice what helps you move to aligned action and what blocks movement to aligned action

☑ What do these patterns reveal about:

- Your adaptive leadership [3]challenges?
- Your MBTI[4] Preferences?
- Your own assumptions and experiences around race, class, culture, and gender?
- Your own understanding of the multiple roles you play, the formal and/or informal authority you have in those roles to act and influence others to act?
- Your orientation toward conflict and the types of conflict that might need to be surfaced and addressed?
- Your relationships?
- Your unique strengths and how those unique strengths can be leveraged with other's strengths for aligned action?
- Your interest and willingness to be accountable for your own choices?
- Your allies in moving to aligned action?
- Your competing commitments?
- Your capacity to manage transitions?
- Your appetite for risk and your risk management strategies?
- What you are willing to hold yourself accountable for?
- Your capacity to change your own behavior in service of a common result?

☑ Persist in your practice

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[3] Heifetz, Ronald *Leadership on the Line, 2007*

[4] Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®