

# Better living through reflection

October 2016 Newsletter



How often do you just stop what you're doing and reflect on your day, your work or your life? Once a day? Once a week? Once a month?

Many people would say it's impossible or impractical to take a regular time out for reflection. Yet it's a habit that can have major payoffs.

## A few minutes can lead to big benefits

Reflection is an easy practice that packs a lot of power. Just making time to be still and think can help you:

- 1. Figure out what's working for you...and what's not.** Steve Jobs said, "You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards."<sup>1</sup> When you reflect, you think about your past experiences and learn from your own mistakes and successes. Your history becomes a tool to learn what worked, what didn't and what changes you can make in the future.
- 2. Recognize your achievements.** Our failures often seem to make more lasting impressions on us than our successes. Both have their value. But remembering to reflect on your successes — and not dwell on your failures — boosts your self-esteem and motivates you to take on more growth.
- 3. Feel happier and more in control of your life.** Reflecting means taking a step back to look at things. You can often get a different perspective than when you're caught in the middle of something.

That can make today's problems seem smaller and more manageable in the overall picture of life. When you recall happy, exciting things, it can add joy and pleasure to your day.

## What are some ways to reflect?

It may not be enough to just say you're going to set aside time to think each day. You may benefit from having a tool or strategy to help. Here are two examples:

- **Work out or exercise.** One of the benefits of running, walking, swimming or doing other exercise is that you usually don't need to think too much about what you're doing. That leaves an opening to use the time for reflection.
- **Begin a "one sentence journal."** Journaling can be very daunting for people; it can seem like homework to sit down and write a long, detailed summary of your day. Gretchen Rubin, who wrote **The Happiness Project**, came up with the idea of a one sentence journal.<sup>2</sup>

She suggests writing one sentence each day. That sentence can sum up your day, express your feelings or say whatever you'd like. One sentence is the expectation, but you may write more if you like. How does this help reflection? It provides a fast and easy way to look back and capture the "takeaway" from each day.<sup>2</sup>

## Use reflection in your own way

Whatever method you choose, reflect on a regular basis. Try to do it daily, at the same time each day. You'll find it self-affirming, calming and enlightening.

<sup>1</sup>[www.brainyquotes.com](http://www.brainyquotes.com)

<sup>2</sup>[www.gretchenrubin.com](http://www.gretchenrubin.com)