

# MASTER PRACTITIONER SERIES:

## THE REFLECTIVE BRAIN

### PART ONE:

### REFLECTION IN ACTION

For MACRO & MPME

February 27, 2014

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# THE MASTER PRACTITIONER

Transform the Practitioner > The Field > The World

## AGENDA

- Role of the Intervener and Mastery
- Metacognition and Thinking on the Run
- Reflection in Action
- Applying Neuroscience to Conflict Practitioners
- Integrative Thinking
- The Reflective Practice in Conflict
- Mindfulness and Meditation
- Ongoing Care of the Soul

# ROLE of the Intervener: SPIRIT AT WORK

- *“When you work you are a flute through whose heart the whispering of the hours turns to music. To love life through labor is to be intimate with life’s inmost secrets. All work is empty to save when there is love, for love is work made visible.”*

Kahlil Gibran

# BRING YOURSELF TO THE TABLE

- It is essential to be a critical and creative thinker.
- It is essential to know who you are.
- It is essential to be able to think in the flow of conflict.
- It is essential know that you have impact in your role as a change agent.
- It is essential to practice with ethical considerations for the sanctioned power you have in your work.
- It is essential to be aware that you are being invited into the sacred space of conflict.

# The Reflective Mediator

## CAN YOU THINK ON THE FLY?

- Build an effective bridge between theory and practice.
- Understand the neuroscience of communication processing and allow parties to be heard.
- Realize that parties will influence the framing of the communication from personal perception.
- Remain flexible, move with the parties, react quickly.



# METACOGNITION: Pathway of the Master Practitioner

- **METACOGNITION-** thinking about thinking.

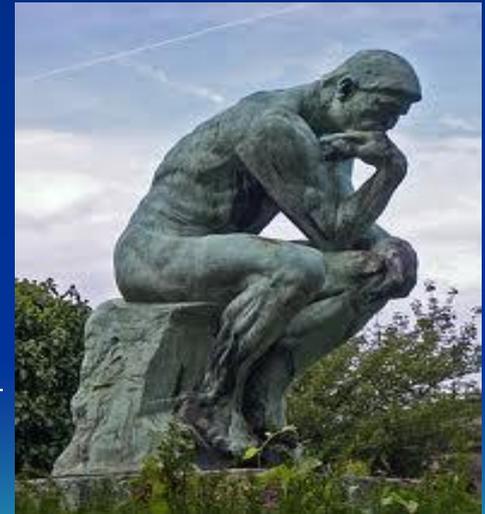
Knowing about how we know. Introspective cognition. It is manifested in self awareness, self-monitoring and conscious intention.

Consists of three basic elements:

*Developing a plan of action*

*Maintaining/monitoring the plan*

*Evaluating the plan*



Source: Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology, V34(3) Fall 2008. <http://www.cjlt.ca/index.php/cjlt/article/viewArticle/507/238>

# Heuristics in Dispute Resolution

- **Heuristic-** to find or discover refers to experience-based techniques for problem solving, learning, and introspective discovery. Heuristic methods speed up the process of finding solutions.
- Strategies using readily accessible though loosely applicable, information to examine problem solving in human dynamics.



# SCHON ON REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

D. Schon [1970]

- 1. Reflection-in-action - reflecting on your actions during an event....how can you maintain momentum- you are hawk like; sharp eyed, making informed decisions based on intuitive split second reflections.
- 2. Reflection-on-action - retrospective reflection, you reflect on actions that have already occurred. What can I do next time to improve things or make use of what you have learned?
- 3. You recall incidents, ruminating in depth on how you can improve your practice; spontaneously while traveling or resting or you may put specific time aside and formally structure your reflections.

# Three Reflective Directions

- First, *reflection-on-action* requires looking back on what one has accomplished and reviewing the actions, thoughts, and product.
- Second, *reflection-in-action*. The individual is responsible for reflecting while in the act of carrying out the task. Reflection-in-action guides the correction of a major component while building hypothesis.
- Finally, *reflection-for-action*. The participant reviews what has been accomplished and identifies constructive guidelines for what needs to be done.

Source: Killion & Todnem (1991). A process for personal theory building. *Educational Leadership*, 48(7), 14-16.

# THE REFLECTIVE MIND

- The reflective mind integrates theory into practice, closes the gap for the practitioner, provides guidance to help look back over events turn them into learning experiences.

# ENHANCEMENT OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

- Record an event where you are aware of reflecting in action, apply retrospective reflection to the same future event.
- What would you do differently?

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PART TWO  
NEUROSCIENCE AND THE  
REFLECTIVE BRAIN

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# THE *INTENTION*:

...is to encourage you to be a  
Master Practitioner and a life long learner,  
to bridge multi-dimensional understanding  
*apply it...*



Science

- *in your own life and*
- *in your field of practice*

Practice

We now have the neuroscience to  
previous theory about human  
dynamics, motivation, development  
and brain neuroplasticity and how this  
relates to spirit.

# Why Study Neuroscience?



- To understand what neuroplasticity means to you.
- To define the mind and understand integration.
- To make sense of systemic thinking, hypothesis and reactivity.
- To understand the effect of trauma on decisions.
- To reduce our own reactivity so interventions remain neutral to the outcome, and focused.
- To use this knowledge to become a Master Practitioner.

# ANTONIO DAMASIO



- Antonio Damasio posited that *somatic signals* bring us a more *integrated* sense of self.

We are conscious throughout our body, neurons are everywhere in the body to give us information.



We think categorically because it assists in memory retrieval. [*hippocampus*]



### *BUT Categorical Thinking...*

- Forms interior boundaries and results in judgment.
- Causes compartmentalized thought.
- Separates us from emotion.
- Impedes *integration, reinforces duality of mind; causes error.*

# HOW DO YOU CORRECT “ERROR” IN CATEGORICAL THOUGHT?

*You integrate brain processing.*  
Thinking with your whole brain allows synchronous neural firing from both hemispheres, and information from all areas of your body speak through the brain.



# HOLISTIC THINKING & NEUROBIOLOGY

- *Why endeavor to be a whole brain thinker?*

*The fact is* ...it requires an understanding of the electrical, chemical, and biological processes [an interdisciplinary approach] to understand the brain, the body, and the mind.



*And...*neurobiology is the study of gene adaptation and mutation, genes are malleable and adapt through outside forces of energy [the environment].

# THE REFLECTIVE MIND

**The Brain** - is the **connective organ**; creates reinforced networks of energy; inform brain processing. It is an electric, chemical, and dynamic organ.



**The Mind**- is the **process** of the brain; determines how we regulate the flow of energy and interpret information.

*The mind makes us who we are.*

{Sources: Kandel, Siegel, LeDoux, Planck, Russell}

# THE REFLECTIVE BRAIN AND NEUROBIOLOGY

*"We are wired to connect in ways that we could not understand before the recent research in the neurosciences."*

*Daniel Goleman*



## *THE Social Skills of a Reflective Practitioner*

- Ability to monitor and manage your emotions
- Ability to motivate your self toward a goal
- Ability to have empathy for others
- Ability to handle conflict and relationships
- Ability to reflect upon learning and reappraise

# EXERCISE TWO:

*What qualities do you have?*

- List three qualities you have that make you effective in your practice?
- List one that promotes mastery through reflective practice.



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PART THREE  
NEUROPHILOSOPHY, MINDFUL  
REFLECTION AND SELF-CARE

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# CHANGING OUR SYSTEM OF THOUGHTS



*“We are disturbed not by what happens to us, but by our thoughts about what happens.”*

*- Epictetus, Enchiridion, V*

# EPICTETUS - 1<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY



*“Nothing external can make us suffer...  
we suffer only when we want things  
to be different from what they are.”*

*-Epictetus, Enchiridion, V*

# EPICTETUS - 1<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

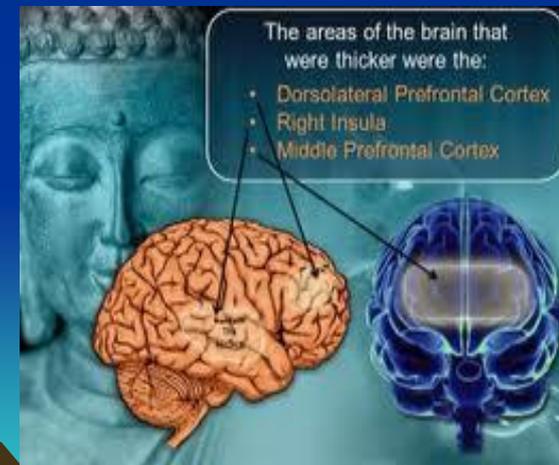


*“No one has the power to hurt you. It is your own thinking about someone’s actions that hurt you.”*

*- Epictetus, Enchiridion, XX*

# THE REFLECTIVE BRAIN: MINDFULNESS

- An ancient method of deliberate, moment by moment attention to thoughts of the mind and spirit.
- A practice of structured intervention, reinforces neural pathways which bypass hysteria and are reinforced daily through intentional peace.
- Purposive concentrated solitude.
- The choice to stay in the vertical moment. *The Power of Now, E. Tolle, 1999*



# REFLECTION THROUGH MEDITATION?

*“The direct experience of your heart, moment to moment, so that others can feel it.” –  
“Meditation in a New York Minute” - Mark Thornton, 2006*

- Through mental stillness, finding the place beyond thought.
- Through breath, experiencing wholeness and interconnectedness directly.
- The practice of becoming present throughout the day.

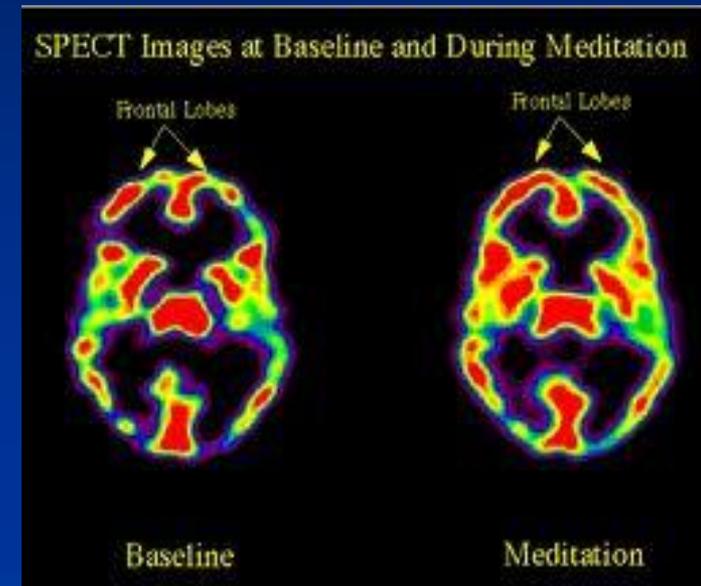
[Sources : Kabat-Zinn, 05; Thornton, 06; Tolle, 99]



# THE REFLECTIVE BRAIN: MINDFULNESS

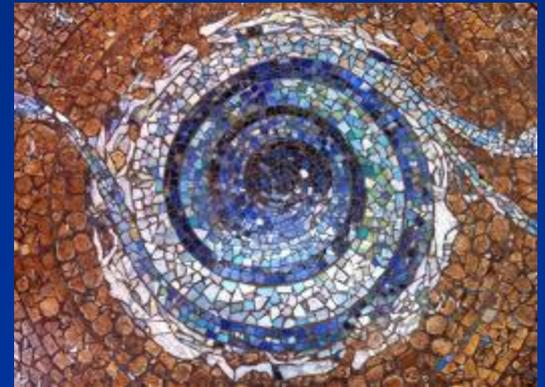
## Why practice mindful reflection?

- Our brains never stop thinking.
- We think we are our thoughts.
- We are self-critics.
- It is not possible to develop mastery in practice without emptying the mind.
- It is not possible to be peaceful unless we can still the “frantic mind”.



# IN MEDITATION...You

- Become still and attend to the inner experience.
- Center, focus and refocus on the inner life.
- Align with your core energy.
- Experience the universe.
- Enhance your ability to join  
with the collective energy of others.



# REFLECTION THROUGH MEDITATION



- Strengthen Your Awareness
- Discover Your Calmness
- Become Alert to Your Consciousness
- Devote Yourself to Spiritual Practice
- Develop Spiritual Intelligence and Mastery
- Deepen Your Ability to Reflect on the Fly

# THE REFLECTIVE BRAIN: BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS

- Neuroplasticity ensures rewiring of the pathways to reinforce positive cognition.
- Is helpful in dealing with stress, developing awareness, and the understanding of others.
- Improves concentration and spawns creativity.
- Allows clarity in intuition.



*It is also the gateway to mastery of creative thought.*

# Calm in a World of Conflict

“There are two ways of spreading light.  
To be the candle or...  
The mirror that reflects it.”

~ *Edith Wharton*



# *STRATEGIES*

## For The Reflective Practitioner in Conflict Systems

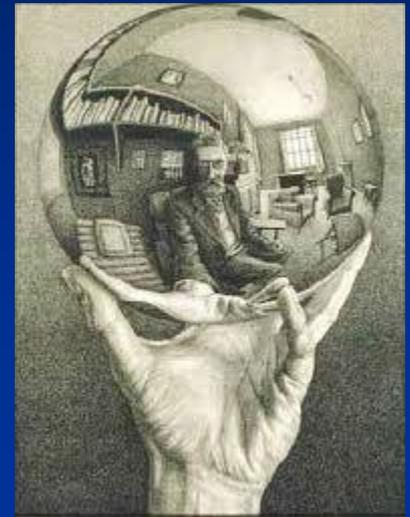
- Never begin without a meditation or prayer.
- Never begin without personal preparation.
- Never begin without clearing your mind.
- Do all of the above *before* you welcome them to your table.
- Be prepared to *RISK* and “mediate dangerously” [K. Cloke, 2005].



# *Exercise Three:*

## *Future Practice Review*

- Write about your most difficult conflict?
- Reflection-on-action: What is one thing you could have done differently?
- Reflection-in-action: Using that idea, can you design a new strategy for application?





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