

School Counsellor Newsletter



The power of Self-reflection

Edition Twenty-one

"We don't learn from experiences, we learn from reflecting on the experience" John Dewey

In this newsletter, the fourth in a series looking at our Wellbeing Superpowers, we take a moment to pause and think about what is helpful for us, what is not so helpful and how we can do things differently and better. This could be particularly useful at the moment as the novelty of life in lockdown and the need for social distancing may be wearing thin. Effective self-reflection helps us to be kind to ourselves and to see the benefit of all experiences. The quote above from John Dewey, an American philosopher, psychologist, education reformer and prominent scholar from the first half of the 20th century, emphasises the importance of not only doing and trying things but to think about what we do. In thinking about what we do, we can ensure our future experiences are as good, or even better, than before. I encourage you to take the time to talk with your son about self-reflection, how he does this at school, and how he does it at home, at practices or in clubs, so that it becomes a regular and useful part of his daily life. It is also something that you can model to him so that he can see its benefits and think of it as a lifelong pursuit.

Self-reflection can be defined as thinking about one's actions and behaviours to improve or meet one's goals. Like our other Wellbeing Superpowers, self-reflection has many benefits

such as increasing control of our emotions and actions, improving how well we pay attention and learn, improving our day to day functioning and organisation, and boosting our coping strategies.

An easy 3-step way to self-reflect after any experience is to ask yourself:

- what worked well?
- what didn't work so well?
- how can I make things better next time?

It can also be a helpful practice to then have a conversation about your responses to family members or friends so that they can reflect and provide feedback to you as well. Other people often notice different things, that we do not see about ourselves, and are often less critical than we are on ourselves. We might then include this in our self-reflection.

Here are some different activities to try and different ways to approach self-reflection:

Revisit other Superpowers and self-reflect by accessing this great resource from Big Life Journal: [I can train my brain to be positive.](#)

Day One: Using pages 1-5 create the poster and use the 3-step self-reflection questions about this process. Day Two: Try one or more of the activities and use the 3-step self-reflection questions about your experiences. Day Three: Try some more activities and use the 3-step self-reflection questions about your experiences. Did one or more of the activities on the poster help to

make things better? How could you use this more in future experiences?

Self-reflection in relation to

COVID-19. This activity may suit older students, or you could adapt the questions for younger students. We might not be able to control the laws and rules about lockdown but we can control what we do in lockdown and how we reflect and learn from it. Access this article and read through it or just scroll down to the reflection questions: [20 questions to ask instead of "How are you doing right now?".](#) Try asking friends and family members and listen carefully to their answers as well.

Continue to practise Mindfulness.

By paying attention to the present moment with an open heart and mind you can reflect on what worked, what didn't work well, and how to make things better next time.



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If you wish to discuss the services the school counsellor can provide please see your son's homeroom teacher or Amos Pilgrim amos.pilgrim@medbury.school.nz.