



Mentoring

Many successful business people offer their services as Mentors as a way of supplementing their Retirement income. This section looks at the skills needed to be an effective Mentor and a receptive Mentee.

Good mentoring programs prepare mentors and mentees by clarifying their roles and defining their time and energy commitments. Mentees have to feel comfortable in sharing their weaknesses with the mentors, and mentors have to be willing to bow out of a relationship that they can't give sufficient time to or aren't able to assist the mentee in the areas he or she needs help with.

Formal mentoring has a structure. It involves an agreement to mentor and to be mentored, a clear framework for mentoring and perhaps a program of support. In a formal mentoring relationship, there is discussion of expectations, goals and the process to be used. The frequency and duration of contact is agreed and ground-rules are established.

The mentoring conversation aims at facilitating self-development and is based on classic problem solving, strategic planning and decision making processes. It answers four questions:

1. Where am I now?
2. Where do I want to be?
3. How do I get there?
4. How am I doing?

The mentor firstly facilitates reflection and the exploration of options. Next, the mentor assists the mentee to make informed decisions, set goals and formulate practical strategies to achieve them. The mentor then encourages and supports the mentee as they implement their plan. When a mentor models and leads the mentoring conversation as described, the mentee learns a valuable problem solving and decision-making process that can be applied in any situation. Thus, a mentor assists not only with immediate needs but also equips the mentee to deal with future issues. *Extract from Rolfe, A. **The Mentoring Conversation.***



Why Mentoring is important to a Company.

Retirees can provide a supportive role. They might give up a management or supervisory position, to become a high-value, expert, team member or “senior statesman” coach, transferring their knowledge to colleagues and younger employees.

This type of arrangement costs less than normal induction and training of junior / mid-level employees.

Why Mentoring is important to You.

A report by *Ameriprise Financial* on February 3, 2015 released its findings of more than 1000 Baby Boomers ages 60 to 73 years who have made the transition into the post career stage of their lives.

48 percent felt that they were not emotionally prepared to retire

69 percent stated that they had challenges adapting to the changes in their lives

One of our biggest challenges is to maintain the belief that we still have a valuable role to play in the world; where the unspoken message about retirement is that our useful life is over.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elwood-d-watson/baby-boomers-and-the-dilemma-of-facing-retirement_b_6703128.html

A structured Mentoring programme allows you to identify and demonstrate your value, to a company and to yourself.

What is a Mentor?

A mentor is an experienced adviser and supporter; somebody, usually older and more experienced, who advises and guides a younger, less experienced person.

In essence, mentoring is a developmental partnership that offers the mentor an outlet to use some of the knowledge he/she has gathered throughout the years to benefit the growth of a younger person.



Mentoring Paradigms

Traditional Paradigm	Contemporary Thinking
The mentor picks a protégé	You look for mentors
A mentor is someone more senior	A mentor is someone you can learn from regardless of age or position
You should have a lot in common with your mentor	Difference provides potential for greater discovery, challenge and growth
Mentoring is for young people	Mentoring is for anyone at any stage of life or career
You have one mentor	You may have mentors for different aspects of life and career
Mentoring is one-to-one	Many ways to mentor - individual, group and mentoring circles
Mentors tell you what to do	A mentor is a sounding board
Mentors gives advice	Mentors assist your decision-making and problem-solving
You are a mentor or a mentee	You are both mentor and mentee
You need a mentor	A mentoring mindset enables you to gain insight by interacting with others with or without formal relationships

Mentoring vs Coaching vs Eldering

There are many similarities and differences between mentoring and coaching and eldering. However the most important distinctions are:

Coaching

- Is used when there is a well-defined goal that is based on improving skills and performance

Mentoring

- Is valuable for career development, providing general guidance, setting and achieving goals, making decisions or facilitating problem solving - and is personal.

Eldering

- Draws on the wisdom of an older, widely experienced Elder who passes on life lessons and moral guidance - providing a broad picture of one's role in the world. It incorporates and extends the skills of mentoring and coaching.



Keys to Successful Mentoring

Key #1: Develop a Relationship of Trust

Develop a relationship of trust. Relationships need to be built before any effective mentoring can take place. An environment of trust and mutuality must be established.

- Begin each relationship with a getting-to-know-you session.
- The mentor should greet the mentee warmly and help the mentee identify his or her professional needs and goals.
- The mentor should learn about the mentee's educational background and experience, and share information about his or her own background and experience.
- The mentor can then continue to build upon the mentees strengths, needs, and goals throughout the mentoring period.

Key #2: Define Roles and Responsibilities

Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of both the mentor and the mentee. Typically, a mentee is more receptive to feedback if he or she feels like an active participant in the relationship.

- What will the role of the mentor be?
- What types of mentoring will be most effective?
- What are the responsibilities of the mentee and mentor? For example, the mentee may be required to attend specific training given by the mentor or complete a certain number of mutually determined goals during the mentoring period.

Key #3: Establish Short and Long Term Goals

Establish short- and long-term goals. Mentors and mentees should work together to develop mutually agreed upon goals. These goals become the basis for the mentoring activities.

- Mentors need to provide constructive feedback to mentees on goal progression.
- Mentees should have an opportunity to be reflective on their actions.
- The mentor can note their observations in a positive, constructive manner and describe any actions taken by the mentee in connection to the established goals.
- The mentor and mentee can review the observations and determine the next steps. Open, respectful, and supportive communication is essential to this process and should include :-
 - Active listening. Mentors must be skilled at actively listening to concerns and must be sensitive to the timing of feedback and the way it is received.
 - Value each other's feedback. Even experienced teachers can learn new ways of thinking and doing things.



Key #4: Collaborate to Solve Problems

Be collaborative in solving problems. Mentors need to allow mentees the opportunity to identify concerns and potential solutions. Mentors should encourage mentees to take risks and do things differently by implementing creative solutions

- Identify the specific concern.
- Brainstorm possible solutions. The mentor can offer ideas, but the mentee should choose which plan to put into action.
- Select a plan and discuss desired outcomes.
- Implement the plan. The mentor should be supportive and encouraging, and reinforce successful completion of the plan.
- Assess the outcome together. The mentor and mentee should be reflective and discuss the effectiveness of the activity and make adjustments as needed.
- Try another solution, if needed - there are many different ways to address an issue.

Key #5: End the Relationship

Celebrate accomplishments, establish plans for the future, close the relationship (rather than let it fizzle out).



Behaviours that qualify you as a Mentor

You reveal your energy through your body language, voice tone and pace. When you use active body language, a confident voice and a moderate-to-lively pace of speech, it shows your focus on a conversation, task or outcome.

1. **Be engaged and interested.** Welcome others' points of view and demonstrate your active listening with behaviours such as eye contact, leaning forward and using acknowledging sounds.
2. **Show you are truly excited, if you are.** Be bold in your goals, initiatives and aspirations even if this stretches you and requires raising your activity level. It will motivate others to accomplish more.
3. **Be a giver — a contributor with ideas.** Share what you know and participate non-judgmentally in brainstorming.
4. **Show it, if you think something at work is really important.** People relate well to passion. Explain why the outcome is meaningful to you and motivates you.
5. **Ask questions.** Whenever possible, demonstrate a continual eagerness to learn.
6. **Make it clear that you are committed to the success of the group and happy to roll up your sleeves.** Convey how your goals intersect with those of your mentees and with the organization's purpose.

And the Behaviour to Avoid...

Sucking the energy out of the room by being unresponsive or slow-paced. When you disagree with an approach, present alternative solutions. Admit you are wrong when you are.

Modified from an article by [Phyllis Weiss Haserot](#), pwhaserot@pdcounsel.com and www.pdcounsel.com.



What Makes a Good Mentor?

Many people feel that being a good mentor requires special skills, but this is not the whole truth! Good mentors are also people who have the qualities of good role models; they demonstrate model codes of behaviour through their own actions and words.

- **Interested in helping others succeed.** They have a genuine interest in other people's lives and experience pleasure when helping others reach their goals.
- **Caring.** They are empathetic, open, reliable and honest with others.
- **Willing to spend time.** They reach out and share their life experiences to help others with their life journey.
- **Open to educate.** They are able to pass on their knowledge, insights and expertise clearly and helpfully.
- **Patient.** They offer help in finding life direction, never pushing.
- **Trustworthy.** They are dependable people who understand the importance of keeping information shared, strictly confidential.
- **Practical.** They assist in setting goals, objectives and timeframes.
- **An active listener.** They are listeners who are able to reflect back the relevant issues while minimizing their own personal assumptions and prejudices.
- **Inspirational.** They aspire to excellence and encourage personal excellence in others.
- **Able to give advice.** Mentors advise without explicitly dictating actions, allowing mentee to find his/her way.
- **Sensitive to people's feelings.** They are able to provide constructive criticism as well as compliments.
- **Successful and admired.** They are well respected in their organizations and in the community.



Creating and sustaining engagement with Mentees

1. **Let go of any negative opinions you may have about your mentees.** Approach each of them as a source of unique knowledge with something valuable to contribute to the company.
2. **Make sure mentees have everything they need to do their jobs.** Simply by asking each person, or the team as a whole, "Do you have everything you need to be as competent as you can be?"
3. **Clearly communicate what's expected of mentees—what the company values and vision are, and how the company defines success.** People can't perform well or be productive if they don't clearly know what it is they're there to do—and the part they play in the overall success of the company.
4. **Get to know your mentees, especially their goals, their stressors, what excites them and how they each define success.** Show an interest in their well-being and that, when appropriate, you do what it takes to enable them to feel more fulfilled and better balanced.
5. **Make sure they are trained and retrained in problem solving and conflict resolution skills.** These critical skills will help them interact better with you, their teammates, customers and suppliers.
6. **Constantly ask how you are doing in your mentees' eyes.** Begin dialogs with mentees using conversation starters such as "What would you like to see me do differently? What could I be doing to make your job easier?"
7. **Pay attention to company stories and rituals.** Are people laughing at each other or with each other? Do they repeat stories of success or moments of shame?
8. **Reward & recognize mentees in ways that are meaningful to them.** Celebrate both accomplishments and efforts, to give people working on long-term goals, a boost.
9. **Be consistent for the long haul.** If you start an 'engagement initiative' and then drop it your efforts will backfire, creating employee estrangement. The work they do and the challenges they face must be a daily priority.

Modified from an article on keeping employees happy

<http://www.nextavenue.org/article/2012-02/9-ways-keep-your-employees-happy-and-efficient>



Questions every Mentor should ask of a Mentee

What are you trying to be or do? This question will help your Mentor understand where you are coming from and what you are aspiring to do.

What are you struggling with? What is frustrating you; what are you struggling with. This will give you an idea of the obstacles you are facing that may prevent you from succeeding.

What do you think you are good at? What are you doing well that is helping you reach your goals? These questions help you understand what you think your strengths are, what comes naturally and what you may do better than others.

What will you do differently tomorrow to meet these challenges? This will help you see if you are willing to spend time on your developmental areas and not just what you are already excelling at. Ask yourself, "What are the priorities?", "What areas am I focusing on?", "Are they the right ones?" "How open am I to refocusing on other tasks towards progress if I seem stuck?"

How can I help you? The answers to above questions should help you understand how the Mentor can help you.

Applying the skills of a Mentor

The fundamental assumption is that the mind that holds the problem also holds the solution.

The Mentor asks the question "what can I do to make it easier for you to do what you have to do"?

Mentoring is about providing support for others rather than taking charge. Bringing out the talent and knowledge that already exists in the other. The skill of the Mentor is demonstrated in their ability to create a "**thinking environment**". Creating that environment requires 2 skills



To provide quality listening –The factors that determine the quality of listening are :-

- **Attention** : Created by the listener : and by 100% attention to the other, 100% attention to the impact of the content on oneself and 100% attention on how to help the other to think.
- **Ease** : With what's happening – it is the thinker's stuff not mine and silences are not empty.
- **Equality** : Not necessarily in experience – but in the ability to think and in our humanness.
- **Diversity** : In experience, background, personality and thought process.
- **Appreciation** : People think better in an appreciative environment.
- **Place** : Both the physical setting and the internal environment.
- **Encouragement** : To help the thinker keep moving.
- **Information** : If the thinker needs information and the listener has it.
- **Feelings** : Express feelings not just logical thought.

To provide quality questioning – providing a different perspective for another. Different kinds of questions elicit different kinds of information.

- **Resource oriented questions** : What resources do you have to solve the problem? What resources have you used already?
- **Asking for exceptions** : When is the problem not present? What is the difference when it is not present?
- **Circular questions** : How would a friend deal with the problem? What would you recommend?
- **Hypothetical questions** : What would have to happen for you to change your behaviour? What effect would that have?
- **Miracle questions** : If a miracle happened and the problem was gone, what would the situation look like? What would you do differently?
- **Scaling questions** : On a scale of 1 – 10 how important is this? From 1 – 10 how far are you from solving the problem?
- **Make-specific questions** : How exactly does the problem? When exactly does it happen? When not?



How to be a successful Mentee

Pass these notes on to your Mentee(s) when establishing your relationship.

Ask Questions

The basis of a mentoring relationship is imparting information from one person to another. Left to chance, a mentee will get the information, advice, or guidance that the mentor wants to give, or thinks is helpful, which may be enough in many cases. However, since the relationship is primarily for the mentee's benefit, being able to ask for what you want, need, and are curious about is an important skill for mentees. High quality questions can help you get what you really want from your mentor and make the best use of the time you spend with him or her.

Listening Skills

All the best questions in the world are useless unless you can actively listen for the information that will be helpful to you. Here are 3 points to bear in mind to help you listen.

- **Listen for central ideas.** Listen for ideas that your mentor repeats and provides examples of.
- **Determine what is of personal value to you in your mentor's conversation.** Once you've identified the central idea, consider how it applies to you.
- **Learn to keep pace--speed of thought vs. speed of speech.** Most people can think five to six times faster than another person can talk. This difference in pace of thought and speech often results in daydreaming or mind-wandering on the part of the listener.

Build Trust.

A mentoring relationship is based on trust. As a mentee, you are placing a great deal of trust in your mentor to provide you with helpful guidance. At the same time, mentors are trusting that mentees will not take advantage of the relationship (e.g., wasting your mentor's time, repeating information not intended for others, asking for favours, inappropriately using the relationship).

Find Your Comfort Zone

Many mentoring relationships will pair a mentee with a high-level or prominent leader. Research has shown that these relationships are sometimes slow to develop because the mentee is often uncomfortable with their mentor. Mentees reported that they were afraid to make mistakes or appear vulnerable in front of their mentors; they had trouble viewing their mentors as partners and they considered their own problems and needs as insignificant.



A reluctant or hesitant mentee can be frustrating to a mentor, so it's important that you develop techniques to become comfortable early on in your mentoring relationship.

- Have a written list of questions before each meeting.
- Prepare a concrete set of goals and objectives for your mentoring relationship.
- Visualize conversations between your mentor and you as if you've known him for a long time.
- Research your mentor's background.
- Prepare conversation points.

Resolving Differences.

In any relationship, at times there are disagreements or misunderstandings, and a mentoring relationship is no different. Keeping in mind that mentoring relationships are partnerships, it's important to accept that you have a right to express yourself when you want to make adjustments to the mentoring relationship. However, it's just as important to make sure that you resolve differences appropriately, professionally, and respectfully.

Getting advice or guidance that you don't agree with.

Instead of arguing with your mentor or just ignoring the advice, approach the situation with a sense of curiosity.

It feels like your mentor is telling you what you should do, rather than letting you rely on them for a sounding board and then solve your own problems.

Often, mentors feel that giving advice is what they're supposed to do and is what is expected of them. At the beginning of your relationship, let your mentor know up front that you don't expect them to know all the answers, but are looking forward to having someone you can bounce ideas off of and who will help you solve your own problems.

Make the Moment(s) Count

Unless you reflect upon your experiences, you can often miss out on the gems in moments you spend with your mentor. Keep a mentoring journal. After each meeting, summarise what you learned and how you can apply the learning. Share what you have written with your mentor to get feedback.

Useful Tools

The SME Toolkit (South Africa) www.southafrica.smetoolkit.org is very useful. It provides templates for all sorts of business activities – admin, finance, marketing, HR .

<http://www.mentoring-works.com> is well structured and a useful guide.