



**REFLECTIONS FOR PROGRESS:
AVOIDING OLD HABITS & EMBRACING
GROWTH**

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HISTORY HAS A WAY OF REPEATING ITSELF

Everyone has hopes and dreams. Planning for them requires goal setting, and actively working towards the goals. Without proper planning, there's no way of knowing if your efforts will land you closer to, or farther from, your hopes for the future.

If you're not intentional about where you're headed, you'll likely find yourself repeating the same activities and habits over and over getting the same results you've always had. If your outcomes are favorable, then you're on the right track, but what if they aren't? What if your track record hasn't been what you hoped and you want something more in the future?

Doing What You've Always Done Gets You What You've Always Had

A popular quote by Maya Angelou says "Do the best you can until you know better. When you know better, do better." Most of us are doing the best we can with what we know and our results indicate whether we are doing well or need improvement.

Without paying attention to what you've always done, chances are you'll continue to get what you've always had, for better or for worse. Taking time to assess your outcomes and examine how you got there is an important first step.

You Can Always Change Your Future

If you're looking for something different in the future, it's as simple as paying close attention to the past. Reflecting and analyzing the past can dramatically improve future outcomes.

Being intentional with your goals and activities can radically improve and change your future making it easier to live your best life.

Using Reflection to Plan for the Future

TAKING TIME TO REFLECT ON THE PAST LEADS TO GREATER SELF-AWARENESS. REFLECTION HELPS WITH

- Understanding past choices
- Recognizing patterns in thoughts and behaviors
- Unearthing good and bad habits
- Evaluating Priorities
- Getting in touch with motivations and triggers

Spending time reflecting can unwind subconscious thoughts and behaviors that drive your decisions and hinder your plans for the future.

Without Reflection, History Tends to Repeat Itself

Since much of life is on autopilot it's easy to keep repeating history despite any intention to do things differently.

THIS CAN REFLECT IN THE HABITS WE'VE DEVELOPED THAT AFFECT OUR

- Health
- Relationships
- Finances
- Spirituality
- Fitness

Stopping to understand why we do the things we do can help us make better, more informed choices and get life-changing results and the future we plan for.



CHOOSING WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T WHEN PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Reflecting on the past and planning for the future are powerful ways to ensure you make and keep your goals. Understanding what choices, behaviors, and activities have led you to where you are can help you make the best choices moving forward.

If your outcomes haven't been what you'd hoped for, reflecting on the past is a great way to identify what isn't working, but don't count out what is working too. That's because life is complicated and while we may be missing the mark in some areas, we are also crushing it in others. Identifying what works and what doesn't is the key.



HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT IS AND ISN'T WORKING?

You may be well aware of some thoughts and habits that are, and aren't, serving you, but you may also be blissfully unaware of a whole bunch more. Being intentional and purposefully reviewing your past can reveal a lot.



START BY BREAKING THINGS DOWN

Whether you are doing an overhaul on your life or hyper focused on one aspect of it, you've got to break things down.

Let's say you want to change your diet for the better. Breaking down your past and current eating habits is the best way to start. Review your eating history by recording your typical diet or the types of foods you're used to consuming. Analyze these foods against healthy food options and see where things stand.

From there you can dig deeper and explore your thoughts and feelings about the foods you have chosen in the past and what habits, mindsets, and behaviors reinforce those choices.

After you've spent time reflecting on the past and how it has impacted your diet, you can determine what, if any aspects work for you and which do not. Maintain the ones that work and look at ways to drop or replace the activities that don't work a lot.



KEEP DOING WHAT WORKS

Your reflection will reveal habits or mindsets that work well for you. Keep doing what works. Celebrate where you feel successful and complete. Recognize your strengths and use them to help motivate you in areas you may want to change. No matter what the situation, there is always something good happening.



STOP DOING WHAT DOESN'T WORK

When you recognize a habit or mindset doesn't serve you, it's time to evaluate and make changes. Sometimes changes will come easy. For example, learning that consuming a candy bar and soda at 3:00 pm spikes blood sugar, adds calories, and causes you to crash at 5:00 pm can help you make the easy decision to eat a protein-rich snack instead. Easy fix!

Other times, change can be harder. Recognizing why you want to eat an entire pizza every time you feel discouraged likely has more to do with a past trauma than a true hunger response.

Either way, reflecting on the past can help you determine what thoughts and behaviors don't work and begin to find a way to replace or overcome them.



TIPS FOR BEING HONEST WITH YOURSELF ABOUT THE PAST

One of the easiest ways to create a better future, is to examine the past; however, one of the hardest parts of examining our past, is taking accountability. Many times, our current circumstances begin and end with our own choices and behaviors. Whether we acknowledge them or not, is key to rectifying them and moving forward in a new way.

Our Self Esteem is Tied to Our Truth

There are plenty of reasons why we don't want to be honest with ourselves about the past. Many times, we simply don't know any better and do what we have always done not fully understanding the impact and consequences we are creating. Other times, we know we need to make changes but the fear of change looms larger than staying the same. Change requires risk, and taking a hard look at our contribution to why we feel stuck can impact our self-esteem.

Our sense of self is tied to how we perceive who we are and what happens to us. Being honest with ourselves can require facing tough truths about ourselves and our choices rather than casting blame on things outside our control.

Being Honest with Yourself is Courageous

Being honest with yourself requires courage and is an act of self-love rather than self-loathing. Being willing and able to face your choices as your own means you can take the steps necessary to make new, better choices.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS THAT HELP



BE OPEN TO BEING WRONG

If you perceive being wrong with weakness or inferiority, it's going to be hard to admit when you missed the mark. Digging your heels in and refusing to accept responsibility only further delays the positive changes you really want. Get comfortable with being wrong. Be willing to try, fail, and try again. Be open to not knowing it all and still being ok.



PRACTICE VULNERABILITY

Practical vulnerability is an act of humility and courage. Exercising vulnerability in a safe way with yourself (and a select few) can change the way you make decisions. Vulnerability creates space to accept help, change your point of view, expand your mind, and be open to lasting change.



LEAN INTO FORGIVENESS

Changing your thoughts and habits may require letting go and forgiving. Leaning into forgiving yourself and others can help you start with a clean slate and make new choices and plan for a better future.



LOOK FOR THE LESSONS

There is always a lesson to be learned. Your outcome may not have been ideal, but somewhere in the rubble is a lesson that will help you.

Change your mindset to look for the value in the past as it relates to the possibilities for the future.



LETTING GO IN ORDER TO MOVE FORWARD

There's nothing better than nostalgic memories of the past. Fondly recalling times spent with family and friends or an achievement you're especially proud of. Happy memories are an important part of the past and often feel warm when we recall them.

Yet, not all memories are positive and some haunt us and remind us of their consequences. Whether through no fault of our own, or due to our choices, some memories of the past cause trauma and linger in the present...and future.

Holding on to the Past Can Keep You Stuck

Holding on to past hurts, lost hopes, or resentments can keep us stuck. It's hard to move forward when you can't or won't let go of yesterday, but it's the only way to make peace with the past and shift towards a new and better future.

Whether you hold resentment towards others, feel stuck in the 'glory days', or have unfinished and unresolved business, you've got to get closure to plan for the future.

Letting Go isn't Easy but It's Worth it

Letting go of the past is an act of self-care. It's a process that doesn't happen overnight. In fact, it may take some time but in the end it's worth the effort.

If you need to let go of something you regret, practicing gentleness and mindfulness helps. Doing the work you need to forgive and find closure is possible on your own or with help.

If you need to move past a trauma or forgive someone else, give yourself time to sort through the issue and come to the best terms possible.

You Can Have Closure Even Without an Apology

Sometimes letting go of the past requires moving on without the closure you deserve or desire. You may not be able to offer or receive an important apology or ask the burning questions you need to better understand why something happened. Regardless, you can learn to let go and move on, even without the closure.

Give Yourself and Others Grace

Letting go requires offering yourself and others the grace to have been wrong or hurtful in the past but making space for something new in the future. Having the courage to be fallible and recognize the shortcomings of others can help you find compassion and mercy even for deep wounds.

The Future Offers More Than the Past

Living in the past and hoping for a different present won't create the future you want. The past only offers memories and lessons. It's the future that offers possibilities. Letting go and focusing on the future can bring the happiness and fulfillment you've been chasing.



HELPFUL IDEAS TO AVOID SLIPPING INTO OLD HABITS

They say it takes twenty-one days to create a new habit. Habits like drinking more water or getting more steps in are good habits that help build a better future, but under the right circumstances, your new habits can easily slip back into the old ones from the past.

Sticking to new, future-focused habits requires determination and an understanding of why you feel the way you do when you want to quit. In some cases, avoiding extra steps isn't about being too lazy to walk, it could be about something deeper you need to consider.

Reflecting on the past can help you build better habits and avoid slipping backwards when they feel tough to stick with.

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS THAT WILL HELP



ASK YOURSELF WHY?

Asking yourself why you want to resist the activities that lead to your future goals is important.

- Why do you feel frustrated?
- Why can't you do the activity?
- What is standing in the way?
- What about the past could be causing your feelings today?

Getting to the root of the why can help you overcome slipping into old habits and stick with the new ones.



REINVENT YOUR SITUATION

You can't get new results doing what you have always done. Sometimes you have to change your scenery, your workspace, or your view. Don't be afraid to make a new start and get a fresh perspective to practice your new habits.



CHANGE THE STORY

We attach stories to why we do, say, and believe the things we do. Rather than tell yourself the same story, rewrite it and memorize a new and better story.

Instead of saying "I always quit." Rewrite your story to say "It may be hard, but I do not quit."

Rather than say "I am unlovable." Rewrite your story to say "The right people love me and the wrong people do not matter."



PARTNER WITH SOMEONE

From an accountability buddy to a whole team of support, finding people to do new and exciting things with can help you move from a difficult past to the future you crave. Find support and plug into it regularly.



JOURNAL OR TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

Tracking your changes can help you stick to your goals for the future and rework your history. Journaling your feelings, tracking your progress, and working through roadblocks or triggers can help you reflect on the past and use the information to create a better future.



TAKE THE Risk OR Lose THE Chance



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