

Mentoring is essentially a **people developing people** strategy.

While the concept of mentoring dates back to Ancient Greece and French Literature, the concept of formal or structured mentoring relationships and programs is still being explored, with some of the first works of research published in the 1970s. The literature also identifies, in broad themes, two approaches to formal mentoring including:

- * **Sponsorship approaches** to mentoring where the focus is on having a high profile mentor who can open career doors for you. Often it is the mentor who might 'select' the mentee, and associated terminology tends to be 'mentor and protégé'. For the most part, the focus is on the outcomes for the mentee.
- * **Learning and development approaches** to mentoring where the focus is on the experience gap between the two individuals and not the status gap, and where the learning and development outcomes, while strongly focussed on outcomes for the mentee, also factor in the learning experiences for the mentor.

Having identified these two broad themes, it must be stated that most mentoring programs and relationships rarely fall directly into either of the above approaches, but **might contain elements of both**.

There are many mentoring definitions and these range from simple one-word interpretations through to complex definitions. And, depending on whether you are engaged in a formal or informal mentoring relationship, the personal experiences of mentoring may differ greatly. To help you determine if mentoring is the right 'fit' for your developmental needs—consider this short list of **characteristics regarding mentoring relationships**:

- * **Offline relationship**—no performance appraisal or assessment
- * **Experience gap**—mentor has experience, knowledge, networks and wisdom to offer
- * **Focussed discussions**—more than just a social chat
- * **Sounding board** for new ideas and approaches
- * Understanding of the '**path trodden**'—personal and professional
- * **Go easy on the direct advice**—help me think it through
- * **Mentee driven**—my personal learning needs count
- * Some boundaries involved—**not counselling**, social work, psychology, psychotherapy or psychiatry
- * **Not training or direct skills/technical development**—but can compliment application of theory to practice
- * **Willing participants**—both mentor and mentee
- * **Confidential**—but may have some limits on this in the workplace
- * **Variety**—may take a number of forms (see terminology)
- * Generally free—**not a client relationship** (can vary though)

MENTORING TERMINOLOGY

Mentoring relationships and activities can take a number of different formats.

Here's **some of the terminology** used to describe contemporary mentoring models, strategies and roles.

FORMAL MENTORING
STRUCTURED MENTORING
INFORMAL MENTORING
SITUATIONAL MENTORING
1:1 MENTORING
MENTORING GROUPS & CIRCLES
E-MENTORING
PEER MENTORING
REVERSE MENTORING
CULTURAL MENTORING
DIVERSITY MENTORING
BUDDY MENTORING
GRADUATE MENTORING
MENTOR
MENTEE—PROTÉGÉ—MENTOREE
MENTORING PROGRAM
MENTORING PROGRAM COORDINATOR
MENTORING CHAMPION
MENTORING PROGRAM SPONSOR
MENTORING REFERENCE GROUP



OVERVIEW

So—you're keen for the support of a mentor, but not sure where to start. There are two key ways in which you might find a mentor:

- * **Within your organisation**—this could be through a formal mentoring program or informally through internal networks (yours or others).
- * **Outside your organisation**—again this could be through a formal mentoring program which may be provided by a professional body or community organisation, OR informally through your own networks and friends.

So—where to start? Here's 5 tips to help you find a mentor to support your personal, professional and career development.

TIPS FOR FINDING A MENTOR

- * **Talk with your manager** about mentoring opportunities within your own workplace—find out what formal and informal opportunities are available within your own organisation.
- * **Talk with your friends, colleagues and family members** about their own mentoring experiences. Ask where, when and how they found their mentors—both formal and informal. Are there people your networks might recommend you seek out?
- * **Reflect on the social and professional groups you belong to.** Find out what mentoring opportunities might be available through these groups. Many associations and professional groups now offer both formal and informal mentoring opportunities for their members.
- * **Consider those people you admire or who are 'where you want to be'.** You might consider talking with them regarding the possibility of forming a mentoring relationship. If you are going to approach someone to ask them to be your mentor—ensure you are prepared. See the Factsheet on Preparation for Mentoring.
- * **Search for agencies and organisations** that offer professional mentoring services. You do need to consider that these services may be paid services, so ensure you check this out first. You might also find these paid services listed as coaching services.

As well as how to go about finding a mentor—you also need to consider **what you're looking for in a mentor**—check out the **Tips Box**.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A MENTOR

Here's some questions to help you determine what you're looking for in a mentor.

Are you looking for someone to challenge you—if so, your mentor may be different to you in experience and style.

Are you looking for a 'friendly ear' - if so, your mentor may be someone who has great listening skills and the ability to be a sounding board for you.

Are you looking for new networks—if so, your mentor may be someone who has had different experiences to you OR who is currently where you want to be in the future. Additionally, they may belong to a number of professional groups.

Are you looking for someone who has had a similar career path to you—if so, you're looking for a mentor experienced in your profession, trade or industry area.

Are you looking for someone who has successfully navigated challenges OR career changes—if so, your mentor might have had more than one career path or lived/worked in different locations/industries.

Get the idea?

The key thing about mentoring is you should experience growth and development—so ensure you seek out mentors who can help you achieve this. Sometimes the best mentor is not the person who always agrees with you—but someone who will challenge you to greater understanding of yourself.



OVERVIEW

So—you're looking for a quick overview on what a successful mentoring relationship needs. Well—it's challenging.

To be frank, mentoring relationships are **people developing people strategies**, which means that what makes one relationship work is not necessarily what makes another work.

But—regardless of whether you're in a formal or informal mentoring relationship or just thinking about getting started, there are some **signposts of success** which history and evidence suggest, if in existence, are more likely to help a mentoring relationship succeed.

MENTORING RELATIONSHIP SIGNS OF SUCCESS

A willingness to be involved—a sincerity on both the part of the mentee and mentor to embrace the relationship and the opportunity. Mentoring should not be a forced activity.

An ability to relate well to one another—a level of chemistry or synergy. You don't need to be best friends—but there needs to be a platform upon which to build a sustainable mentoring relationship.

A sense of respect for the other person and the mentoring relationship. Respecting each other's time and the importance of building the relationship is vital, as is acknowledging each other's differences and diversity of personality, influences, experiences and future aspirations.

A commitment to honesty and confidentiality of the mentoring relationship. Both parties need to identify the mentoring is not only an environment to reflect on challenges, but also a place to plan for the future and celebrate successes. Successful mentoring relationships balance both reflection on the past or current activities, with actively planning and discussing the future.

Timing—the timing of the relationship works for both people. This could be the time in which the relationship takes place and also the amount of time allocated.

A need for success and direction in the mentoring relationship. Successful mentoring partnerships are able to identify what has changed as a result of their mentoring activities. It's important for momentum and motivation to have a shared vision.

MORE TIPS FOR YOU

What can I do to prepare for a mentoring relationship?

Mentees—here's a few quick questions you can work through to prepare to work with a mentor.

- * **What's happening in your career/life** in the next 12 months—how could a mentor support you?
- * **What is your 'personal brand'** within your organisation? That is—how are you perceived? Could your mentor help you to strengthen your 'personal brand'?
- * **What opportunities** would you like to experience in the next 12 months that may be 'just outside' your day to day role, but which you feel might help you to progress your career? Could a mentor help you to achieve these opportunities?

Mentors—here's a few quick questions you can work through to prepare to work with a mentee.

- * **How are you placed for time this year?** Can you allocate 1-2 hours (min) per month to meet with your mentee? Check your diary now!
- * **What are your expectations** of a mentoring relationship? A mentee? Consider how you view mentoring and be prepared to discuss this upfront.

And for you both—clarify your shared understanding of the roles of mentee and mentor, and your expectations of how you want your partnership to be successful.

OVERVIEW



Starting out in a new mentoring partnership is a bit like planting a seed.

It requires some additional activities at the start of the program to ensure that you set in place a good and stable platform for the mentoring partnership to grow and flourish. Like all partnerships, you'll move through a series of phases in building your partnership. It's not important to 'know' these phases, but it is important to recognise that you are embarking on the development of a relationship (partnership) and so it requires a level of commitment to both the partnership and the process of mentoring.

The **basic stages of a mentoring partnership** are:

PREPARATION

This is an opportunity to prepare to undertake the mentoring relationships and may include reflecting on your mentoring needs and expectations, identifying questions you may have for your mentoring partner, meeting for the first time, and possibly undertaking formal education.

AGREEMENT

This is a time to discuss how the partnership will work, decide upon objectives, discuss the logistics of the partnership, complete your Mentoring Partnership Agreement, and update supervisor and/or line manager (if applicable). Essentially—it's about ensuring that both you and your mentoring partner are clear about the aim, expectations and focus of the mentoring partnership.

ACTION

This is the time for you to meet on a regular basis with your mentoring partner and to commence working towards some of the outcomes you set yourself at the beginning. Along the way, remember to take time to monitor your progress and ensure that the mentoring experience is meeting both of your expectations and needs. Plus—keep a check on your mentoring objectives and celebrate your successes OR adjust your focus as you go along.

EVALUATION-REDEFINITION

Unless you are in a very informal, ad-hoc mentoring relationship, you will most likely set some sort of timeframe around meeting in a more formal capacity. When this comes to an end, it's important to 'mark' this by discussing and evaluating the mentoring experience and outcomes, and redefining the function of the mentoring partnership for the future. This may include continuing to meet on a formal basis OR moving to a more informal or ad-hoc relationship.

See the **Tips Box** for more information on the **Mentoring Partnership Agreement**.

MORE TIPS FOR YOU

What is a Mentoring Partnership Agreement?

Regardless of whether you are part of a formal mentoring program OR embarking on a mentoring relationship of your own accord, it is vital to have some upfront discussions that help you and your mentoring partner to have a clear understanding of how you want the mentoring partnership to be conducted, and your shared expectations.

A **Mentoring Partnership Agreement (MPA)** is commonly provided as a partnership resource in a formal mentoring program.

It encourages you and your mentoring partner to discuss the following elements:

- * Duration of the partnership
- * Clarity of roles (mentor/mentee)
- * Expectations of one another
- * Regularity of meeting
- * Locations for meetings
- * Use of communication tools/methods
- * Boundaries of discussion
- * Confidentiality in the relationship
- * Potential challenges in the relationship
- * Mentee areas of focus/mentoring goals
- * Inclusion of others in the discussions.

If you have an MPA—then do use this record your discussions and agreements, and then you can return to the MPA to monitor your progress.

If you don't have an MPA—then use the above list to 'prompt' your early conversations and even record your thoughts so that you can come back to them at a future point in the mentoring relationship.

OVERVIEW

In a recent survey of mentees and mentors participating in a formal mentoring program, participants were asked to identify the **key take home points** they had gleaned from the commencement education activities.



Let's take a quick look at the themes from these **key take home points** to help you in your own mentoring journey.

For Mentees

- * *Mentees need to 'drive the agenda' - you will get out of it what you put into it*
- * *Confidentiality will be respected—it's a two way street in the mentoring relationship and needs to be discussed 'up front'*
- * *Do not over-structure the partnership but do set some parameters so that you can measure progress and success*
- * *Be organised—work out what you want from the mentoring relationship and actively go after it*
- * *Keep an open mind to the process and use this as a further tool to develop yourself as a person and to guide your career*
- * *Spend some time preparing so that you get the most out of the engagement with your mentor*

For Mentors

- * *Active listening is fundamental to strong mentoring and allowing the mentee to arrive at their own conclusions allows more confidence in the decision*
- * *Laying the groundwork for the mentoring relationship helps to keep our focus on the mentoring relationship and the mentoring focus of the mentee*
- * *Honest and open communication is vital to the success of the partnership*

For Partnerships

- * *Give the partnership time—be creative in how we go about achieving our mentoring goals/developmental areas*
- * *Discuss and agree upon boundaries—don't just use the mentoring conversation for a 'whinge'*
- * *Use the tools available—the Mentoring Partnership Agreement can help to lay the framework of the mentoring partnership*

MORE TIPS FOR YOU

What if the mentoring relationship does not work?

This is a frequently asked question asked by both mentees and mentors. In all cases, both formal and informal, mentoring relationships should have a 'no fault exit' approach.

Here's what history and evidence suggest pose challenges for mentoring relationships:

- * Lack of 'right fit' or chemistry
- * Too bigger difference in position/power
- * Time management or lack of time
- * Falling 'out of contact'
- * Change in circumstances
- * Increase in workload
- * Geographic distance
- * Personal 'styles'
- * Lack of motivation or clarity
- * Lack of knowing 'what to do'
- * Breach in ethics or confidentiality
- * Departure from the organisation
- * Formal program finishes.

This list is not exhaustive—but provides some insight into experiences which have challenged mentoring relationships. If you and your mentoring partner determine that you cannot continue—ensure you:

- Discuss and agree upon the change with your mentoring partner—remember a **graceful and professional end is important**
- If applicable, discuss other mentoring opportunities that might help the mentee to continue—perhaps the mentor has networks of alternative mentors
- Thank each other for the opportunity and wrap-up the partnership.



OVERVIEW

If asked—what would others say about your listening skills? Of course you know how to listen, but do you **actively listen**?

Active listening is not just a communication skill but it is also an attitude or approach to how you communicate with others. **In a mentoring relationship**, active listening is a critical 'piece' of the mentoring conversation matrix.

To get a feel for your active listening competency, reflect on these questions:

1. While listening, do you sometimes think about how you will respond to the person OR judge what they are saying—perhaps mentally disagreeing with them?
2. Do you interrupt the speaker with an idea, thought or suggestion—or even start to finish their sentence?
3. Do you often have to ask someone to repeat what they have said or only vaguely remember what they have said?

These three questions give 'clues' to the challenge of active listening. Consider this quote from psychologist, Carl Rogers:

'Nothing feels so good as being understood, not evaluated or judged. When I try to share some feeling aspect of myself and my communication is met with evaluation, reassurance, distortion of my meaning, I know what it is to be alone.' (Carl Rogers, psychologist)

So what is required for you to actively listen? Here are five key tips for improving your active listening:

- * Don't talk—listen.
- * Shut out or overlook distractions (eg. Background noise)
- * Be aware of your own body language
- * Don't interrupt—even to agree with the speaker
- * Don't jump into the conversation when there is a moment of silence.

(www.njgroups.org)

Australian social researcher, Hugh Mackay in his book *The Good Listener* points out that active listening takes **courage, generosity and patience**.

So as you take your mentoring relationship forward, take time to really focus on how you actively listen in the mentoring conversation. Remember also that actively listening to your mentoring partner helps to build a trusting environment. And as a result, *'after having the opportunity to be truly listening to without interruption, evaluation and judgement, many people feel encouraged and empowered'* (www.njgroups.org). **So—next time you meet—focus on actively listening and reap the rewards.**

MORE TIPS FOR YOU

Barriers to Listening

Developing your approach to active listening requires you to understand some of the barriers that stop us from listening effectively. Take a moment to review some of the common barriers to effective listening and identify those you may need to either reduce, remove or actively 'work on' to strengthen your active listening approach.

Common barriers to active listening include:

Comparing what the speaker is saying as being better or worse than something else.

Personal experiences getting in the way of you truly listening from an empathetic viewpoint (eg. In the other person's 'shoes').

Trying to **'read the mind'** of the other person by thinking in advance that you know what the other person is going to say.

Mentally rehearsing what you are going to say—thereby spending time thinking about this rather than listening to what is being said.

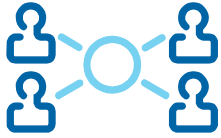
(Source: www.njgroups.org)

These are **just a few barriers** to consider. As you review them—take time to reflect on the last mentoring conversation and identify your listening approach.

Remember—actively listening to another person does not mean that you have to agree with that person.

Active listening is about understanding, and in the mentoring conversation, helping your mentoring partner to make connections in **their learning and development.**

OVERVIEW



An often cited mentoring goal or objective is to increase or improve in networking **skills/habits** and strengthen or build the personal and professional networks of the mentee (and mentor for that matter).

So what is networking and how can the mentoring relationship assist a mentee in broadening their networks?

A **simple definition of a network** is 'an interconnected system of things or people'. When you stop for a moment to consider this simple definition, the key word in the definition of 'interconnected'. Networking is **not just about** going to someone who can do something for you when you need it. Networking is about staying in contact with people you respect and like, even if they can't help you immediately. It's about building a network of relationships based on values and ethics. Robyn Henderson, Australian networking expert, says that there are **two major keys to networking**:

- * **Giving without expectation**—that is doing something for others, not just to get something back.
- * **Having an abundance mentality**—that is believing that there are many opportunities for everyone.

So what are some of the habits for successful networking? In *Understanding Influence for Leaders Today, the Power of Networking*, Robyn Henderson discusses habits and lessons on networking which include:

- * **Understand that networking is a life skill**—not just something you do when you want something from another person.
- * **Place a high value on your networks**—remember they may come up at any time during your life/career.
- * When connecting with others, **aim to be fully present**—practise making sincere connections with others.
- * Ensure you have **business cards and a name tag** when you attend a networking event.
- * Work on your **listening skills**—the better you listen, the better you will remember.
- * **Ask questions or clarify details**—be open to seeking more information

See the **More Tips for You** section for ideas on how to put networking on the mentoring conversation agenda.

Sources:

- * www.ehow.com/how_1382_network-effectively.html
- * www.businessknowhow.com/tips/networking.htm
- * www.networkingtowin.com.au/art1.html
- * www.aim.com.au/publications/bkchapters/influence_ch5.html

MORE TIPS FOR YOU



Ideas for introducing the concept of networking into the mentoring relationship and conversation ...

The mentoring relationship and mentoring conversation is a great 'space' to discuss the concept of networking.

In your mentoring relationship, questions that you could use to guide your discussion on networking could include:

- * How do you define networking?
- * What has your experience been of networking?
- * What is your current level of networking ability/effectiveness?
- * What opportunities do you use to practise networking?
- * What do you do well in the networking sense?
- * What do you need to improve on in the networking sense?
- * How do you maintain your networks?
- * How do you utilise your networks?
- * How could increasing your networking ability help you progress in your career and professional development in the next 12 months?

Plus—you might like to do a '**networking audit**' with your mentoring partner where you actively identify your current personal and professional networks as a way of identifying answers and actions to the above questions.



OVERVIEW

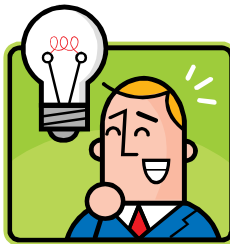
Proactively planning or mapping out your career is a goal that many mentoring partnership actively work towards. This forward thinking process allows the mentoring partnership to focus on concrete steps and in some cases, visible outcomes.

But how do you go about mapping out a career? Many people talk about how their career has actually been 'steered by the organisation' instead of they themselves actually learning how to firstly articulate what they want in a career and secondly put in place a plan of action to help them reach their own career choices.

Let's take a look at four key steps to help you map out your career—you could then use this as the basis of learning and application in your mentoring conversation. Remember—career planning **does not have to be a linear process**—while we may age in a linear way—your career can take many 'twists and turns'.

Key Steps for Career Planning

The first step in any career planning process is to take some time to explore yourself—**SELF**. This means reflecting on your interests, values, skills and aptitudes, preferred environments, needs and the realities of your situation. Create a personal 'checklist' from this step.



The second step is then to explore the options—**OPTIONS**. This may mean reaching out to other people and networks to find out more about the options that could be available to you. Remember that 'up is not the only' way in your career—lateral or sideways movements may be just as rewarding and could offer you expanded knowledge, skills, competencies and opportunities.

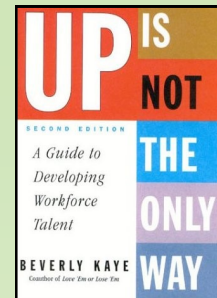
The third step is then to start to match your self exploration outcomes to the options you've explored—**MATCH**. This could mean identifying possible new career moves or occupations, evaluating these against your personal checklist and then identifying both short and long term goals or activities.

The fourth and final step is then to act—**TAKE ACTION**. It's always more comfortable to stay with the known—but if you really want to map out your career and take charge of it, at some point you must then take action. Taking action could mean all manner of activities from undertaking job enrichment activities to enhance your current role through to tackling re-training or more study or education to prepare you for the next phase of your career. It could also mean changing from full time to part time work, taking a lateral or sideways move, or exiting your current work environment and seeking a better job fit. The list of possibilities is endless!

So in summary—the mentoring partnership is a great space to actively explore the development of your career path. Use the four steps above to help you map out your mentoring conversations and activities.

MORE TIPS FOR YOU

Up is not the Only Way—Book Review



In her 2001 book, *Up is not the Only Way*, author Beverly Kaye says that 'the biggest obstacle to career growth is not lack of opportunity; it's inertia.' Essentially—it's about not taking action in your career. So—the mentoring conversation is a great way to gain support to overcome any inertia you may have experienced to date.

While this book is a few years since publication, the messages are still very relevant to today's career planning process. If career planning is on your mentoring conversation agenda, why not consider the variety of different career moves, which according to Kaye could include:

- * Lateral movement
- * Job enrichment
- * Vertical movement
- * Exploration
- * Realignment and downshifting
- * Relocating.

It's important to realise that no two career paths have to be the same, and that what engages and inspires one person, may not engage or inspire another. **So—be brave—map out a career path which matches your particular needs, interests, desires and realities.**

OVERVIEW



A commonly cited mentoring objective is to explore and understand the **key behaviours and drivers of success**. Now this may be about exploring success in the context of a particular work environment OR it could be exploring success from a personal and professional point of view.

So—what leads to success?

Richard St John in a TED (www.ted.com) video presentation challenges the notion of **success being a one way street** and encourages us to consider **success as part of a continuous journey**. Richard goes on further to identify the **8 Traits that Lead to Great Success**. These traits have come from some 500 interviews of successful people over a decade. The people he interviewed spanned all walks of life. Here are the 8 traits that he identified:



The 8 Traits That Lead to Great Success RichardStJohn.com © Copyright 2010 Train of Thought Arts Inc.

It's important to note that **each of us defines success differently**. In its **most simple form**—success is about the attainment of one's goal or aim. What is different for each of us is the actual goal or aim. For some—success may be linked to wealth—for others it may be about work-life balance. How you define success will be your **own personal choice**.

Why not watch the full video at the TED website—here's the direct link: www.ted.com/talks/richard_st_john_s_8_secrets_of_success.html. Plus—get a **Success Poster** of your own—go to www.richardstjohn.com.

'The biggest secret of success in life is: You don't have to get it right; you just have to get it going. Perfectionism can kill success. We never get going because we are always waiting to get everything just right. Instead, let's get going.' (Mike Litman)

MORE TIPS FOR YOU

Using the mentoring conversation to explore success ...

'Motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you going.' (Jim Ryun, Athlete)

The mentoring conversation is a great space to explore success. Here are **five key questions that you could use to launch a mentoring conversation on the notion of what leads to success:**

- * **How do you define success.** Understand what it is that will define success for you. Is this wealth? Career position? Work-life balance? Family and friends?
- * **How successful are you now?** Based on how you have defined success, now audit your 'success' to explore your achievements to date.
- * **How successful do you want to be in the future?** Now cast your mind forward to the future—and envision the future. What will success look and feel like?
- * **What actions do you need to take? What habits do you need to form?** What actions do you need to start today to reach success for you in the future and what habits do you need to form to make it 'stick'?
- * **What support do you need to achieve success and overcome any barriers that you need to hurdle?** Who or what do you need to reach out to help you achieve success? How can you start this today?

And finally—remember that ultimately, **your success is your responsibility!**



OVERVIEW

Giving and receiving feedback is a key part of your personal and professional development. It's also on the agenda in many mentoring conversations, and can be a great developmental activity for mentoring partnerships to explore and pursue. Let's look at three key elements about feedback you could discuss and work on in your mentoring conversation.

What is Feedback? There are a great many definitions for feedback. Let's keep it simple, and focus on the fact that feedback is about three elements:

- * Specific information
- * Against a standard or objective
- * Designed to improve or regulate performance.

Also, in the workplace, feedback can be **informal** (eg. On the run) or **formal** (eg. At a performance review).

Tips on Giving Feedback. Many people find the practise of giving feedback to be stressful. This could be because the information to be given is of a challenging nature (eg. Performance deficit); or the person giving the feedback feels concern about their skills in this area; or because the environment in the workplace does not foster a sense of continuous or regular feedback. Bearing this in mind—here are five key tips for giving feedback:

- * **Be clear about what you want to say and why**—write it down prior.
- * **Be specific about what you say**—avoid generalisations.
- * **Focus on behaviour against a known standard**—eg. Job description, key performance indicator, company value etc.
- * **Provide both positive and corrective feedback**—remember to provide feedback on what people do well.
- * **Discuss forward planning to improve performance**—engage the person who is receiving the feedback in taking ownership of the changes and agreeing on how the changes will be monitored.

Tips on Receiving Feedback. Just like giving feedback can be challenging, receiving feedback with a degree of grace and professionalism can be equally as challenging. Here are give key tips for receiving feedback:

- * **Be open to receiving feedback**—remember feedback is an essential part of the development process—both personal and professional.
- * **Maintain perspective**—feedback is mostly about one part of your life at a particular moment—**in general** it's not designed to 'make or break' your career!
- * **Seek to understand**—ask questions to ensure you understand the exact nature of the feedback—seek further clarity.
- * **Acknowledge your role**—in many instances, there's two sides to every situation and story—be reflective about this.
- * **Focus forward**—gain assistance in identifying what you need to do in the future—take responsibility for this.

MORE TIPS FOR YOU

Another way to look at feedback—*feed forward.*

Marshall Goldsmith, international leadership expert, and Jon Katzenbach coined the phrase and practise of **feed forward**.

They describe the notion of feed forward as: **'the promise of the future rather than the mistakes of the past.'** Marshall Goldsmith suggests that the process of feed forward include the following steps, which we have adapted here to suit the mentoring environment:

Pick one specific behaviour that the mentee would like to change.

Change in this behaviour should make a *significant, positive difference* in their lives.

Have the mentee describe this specific behaviour to colleagues, managers or others in a 1:1 discussion and ask for two suggestions for the future that might help them achieve a positive change in their selected behaviour. For example: 'I want to be a better listener.' The mentee **should not** comment or critique the suggestions—just take notes and thank the person for their suggestions.

The data collected in Step 2 could then be reviewed and explored in the 'safety' of the mentoring conversation. Mentors—your role can be to help the mentee explore the suggestions and commit to an **accountable action plan.**

Feed forward—

worth considering as another mentoring conversation strategy.

For more information see:
www.marshallgoldsmithfeedforward.com

OVERVIEW

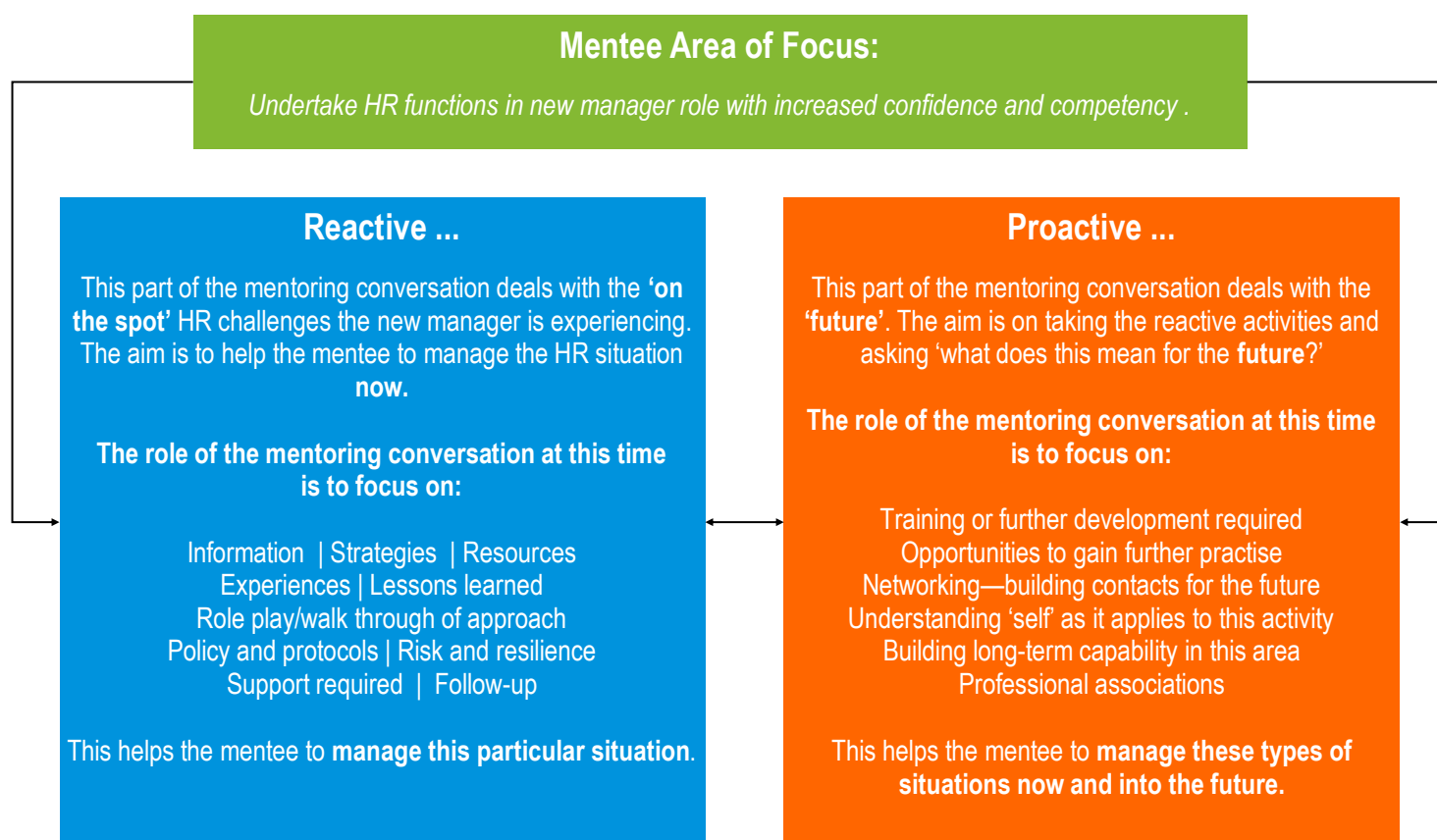
'I was surprised that much of the conversation with my mentee was about day-to-day tensions in the work environment rather than longer-term career and professional development.' (Mentor)

This quote from a mentor provides some insight into the delicate balancing act of the mentoring conversation. The contemporary mentoring conversation should be a **healthy balance** of exploring development in both the **reactive** and **proactive** spheres. While each mentoring partnership will have its own unique developmental focus, what you don't want to do is to mistake the mentoring conversation for a forum of deconstructing the various situations and personalities of the workplace in a less than constructive manner.

So how can you avoid this?



Let's take the example of a new manager (mentee) who expresses their concern with their lack of knowledge and experience in the field of human resource management. As a new manager, this mentee will need support and development in both the **reactive (on the spot)** situations and also the **proactive (longer term)** requirements. Your mentoring conversation should be able to include **both** of these elements. Let's use the diagram below to illustrate this concept.



The list of elements for the reactive and proactive is not finite—but it serves to demonstrate that the mentoring conversation can include conversations that help with the 'here and now', while at the same time, still focussing on the overall developmental needs of the mentee for the future.

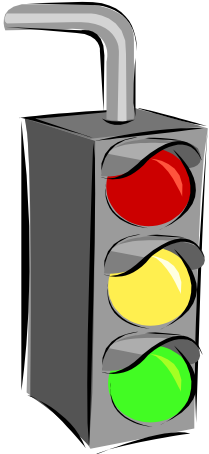
Plus—it's not essential that both aspects of the conversation happen in the one mentoring meeting—but rather that your overall mentoring conversation includes both elements.

Why not try this approach the next time you meet with your mentoring partner?



OVERVIEW

In a sense, the mentoring partnership uses the traffic light metaphor as it develops.



At the beginning, you get the 'green light' to build your mentoring partnership and to move ahead with the mentoring conversation and achieving a level of development.

During the partnership, you're encouraged to use the 'amber light' and to pause and reflect on your progress, and to be ready to adjust your 'mentoring speed' as required.

At the end of the mentoring partnership, it's time to use the 'red light' to stop, reflect and prepare to move forward from the mentoring partnership.

So—what are the key steps to ending the mentoring partnership with a high degree of professionalism? Here's three key steps ...

Look back at your **Mentoring Partnership Agreement** to review your progress. Use this time to:

- * Identify those objectives that were fully met - celebrate this achievement.
- * Discuss which objectives might still require some development - perhaps discuss how this might happen in the future within the mentoring partnership or outside of it.

Discuss your experiences of the mentoring partnership including:

- * What you have enjoyed from the partnership?
- * What did you find challenging and why?
- * What you have learnt as a result of being involved?
- * What have you discovered about yourself during the partnership?
- * What you feel that you may be doing differently as a result of the partnership?

Discuss what you both want to happen next. Options might include:

- * Continuing in the mentoring partnership with a new agenda or set of objectives
- * Ending the partnership and staying in contact informally or on a more ad-hoc basis
- * Discussing possible other mentors who might be suitable to connect with in the future
- * Ending the partnership and saying goodbye.

Remember—you want to end the partnership in a way that you can both be proud of in the future.

MORE TIPS FOR YOU



Additional Tips for Mentors

- **Take some time to reflect** on what you have learnt about yourself as a mentor and individual. How can you benefit in the future from your mentoring experiences?
- Consider how you can be involved in the future or **take the 'mentoring conversation' back** to your day-to-day functions.
- **Encourage colleagues** to consider being a mentor.

Additional Tips for Mentees

- Ensure you **thank your mentor** for their time and involvement with you.
- Consider how you can **connect** your mentoring experiences to the future.
- **Encourage colleagues** to consider being a mentee.

Regardless of whether you are in a formal or informal mentoring partnership, it's vital that you undertake closing discussions to ensure that you are both clear on the next steps, and that you wrap up this partnership with grace and professionalism.

OVERVIEW

Sir Ken Robinson, British creativity expert, challenges the way children are educated. Now you may ask—what does this have to do with your mentoring relationship? In a 2010 presentation at the international TED conference (www.ted.com), Robinson presented on *The Learning Revolution* where he promotes a radical re-consideration of our school systems—one which focuses on a more agricultural, organic approach to learning rather than an industrialised, linear approach.

So what does he mean by the agricultural approach to learning and why is this relevant to your mentoring relationship?

The mentoring relationship and conversation is ripe with opportunity to develop a personalised curriculum for the mentee. One which is organically driven by the needs, interests and passions of the mentee and where the mentor provides guidance, support, challenge and wisdom. Robinson argues that in order to foster more creativity in our education systems, we need to focus on an approach which creates the right conditions for learning—much like a farmer creates the right conditions for his crop to flourish, rather than putting in place a standard system where individuals progress in a linear path.

The mentoring relationship and conversation is a safe space to create a learning environment specifically tailored for the mentee—where the focus is on creating the right conditions for the mentee and the partnership to flourish and achieve (grow) great results. Robinson **asks the question:** *Why don't we get the best out of people? He argues that it's because we've been educated to become good workers, rather than creative thinkers.*

So—how can you create the right conditions and encourage creativity in your mentoring relationship—consider these tips ...

- * Explore what 'logistical' **conditions** will help the partnership to be a priority for you both and to flourish.
- * Take time to discuss how the mentee **came to be at this moment in their career**—look back to look forward.
- * Identify what the **mentee's true talents are**—are they making the most of these talents as they pursue their career and future?
- * Embrace the **diversity of your partnership**—remember it's not about having the mentee be a clone of the mentor.
- * Create a **personalised curriculum** for the mentee—see the mentoring relationship as an activity to plan and engage in conversations and activities that are truly **mentee driven**.
- * Question what you take for granted—**challenge yourself to 'disenthral'** yourself with notions that don't lead you to make the most of your talents and future—even when they may seem the norm!

So go on—challenge yourself to move away from a linear process and focus on creating the environment for the mentee, mentor and mentoring partnership to flourish!

MORE TED VIDEOS FOR YOU



Do you know about the TED website—ideas worth spreading? If not—it's at www.ted.com.

If you're looking for more inspiration in your mentoring conversation—here's two great TED videos **to get you thinking ...**



Sir Ken Robinson— the Learning Revolution

Key take home points:

Aim to create the circumstances where 'human resources and talents' will 'show themselves'.

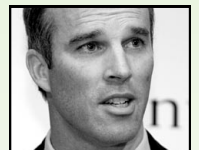
*Are we enduring life or living life with passion?
Do we just 'wait for the weekend?'*

*Challenge what we take for granted—
rise with the occasion not to the occasion.*

*Diversity of talent is important—
don't focus on a singular conception of ability.*

Watch the video at ...
www.ted.com/talks/sir_ken_robinson_bring_on_the_revolution.html

Lewis Gordon Pugh— Mind-shifting Everest Swim



Key take home points:

There is nothing more powerful than the made up mind.

Just because something has worked in the past does not mean that it will work in the future. Consider a radical, tactical shift!

What mindset do I need to undertake this task?

Watch the video at ...
www.ted.com/talks/lewis_pugh_s_mind_shifting_mt_everest_swim.html

OVERVIEW



What do you think of when you hear the term 'performance review' or 'performance conversation' or 'feedback'?

Do these activities make you shiver in your boots? Or do you leap at the chance to have an honest discussion with your manager about your progress and 'where to next'?

As a leader and manager (current or future), you are impacted by the performance conversation on two fronts:

- * On one front you **are the manager or leader responsible for creating a culture** of regular feedback, career and performance discussions within your team
- * On the second front, **you are a team member engaging** with your own manager in feedback, career and performance discussions.

So where does the **mentoring relationship fit into the performance conversation?** Let's discuss this from **two perspectives**.

Firstly—the mentoring relationship is a great space to reflect on how you as a manager and leader set the pace and tone for career and performance conversations in your own team. Reflect on whether career and feedback discussions are part of the day to day routine, or do you wait to have the annual performance appraisal as your opportunity to provide feedback. Questions you could discuss in the mentoring relationship include:

- * **What challenges** does your team have now in relation to feedback, career and performance appraisals? What would you like to change about this? How could you do this?
- * How **competent and confident** do you feel tackling challenging conversations with team members? What support and/or guidance do you need to develop this manager/leader skill?

Secondly—the mentoring relationship is a safe space to reflect on your own personal career journey and the relationship you have with your own manager in discussing feedback and performance. Take time with your mentoring partner to discuss questions such as:

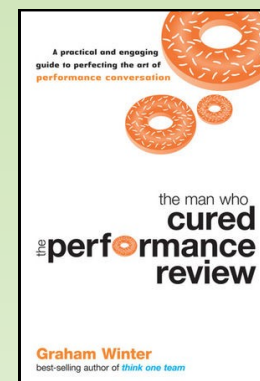
- * **How often** are you receiving feedback from your manager—is this enough? If not—how could you address this?
- * **What's changed in your career aspirations** over the past five years—how could you communicate this to your manager?
- * **Is your current position still a 'fit' for you?** If not—how could you communicate this to your manager and perhaps seek alternative roles?

While the mentoring conversation is **not about performance management**, it can play a vital role in helping mentees to strengthen this aspect of their day to day work roles.

MORE TIPS FOR YOU

If you're looking to further your competency in the area of performance reviews—why not read ...

***The Man who Cured the Performance Review* by Graham Winter.**



This Australian text provides a framework to *'replace the bureaucracy of the performance review with simple tools and practices for fostering real performance conversations'*.

This text is a great place to start from if you are **new to the art of performance conversations** OR **have a hunch that it could be improved in your organisation**. It's an ideal companion to supporting your mentoring discussion and can provide mentees with guidance on how to:

- * Eliminate the fear of feedback
- * Learn how to create powerful two-way performance conversations
- * Align business goals and individual behaviours.

Published by Wiley—ISBN: 978-1-74216-951-4

OVERVIEW

'Emotional intelligence and mentoring seem to be related in two basic ways. First, the emotional intelligence of both the mentor and protégé [mentee] appears to influence the quality of mentoring. Second, the best mentoring relationships often help people become more socially and emotionally competent.' (Cherniss, C. 2007, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work*)

Have you ever had any of these situations happen to you?

- Sent an email off while still 'hot under the collar' and then regretted it (or had to make amends/explain)?
- Had an emotional outburst at work that really you should have 'contained'?
- Worked for different managers but had the same issues or problems—despite the different manager?
- Become upset every time there is a delay or something does not happen the way you want?

All of these situations have a strong theme of **emotion** to them. In fact—they all relate to the concept of **emotional intelligence**. US Psychologist, Daniel Goleman was one of the first authors to publish literature in the field of emotional intelligence. He developed a framework that identified five key elements that define emotional intelligence including:

Self awareness. *Self-awareness means being aware of your emotions and their impact on others. It's about not letting your feelings 'rule you' and being ready to take an honest look at yourself.*

Self regulation. *This is the ability to control your emotions and to 'think before you act'. It's about not making impulsive, careless decisions.*

Motivation. *This is about being motivated for long-term success—it's about being productive and effective.*

Empathy. *This is the ability to understand those around you—to recognise the feelings of others and to put yourself in the place of the other person—to look at a situation through their eyes.*

Social skills. *This is about working with others in a team—it's about being able to manage disputes effectively and in being able to build and maintain relationships.*

The mentoring conversation can be a great place to explore your knowledge, awareness and experience of emotional intelligence. Why not use the list at the top of this article and identify your own 'emotional instances' and with your mentoring partner explore:

- **Why you acted or reacted** the way you did?
- How this made **you and others feel/react to you?**
- What you could **do differently next time?**

MORE TIPS FOR YOU

Excerpts from research on emotional intelligence and its impact on the mentoring relationship ...

~

'There was considerable agreement that good mentoring relationships involved feelings of respect, of being valued and of belonging.' (Brechtel, 2004)

~

'People's capacities to form positive, safe relationships seem to be strongly influenced by emotional intelligence. As Kram and Cherniss (2001) noted, both mentors and protégés "must rely on their willingness to invest in the relationship and their capacities to initiative contact, actively listen, invite and give feedback, and foster ongoing communication".'

~

'At the same time that emotional intelligence contributes to effective mentoring, effective mentoring can enhance emotional intelligence.'

~

'There are several ways that people in the work setting can try to improve their emotional intelligence, such as coaching and formal training programs. However, mentoring seems to be particularly effective.'

Source: *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work: Theory, Research and Practice* (2007).

Editors: Belle Rose Ragins & Kathy E. Kram.

ISBN: 978-1-4129-1669-1

OVERVIEW



If you've been through a job interview recently, you may have experienced an interview based on the behavioural based interview technique. That is—questions in the interview that were designed to prompt you to describe your actual behaviour and results in certain situations, rather than the traditional 'tell us about yourself' questions of the past. These behavioural based questions are often strongly linked to the experiences, behaviours, skills and knowledge that are required for the position in question. A technique to help you respond to behavioural based questions is **STAR** which stands for giving an answer using the following framework:

Situation (S) Task (T) Action (A) Results (R)

The **mentoring conversation** can also make use of the behavioural interviewing approach and the STAR framework. Let's see how.

For Mentors ...

One of the key skills for mentors is to be able to *listen with the intent to understand rather than with the intent to respond*. This means listening with a sense of curiosity and asking questions that will help the mentee to respond and think the situation through in detail. Mentors can take a behavioural based interview approach in the mentoring conversation by using the STAR method to frame their questions. Here's some examples:

- * What is the **situation** you've found yourself in?
- * What are your responsibilities and **tasks** in this situation?
- * Tell me about the **actions** you've taken to date? In the future?
- * What **results** have you achieved? What would you like to achieve?

Mentors—the idea is that you then have a framework upon which to base your question set, all the time focussing (where you can) on asking open-ended questions (eg. Each of the questions above requires more than a 'yes/no' answer—so will encourage reflection and further discussion with the mentee).

For Mentees ...

Mentors will often look to mentees to direct the mentoring conversation by *leading off* the discussion. But how can you ensure that you have a semblance of structure to your part of the mentoring conversation and don't just ramble on—especially when time may be limited? The STAR framework can be a great way for you to structure your thoughts in an ordered way. Here's an example:

- * The **situation** I find myself in is ...
- * As I see it, the **tasks** I'm responsible for include ...
- * So far my **actions** have been ... I'm thinking about these future actions ...
- * To date my **results** are ... But I'd really like them to be ... in the future ...

Mentees—essentially it's about giving you a framework for storytelling in the mentoring conversation—with the express aim of being able to reach some clarity, decision, insight, strategy, or action plan into the topic that you've brought to the mentoring conversation.

Why not try this strategy next time you meet with your mentoring partner?

More on STAR for you ...

The STAR technique can be a great framework for all sorts of topics in the mentoring conversation as a strategy for both mentors and mentees.

Why not try using the STAR framework to guide your mentoring conversation for these types of conversations ...

~

Conversations that deal with **challenging workplace scenarios ...**

~

Conversations that deal with **reflecting on past situations**—pose the questions in the **past tense**...

~

Conversations that deal with **future events or preparing for future events**—pose the questions in the **future tense**.

~

Conversations that deal with **career progression or planning**.

~

And finally ...

Conversations that deal with the **progress of the mentoring relationship itself**—especially when you may have to address a difficulty—it can help to keep to a 'fact based' approach.

**STAR—
a useful mentoring conversation strategy.**

OVERVIEW

The notion of the first 100 days is a term that US President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) personified as a measure of dynamic leadership and action. In his inaugural address, FDR promised to *'take action and action now'* in the circumstances that he found himself in when he took office during the Great Depression in 1933.

Now—it's clear that you're not about to step into a political situation; however, the first 100 days are critical to the long-term success of your mentoring partnership. In this time, you and your mentoring partner can really set the platform for your mentoring partnership. Here's some strategies to consider in the first 100 days to help you *'take action and action now'* in your mentoring partnership!

Do take the time to get to know one another—this helps to build trust and rapport in your mentoring partnership. Trust and confidentiality are central to the success of a mentoring conversation, so make sure that in the first 100 days you really aim to get to know your mentoring partner on a more personal level.

Tip: *It's often useful to meet a little more often than monthly in the first 100 days—this helps you both to overcome the **transaction type** conversation and really start to feel comfortable with progressing the mentoring conversation.*

Do take the time to complete a Mentoring Partnership Agreement. It's an important tool to ensure that you have discussed and agreed upon the expectations and understanding of how you both want the mentoring partnership to progress. It's a bit like the *strategic roadmap* for your mentoring journey.

Tip: *Don't just do the Mentoring Partnership Agreement and **file it**. It's a very useful monitoring tool for you to review your progress against throughout the partnership.*

Do take the time to identify core focus areas of development or growth for the mentee. While mentoring is not a skills coaching or training activity, it does need and should have some solid areas of focus to guide the mentoring conversation and the growth of the mentee. After all—that's why you and your mentoring partner are engaging in the process of mentoring! Aim to identify 3-5 key areas that will really make a difference to the mentee. From these—plan some active and defined goals that you can use to measure your progress.

Tip: *Having a set of mentoring objectives helps the partnership to focus—and refocus if necessary. Don't be afraid to add or subtract objectives as you progress in your partnership—remain flexible—but committed and focussed.*

Do take the time to strengthen your commitment to the mentoring process. It's all very well to start off with a great first meeting—but what really counts is how you both follow this up. Get the diary out and schedule a regular meeting time for the first 100 days. Reset your meeting schedule each 100 days.

Tip: *It's a good idea to set a re-occurring meeting in your Outlook calendar—this helps mentoring to have visibility amongst competing activities!*

First Partnership Checkpoint - the end of the first 100 days ...

We suggest that at the first 100 days mark of a 12-month mentoring partnership, you take time during one of your mentoring activities to do a quick partnership **health check**. Here are some ideas to guide your discussion:

- * How are our **meetings and logistical arrangements** working? What's going well? What do we want to change?
- * How is our **partnership progressing**? Are we getting to know one another and do we have some synergy together?
- * Are we starting to **work towards our objectives**? Can we identify something we've put some work into and which has made a difference or been achieved?
- * What **further information or support** do we need to make our partnership successful in the coming months?
- * Is there anything happening at work or at home which would **preclude us from working together** in the coming months? (eg. annual leave, health issues, work activities, change in responsibilities in current position)?
- * What are we **enjoying** about the mentoring partnership? What's **frustrating**? What can we do to **solve it**?

And you could finish with these **three questions**:

- * What should we **stop doing**?
- * What should we **keep doing**?
- * What should we **start doing**?

All the best for the next phase of your mentoring partnership.

OVERVIEW



Can you remember back to when you learnt to ride a bike? At first you were pretty wobbly but with more practise you become steady on the bike and could handle the bumps, twists and turns of the road or path with increased skill. The essence of gaining this confidence and competence was **practise in riding your bike** and **support from someone with more experience in riding a bike**.

While much of the mentoring conversation is just that—conversation—there is also room for role play or rehearsal in the mentoring conversation to help a mentee 'walk through' a future activity and to then practise and be prepared.

Using the mentoring conversation space for rehearsal can provide the following benefits:

- It allows the mentee to practise the activity beforehand and to experience the situation—this can then 'throw up' any areas that may need further work or strengthening.
- It allows the mentor to use their experience in providing feedback to the mentee by actually 'seeing them' in action—as opposed to just hearing about how an activity went.
- It helps the mentee to consider potential road-blocks in the activity such as the response of the other person/people and then be prepared for reactions and/or be comfortable with the challenge of others.
- It allows the mentee to become comfortable with any emotions that can rise with a future situation such as nerves or anxiety.

Including role play or rehearsal in your mentoring conversation takes some preparation for it to be successful. Here's some tips on how to prepare:

- Identify the future situation or activity and work through the strategy—'rehearse on paper' before you 'go live'.
- Keep the stress low—remember this is practise and this means that mistakes are OK.
- Don't 'assume' someone else—this is not acting! The role play is about the situation—you are not role playing another person (unless the mentor takes on a 'role' for the activity). Mentees 'play' themselves!
- 'Correct' on the run so that feedback is part of the process.

So next time you meet with your mentoring partner, why not reflect on any future activities the mentee is going to undertake and identify whether role play or rehearsal may help to prepare the mentee for the future experience.

And remember:

'I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand.' (Confucius)

Ideas for Practise in the Mentoring Partnership



Let's be honest—for many of us, the thought of 'role play' is likely to send us running for cover. So—don't! Think of it as role play that is—it's about **practise and rehearsal to help you become confident, competent and prepared**.

Here's some times when the mentoring conversation can be great for rehearsal:

To prepare for upcoming difficult or challenging conversation.

~

To rehearse an argument or information to be presented during a meeting.

~

To practise a presentation to be delivered in a public forum.

~

To prepare for a performance appraisal meeting or review session.

~

To ask for a pay rise or advanced career opportunity.

~

To practise saying 'no' (and meaning it!)



OVERVIEW

Managers and mentors are not in competition with one another, but rather provide complimentary support and development to an individual. Both roles exist for different developmental needs and reasons.

As a manager, you have a responsibility to the organisation to ensure that you and your team achieve its goals and key performance indicators. As a result of this, while you may have an informal mentoring relationship with your team members, because you assign tasks, evaluate outcomes, conduct performance reviews and have direct input into future career positions, as a result of on-the-job performances, you are not paired with your direct report as their formal mentor.

However, managers still play a key part in helping a direct report to successfully engage in a mentoring relationships. As a manager, you can support a mentoring relationship by:

- * Being supportive of the mentoring relationships through negotiation of time and understanding of the benefit that it can bring to the individual, the team and the workplace
- * Being interested but not intrusive on the progress of the mentoring relationship
- * Respecting the boundaries of confidentiality that exist within the mentoring relationship
- * Providing feedback to your direct report when you observe changes in behaviour or actions (eg. Increased confidence etc)
- * Identifying opportunities for other team members to have mentoring opportunities

Frequently Asked Questions by Managers

Who do I consult if the mentoring relationship is taking up more time in the workplace than allocated by the program guidelines? In the first instance, speak with your direct report and then with the Mentoring Program Coordinator.

I know my mentee's mentor socially? Is this a problem? During the commencement of the formal relationship, the mentee and mentor should be identifying any challenges or issues to their partnership – such as this issue. The key element is that the mentoring relationship is confidential. You may need to discuss this challenge with your mentee further.

I'm a mentoring manager – why does my direct report need a mentor? Your key function is to ensure that the objectives your team is responsible for, in the broader company role, are achieved. As a result, while you may be a manager who a mentoring approach, your focus is one of a job supportive relationship with an efficiency focus of 'doing things right'. Sometimes, direct reports benefit from an independent person who they can use as a sounding board, information resource, teacher/coach, and role model. This relationship is complimentary to your role – not in competition to it.

Ideas for Practise in the Mentoring Partnership

Within the mentoring program, mentees are encouraged to consider the role their manager (leader) may have in their mentoring relationship. Best practice indicates that it should be the mentee's decision as to the level of involvement or sharing of information with the manager.

Mentors are not in the position to intervene or discuss the mentoring relationship with the mentee's manager (unless specifically asked to do so by the Mentee). Mentees **are encouraged (but may choose)** to have an initial meeting with their manager early in their mentoring partnership to discuss:

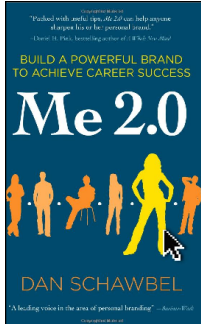
- * The Mentoring Program and its aims and objectives.
- * The areas in which they plan to work on during their mentoring partnership.
- * Any areas the manager has observed, including both strengths and areas for development, which the Mentee could also include in the development plan for their mentoring partnership.

Mentees are asked to consider questions such as:

- * How much involvement, if any, would you like your manager to have in your mentoring partnership?
- * Does your manager know your mentor? If so, what's the connection, and how might this have an effect?
- * How could you keep your manager informed about your development progress and the non-confidential aspects of your mentoring partnership?
- * How will you handle any contrasting advice or viewpoints from your manager and your mentor?

(The Mentee's Guide, Dr Linda Phillips-Jones, 2003).

OVERVIEW



According to author of *Me 2.0*, Dan Schawbel, personal branding is about 'unearthing what is true and unique about you and letting everyone know about it.'

He goes on to further to say: '*As a brand, you are your own free agent. You have the freedom to create the career path that links your talents and interests with the right position and the ability to move both vertically and horizontally, now and throughout your career paths.*'

Now perhaps you feel that all this talk about personal branding is a little selfish or too self-promotional? Well—in some ways it is, but it's also about helping you to establish yourself further in your current role and to proactively develop yourself for your long term career.

According to Schawbel, there are four key steps to building your personal brand:

1. Identify what your brand is—**INVESTIGATE**
2. Design your brand—**CREATE**
3. Share your brand—**COMMUNICATE**
4. Keep your brand—**MONITOR.**

Do you have an online profile that helps you to communicate your brand? Is working on your personal brand part of your mentoring conversation? One practical part of your personal brand is your online presence and profile. **See the Tips Box for more ideas.**

The mentoring conversation is a great (and safe) space to discuss your personal brand. You could use the steps that Schawbel outlines above to guide a mentoring conversation on personal branding. Here's some questions you could take forward in a mentoring conversation:

- * What is my current personal brand? (investigate)
- * What is my future personal brand? (create)
- * What activities can I undertake to move towards my desired personal brand? (create)
- * What opportunities do I have to communicate my brand (eg. Resume, online profiles, volunteering for opportunities)? (communicate)
- * How can you connect your professional network and your personal branding? What relationships are you building? (monitor)

So as you start to consider the end of your mentoring partnership—take stock of what discussions you've had about your own personal brand and identify the opportunities that an online professional profile may provide for your next action steps.

Your Online Personal Profile



LinkedIn is one online tool that helps to promote your personal brand. However, it's important that you create and monitor your online profile successfully. It's more than just putting your 'name up there'!

Here's five tips on using LinkedIn:

- * **Start with a good profile**—take the time to register and set up a comprehensive profile.
- * **Connect with others**—consider colleagues that may be important to you—reach out. Reflect on who will help you to build a high quality professional network.
- * **Keep it personal**—it's not about the quantity of your connections—it's about the quality. Tailor the messages and information that you send others to keep it more personalised.
- * **Keep updated**—monitor your profile and update as things change.
- * **Join in**—there are many professional development groups in LinkedIn that can offer great support and content.

100 million professionals use LinkedIn—so they can't all be wrong.