

## **Guidelines & Resources for Mentors & Protégés:**

Mentoring relationships (aka mentorships) are dynamic, reciprocal, personal relationships in which a more experienced person (mentor) acts as a guide, role model, teacher and sponsor of a less experienced person (protégé).

Mentors provide protégés with knowledge, advice, counsel, support, and opportunity in the protégés pursuit of full membership in a particular profession.

Outstanding Mentors are intentional about the mentor role.

Mentoring is an act of generativity – a process of bringing into existence and passing on a professional legacy.

Knowledge is informed understanding.

Attitude is the perspective or point of view.

Skill is behavior designed to serve a specific purpose.

### **What Excellent Mentors Do**

#### **Be selective:**

Mentors should be very selective when choosing / agreeing to work with a protégé. You have limited resources, your time and energy. You can not mentor everyone. A well-intended but over-extended mentor pays a price and so does the protégé. Seek protégés that share your interests and career aspirations. Decide in advance the number of protégés you feel you can mentor while maintaining excellence. Commit to mentor only after some period of informal work and interaction with the prospective protégé.

#### **Know your Protégé:**

- Study the person, discern their distinct mix of talent and vulnerabilities.
- Be attentive to the protégés fears and personal challenges – acknowledge them but do not allow the protégé to see them as insurmountable.
- In order to know your protégé, you need to have a personal relationship with them.
- Get to know your protégé through:
  - Observation
  - frequent interactions – especially face to face

- be accessible and available
- listening
- caring
- communicating openly
- giving constructive feedback

### **Expect Excellence:**

- Effective mentors do not settle for mediocrity.
- Expect more of your protégés than they expect of themselves. This will raise their expectations and lift their performance.
- Communicate clearly your expectations for excellence.
- Provide a strong sense of inspirational motivation.
- Model the same excellence you expect from your protégé.
- Be careful to avoid endorsing perfection, as this is not an attainable goal.

### **Affirm the Protégé:**

- Affirmation is the key to a feeling of well-being for all humans.
- Affirm your protégé as a person. This is an acknowledgement of a person's inherent worth.
- Affirm your protégé as a professional. This is an acknowledgement of their achievements.
- Affirmation is an artful blending of personal acceptance and professional endorsement.
- By affirming your protégé you are communicating an unequivocal belief in them.
- Communicate and demonstrate faith in the protégé's ability and trust in their judgement.
- Instill confidence in your protégé to help them overcome self-doubt.
- Seek to discern and then endorse your protégé's life and career dreams. Work diligently to help them achieve them.
- Consider which opportunities (ie: committees, organizations, projects, professional experiences) would best prepare them to achieve their dreams.
- Gently shed light on unrealistic aspirations.

### **Be a Teacher:**

- If you teach, protégés will learn.
- Provide knowledge, make recommendations, offer consultation, stimulate motivation and encouragement.
- Bolster your protégés technical skills by providing knowledge and refining specific professional skills. Learning is a catalyst for growth.
- One method to use is storytelling. Share your stories of your own successes and failures with them.

- Teach protégés strategies for managing conflict, coach them on goal setting, and teach them the acceptable ranges of behaviors.
- Help them understand and respect organizational politics and group norms while avoiding gossip.

*Source: "The Elements of Mentoring" By W. Brad Johnson and Charles R. Ridley*

## Key Actions for Giving Constructive Feedback

### Convey your positive intent:

- Mentally prepare to give feedback
- Choose a time when the other person is likely to be receptive to what you have to say
- Briefly state what you'd like to cover
- Point to a common goal
- Avoid placing blame

### Describe specifically what you have observed:

- Be brief and to the point
- Focus on the behaviors and actions, not on the person
- Limit your feedback to one issue at a time
- Avoid using "you" as much as possible

### State the impact of the behavior or action:

- Link the behavior or action to important goals like client service, costs, turn around times
- State the impact on you and others
- State only one or two of the most significant consequences
- Maintain an objective tone

### Ask the other person to respond:

- Pause to encourage the other person to speak
- Ask open-ended questions
- Listen objectively to what the other person has to say
- Summarize the other person's key points to show your interest and confirm your understanding

### Focus the discussion on solutions:

- Ask questions to explore possible solutions
- Ask directly for changes, or help you want
- If you are making suggestions, avoid coming across as an expert
- Be willing to change your own behavior to contribute to a solution
- Manage your own expectations about what it will take for a solution to work

## Proactive Listening Tip Sheet

### **Show interest in what the speaker has to say:**

- Focus on the speaker
- Openly tell the speaker that you are interested, and why
- Use nonverbal cues to establish and maintain rapport:
  - Face the speaker and lean forward
  - Maintain open body language
  - Establish eye contact
  - Nod and smile when appropriate
- Allow time for the speaker to respond or elaborate
- When the speaker pauses or hesitates, use short, verbal cues to encourage continued communication
- Avoid interrupting the speaker

### **Ask questions to clarify, gather information, and focus the conversation:**

- Use open-ended questions to probe for more information
- Use closed questions to gather specifics and details

### **Let the speaker know what you understand:**

- Restate in your own words what you've understood
- Keep restating until you've got it right
- Acknowledge the speaker's emotions

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## Techniques For Receiving Constructive Feedback

**When you are receiving feedback, remember to:**

### **Focus on the content, not on the person**

- Assume the person giving the feedback is concerned about you and the work, not motivated by ill will.
- Find the nugget of wisdom in the feedback.

### **Listen calmly and attentively**

- Get the complete picture so you can choose the best response.
- Tune in fully. Your willingness to listen will often make the speaker feel better and help “turn down the heat” quickly.
- Monitor any negative reactions you have to keep them from escalating.

### **Clarify the feedback**

- Select a few key questions you will ask to gather the information you need and to be sure you understand.
- Avoid antagonizing the person with too many questions or comparisons to other situations.

### **Acknowledge the other person’s concerns**

- Show you understand the other person’s point of view.
- Point to common goals and objectives.
- Express your willingness to engage in mutual problem solving.

### **Avoid defending or over- explaining**

- Correct any inaccuracies you hear, but keep your input to a few words.
- If necessary, take time out before responding in order to sort out what you want to say.

### **Welcome suggestions**

- Focus on the future.
- Find out at least one thing you can do differently to better meet the needs or requirements.

### **On an ongoing basis or after receiving feedback**

- Ask for feedback regularly.



- If in doubt about the merit of feedback, check with others.
- Evaluate feedback you receive and decide what changes you can make.
- Let people know when you implement changes that stem from the feedback they gave you.

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## Leadership Skills

### Tips on Speaking Effectively

- Outline in your mind what you are trying to say then stick to your outline.
- Paraphrase the questions you are asked.
- Eliminate speech habits that may annoy others, such as talking too slowly, too rapidly, or too hesitatingly.
- Deliberately use a new word every day in your discussions.
- When you are asked a tough question, allow yourself to pause for a moment to compose your answer instead of “shooting from the hip.”

### Tips to Foster Open Communication

- Find out what your employees want to know.
- Don’t “shoot the messenger” of bad news.
- Hold periodic staff meetings to share information about recent developments in the organization.
- Use the “informal organization” as a way of keeping others informed. Wander around, have coffee with others, ask them questions.
- Return phone calls promptly.

### Tips for Building Relationships

- Focus on people’s good qualities rather than on their deficiencies.
- Be friendly, positive, and optimistic when you meet someone for the first time.
- Ask others directly how things are going for them.
- Don’t allow yourself to become so busy that you fail to notice the needs and concerns of others.
- Ask if you can help when you see a colleague “in a bind” on a project or assignment.

**Source: “Successful Manager’s Handbook”**  
**Personnel Decisions International**  
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## The Basic Principles for Collaboration

### Basic Principle 1: Focus on the situation, issue, or behavior, not the person

- Take a broad perspective.
  - Ask yourself:
    - How does this situation compare to others that have happened before?
    - What knowledge or information might apply?
    - How could this situation affect the future?
- Avoiding putting others on the defensive.
  - Don't attack or criticize.
  - Don't let personality differences or strong opinions cloud your vision.
- Consider other points of view.
  - Ask yourself:
    - How would a peer view this situation? A client?

### Basic Principle 2: Maintain the self-confidence and self-esteem of others

- Let others see that you have confidence in them.
  - Give people reinforcement about their abilities if they seem to need it – and even if they don't.
  - Seek out opportunities for others to apply newly acquired skills.
- Recognize accomplishments.
  - Make a point of acknowledging people's ideas and contributions.
- Encourage people to express their ideas.
  - Assume others may know something you don't. Let them know that you are interested in what they have to say. Listen closely. Ask questions.

### Basic Principle 3: Maintain constructive relationships

- Use every interaction as an opportunity to build relationships.
  - Always treat people openly and supportively. Assume they are acting with the Firm's best interest at heart.
- Acknowledge problems openly and honestly.
  - Deal with conflicts as they arise.

- This means working together effectively and sharing honestly, but respectfully and professionally feelings and points of view.
- Share information.
  - Discuss changes that affect the Firm or your work group.
  - Share information about how your work group affects other function centers.

## **Basic Principle 4: Take the initiative to make things better**

- Look for opportunities for improvement.
  - Consider ways to raise client satisfaction, reduce turnaround times and costs, and /or streamline work processes.
- Stay informed.
  - Change is a fact of life. Keep up on what's happening in the industry and the Firm. Don't get caught off guard.
- Act as if there is a solution to every problem, because there almost always is.
  - Look for ways to overcome inertia and the fear of embarrassment that can stifle initiative.
  - If a problem seems too big, break it down into manageable chunks.
- Plan ahead.
  - If you are handling a crisis, ask yourself how you might avert such crises in the future.
  - If you hear about a coming change, think through the possible challenges for your group and how they might meet them.

## **Basic Principle 5: Lead by Example**

- Follow through on your commitments.
  - People need to be able to depend on you, so follow through on your responsibilities. If you can't keep a commitment, don't make it.
- Admit your mistakes.
  - Mistakes are inevitable during periods of rapid change. If you don't admit them, you can't learn from them.
  - Admitting your mistakes will almost always earn the respect of other people.
- Push yourself and others to try new ways of doing things.
  - Acknowledge your feelings about change. Chances are, others feel the same way.
  - Don't be afraid of a few calculated risks. A risk-free life is no life at all.

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