Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

A framework for structured reflection on experience — Appendix

Developed by Professor Graham Gibbs in 1988. Use it alongside the PROSPER framework's Reflect stages, or on its own after any significant leadership experience — a feedback debrief, a difficult conversation, a moment that did not go as planned.

1. Description *What happened?*	Describe the situation objectively. Context, who was involved, what you did, what others did. Stick to observable facts — no interpretations or judgments yet.
2. Feelings *What were you thinking and feeling?*	Your emotional response before, during, and after. Acknowledge them honestly — unexamined emotion distorts the reflection that follows.
3. Evaluation *What went well, and what did not?*	An honest assessment. Hold both sides — the temptation is to focus on what went wrong, but include what you handled well and would do the same way again.
4. Analysis *What sense can you make of it?*	The deeper thinking. Why did things unfold this way? What does your response tell you about your assumptions, habits, or patterns under pressure? What might others have experienced?
5. Conclusion *What else could you have done?*	What alternatives were available? What would you do differently if you encountered the same situation again? What does this tell you about something you need to develop?
6. Action Plan *What will you do next time?*	Turn conclusions into specific intentions. This connects directly to the Strategize and Prepare stages of the PROSPER framework.

The cycle is designed to be repeated. Over time, the questions become instinctive — you will find yourself moving through them naturally in the moment. That internalization is the goal.