

IMPROVEMENT *Burst*

Becoming a More Reflective Manager



what is it?

Reflection is a critical leadership skill that helps managers/leaders make better decisions, navigate complex situations, and continuously grow. In human services, where managers juggle competing priorities, taking time to reflect may seem like a luxury, but in reality, it's a necessity. Becoming a more reflective manager/leader improves problem-solving, reduces reactive decision-making, and strengthens emotional intelligence.



why it works?

- Enhances **self-awareness**, allowing you to recognize biases and blind spots.
- Supports **better decision-making**, leading to more thoughtful and strategic leadership.
- Reduces **stress and burnout** by helping you process difficult experiences.
- Encourages a **culture of learning**, setting an example for your team.

Reflection: Why this matters to you ?

Before jumping in, take a moment to consider:

- **Why do I need to improve my reflection habits?** Do I feel rushed in decision-making? Reactive? Disconnected?

- **What has stopped me from being more reflective before?** Is it a lack of time, structure, or awareness

- **What will be different now?** How can I ensure this practice becomes a habit?



How to Use It Right Now ?

1. Schedule Reflection Time

- Block **10-15 minutes** at the end of the day or week to reflect. If you don't schedule it, it won't happen.
- Use this time to think about challenges, successes, and areas for growth.

2. Use Guiding Questions

- Ask yourself:
 - What went well today/this week? What didn't?
 - What are employees saying about their work at the dinner table today/this week?
 - How did I handle challenges? What could I do differently next time?
 - Did I lead with my values? Where did I feel misaligned?
 - How did my decisions impact my team and clients?

3. Keep a Reflection Journal

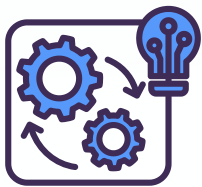
- Writing helps clarify thoughts. Keep a simple notebook or digital document.
- Use bullet points if writing full paragraphs feels like too much.

4. Seek Outside Perspectives

- Ask a mentor, coach, or peer for feedback.
- Share a challenge and ask, "How would you have handled this?"

5. Use "Pause Moments" in Your Day

- Before responding to an email or making a decision, take **5-10 seconds** to consider:
 - Am I reacting, or responding thoughtfully?
 - What can I learn from this interaction?
 - What outcome do I want from this interaction?



Example in Action

For two weeks, Terry spent the end of each workday reflecting on whether and how she led with her values. Terry noticed that the act of reflecting itself resulted in an increase in leading by their values. They also noticed that even though they led by their values, they rarely spoke about values explicitly at work. The 2-week reflection period ended with Terry deciding to try making the role of their values more explicit when communicating with employees.

Power-Up Option



- Try this for **two weeks** and note any changes in your decision-making or stress levels.
- Identify one **trusted person** (colleague, mentor) to discuss your reflections with.
- Consider using a **coach** to help guide your reflection.
- If you miss a day, **don't give up**—just start again.