

HOW TO BE A GREAT MENTEE

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the session, delegates will understand how a Mentee can gain confidence and independence in their career, with the help of a good Mentor. The best Mentors provide a sounding board against which to bounce new ideas, clarify problems and suggest alternative working methods.

A mentor is a person who volunteers to spend some time with you, helping you with problems and questions. They can be from any background, professional or otherwise, and their role is to guide you. They might help with work issues, give career advice or listen when you need someone to talk to.

In the films, delegates will meet Bad Mentor. He cuts corners, is slapdash, self-centred and lazy - and he'll never change. He believes that mentoring can be delivered quickly, and with a traditional approach, he soon ends up in trouble. Smart, organised, charming, firm but fair, Good Mentor is everything Bad Mentor is not. She represents the right way of doing things and is the voice of reason.

Jason thinks his Mentor will do all the heavy lifting for him. He arrives completely underprepared and as a result, clashes with Bad Mentor. The prospect of planning his entire future career is so daunting for him he has decided not to plan at all, and wing it—big mistake.

On the other hand, Meg is fastidious, smart and driven. Good Mentor slows things down, establishing ground rules and building rapport and trust. She is then able to help develop her independence and resolve the challenges facing her.

LOOK – watch the video and reflect on the content and message

THINK – activities and questions linking the video to their own experience and workplace

REMEMBER – a summary of the key learning points

Each section relating to the video will last around 15 minutes

PRACTISE – At the end of the series of videos there is a practical exercise which will bring the learnings together. Delegates should be encouraged to record any personal development actions on their Personal Action Plan sheet.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- The First Meeting
- Expectations

FILM 1 – THE FIRST MEETING

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Divide the group into two teams or chat groups. Assign a team leader to each and ask each team to discuss how a Mentee can adopt a proactive attitude and get the most out of being mentored.

Draw out the points they make to cover the key points below;

Being mentored shouldn't be a passive experience. To get the most out of it, you should:

- Think about what you want from your mentor
- Make a list of goals you want to achieve with your mentor's support
- Tell your mentor how best he or she can help you. Do you want advice, someone to talk to or help in doing something?
- Follow up any suggestions your mentor has and report back
- Come to every session with an agenda
- Be open and willing to learn
- Give your mentor feedback, i.e. what is working for you, and what isn't?
- Keep a journal noting your successes and things that haven't gone so well

The major priority in the first and early meetings is to establish the relationship itself - to gain rapport, trust and confidence. It is also important to stress that whatever is said during these meetings is confidential.

Think about what you would like to get out of the mentoring process and prepare some objectives which your mentor can help you to refine.

You agree at the beginning of the relationship a fixed pattern of meetings. These don't have to be face to face - if your location makes it difficult to meet in person you can book a telephone call or Skype conversation. However, all the meetings should have a start time and an end time. Make sure that both of you are aware of the end date and work towards it.

REMEMBER

- Build rapport and trust - Mentoring conversations are confidential so speak openly with each other.
- Agree a fixed pattern of contact for the first few weeks
- Set meeting start and end times and stick to them

FILM 2 – EXPECTATIONS

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

There are always going to be times when you face critical questions. Here are some things to remember if your Mentor challenges you:

- Don't be defensive - it'll only add to fuel to the fire.
- Don't respond by fighting back.
- Be specific. Make your Mentor critic explain the exact nature on his/her criticism e.g. Could you please explain what you mean by 'unfinished'? How exactly had you hoped it would look?
- Ask for suggestions. You must show that you want to improve e.g. What format would be better?; Could you demonstrate what you mean?
- Disagree when appropriate. Get all the information about what the critic perceives to be wrong and then provide evidence or further information to prove your point. Try to show you have a viable alternative.
- End constructively. Try to answer the points made and thank your Mentor for the criticism.

Ask the group to consider how they might be able to overcome negativity emerging in a mentoring session. Answers could include:

- Learn to recognise when your defensive mechanisms come up - realise that you are probably not really being attacked.
- When you catch yourself feeling defensive, don't react so quickly.
- Learn how to listen when someone asks a question or makes a suggestion.
- Ask people to re-state their question/comment/suggestion.
- Try to understand what others are saying by repeating back what you think you heard.
- You may want to ask for more time to respond, then get back to them. This will give you time to work with the question/comment/ suggestion without the pressure of being on the spot.
- DO consider that other people have good ideas that are just as valid as yours are.
- Ask a colleague or someone that you interact with regularly to let you know when you are being unreasonable and call your attention to what you are doing. That will help you learn to see what situations and events trigger your insecurity.
- Recognise that changing learned patterns of insecurity and defensiveness will take time.

Conclude by suggesting that the effort to improve your ability to get along with others will be rewarded, as you find more career opportunities open up for you.

REMEMBER

- Set specific goals and expectations for the mentoring relationship – formally or informally.
- Mentoring conversations are confidential so feel free to speak openly with each other.
- Mentors don't make decisions for mentees. Mentees must learn to resolve problems and issues independently of the mentor.
- The mentee must not take advantage of the mentor.

HOW TO BE A GREAT MENTEE – GROUP EXERCISE

Divide the group into two teams or chat groups. Assign a team leader to each and ask each team to discuss the Dos and Don'ts that a Mentee should follow:

Draw out the points they make to cover the key points below;

Mentee Dos and Don'ts

- Do set specific goals and expectations for the mentoring relationship.
- Don't expect the mentor to make decisions for you. Learn to resolve problems and issues independently of the mentor.
- Do be proactive. It is the mentee's responsibility to maintain contact with the mentor and schedule future interactions.
- Don't take advantage of the mentor.
- Do respect the mentor's time and help.
- Don't gossip about the mentor.
- Do treat the mentor professionally and in an ethical fashion. Be thoughtful and sensitive about the mentor's feelings and time

Complete the session by sharing the Mentoring contract:

The Mentoring Contract

<p>The mentor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet when agreed • Listen attentively • Support you • Ask awkward questions • Give you honest feedback • Provide information if appropriate 	<p>The mentor will not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the work for you • Do most of the talking • Intervene between you and your manager • Chase after you • Share confidential information
<p>The mentor can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help with the politics • Provide introductions to others • Ask others for feedback on you if appropriate • Help identify goals 	<p>The mentor cannot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursemaid you • Teach you everything • Demand feedback • Identify your goals for you