

# Using Reflection to Leverage Results

A sample coaching conversation illustrating the power of reflection, by Michael Essenburg

*A meeting in a coffee shop near a train station*



Bill: Hey, it's good to see you again, Michael! You know, after our conversation a couple of months ago, I made a real commitment to getting better results in my personal life and in my ministry.

Michael: *What's happened since you made your commitment?*

Bill: A lot. I've completed several projects, including preparing a set of lessons for the English classes I teach, sending out a newsletter, and updating my photo albums. I've organized several events—a concert, a workshop, and a surprise birthday party for a friend. And I've learned to say “no” to some requests, to respond to my e-mail twice a day (instead of throughout the day), and to start using calendar software to map out how I'll get my goals done.

Michael: *Good for you!*

Bill: Yeah, I feel pretty good. Focusing on results has helped me see that I really do have limited time and energy. I can't really take on more things, but I still want better results. What can I do to leverage my results?

Michael: *Before I respond to your question, can you reflect on what you learned from getting projects done, organizing events, and*

*learning new things?*

Bill: OK. As I said, focusing on results has helped me make better choices about how I focus my time and energy. Making a commitment to ministry results meant saying “no” to some requests—and now I feel OK about saying “no.” I realize I'm saying “no” in order to carry out the ministry God has given me. I feel less guilty and less stressed out about saying “no.”

## Ask questions to help others reflect

- What did you learn?
- What insights did you have?
- What discoveries did you make?
- What was helpful?

## In the following situations, what questions can you ask to help others reflect?

- An event your team organized is now finished.
- Someone you supervise is reporting on a project she has completed.
- Someone you coach is sharing the progress he has made on a personal goal.
- You've facilitated an all-day strategy meeting. Your organization now has a strategy statement that is clearer and more specific.
- You have just finished collaborating with other board members to identify your organization's core values.

Michael: *Pretty powerful learning. What else did you learn?*

Bill: That I can save time in the long run by taking time to learn new things. Like calendar software. It took me some time and frustration to learn to use it to map out my goals. But now my plans are a little better. And mapping out my goals helped me finish updating my photo albums.

Michael: *What else did you learn?*

Bill: I need to make a deeper commitment to achieving my priorities. When I'm not clear on my priorities and when I

haven't made a definite commitment to my priorities, I'm more likely to spend too much time on e-mail. I used the time I saved on doing e-mail to work on my friend's party and to get my newsletter done.

Michael: *You've learned some key things. How can you use your learning to leverage your results?*

Bill: I think I'll continue reviewing and documenting my priorities, making a plan for each priority, and entering each plan into my calendar. That will help me make sure I'll get the results I want. It'll also help me know how much time I have available to say “yes” to appropriate requests.

Michael: *That sounds good. Earlier you asked me, “What can I do to leverage my results?” How would you answer your question now?*

Bill: Oh! I guess I just answered myself, didn't I? I can leverage my results by reflecting on them and applying what I learn from my reflection. I need to do that all the time!

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