



Mentoring For Mentors



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What Is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a one-to-one relationship, usually over a set period of time, in which an established business or professional person (mentor) provides consistent support, guidance and practical help for a less experienced person (mentee).

It is a voluntary relationship, which the mentee or mentor can end at any time.

Mentoring is a way of enabling the mentee to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to perform at a higher level, and of giving them access to impartial, non-judgmental guidance and support.

During the mentoring-process the mentor shares their personal skills, knowledge and experience with the mentee to enable him or her to explore their personal and professional situation. It is a two-way process in which the mentor and mentee work together to set and achieve predetermined goals and objectives.

What is a Mentor?

A mentor is someone who will encourage and support a mentee to make the most of their career or business. As a mentor, your role is to be a trusted confidante, helping the mentee to make informed choices.

Although the final decisions are always in the mentee's hands, a mentor can be invaluable in guiding the mentee to consider the options, get new information and identify the support they need.

Mentor characteristics

- > Enthusiasm
- > Passion
- > A desire to make a difference
- > Willingness to share experience
- > The desire to inspire
- > An approachable manner
- > Good listening, questioning and feedback skills

What Can You Achieve from Being A Mentor?

- > Personal fulfilment from investing in others
- > New mentoring skills
- > A feeling of being valued as a role model
- > The chance to enjoy a rewarding challenge
- > The chance to be inspired and enlightened

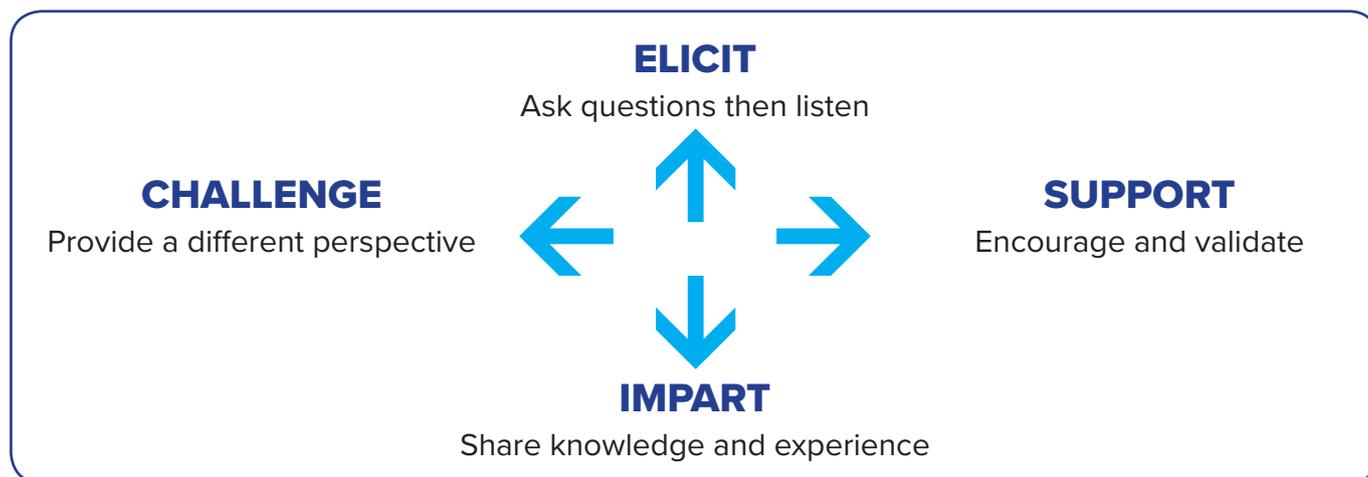
The Mentor's Role

The traditional view of a mentor is someone who shares experience and imparts knowledge. In contemporary mentoring a mentor does a lot more listening than talking.

A mentor's role isn't to tell a mentee what to do, it is to act as a guide. A mentor asks questions and draws out the mentee's own thoughts before offering advice and providing additional options.

A mentor also challenges, offers a different perspective, another point of view and provides support.

While no two mentoring relationships are the same, all mentoring relationships should start with the same solid foundations.



MENTORS PULL – THEY DON'T PUSH

A mentor never “pushes”, whether by telling, instructing or giving advice.

MENTORS PULL

- They listen to understand
- They ask questions
- They will paraphrase and summarise discussions
- They can suggest options
- They will give feedback
- They can offer guidance
- They help mentees to solve their problems

A mentor should expect to:

- > Encourage mentees to develop their own resourcefulness: mentoring does not mean giving advice – it is up to the mentee to decide whether to use the information they receive from their mentor.
- > Guide the mentee to look at a wide variety of options and consider alternative courses of action in order to solve problems for themselves, rather than to give answers or provide solutions.
- > Be a sounding-board and provide a link into other information and people who can help. The mentor doesn't need to have all the answers.
- > Help the mentee gain new personal skills, experiences and knowledge.
- > Provide an outside perspective on the mentee and their career.
- > Help the mentee to develop new attitudes and behaviour, thereby improving both their personal and business performance.
- > Listen, in confidence, to the things that are worrying the mentee about their career.
- > Help the mentee by sharing their own experience of failures and successes.
- > Give friendly, unbiased support and guidance.
- > Facilitate decision-making by suggesting alternatives based on personal experience
- > Provide honest and constructive feedback.
- > Provide ongoing support and encouragement.

Sometimes all a mentee needs is to talk to someone and this process in itself will make actions and solutions obvious. The mentoring process then becomes a catalyst for change.



Effective Mentoring Relationships

What is an effective mentoring relationship?

Based on the results of a number of studies on effective mentor/mentee relationships, the following are a number of pointers to help develop an effective mentoring relationship:

- > **Develop trust.** Both mentor and mentee need to be patient to develop a relationship of trust. It may take time for a mentee to develop trust in their new mentor.
- > **Consider your purpose** in the relationship as one based upon giving. Understanding that, at least initially, the relationship could be one-directional.
- > **Offer reassurance and support.** Don't be afraid to tell your mentee that you believe in them, too few people ever hear these words.
- > **Suggest ways to solve problems.** Try to listen carefully and offer possible solutions without passing judgement. Practical suggestions rather than criticism or instructions are usually most helpful for your mentee. Whenever possible, try to think together of ways to solve a problem, rather than telling your mentee what you think she/he should do.
- > **Identify the mentee's interests and take them seriously.** Try to include your mentee in determining both the activities you engage in and the areas in which you offer help.
- > **Do not force the mentee to talk about personal issues.** Delving into your mentee's personal or family life, particularly early in the relationship, is usually not productive. If your mentee resists sharing information, don't push. Silence does not necessarily mean rejection. It's important not to measure a relationship's success by the extent of the mentee's disclosure.
- > **Have realistic expectations.** Many mentors get discouraged when they feel their mentees aren't "turning their lives around" or making huge improvements. Although you certainly will have an impact on your mentee, it is unlikely that she / he will be totally transformed by this relationship. Gains may seem small, but they are nonetheless signs of progress. Adjusting your expectations and understanding that your mentee may not always express gratitude directly will help prevent mentor "burnout" and frustration.
- > **Try to relate to your mentee's personal experiences.** Although you may not have faced the same problems as your mentee, try to reference them to some of the difficulties you have had within your career.

Attempt to understand your mentee's family, social class and culture.