

Mentoring Managers: 14 Important Truths for Business Mentor-Mentee Relationships



To mentor means to provide trusted advice to a mentee during her/his learning adventure. That is, mentors, share the truth of their lived experiences when the mentees are ready (and sometimes not ready) to listen.

Mentors share their experiences in a friendly, conversational way. They have a vested interest in their mentees gaining personal insights into living their great lives and/or creating well-living workplaces.

A mentee, ready to engage in mentoring, is often heard to say: "I know I am stuck and with your experience, you can advise me to see my knowing."

My Mentors, My Mentoring

I have had two notable mentors in my life. One was a playground supervisor when I was in my late teens. He showed me the path of creativity and freethinking. Through his encouragement, I began to write poetry as a way to express my feelings. His spirit remains with me today even though I cannot remember his name.

A second mentor gave me the gift of his time to dialogue so I might expand my ideas. Our conversations were glorious. When Gerard passed from this world, I bought a portion of his estate re the terms and concepts, processes and instruments to undertake organization culture assessment. Then, through continued research and considerable thinking, reflecting and presenting, I continue to honor our mentoring relationship by expanding our/my theory and practice.

And today, I mentor others. I do so because 'you educate what you love to learn.' When I mentor I pass along ideas, tools, and techniques I have learned. More importantly, our conversations also generate new ideas that expand my thinking and practice.

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14 Truths about Mentoring

From a mentor-mentee perspective, here is what I have learned about mentoring:

1. The mentor starts from the perspective: the mentor is guiding the mentee to the mentee's knowing. They are both engaged in the social construction of knowledge, then wisdom.
2. The mentor connects with the identity the mentee offers. That is, the mentor starts with who the mentee is today. For example, if the person is opening a new business, the mentoring starts with entrepreneurship and the mentee being an entrepreneur. In doing so, there is a shared context for the mentor's relationship with the mentee - a place to start that is public to both.
3. Mentoring is a person-centered, learning-centered (humanistic) approach for shared trust, respect, fairness, caring, responsibility and a willingness to develop community.
4. The mentor is asked to become engaged by the mentee. And yet, the mentor must have the where-for-all to know when the request would not benefit both parties and thus decline to become involved. The decision to mentor is with the mentor; this decision is sacred to the mentor.
5. The mentor recognizes the mentee is on a learning journey (adventure) where and when the mentee may [or may not] request advice and guidance. Because of the trust and respect in the relationship, the mentor knows when to share and when to be quiet.
6. The time spent together is usually of a duration that matches what the mentee's needs to learn from the mentor's lived experience.
7. The shared (learning) conversation is dynamic, open and nurturing. Both intend to ensure what is said is relevant and applicable. Confidentiality is the glue that binds the relationship.
8. The connection can be close in and/or far away. While the face-to-face exchange has its advantages, technology-supported connections do allow for

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distance mentoring. However, there is something to be said for a real voice, seeing a real face and listening through body language.

9. Mentors seek fair exchange in the relationship. While the mentor has a vested interest in the mentee gaining insight, the exchange has the mentor fulfilling a need to be in service - the view to serve originates from a sense of informed quietness.

10. It is up to the mentee to use the insights gained from the conversation wisely. While the mentor helps layout options, it is the mentee who makes the ethical decision to proceed.

11. Mentors acknowledge and support mentees to continue their learning through the use of praise and the sharing of knowledge, skills and attitude insights.

12. Mentoring and succession planning are more transformational than transactional. And yet, when possible, the relationship becomes transcendent. That is, individually and together, the mentor and mentee are going somewhere without either knowing where they will end up. Their relationship requires faith.

13. Each mentee is unique and deserves to be honored and celebrated.

14. The mentor is a partner, a companion and a 'guide on the ride.' The mentor counters feelings of loneliness along the mentee's journey. The mentee knows someone is present with whom to share thoughts and feelings.

These 14 insights are my truth about mentoring - a truth that continues to evolve; a truth, now articulated, that will see more light as it is shared with you.

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Extending Your Learning

For your continued learning here are questions to consider:

Who has mentored you? What were the gifts of their mentoring?

Who is mentoring you today?

Who can you mentor?

If approached to mentor someone, are you willing to say NO if there is no fit?

Explore the International Community



<https://wellthmovement.com/mentor-schools>

Resources:

Wellth Blog - <https://wellthmovement.com/wellth-blog>

Articles on Mentoring - <https://wellthmovement.com/mentoring-resources>

Online Course - <https://wellthmovement.com/wholiversity>