



## A Narrative Framework for Reflection

*Narrative, through reflection, nurtures mindfulness. Narrative is mindful practice, mindful research, mindful teaching. Hence the more I reflect on my experience, the more aware I become of those things in my practice. It is a spiral that feeds itself leading to a higher level of consciousness, towards enlightenment.*

(Johns, 2011)

## What is this?

This narrative framework for reflection is based on theories of narrative-based learning. According to Bruner (1991), "we organise our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative-stories." Bruner also emphasises the subjective nature of narratives. There is no requirement for narratives to be logical or empirically verifiable, yet, in drawing out the story from our experiences, we can discover new meaning and perspectives. We can get to the core of what matters to us.

## When should I use it?

Use this framework to draw out the learning after a longer experience. For example, after a project or engagement. It might lead to a case study, or something you can share internally. Perhaps you will compare and contrast narratives with members of your team.

## How do I use it?

Articulate each of the story elements in turn, using the prompts to guide your reflection. Delete the prompts as you go, ignoring any that don't feel relevant to you.



| Story element                   | Prompt  |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>The actor</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who is this story about?</li><li>• What do they care about?</li><li>• What are their unique challenges or frustrations?</li></ul>                         |
| <b>The problem or challenge</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the problem or challenge they are facing?</li><li>• What makes it a problem for them?</li><li>• What will happen if it isn't addressed?</li></ul> |
| <b>The goal or desire</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do they want to make happen?</li><li>• Where do they want to get to?</li><li>• What beliefs or assumptions underlie this goal?</li></ul>             |
| <b>The actions</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What steps will they take to meet the goal?</li></ul>   |
| <b>The obstacles</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What's stopping them from making this journey?</li><li>• What gets in their way?</li></ul>  |
| <b>The enablers</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What or who will help them overcome the obstacles?</li><li>• How?</li></ul>   |
| <b>The result</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What happens?</li><li>• Where do they end up?</li></ul>   |
| <b>The learning</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do they discover along the way?</li><li>• How have they changed through this process?</li></ul>  |

## References

Johns, C. (2011). Guided Reflection: A Narrative Approach to Advancing Professional Practice. Wiley-Blackwell.

Bruner, J. (1991). [The narrative construction of reality](#). Critical Inquiry 18(1): 1-21.