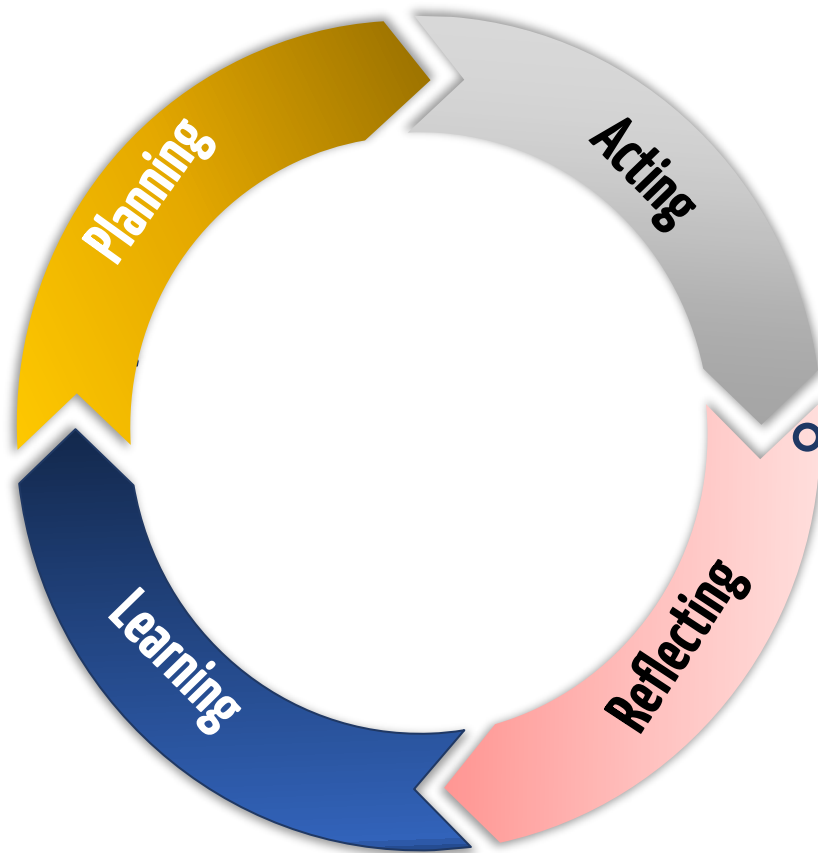


Reflection – What is it?



THREE POINTS OF FOCUS FOR REFLECTION:

- Content : Reflecting on the content or the description of the situation or problem.
- Process: Looking at the methods or strategies being used to deal with the situation or solve the problem.
- Premise: Giving consideration as to why the situation or problem is as it is in the first place.

Is the active process of witnessing our own experience in order to examine it more closely, in all it's elements, give meaning to it AND learn from it,

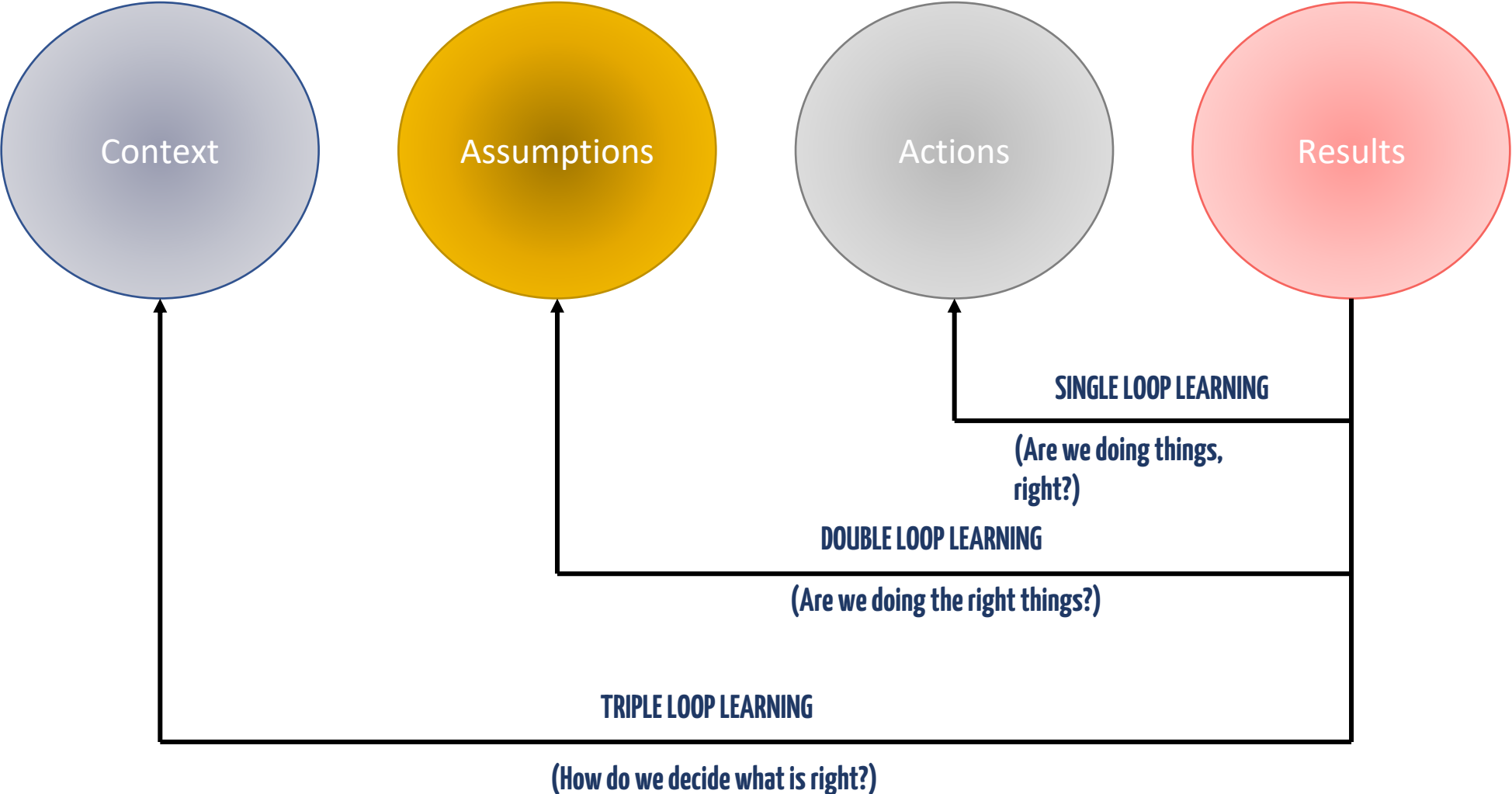
REFLECTION HAS A NUMBER OF ASPECTS:

- Returning to the experience (what happened – facts of the matter?)
- Attending to emotional responses and feelings (What did the experience mean?)
- Evaluating the experience (Interpretation?)
- Noticing what was learned.

THERE ARE TWO MAIN TYPES OF REFLECTION:

- Reflecting ON an action (after the fact) – this enables application of the lessons learned to future planning and action and getting clarity around next steps.
- Reflecting IN an action (thinking and acting on our feet – using the Balcony AND Dance perspective).

Three Important Learning Loops and their Questions for Reflective Inquiry



Balcony AND Dance

THOSE WHO ENGAGE IN REFLECTION AND SEEK TO WORK FROM A 'Balcony AND Dance' Perspective are:

- Intellectually curious about their work and life in general
- Actively question and inquire as to 'what', 'how' and 'why' as a matter of their natural approach to life
- Develop their own hypotheses about the world and how it operates based upon their own experiences.
- Use their understanding and their intuition to contribute to learning and knowledge generation.
- Understand and accept their limitations and weaknesses and are not cowed by them but see them as an opportunity for growth and development.
- Explore a range of approaches, tools and techniques for their individual and collective investigations.



CORE COMPETENCIES NEEDED ARE:

Self Knowledge

Understanding of and insight into one's self worth, motives, character, capabilities, blockages and strengths.

Inquisitiveness

Willingness to ask the tough questions. No holy cows. Inquiring without attachment to outcomes or answers

Critical Thinking

Application of logic, standards of evidence, reasoning, analysis, exploration of claims for facts and data, challenging beliefs and assumptions

Emotional Intelligence

Ability to identify, assess and manage own and other's emotional landscape and responses

Balcony AND Dance : Obstacles to Application of Reflective Practices

ORGANISATIONAL

- Performance Pressure
- Task Focused / Bias for Action Culture Predominates
- Reflection undervalued by colleagues or leadership
- Competency Traps
- Lack of Leadership Support
- Absence of Forums or Structures for exploration
- Blame / lack of Accountability Culture
- Short-termism overriding the Long-term consideration or implications for action
- External Locus of Control
- Worshiping the 'Intellect' over all else

PERSONAL

- Perceived lack of Time
- Undervaluing Reflection as a tool for Insight and Breakthrough thinking
- Under-developed Competencies that are Needed
- Limited or no experience in applying Balcony/Dance
- Fear of Feedback
- Fear of Failure
- Fear of looking Stupid
- Thinking there is only one 'right answer'
- Needing to have the 'right answer'
- Lack of awareness or expertise
- Undervaluing own expertise

Balcony AND Dance : Practices to Build the Skill

STRUCTURED QUIET TIME:

- Put aside uninterrupted time to do some intentional thinking. Allocate 60-90 minutes to sit in a quiet place with a notebook and notice the thoughts that arise –taking note of insights and their potential application

REVIEW OF PAST LEADERSHIP/ORGANISATIONAL AGENDA'S:

- Review the % of time spent either by self and/or your team on purely operational or task focused (dance) items as opposed to balcony time. What is the potential impact of that? And how might you shift this balance to include more structured 'big picture' balcony conversations?

COLLECT REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS AND QUOTES:

- Find and collect powerful questions, inspirational or inquiring quotes or images that you can use as a vehicle for obtaining different perspectives during reflection.

CONSCIOUS 'SETTING THE TONE' IN MEETINGS:

- Start meetings with a centring practice – such as a guided meditation or just quiet time to allow everyone to become present and centered.

THINKING JOURNAL :

- Keep a 'thinking journal' to record ideas and insights as they arise. Read Nancy's Kline's – Time to Think.

MIND MAPS:

- Learn how to build mind maps - these are very helpful as they mirror how the brain makes connections and meaning compared to linear writing.

GET A BUDDY:

- Ask someone to pose questions – keep you accountable for taking balcony time. AND/OR ask them to suggest that you shift state in the moment.

TEAM THINKING:

- Arrange 'thinking time' on the team agenda.

Balcony AND Dance : Practices to Build the Skill

PERSONAL JOURNAL:

- Write daily in a personal journal. It is often helpful to write at the end of the day – capturing lessons, learnings, questions that have arisen during the day – including things you are proud of, grateful for and things you'd wished you'd done better
- It is also useful to start the day off with either a journal entry – or at least some quiet time to run through your intentions for the day in your mind and to imagine how the day will proceed.

MEDITATION PRACTICE:

- Daily practice of a breathing practice will enable the ability to notice from the Balcony whilst also being in the dance – this is because when we focus on our breath and our mind goes off onto thoughts or distractions such as outside noises – noticing and coming back to watching the breath is in fact the very practice of Balcony AND Dance in that moment.

POSE YOURSELF A QUESTION OR QUESTIONS:

- Posing yourself questions that are of interest to you that you would like some deeper insight into. EG. What is your leadership philosophy? What do you want to be known for – your legacy? Looking back on the timeline of your life – what did the challenges you overcome help you become that is serving you today? Etc.

CONSCIOUSLY STOP:

- Develop the habit of consciously stopping – when you are frantic or even when not, to just pause for a few moments and ask yourself – 'what is happening now/ what's going on that I need be aware of?

ASK SOMEONE:

- Ask someone who you've noticed can be in the Dance AND on the Balcony at the same time – how they go about it.

ASK YOURSELF:

- What helps you toggle between Balcony and Dance, or hold both at the same time, and what hinders you from your experience – do more of the first and less of the second.

Balcony AND Dance : Practices to Build the Skill

LEADERSHIP :

- Explain to Leadership the benefit of this practice – and ask for their support to implement

CIRCLE OF HONESTY:

- Create a group of 'honest critics' and seek out their input and thoughts.

IDENTIFY AND LISTEN TO STAKEHOLDERS:

- Create a stakeholder map, and actively seek them out to hear their perspectives

LOOK OUTSIDE:

- For patterns, trends, and issues that other allied industries/ companies are looking at. Identify and read key thinkers in your area. You will get signs of what is coming

PRACTICE MINDFUL LEADERSHIP:

- Observe, proactively share information and insights, ask questions, listen deeply and make constant adjustments

HOLD A CONVERSATION WITH THE SITUATION:

- You may use two chair – one for self and one for the situation. Sit in your chair and ask the situation chair about itself, then move to the other chair and answer the question from the perspective of the situation.

USE SYSTEMS DYNAMICS PROCESS:

- You can also do this with more than one element by writing the name of the element on an A4 page and placing it on the floor. Standing on the paper – and allowing you to speak from that element is a powerful way of gaining insight using the process used in Systemic constellations work.

CONSCIOUSLY WATCH YOURSELF :

- Make a conscious choice to watch yourself whilst you are in the action – and then identify later the noticing of how you were – what helped and what hindered.

Balcony AND Dance

“The only way you can gain both a clearer view of reality and some perspective on the bigger picture is by distancing yourself from the fray.

If you want to affect what is happening, you must return to the dance floor.”

.....This is the ability to, during action step back and ask yourself;

- What’s really going on here?
- Am I seeing the bigger picture?
- Am I missing something?
- What can be better?

It is critical for each one of us, leadership or not, to develop this muscle.

Ron Heifetz