



Donald Schon: "Knowing in Action"

Learning how to take perspective on one's own experiences and actions in a process of continuous learning

- Experience may be of a meeting, a session, a project, a disaster, a success, or... whatever
- And the reflection may take place before, during or after the event (Amulya)

Reflective Practice



- ☞ Learning by witnessing one's own experience
- ☞ Taking perspective on one's own actions and experience
- ☞ Learning by doing
- ☞ Learning while doing
- ☞ Learning.....



"Learning the Hard Way"



“The Witness”



- ☞ In this process, we’ve come to see the value of the Witness – that stance behind experience in which we merely acknowledge what is, without judgment of ourselves or others. It is simply a fair witness to our humanity... the ability to remain quiet and open – simply to observe, never to judge – is what prevents The Witness from becoming reactive and self-conscious. As we become more grounded in this practice .. we discover shifts of perspective that not only lighten the load of service but change its character as well...
- ☞ ... the seeds of burnout are often sown in how we enter in to the helping act and in what we bring with us: our motives, our needs, our expectations, the models we have for ourselves...

☞ Ram Dass and Paul Gorman How Can I Help? Stories and Reflections on Service

Reflective Practice



Reflective Practice is driven by questions, dialogues, and stories

Reflective Practice means creating a habit, structure or routine around examining experience

 Good works.

Why a Structured Process?



- ❧ It disciplines the decision making, which can often be highly emotional in a crisis
- ❧ It ensures that all relevant factors are considered
- ❧ It draws from multiple perspectives
- ❧ It allows us to reflect on our moral intuition
- ❧ It helps us align emotions and intuition with intellect, training and education
- ❧ It keeps professional and organizational values in focus in our daily practice

Doesn't it "just happen"?



"DOING SWALLOWS UP LEARNING"

"I DON'T HAVE TIME TO THINK"

The pressure and pace of the work day, week, and year can easily overload all of us: trauma contagion



When does reflective practice happen ?

Community Meetings - brief daily or weekly opportunities

Staff meeting as agenda item

1:1 staff supervision and development

Debriefings on critical incidents

"Red Flag" reviews in advance of a problem or crisis

GOOD WORKS

Making it happen

Creating space and time

Knowing the basic structures

Slowing down to reflect and helping others slow down

Asking the questions at the right time

GOOD WORKS

“Certain kinds of experience create particularly powerful opportunities for learning...”



- ☞ **Struggles:** what’s working and not working; analyzing challenges
- ☞ **Dilemmas:** clash between values and getting things done
- ☞ **Uncertainty:** shed light on areas where the approach to work is not fully specified
- ☞ **Breakthroughs** in action help us identify what we learned and what our theory of success looks like

Think about a recent...



- ☞ Struggle
- ☞ Dilemma
- ☞ Uncertainty or
- ☞ Breakthrough



A Sequence for Self Reflection



A disorienting or ethical dilemma...

Self examination of affect

Critical Assessment of assumptions

Exploration of new roles

Planning a course of action

Acquiring new knowledge and skills

Trying out new roles

Mezirow (1994).

Some useful questions

What happened? (time line or sequence)

Any questions around our admission of this client?

What worked?

What broke down?

Are there other clients like this one or affected by this incident that we can help now?

Is there wear and tear on staff - or have relationships been affected?

What did we learn?

What will we do differently?

Disorienting Dilemmas



Think of a recent time in your practicum or other practice experience

Something unexpected, a crisis, a turn of events, new information

You felt...

- Out of your comfort zone
- "Disoriented" = lacking grounding or direction
- Nowhere to "fit" the experience that faces me in the framework I already know
- Cognitive as well as emotional "dissonance"