



Mirror, Mirror on the Wall...

What is self-reflection?

Self-reflection is like looking into a mirror and describing what you see. It is a way of assessing yourself, your ways of working and how you learn. Reflection means to seriously think about or consider something. Self-reflection means to seriously consider yourself; your thoughts, feelings, actions and responses to the people and the world around you.

Why is self-reflection important?

Reflecting helps you to develop your skills and review their effectiveness instead of continuing to do things as you have always done them. Reflecting is about questioning, in a positive way, what you do and why you do it and then deciding whether there is a better, or more efficient, way of thinking or acting it in the future.

Whether at home or work, reflection is an important part of learning. You wouldn't use a recipe a second time if the dish didn't taste good the first time, would you? You would either adjust the recipe or find a new and, hopefully, better one. Without reflecting we can become stuck in a routine that may not be working well. Thinking about your own skills and choices can help you identify changes you might need to make.

How do I practice self-reflection? Ask honest questions of yourself. Answer honestly. Try these.

- **Strengths** – What are my strengths? For example, I am well-organized. I do things on time.
- **Weaknesses** – What are my weaknesses? For example, I am easily frustrated. I need to learn and practice skills to be more patient.
- **Skills** – What skills do I have? What am I good at? For example, I am a good listener.
- **Problems** – What problems are there at work or home that may be affecting me? Have I taken on extra responsibilities? Am I distracted by things at home that are having an impact on my work? What are those things? What positive steps can I take to change this situation so that it is better for me and all involved?
- **Achievements** – What have I achieved? For example, I have earned an important job.
- **Happiness** – Are there things that I am unhappy with or disappointed about? What makes me happy?
- **Solutions** – What could I do to improve in these areas? Looking at the possible solutions, which ones are best? Which one will I do? When will I do it?

Self-reflection can seem difficult at first, or even selfish or embarrassing. If you are just being introduced to this skill as an adult, it may not come naturally. It gets easier with practice. Find people that you trust to help ask you reflective questions. Make a pact to help each other reflect rather than blame and to identify possible things you can do differently to change the outcome next time. The result will likely be a happier and more efficient you.