

# Personal Retrospectives: Self-acquaintance and Agility



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# Agenda

## What is a Personal Retrospective?

### The Approach

- Clarify the Purpose
- Assess Decision-making Influences
- Gather Data
- Distill the Learning
- Transform Learning into Plans

# What is a Personal Retrospective?

An active framework, individually unique,  
for exploring where we are now (the result of  
our past) or a particular event or time period,  
with an explicit intention of using the  
reflections to shape a different future.

# Self-acquaintance and Agility

Self-acquaintance is a tool for personal agility.



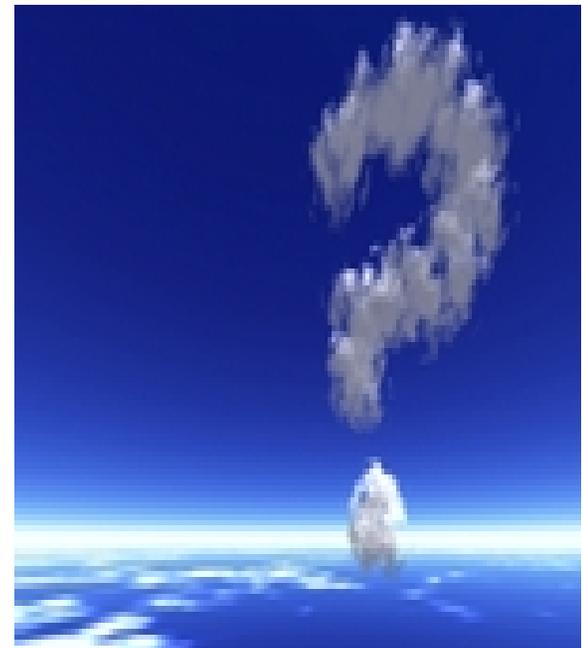
# The Power of Questions

*“We make our world significant by the courage of our questions, and the depth of our answers.”* \_\_ Albert Einstein

The act of questioning can trigger decisions that dramatically change our lives.

Why are questions so powerful?

Because the beginnings of change are in the questions we ask..



# The Approach

Clarify the Purpose

Assess Decision-making Influences

*Why do I choose that?*

Gather Data

*What happened?*

*How did I feel and react?*

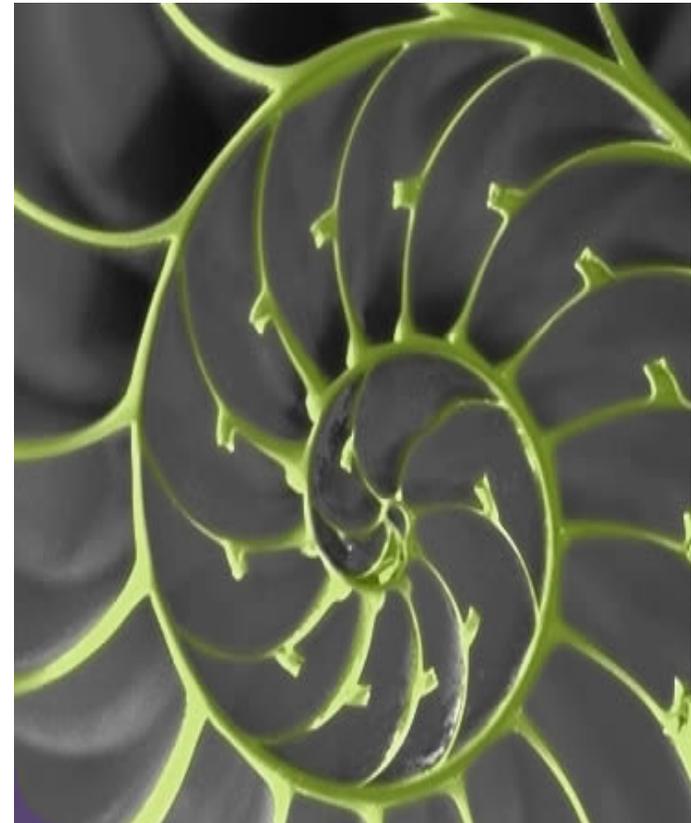
Distill the Learning

*What does this tell me?*

*Why was it significant?*

Transform Learning into Plans

*What specifically will I do?*



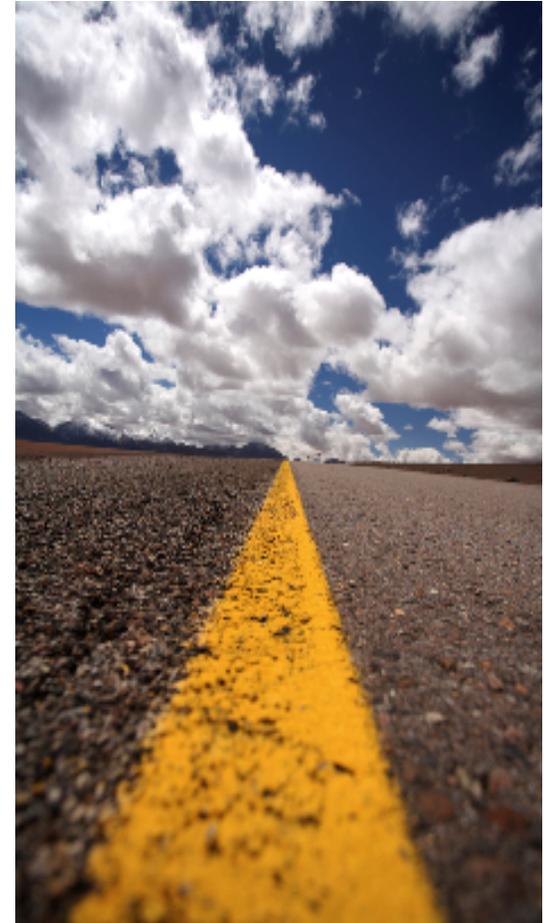
# Clarify the Purpose

**What prompted your decision to have a retrospective?**

“During the last iteration I continually spoke against the design rewrite and the team called me on it. I get the feeling that I do this in other areas as well...”

**What are you seeking to accomplish as a result of the work?**

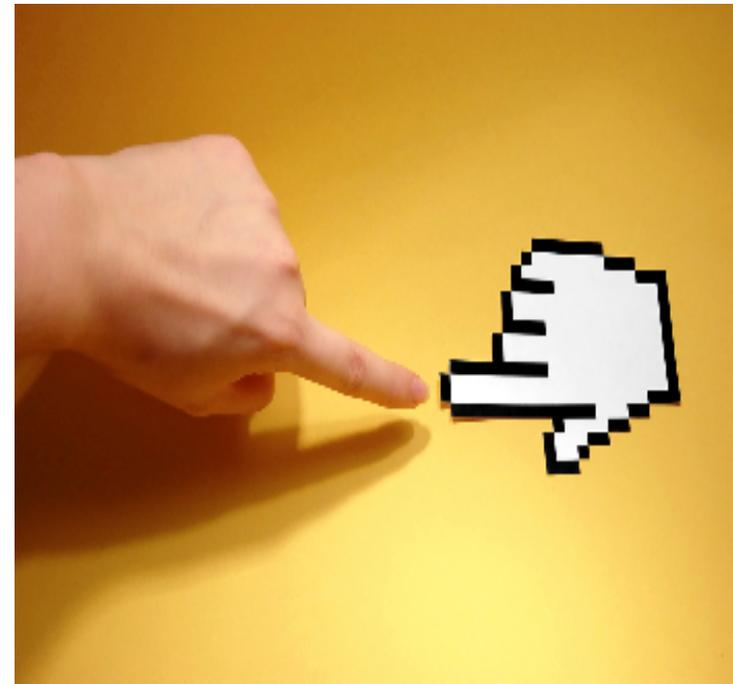
Purpose: To reduce my resistance to change.



# Assess Decision-making Influences

Many factors can influence the way we make decisions and may result in blind spots that create barriers to learning and development.

- Ways we arrive at knowledge
- Assumptions about the future
- Values
- Level of self-appreciation



# What Are My Sources of Knowledge?

Hunter Lewis - six modes by which we choose to “arrive at knowledge.”

<b>Authority</b>	Taking someone else’s word, having faith in an outside authority.
<b>Deductive Logic (Reason)</b>	Using consistency tests of deductive reasoning. <i>Since A is true, B must be true, because B follows from A.</i>
<b>Sense Experience</b>	Gaining direct knowledge through our own five senses.
<b>Emotion</b>	Feeling that something is right. <i>I just feel that this is the right thing.</i>
<b>Intuition</b>	Unconscious thinking that is not emotional.
<b>Scientific Method</b>	Performing an experiment

# What Are My Assumptions About the Future?

Assumptions about the future, consciously or unconsciously, justified or unjustified, have an impact on our present day actions.

- What do I assume I will never change about myself?
- What limits or expands my choices?
- What do I want people to think of when they hear my name?



# What Are My Values?

Values represent the relative importance of things that matter to us and at times our ethical boundaries.

Values inspire principles which inform our choices and actions.

We often learn what our values truly are when they conflict with each other or other decision-making influences.

Value Statement examples:

- Honesty trumps expediency
- Moderation in all things
- Family comes first
- I practice what I preach



# What is My Level of Self-appreciation?

How does my memory of the past influence the expectations I have for myself?

“Regardless of what we discover, we must understand and truly believe that everyone did the best job he or she could, given what was known at the time, his or her skills and abilities, the resources available, and the situation at hand.”

— *Project Retrospectives: A Handbook for Team Reviews*, by Norm Kerth

# The Approach

## Clarify the Purpose

- *What prompted your decision?*
- *What are you seeking to accomplish as a result of the work?*

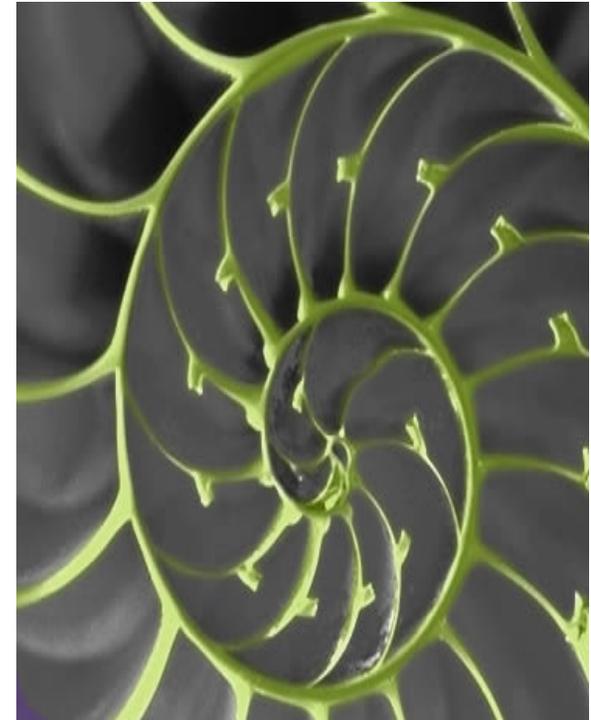
## Assess Decision-making Influences

- *Sources of Knowledge*
- *Assumptions about the Future*
- *Values*
- *Level of Self-appreciation*

## Gather Data

## Distill the Learning

## Transform Learning into Plans



# Gather Data

Gathering data is not intended to measure success or failure – the purpose is only to provide information.

Use methods that will best support your own learning preferences.

- Lists
- Radar Charts



# Gather Data - Create Lists

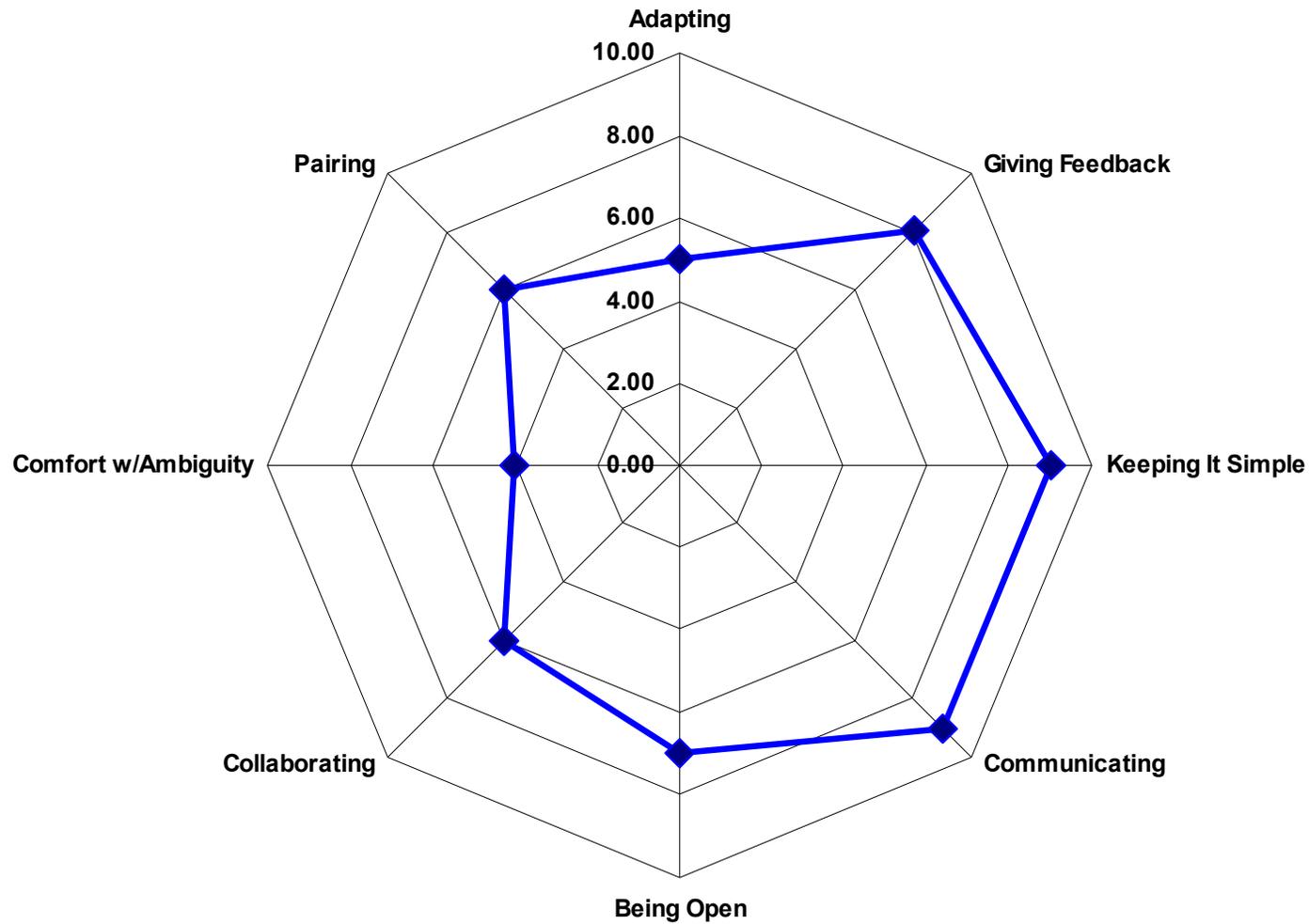
**Retrospective Purpose:** To reduce my resistance to change.

- times I've enjoyed change
- triggers that provoke my need to control
- physical changes that occur when I resist
- excuses
- what I do well and want to keep doing/improve
- traits I value the most in people
- what I need to protect myself from
- situations where I follow instead of lead
- other things I resist
- what I tell others about change



# Gather Data - Radar Charts

**Retrospective Purpose:** To reduce my resistance to change.



# Distill the Learning

**Lists** – Select a list. For each item in the list, quickly capture 3 things you associate with it (logic not required). Review your association items. What patterns, similarities, or differences do you see?

**Five Whys** – Ask “Why” five times to get to the root cause.

**Five “What does that allow me to do?”** – or other interesting question

**Patterns and Shifts** – Look for connections between fact and feelings. (*Agile Retrospectives*)

# Distill the Learning

**Radar Chart** - Create a second-level Radar Chart to drill down on an axis where you'd like to improve performance.

Identify meaningful aspects of the axis to become the new axis points.

What questions could you ask?

- How would things change if this changed?
- What is my true ability?
- What are my beliefs about my ability?
- Are my beliefs associated with anything else?

# Distill the Learning

Consider questions to surface meaning in data:

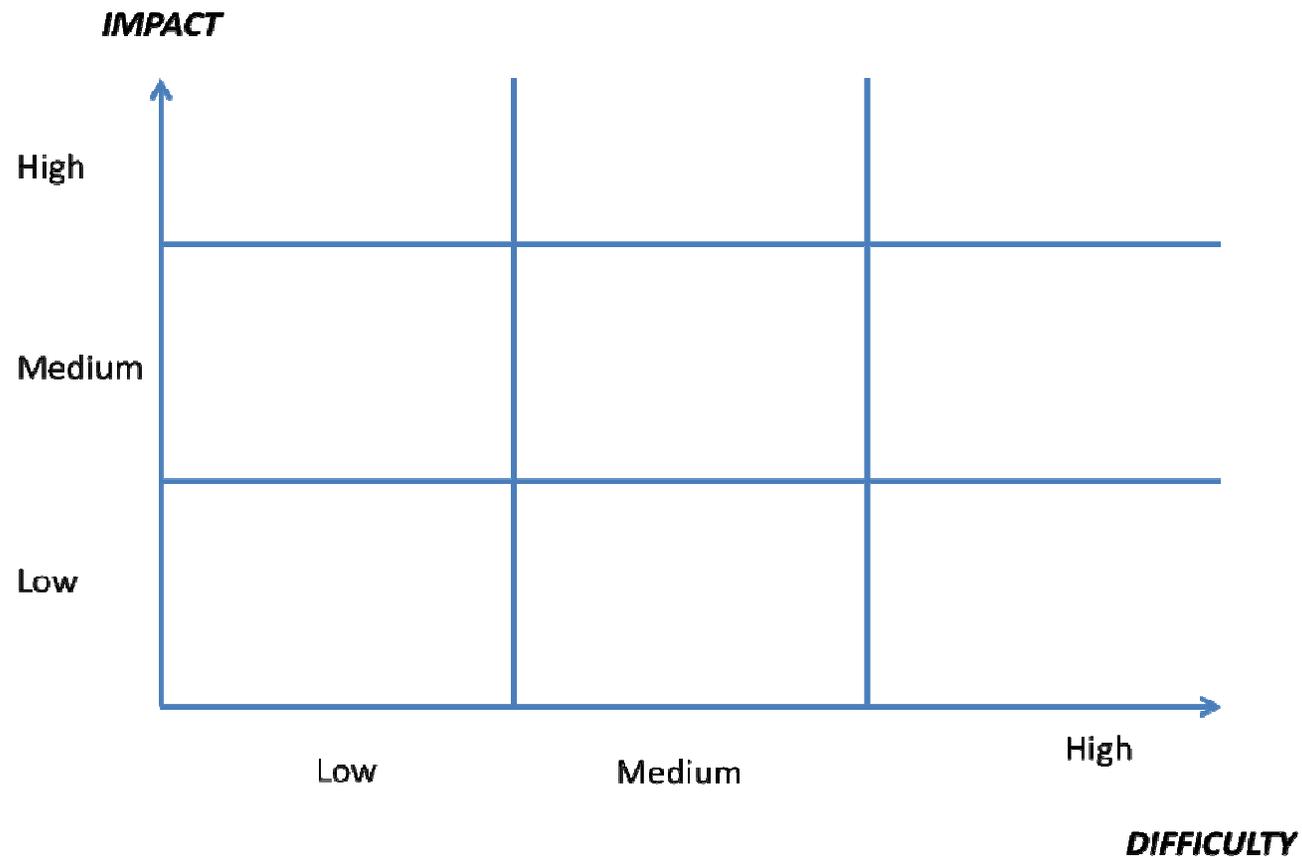
- Am I surprised or puzzled by anything?
- If I can't put it into words, how can I express it?
- Is the reward out of synch with the investment?
- What limits or expands my options?
- What has helped or hindered me to reach my potential?
- What have I neglected?
- Are there common threads? How are they connected?
- What would be possible if I trusted myself more?
- Do I believe that I really have choices?
- What do I see now that wasn't obvious before?

What else could you ask?

# Transform Learning into Plans

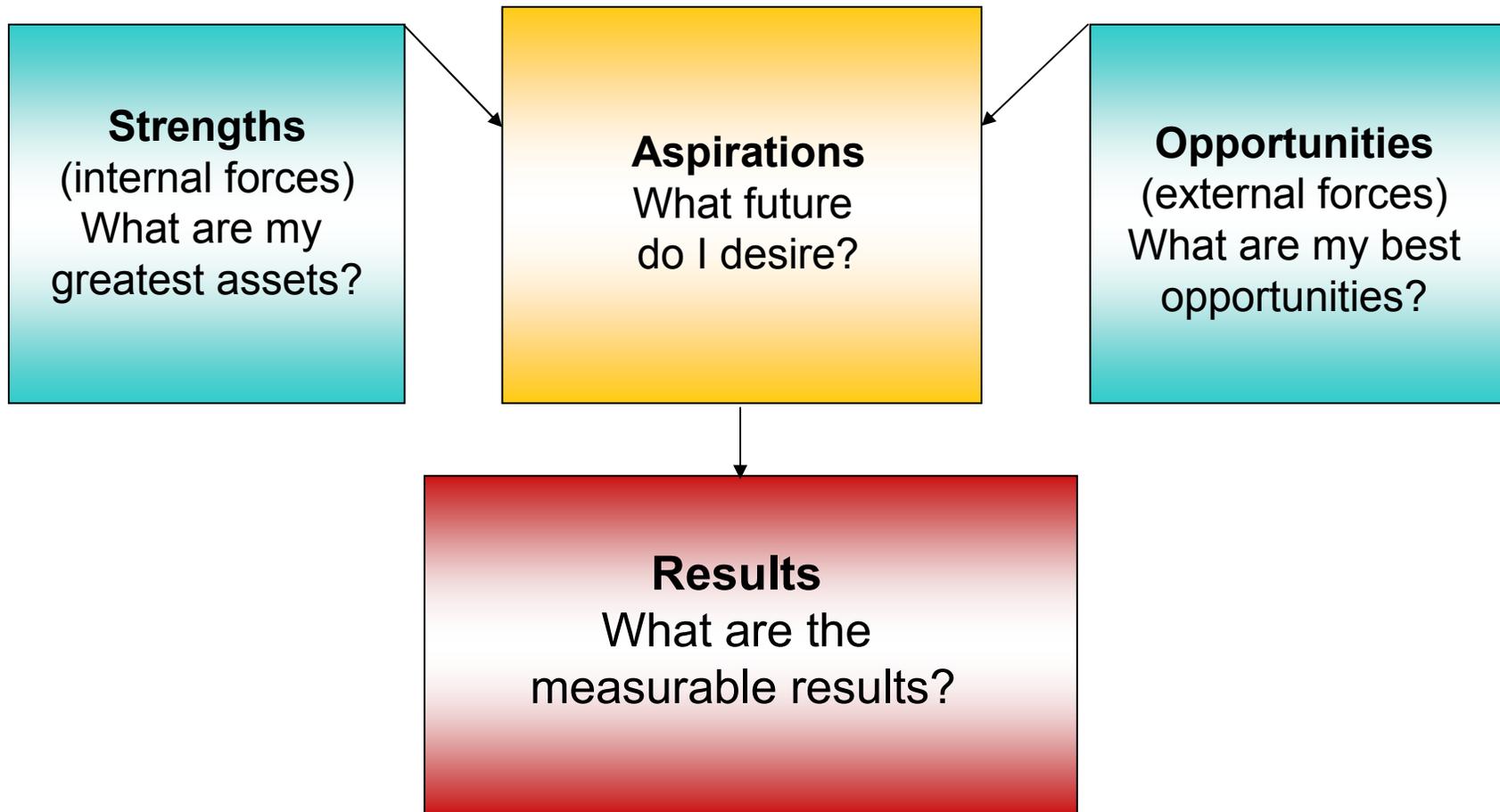
Create a backlog of stories/recommendations to address the learnings.

Prioritize the stories; plot each story on the grid.



# Transform Learning into Plans

## SOAR – A Strategic Approach to Planning



# Transform Learning into Plans

Create a set of explicit actions to implement your stories:

- exactly what you will do
- how you will know that it's done
- when it will be done



# Further

Nothing will work unless  
you do. \_\_ Maya Angelou

Learn from yesterday, live for  
today, hope for tomorrow. The  
important thing is not to stop  
questioning. \_\_ Albert Einstein

If you think taking care of  
yourself is selfish, change your  
mind. If you don't, you're simply  
ducking your responsibilities.  
\_\_ Ann Richards



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