

Title: From Missteps to Meaning: Reflection as the True North of Growth

There's a popular saying I often share with the leaders and coaches I mentor:

"Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterwards."

This quote resonates because it reflects a truth we all know deeply, especially those of us working in transformational coaching, education, and leadership. Growth doesn't come pre-packaged with clarity and answers. More often, it arrives wrapped in confusion, missteps, with a messy middle, and unexpected outcomes.

The truth is, people need time to engage with complexity. To make mistakes. To try, pivot, and try again. They need space to wrestle with ambiguity and to reflect on what worked, what didn't, and why. It often takes time to gain perspective and recognize how a misstep opened an insight. That kind of engagement fosters meaningful learning and plants seeds of wisdom, not plowing through to an outcome just for surface-level change.

In our work as facilitators and coaches, we can sometimes forget that reflection is not a *bonus* step—it is the *heart* of transformation. When we help others slow down and examine their experiences, we're offering them a gateway to lasting insight. We're helping them move from reactivity to awareness, from doing to understanding.

But reflection requires more than just good questions. It asks us to model something deeper:

- **Tolerating imperfection.**
- **Staying present with mistakes.**
- **Letting discomfort be a teacher, not an obstacle.**

Whether you're working with educators, organizational teams, or fellow leaders, your role is not just to guide—it's to hold space. To help them uncover the lessons their experiences are trying to teach. And that doesn't happen in one session, or even one breakthrough. It unfolds over time, through conversations that invite curiosity and compassion. We help them find and trust their own inner compass to guide their decisions and discoveries.

So here's something to reflect on this week:

**What has helped you to create time and space to find and trust your own inner compass?
What strategies, structures or practices do you use that help those you support find meaning in their experiences, not just move through them?**

Reflection isn't a pause in the learning process—it *is* the process. Let's honor the complexity of real change by staying with the messiness and making space for meaning to emerge.

With reflection and purpose,
Constant Hine