REFLECT & RESET:
A STAFF RETRO CONVERSATION

Simple reflection conversations that help teams learn and improve together.

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WHAT ARE RETROS?

Retrospectives, or "retros," are short team reflection conversations where a group looks back on a project, event, or time period to discuss what worked well, what was challenging, and what could improve next time.

The goal is to learn from real experiences so teams can celebrate successes, strengthen collaboration, and make small improvements moving forward. **Try one of the six retro activities in this resource** with your team to spark reflection and identify one small improvement to carry into your next project or event.

KEY BENEFITS

Capture learning while it's fresh: Teams can quickly identify what helped them succeed and what they would adjust next time.

Strengthen team voice: Staff have a structured opportunity to share ideas, observations, and insights about their work.

Turn reflection into improvement: Small adjustments identified during a retro can make future projects smoother and more effective.

Start, Stop, Continue

Great for: Staff meetings, end of a quarter, after an event.

This simple retro format helps teams quickly reflect on what's working and what could improve. It keeps the conversation balanced by recognizing successes while also identifying opportunities to adjust.

How it works:
Staff add ideas to each category using sticky notes or a shared document. After posting responses, review the themes together and identify one or two ideas your team wants to try moving forward.

- **Start:** What is something we should try moving forward?
- **Stop:** What is something that isn't helping and could be dropped?
- **Continue:** What is working well that we should keep doing?

Leader Tip: Have staff write ideas on sticky notes and place them on a poster. Then group similar ideas and discuss the biggest themes together.

The 4 L's Retro

Great for: End of a semester, major initiative, school event, or new program rollout.

This reflection format helps teams explore their experiences in a thoughtful way. Instead of only focusing on what went well or what didn't, the four prompts encourage staff to reflect on successes, lessons learned, gaps, and future possibilities.

How it works:
Create four sections on a board or chart paper labeled Liked, Learned, Lacked, and Longed For. Give staff a few minutes to write their reflections on sticky notes and place them in the category that fits best. Review the notes together, discuss common themes, and identify one or two ideas the team wants to carry forward.

- **Liked:** What worked well?
- **Learned:** What did we discover or realize?
- **Lacked:** What was missing that would have helped?
- **Longed For:** What do we wish we had or could try next time?

Leader Tip: Ask each person to add one note in each category to keep the conversation balanced and encourage a variety of perspectives.

School Year Timeline

Great for: End of a semester or end-of-year reflection.

This visual reflection activity helps teams step back and see the bigger picture of the school year. Mapping key moments on a timeline allows staff to recognize highlights, acknowledge challenges, and capture lessons that can guide future planning.

How it works: Draw a large timeline across a wall, whiteboard, or poster and divide it into time periods from the school year. Give staff sticky notes and invite them to add moments that stood out. Once the timeline is filled in, review it together and discuss patterns, successes, and insights to carry into the next year.

- **Timeline Sections:** Create sections for August–September, October–December, January–March, and April–May to represent key parts of the school year.
- **Staff Add Sticky Notes:** Invite staff to add notes that highlight memorable successes, challenges the team faced, and lessons learned along the way.
- **Discussion Prompts:** After reviewing the timeline, ask the group: What patterns do we notice? What helped our team succeed? What would we adjust next year?

Leader Tip: Encourage staff to include both small and big moments. Often the everyday experiences reveal the most valuable insights for future improvement.

"One Thing" Retro

Great for: Quick staff meeting reflections or monthly check-ins.

This quick retro format helps teams pause briefly to reflect without taking much time. It focuses on identifying one success, one challenge, and one idea to try next, helping teams continuously improve through small adjustments.

How it works:
Ask staff to reflect on the past month, project, or event and respond to three simple prompts. After sharing responses, look for common themes and choose one action the team will test moving forward.

Prompt Questions:
- One thing that worked really well this month
- One challenge we should learn from
- One thing we should try next

Leader Tip: Focus on choosing just one action step. Small, clear improvements are more likely to happen than a long list of ideas.

Rose, Thorn, Bud Retro

Great for: Staff meetings, end of a unit, or reflecting on a school event.

This reflection format encourages teams to notice both successes and opportunities for growth. It keeps the conversation balanced by celebrating what worked while also identifying challenges and future possibilities.

How it works:
Create three sections labeled Rose, Thorn, and Bud. Staff write responses on sticky notes and place them in the category that fits best. Review the responses together and discuss what the team wants to continue or explore next.

Prompt Categories:
- Rose: Something positive that worked well.
- Thorn: A challenge or difficulty the team experienced.
- Bud: A new idea or opportunity to try moving forward.

Leader Tip: Encourage staff to add at least one Bud. It helps shift the conversation from problems to possibilities.

Kudos Retro

Great for: Ending a semester, event, or staff meeting on a positive note.

This retro focuses on recognition and appreciation while still capturing lessons learned. Many teams include recognition in retrospectives because it strengthens trust and team morale.

How it works:
Ask staff to write short "kudos" notes recognizing colleagues who helped the team succeed. After sharing the notes, briefly reflect on what made those moments successful and what the team can continue doing.

Prompt Ideas:
- Who helped make something difficult easier?
- Who deserves a thank you this month?
- What teamwork moment stood out?

Leader Tip: Collect the kudos and post them in the staff lounge or share them in the next staff newsletter.
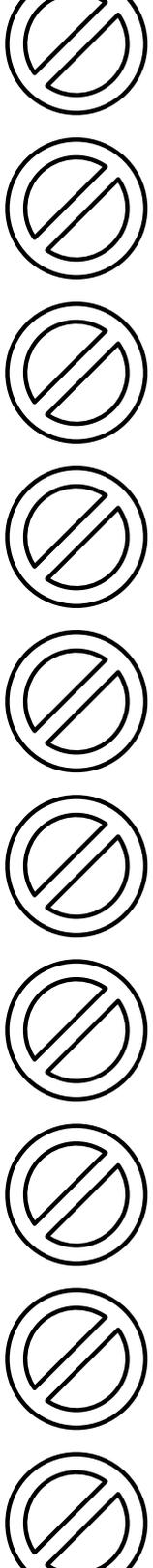
PRINTABLES FOR:
START, STOP, CONTINUE

START

What is something we should try moving forward?

STOP

What is something that isn't helping and could be dropped?

CONTINUE

What is working well that we should keep doing?

START, STOP CONTINUE

Name:

Start: What is something we should try moving forward?

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Stop: What is something that isn't helping and could be dropped?

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Continue: What is working well that we should keep doing?

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START, STOP CONTINUE

Name:

Start: What is something we should try moving forward?

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Stop: What is something that isn't helping and could be dropped?

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Continue: What is working well that we should keep doing?

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What is working well that we should keep doing? _____

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What is something we should try moving forward?

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What is something that isn't helping and could be dropped?

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What is working well that we should keep doing? _____

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PRINTABLES FOR:
4 L'S RETRO

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Name:

Liked: What worked well?

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Learned: What did we discover or realize?

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Lacked: What was missing that would have helped?

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Longed For: What do we wish we had or could try next time?

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4 L'S RETRO

Name:

One thing I liked

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One thing I learned

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One thing we lacked

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One thing I long for next time

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PRINTABLES FOR:
SCHOOL YEAR TIMELINE

August - September

Add sticky notes to the timeline to capture moments that stood out during the year. Use the icons below on your notes to highlight successes, challenges, or lessons learned.

☆ Highlights   ◉ Challenges   ♡ Lessons Learned

October - December

Add sticky notes to the timeline to capture moments that stood out during the year. Use the icons below on your notes to highlight successes, challenges, or lessons learned.

☆ Highlights   ◉ Challenges   ♡ Lessons Learned

January - March

Add sticky notes to the timeline to capture moments that stood out during the year. Use the icons below on your notes to highlight successes, challenges, or lessons learned.

☆ Highlights   ◎ Challenges   ♡ Lessons Learned

April - May/June

Add sticky notes to the timeline to capture moments that stood out during the year. Use the icons below on your notes to highlight successes, challenges, or lessons learned.

☆ Highlights   ⟲ Challenges   ♡ Lessons Learned

PRINTABLES FOR:
ONE THING RETRO

NAME:

One thing that worked well this month:

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One challenge we should learn from:

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One thing we should try next:

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NAME:

One thing that worked well this month:

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NAME:

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ONE THING RETRO

Name:

One thing that worked well this month:

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One challenge we should learn from:

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PRINTABLES FOR:
ROSE, THORN, BUD RETRO

ROSE, THORN, BUD RETRO

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Rose: Something positive that worked well.

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Thorn: A challenge or difficulty the team experienced.

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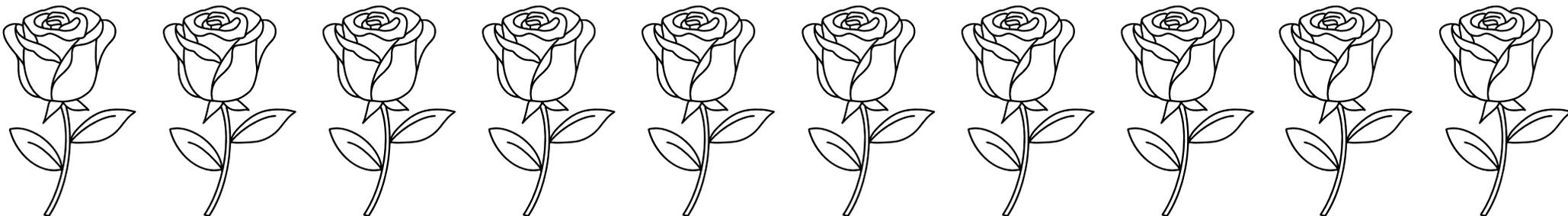**Bud:** A new idea or opportunity to try moving forward.

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ROSE

Something positive that worked well.

THORN

A challenge or difficulty the team experienced.

BUD

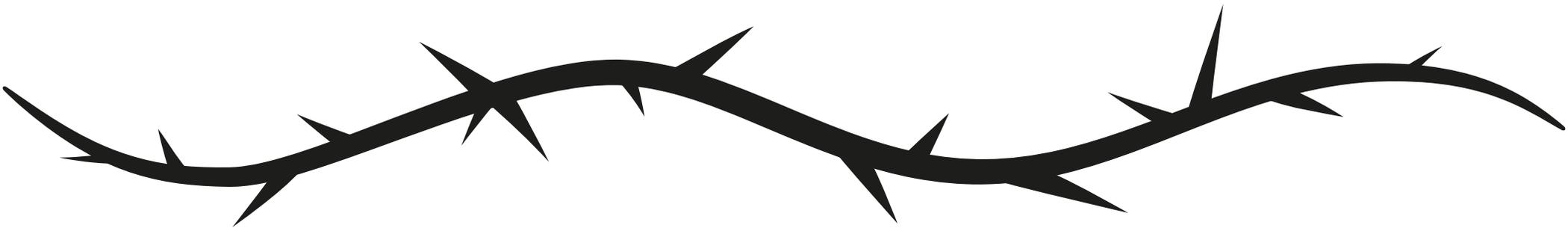## A new idea or opportunity to try moving forward.

PRINTABLES FOR:
KUDOS RETRO

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Who helped make something difficult easier?

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Who deserves a thank you this month?

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What teamwork moment stood out?

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NEED PRIZE IDEAS?

CHECK OUT OUR PRINTABLE COUPONS!

Choose from over 15 options, print the ones that fit your staff best, and celebrate their efforts with meaningful breaks and perks!

REWARD & RECOGNIZE

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COZY & COMFY!

TEAM SNACK ATTACK

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Rejected
Unseen
Energized
Heal
Guarded
Removed
Enriching
Assured
Lonely
Disconnec...
Befriended
Motivated
Rejected
Str
Cautious
Underrepo...
Revitalized

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