



People Problems

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Being a successful mentor is up to YOU!

30 January 2013

A lot of really successful people put high value on having good mentors in their working lives. The help that a good mentor can provide will keep you on a straight path while the world is trying to pull you in other directions.

But looking at the other side of the coin – how do you become a good mentor? Is it simply a matter of being successful in business, or is there more to it than that?

Start by building a strong and trusting relationship

The most important thing is to build a trusting relationship. Be a great listener and ask good quality open questions. Agree on when, where, how long, how often and the goals you need to achieve over what time period. Then make sure you stick to those times and goals as much as possible. The quickest way to lose respect and destroy the relationship is to continually cancel and postpone the meetings.

A strong analytical mind

A mentor needs to be a guiding light for the mentee. This requires the ability to look beyond what is being presented and to spot trends or problems before they engulf the mentee. It is a skill that usually comes with a lot of industry experience, but even without that benefit a good mentor has the ability to really strip back a problem to its roots and logically work through to a solution.

The ability to confront

It is usually ambitious or entrepreneurial people that seek out a mentor, and people with these personality types have a tendency to get ahead of themselves. A mentor that can highlight that an unrecognised problem exists and needs to be addressed will build a powerful and beneficial relationship. It's best to be up front from the start and agree that honesty is the best approach and that we all learn best from critical feedback. Nobody needs a wishy-washy mentor that beats around the bush, can't be direct, or worse still says nothing.

The ability to encourage

When you become someone's confidante you will quickly become a sounding board for their most troubling times. Decisions that need to be made or problems and hardships they are facing will likely enter the discussions. If these negatives become overbearing then the mentor will be put in a position where he/she needs to provide a good dose of encouragement. Knowing the right time to say "push through" compared to saying "it's time to change tack" is an essential skill for mentors.

Lasts 5 posts

A 13-point checklist on how to choose a good mentor
Don't just sit there – LISTEN!
What motivates your team at work? A quick pop quiz
A fail-safe way to work through important decisions
Don't touch at work

Reviewing and progress checks

The best thing a mentor does is to keep a mentee on track. This usually involves reminding the mentee of what they had outlined as their goals and targets. It also involves the gentle prodding, with phone calls or emails that proactively prompt an update on a project or business plan. It's not micromanaging and trying to prevent all mistakes.

It's also important to be open about your own performance as a mentor – ask for feedback, and be honest about your limitations.

*Eve Ash has produced some useful resources when it comes to being a great mentor and leader: **HOW TO MENTOR, WHY ARE WE STUCK?, INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP**. And for anyone who wants to assess their mentoring skills try this **Mentoring Effectiveness Indicator** for some 360 degree feedback! Check out more at www.7d-tv.com.*

This article was first published on SmartCompany.