

Appraisal Assertiveness Benchmarking Brand management Business leadership for women Coaching Competitor analysis Consulting Costing and management accounting Creativity Cross cultural differences Customer Relationship Management Decision making and problem solving Delegation Emotional intelligence Facilitation skills Feedback techniques Harassment Influencing Innovation Interpersonal skills Interpreting financial accounts Interviewing Introduction to marketing Investment appraisal Knowledge management Leadership Learning organisation Lifestyle planning Managing change Managing diversity Managing stress Manufacturing operations Marketing strategy and planning Meeting skills Negotiating skills Neuro linguistic programming Performance management Presenting skills Process management Project management Public relations Relationship marketing Time management Self managed development Service excellence Strategic awareness Supply chain management Team building/team working Time management Value creation Virtual teams Writing a business plan Writing skills

Appraisal Assertiveness Benchmarking Brand management Business leadership for women Coaching Competitor analysis Consulting Costing and management accounting Creativity Cross cultural differences Customer Relationship Management Decision making and problem solving Delegation Emotional intelligence Facilitation skills Feedback techniques Harassment Influencing Innovation Interpersonal skills Interpreting financial accounts Interviewing Introduction to marketing Investment appraisal Knowledge management Leadership Learning organisation Lifestyle planning Managing change Managing diversity

Appraisal Assertiveness Benchmarking Brand management Business leadership for women Coaching Competitor analysis Consulting Costing and management accounting Creativity Cross cultural differences Customer Relationship Management Decision making and problem solving Delegation Emotional intelligence Facilitation skills Feedback techniques Harassment Influencing Innovation Interpersonal skills Interpreting financial accounts Interviewing Introduction to marketing Investment appraisal Knowledge management Leadership Learning organisation Lifestyle planning Managing change Managing diversity

Mentoring

Learning Guide

Mentoring

Introduction

This Learning Guide was written by Bob Jack, a management consultant and specialist in management development and training. It is one of a series produced by the Learning Resource Centre. Each guide sets out to give you a quick summary of the main theories on a particular topic backed up by a practical commentary based on Ashridge's long experience of consulting on teaching management issues. We hope that it whets your appetite for more information. The guide points you in the direction of other sources such as key books, articles and useful websites.

Where to start

If you have less than an hour, read the overview and the article by Adrienne Geiger-duMond and Susan Boyle *Mentoring: a practitioner's guide*. If you have longer, take a look at the Management Pocketbook on mentoring and explore the Centre for Mentoring website at <http://www.mentoringcentre.co.uk>. If you have time to explore in more depth, turn to the resources section where you can find suggested journal articles and books on mentoring. Should you have several hours to devote you may wish to try some of the practical development activities.

Resources

Videos

Personal Development Coaching (1999), Audio Briefings – 31 minutes.

Coaching is a support and a resource for those who are already successful, and are ready to expand their horizons and their goals. This briefing covers: what is coaching; who is it relevant to; the benefits of coaching; the tools coaches use; the differences between coaching, mentoring and training; the time commitment and costs; how to justify using a coach in your company; how to find a coach.

Journal articles

Bell, Chip (2000) *The mentor as partner*, Training & Development, February, p52-56.

Clutterbuck, David (2000) *Ten core mentor competencies*, Organisations & People, November, p29-34.

Deane, Terrance (1997) *Mentoring: A process for growth or buzz word for the 90's?*, Training Officer, September, p198-200.

Geiger-duMond, Adrienne; Boyle, Susan (1995) *Mentoring: a practitioner's guide*, Training & Development, March, p51-54.

Gibbons, Andrew (2000) *Getting the most from mentoring: recent developments and learning*, Training Journal, March, p18-20.

Johnson, Roy (2004) *Coaching and Mentoring: aha moments*, Organisations & People, February, p26-32.

Lansdale, Anthony (1996) *The mentor's journey*, Management Training, May/June, p23-25.

Lindenberger, Judith; Zachary, Lois, J (1999) *Play "20 questions" to develop a successful mentoring program*, Training & Development, February, p12-14.

Mehta, Stephanie (2001) *Why mentoring works*, Fortune, July, p119.

Mumford, Alan (1998) *Styles of mentoring*, Management Skills & Development, June, p12-16.

Napper, Rosemary; Keane, Dee (2004) *What's in a name?*, Organisations & People, November, p34-41.

Simonetti, Jack; Ariss, Sonny; Martinez, Joan (1999) *Through the top with mentoring*, Business Horizons, November, p56-62.

Tyler, Kathryn (2004) *Find your mentor*, HR Magazine, March, p 89-93.

Van Collie, Shimon-Craig (1998) *Moving up through mentoring*, Workforce, March, p 36-42.

Veale, David; Wachtel, Jeffrey (1996) *Mentoring and coaching as part of a human resource development strategy: an example at Coca-Cola Foods*, Leadership & Organization Development Journal, May, p16-20.

Zielinski, Dave (2000) *Mentoring up*, Training, October, p 136-140.

Information files

There are information files on the following subjects containing a number of newspaper and journal articles:

- Mentoring.
- Coaching.
- Motivation.
- Leadership.

- Performance management.
- Feedback techniques.

Books

** Books marked with asterisks are available for sale from the LRC Bookshop. Mail order service available. Tel: +44 (0)1442 841159. Fax: +44 (0)1442 841211. Email: celia.tucker@ashridge.org.uk.

Caplan, Janice (2003) *Coaching for the Future: How Smart Companies use Coaching and Mentoring*, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. Ashridge shelf reference: **JMC (CAP)**

Coaching for the Future is a handbook aimed at HR professionals and line managers. It sets out different ways that coaching can be used within an organisation, as well as how it can help individuals with their personal and career development. Topics covered include: the case for coaching; managing the coaching process; and future trends such as the impact of blended learning and e-coaching.

Clutterbuck, David (2004) *Everyone Needs a Mentor: Fostering Talent in your Organisation*, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. Ashridge shelf reference: **CDC JMB (CLU)**

In this book David Clutterbuck shows you what mentoring is and how it differs from coaching. It shows you how to make the business case for mentoring and then how set up, run and maintain your own mentoring programme. Everything from selecting and matching mentors and mentees to measuring the results.

Clutterbuck, David & Megginson, David (2004) *Techniques for Coaching and Mentoring*, Butterworth Heinemann. Ashridge shelf reference: **CDC JMB (CLU)**

The aim of this book is to provide the coach or mentor with a wider portfolio of techniques and approaches to helping others than would normally be gained from practical experience or attending a course. In compiling these techniques, the authors have drawn on experience from their coaching and mentoring activities, and added to these with the help of other experienced professionals within the field. They have clustered these into a number of themes, which now make up the framework for the main body of this book.

Cranwell-Ward, Jane; Bossons, Patricia & Gover, Sue (2004) *Mentoring: A Henley Review of Best Practice*, Palgrave.

Ashridge shelf reference: **JMB (CRA)**

This book draws on case study material and includes advice on best practice from leading companies on setting up, running and evaluating mentoring schemes. It gives a comprehensive view from the perspective of both those running company mentoring schemes and those taking part in mentoring relationships.

Hay, Julie (1999) *Transformational Mentoring*, Sherwood Publishing.

Ashridge shelf reference: **JMC (HAY)**

This work presents an approach to mentoring that reflects current organisational realities: flatter structures; learning companies; career mobility; portfolio building; and flexible career options. It aims to help create developmental alliances between equals, inside or outside an organisation.

Johnson, Brad & Ridley, Charles (2004) *The Elements of Mentoring*, Palgrave.

Ashridge shelf reference: **JMC (JOH)**

This book summarizes the substantial existing research on the art and science of mentoring. Although there are a number of successful books addressing mentoring, this book reduces the wealth of published theory on the topic to the fifty most salient and pithy truths for supervisors in all fields. The book is arranged into six parts, which clearly organize these key elements of successful mentoring: 1) What Excellent Mentors Do, 2) Traits of Excellent Mentors, 3)

Arranging the Mentor Protege Relationship, 4) Mentoring and Integrity, 5) When Things Go Wrong, and 6) Welcoming Change and Saying Good bye.

Klasen, Nadine (2001) *Implementing Mentoring Schemes*, Butterworth Heinemann.

Ashridge shelf reference: JMC (KLA)

Implementing Mentoring Schemes constitutes the most comprehensive and up-to-date coverage of the design, implementation, evaluation and revitalisation of mentoring schemes. Although it can be used as a practical "how-to" guide on implementing mentoring schemes, it is ultimately a book that promotes best practice, combining academic research and case studies with many years of practical experience to produce expert advice. It enables readers to fully understand mentoring and to create state-of-the-art programmes. In addition, it establishes a tenable case for mentoring that will greatly assist readers in promoting programs within their organisation.

Lambert, Andrew (2001) *Obtaining Value From Executive Coaching And Mentoring*, Careers Research Forum.

Ashridge shelf reference: JMC (LAM)

This report from the Careers Research Forum examines the subject of Mentoring and Executive Coaching. The author builds on a 1996 publication on coaching to update the practices within the field. Contents include: the growth of mentoring and coaching, addressing different needs, managing and evaluating, selecting external coaches and also features case studies on organisations such as: Royal Sun Alliance; Credit Suisse; Johnson and Johnson; Nationwide; Safeway and Kingfisher.

Luecke, Richard (2004) *Coaching and Mentoring: How to Develop Top Talent and Achieve Stronger Performance*, Harvard Business School Press.

Ashridge shelf reference: JMC (LUE)

Effective managers know that timely coaching can dramatically enhance their teams' performance. *Coaching and Mentoring* offers managers comprehensive

advice on how to help employees grow professionally and achieve their goals. This volume covers the full spectrum of effective mentoring and the nuts and bolts of coaching. Managers will learn how to master special mentoring challenges, improve listening skills, and provide ongoing support to their employees.

Shea, F, Gordon (1995) *Mentoring: A Guide to the Basics*, Kogan Page.

Ashridge shelf reference: JMC (SHE)

This study describes mentoring in the business environment, explaining what it can offer, how the recipient should benefit from the process and how to set mentoring to work in any organisation.

Whittaker, Mike & Cartwright, Ann (2000) *The Mentoring Manual*, Gower Publishing.

Ashridge shelf reference: JMC (WHI)

This manual provides both theory and materials for starting a new mentoring scheme or revitalizing an existing one. It shows how to win over decision-makers, recruit mentors and mentees and develop champions for the cause, and how to design, plan, launch and sustain a successful scheme. Access to new ideas and best practice is provided alongside ideas and examples, forms, questions, exercises and other photocopiable materials for the trainer or facilitator. The examples are from many areas including business, the voluntary sector, and higher and secondary education.

Zachary, Lois & Daloz, Laurent (2000) *The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships*, Jossey Bass Wiley.

Ashridge shelf reference: JMC (ZAC)

The Mentor's Guide explores the critical process of mentoring and presents practical tools for facilitating the experience from beginning to end. Now managers, teachers, and leaders from any career, professional, or educational setting can successfully navigate the learning journey by using the hands-on worksheets and exercises in this unique resource.

Useful websites

<http://www.emccouncil.org>

European Mentoring & Coaching Council exists to promote good practice and the expectation of good practice in mentoring and coaching across Europe.

<http://www.mentorsforum.co.uk>

This site, run by Business Link Hertfordshire, provides both information about specific mentoring services and about mentoring as a generic subject. Features of the site include mentoring case studies and research; mentoring publications and evaluation tools; and details of global mentoring services. An online discussion forum is also available.

<http://www.mentoringcentre.co.uk>

The Centre provides a professional mentoring and executive coaching service for managers and leaders wanting the highest quality support. The Centre offers the client a unique diagnostic assessment which leads to the matching of an individual mentor who meets their needs based on the criteria of expertise, experience, personal qualities and geographical proximity.

Overview

Introduction

The notion of mentoring is an ancient one. The original Mentor was described by Homer as the "wise and trusted counsellor" whom Odysseus left in charge of his household during his travels. Athena, in the guise of Mentor, adopted the role of guardian and teacher of Odysseus' son Telemachus. *On a point of language, if the giver of experience and wisdom is the "mentor", then convention dictates that the receiver is the "mentee"*. This Learning Guide will use these terms throughout.

In modern times, the concept of mentoring has found application in virtually every forum of life and business. Now that "jobs for life" have been replaced by "portfolio careers", the need for mentoring is greater than ever. Essentially mentoring is a process where one person offers help, guidance, advice and support to facilitate the learning and development of another. This Learning Guide focuses on the practicalities of achieving success through the development of mentoring relationships.

The mentoring relationship

In the broad sense, a mentor is someone who takes a special interest in helping another person to achieve success. Mentoring as a relationship succeeds because there are no power games, the emphasis is on cooperation, not competition and the relationship exists for the primary benefit of the mentee.

Mentors adopt multiple roles to meet the needs of their mentees, acting as:

- Advisors - people with career experience who are willing to share their knowledge.
- Supporters - people who give emotional and moral encouragement.
- Tutors/coaches - people who give specific feedback on another's performance.
- Masters - in the sense of employers to whom one is apprentice.

- Sponsors - sources of information about and help in obtaining opportunities.
- Models - of identity, of the kind of person the mentee should or wants to be.

In general, an effective mentoring relationship is characterised by mutual respect, trust, understanding, and empathy. Good mentors are able to share life experiences and wisdom, as well as technical expertise. They are good listeners, good observers, and good problem-solvers. They make an effort to know, accept, and respect the goals and interests of the mentee. In the end, they establish an environment in which the mentee's accomplishment is limited only by the extent of his or her talent.

Perhaps without realising it at the time, you will almost certainly have been "mentored" at some time in your life. Ask yourself these questions:

- Who was it you were talking to when the penny suddenly dropped, creating a leap of understanding for you about that problem you had been wrestling with?
- Think about those short phrases and sayings you often use that have powerful significance for you in the way you live your life, for example, "Being in the right place at the right time won't help if you're not **ready** for the opportunity". Who did you learn these from?
- Who was it who helped you discover a talent you didn't know you had?

The insights provided by these examples are typical products of mentoring.

Think back to those times in your life when you have sought and been helped by the wisdom and experience of a parent or guardian, teacher, tutor, work colleague, sports coach or friend. There will also have been occasions when you have shared your wisdom and experience with someone else. These informal mentoring relationships are a part of life. In the academic world, relationships like these are an integral part of the education and learning processes. Increasingly in the business world, the value of sharing wisdom and knowledge

is being recognised and formalised in the establishment of mentoring relationships.

To be effective, the mentoring relationship needs to be able to explore the personal feelings, aspirations and fears of the mentee. To facilitate this depth of exploration, it is best for the mentor to be outside the mentee's direct chain of command. That said, mentoring is not a substitute for the relationship with an individual's line manager. It supplements the efforts of the line manager in developing his/her people. The line manager has a vital part to play in enabling the mentee to transfer his/her learning and development to work related issues. It is important that line managers should not see it as an indication that they have failed if one of their employees wants a mentor. Rather, it shows a commitment by the employee to self-development that deserves to be welcomed.

A mentoring relationship usually develops over an extended period, during which a mentee's needs and the nature of the relationship are subject to change. An effective mentor will be aware of these changes and vary the degree and type of attention, help, advice, information, and encouragement that he or she provides.

What's in it for you?

Most of us need little encouragement to share our experience and give advice to anybody who asks for it. Simply being asked can be perceived as an indicator that we are held in esteem by others. Most of us, however, lead busy lives and may well find it difficult to identify the payback we are likely to receive in return for devoting a considerable amount of our time to the development of other people.

Here are some of the benefits that mentors say they derive from developing such relationships:

- Personal satisfaction from helping others.
- Continuous personal learning and development through the mentoring process.

- Solving their own problems as a result of helping others solve theirs.
- Higher profile in business and social circles.
- Pleasure and satisfaction from sharing the successes of their mentees.
- Greater personal visibility within their organisation.
- Help with their own workloads through development delegation.
- Networking opportunities.
- Durable friendships.

We have a tendency to remember those people we once adopted as role models who took a close personal interest in our career. We are inclined to make efforts to remain in touch with them, often for the rest of our lives.

Mentoring – A two-way process

Philosopher Eric Hoffer wrote: “In times of massive change, it is the learner who will inherit the Earth, while the learned stay elegantly tied to a world that no longer exists.”¹ Modern mentoring provides opportunities for both mentor and mentee to engage in continuous learning.

In the past, mentoring has been perceived as a one-way, senior/junior relationship with the mentor as the giver and the mentee as the receiver. This perception suggests a cloning process where the mentee ultimately becomes a new version of the mentor. Modern mentoring relationships are more of a partnership, with both parties working equally together with mutual respect for each other. Mentees become developed individuals in their own right, choosing for themselves the wisdom, knowledge, skills and behaviours that they want to adopt from their mentor role model.

The senior/junior relationship in that order is not necessarily a prerequisite of mentoring. Proctor & Gamble operate a “mentoring up” programme where mid- or junior-level managers provide mentoring to senior level executives, raising consciousness of work related issues and acting as a sounding board. This process also contributes significantly to the way in which people feel valued

¹ Bell, Chip R. (2000), *The Mentor as Partner*, Training & Development, February.

within the business. Other organisations are asking technical employees to “teach old dogs new tricks.”

A systematic approach

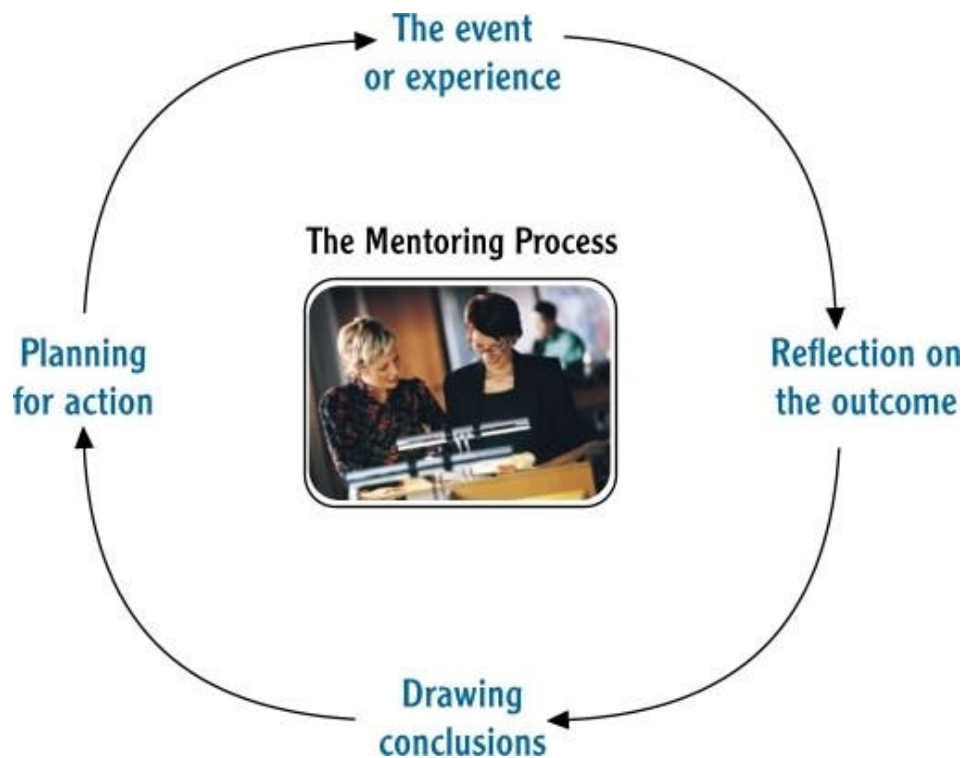
Much of the value derived from mentoring stems from the build up of a relationship that often becomes increasingly informal as the two parties become closer to each other. Nevertheless, most successful mentors develop and follow a systematic approach that operates behind the informality.

A typical process of interaction between mentor and mentee might be:

- Open with rapport.
- Check feelings.
- Summarise progress and actions taken.
- Acknowledge positives.
- Explore negatives.
- Identify problems.
- Share your experience.
- Facilitate solutions.
- Agree next steps and ownership.
- Summarise discussion.

Below is an example of a simple process that can become a part of the routine of review meetings.

Fig 1 – The mentoring process



- The event or experience is something important that happens to us.
- We reflect on the outcome in terms of its impact upon us – good or bad, what it means about the way in which we handled it and why.
- We come to a conclusion about the event or experience in relation to our own actions or feelings.
- We generate choices we can make, either to do the same thing again or to do something different to change the outcome of the event the next time around and plan the action we will take.

Throughout this process, a good mentor will help the mentee to maximise his/her learning from each experience.

Mentoring competencies

Experienced mentors agree that the art of mentoring requires them to demonstrate not one, but a whole range of competencies to the right degree and in the right balance. These competencies are likely to include:

- **Self-awareness:** in order to recognise and manage their own feelings and behaviour within the relationship and to be appropriately empathic.
- **Understanding others:** to have an insight into how people behave and interact with each other and be able to predict the consequences of behaviour or actions.
- **Communication:** key to the whole process as a complete set of highly developed skills.
- **Building and maintaining rapport:** able to develop trust, show genuine interest in helping others and demonstrate appropriate empathy.
- **Good humour:** in order to maintain a sense of proportion, put things in perspective and keep the relationship enjoyable.
- **Commitment to self-learning:** able to demonstrate an appetite for continuous personal learning as a role model for mentees.
- **Commitment to developing others:** prepared to “go the extra mile”, building confidence in mentees, focusing on inspiration and enthusiasm.
- **Goal orientation:** able to analyse issues, clarify and stay focused on achievable goals.
- **Business acumen:** gained from experience, an in-depth, current understanding of the business and its environment.

- **Conceptual thinking:** being able to draw on a range of models to help mentees understand, challenges, issues and situations.

Within these competencies, some typical mentor behaviours might be:

- Staying neutral and avoiding blame.
- Being willing to debate, argue and discuss.
- Being prepared to give honest answers to questions.
- Asking challenging questions.
- Offering and providing guidance but leaving decision making to the mentee.
- Demonstrating genuine interest and concern for the mentee.
- Facilitating and enabling the mentee to develop.
- Being approachable at any time.
- Demonstrating expertise in his/her job; knowing his/her stuff.
- Being tough on achievement of goals and targets.

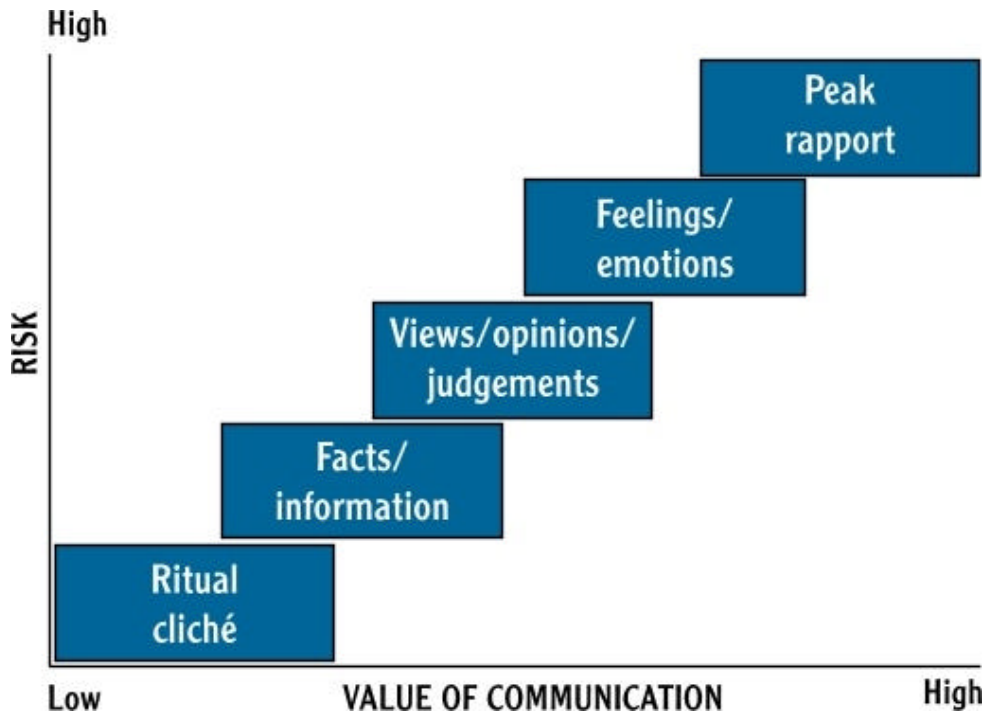
Developing mentees

Much of the power of mentoring lies in its ability to promote self-discovery in the mentee. The use of simple tools such as SWOT analysis help to raise the mentee's awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and the potential opportunities and threats they face.

Communication

Successful self-discovery, however, requires a high level of openness and honesty between mentor and mentee which, in turn requires highly effective communication. If you think about the people you know in terms of how you communicate with them, you will acknowledge that with some you merely engage in polite clichés whilst, with perhaps only a few, the depth of mutual understanding can seem almost telepathic. The figure below represents the different levels of communication we may use with other people.

Fig 2 – Different levels of communication



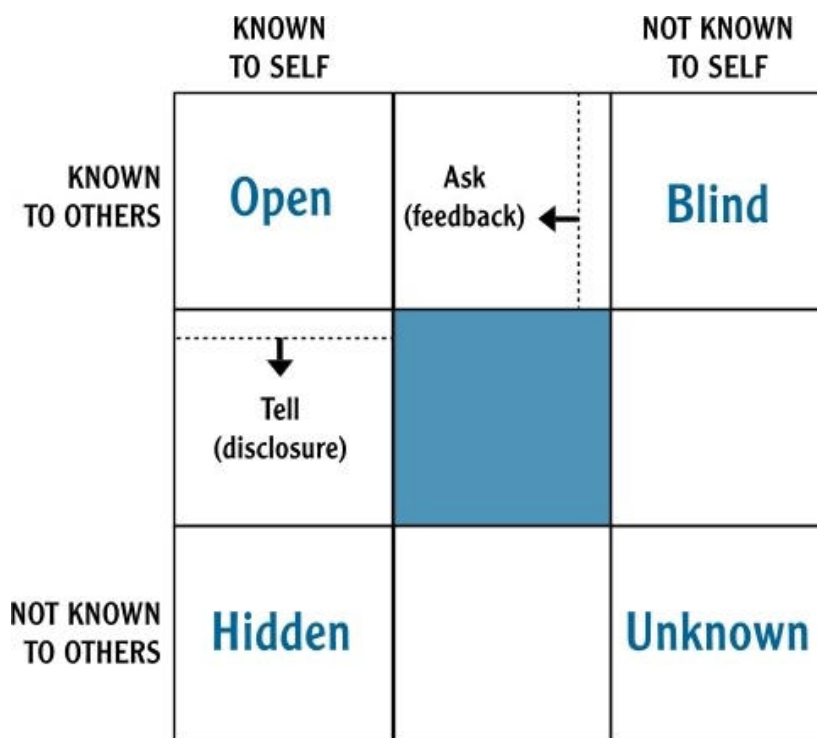
The further up the value scale we go, the more meaningful and valuable the communication gets. The “risk” also rises as we progress up the ladder. It is reasonable to assume that ritual clichés such as “good morning, how are you?” are safe from challenge, and we will exchange these with many people. The exchange of facts and information is more open to challenge, but not generally at a personal level. Further up the scale, people may well disagree with our views, opinions and judgements, leaving us vulnerable unless we are confident in the relationship. Free and open expression of our feelings and emotions is normally reserved for those we trust enough to expose ourselves in this way. The highest level of communication occurs in those relationships where openness and honesty come naturally and often each instinctively knows the other’s thoughts and feelings.

Effective mentoring relationships will climb this scale, opening up and developing powerful channels of communication for the benefit of both mentor and mentee.

Openness and self-awareness

The highest levels of communication will support the use of, for example, the **Johari Window** as a simple and effective tool used by many mentors to increase openness and promote self-awareness in mentees.

Fig 3 – The Johari Window



Source: Luft, J; Ingham, H, *Group process: An introduction to group dynamics*, National Press Books.

The four panes of the window represent the following:

- **Open:** The open area is that part of our conscious self - our attitudes, behaviour, motivation, values, way of life - of which we are aware and which is known to others. We move within this area with freedom. We are "open books".
- **Hidden:** Our hidden area can't be known to others unless we disclose it. There is awareness that we keep freely to ourselves, and awareness

that we retain out of fear. The degree to which we share ourselves with others (disclosure) is the degree to which we can be known.

- **Blind:** There are things about ourselves that we don't know, but that others can see more clearly; or things we imagine to be true of ourselves for a variety of reasons but that others don't see at all. When others say what they see (feedback), in a supportive, responsible way, and we are able to hear it in that way, we are able to test the reality of who we are and are able to grow.
- **Unknown:** We are more rich and complex than we and others know, but from time to time something happens - is felt, read, heard, dreamed - something from our unconscious is revealed. Then we "know" what we have never "known" before.

It is through disclosure and feedback that our **open** pane is expanded and that we gain access to the potential within us represented by the **unknown** pane. Mentors are able to develop the relationship by facilitating an increase in the size of the mentee's 'open' window and reducing the size of the 'blind' and 'hidden' windows. Achieving this involves:

- Providing feedback to the mentee.
- Encouraging the mentee to seek and obtain feedback from others.
- Building the trust that will enable the mentee to be open about 'hidden' issues.

Influencing

Mentees learn from their mentors through influence as opposed to direction. Working on the principle that most people learn more effectively from what they have been able to discover for themselves rather than from what they have been told, mentors need to be able to deliver a balance between "push" and "pull" in their influencing style.

“Push” input is necessary and appropriate in the form of:

- Stimulation.
- Ideas, knowledge, wisdom, stories of real life experience, models, tools and techniques.
- Something new and of value for the mentee to take away and think about.

“Pull” attraction is necessary and appropriate in the form of:

- Offering a “safe place” to go to for help.
- Supporting learning by asking questions, listening and helping the mentee draw his/her own conclusions.

Experienced mentors will opt for “pull” rather than “push” in order to ensure that the mentee keeps responsibility for and stays in control of his/her agenda. It is important that, at no stage, does the mentee’s problem become the mentor’s problem. Mentors need to resist the temptation to say “Leave it with me and I’ll come up with a solution.” This approach may save time but will run the risk of creating an unhelpful dependency and be of little value to the development of the mentee. Some people go through life unable to solve problems because they have never been encouraged to take responsibility for them.

A typical approach might be:

- **Problems** – What are you facing that I can help you with?
- **Options** – What are the choices open to you?
- **Consequences** – Evaluate the options and their potential outcomes (Pay-offs versus Costs – See development activities)
- **Solutions** – Which is the best solution for you to choose?
- **Actions** – So what are you going to do? (Summary and action planning)

Four essentials of good mentoring practice

- **Careful listening:** As a good mentor, you will be an excellent listener, hearing exactly what the mentee is trying to say, including words, tone, attitude, and body language. You will be able to listen actively by repeating points you think you have understood and asking whether you have understood correctly. Through careful listening, you will display empathy for the mentee and your understanding of his/her challenges. When a mentee feels this empathy, the way will be open for clear communication and more effective mentoring.
- **Keeping in touch:** The amount of attention you give as a mentor will vary widely. A mentee who is doing well might require only brief meetings. Another mentee might have on-going difficulties and need several formal meetings a week. If you have a number of mentees, one or two of them might occupy most of your mentoring time. Try through regular contact - daily, if possible - to keep all your mentees on the "radar screen" to anticipate problems before they become serious. Don't assume that the only mentees who need help are those who ask for it. Even a mentee who is doing well could need an occasional, serious conversation.
- **Building networks:** You can be a powerful ally for mentees by helping them build their network of contacts and potential mentors. Advise them to begin with you, other business acquaintances, and people they meet through jobs or meetings of professional societies. Building a professional network is a lifelong process that can be crucial in building a satisfying career.
- **Professional ethics:** Be alert for ways to illustrate ethical issues and choices. The earlier that mentees are exposed to the notion of integrity, the better prepared they will be to deal with ethical questions that arise in their own work. Most of all, show by your own example what you mean by ethical conduct.

Building trust

The mentoring relationship might focus on work but it is fundamentally a personal relationship built on trust. There are many ways to build trust and strengthen the relationship:

- **Be a “wise and trusted counsellor”.** For many people, emotional support is crucial; a mentor is one who cares and is there when needed. Caring can be demonstrated in such routine ways as being on time for meetings, making notes on what you talk about and referring to those notes before the next meeting.
- **Don’t try to over-direct.** Too much help can hinder the mentee’s progress. Unless he/she feels trusted to be allowed to do the fixing, nothing is gained.
- **Look for the *real* problem.** A mentee with a truly urgent problem might cover it with small talk. Give important issues time to emerge.
- **Encourage feedback.** Remind mentees that you have to understand their needs to be able to help. Check with them whether your involvement is too much or too little.
- **Be direct.** At times a good mentor must take steps that may cause pain. You might decide that a mentee cannot do the work despite the best efforts of both of you. Be open in explaining your concerns directly and recommending a change.
- **Talk at a good time.** If a mentee approaches you at an inconvenient moment, suggest an alternative time instead of listening impatiently.
- **Watch for ‘down time’.** Fatigue, pessimism, isolation and difficulty in concentrating can indicate emotional difficulties. Be prepared to take whatever action is necessary.

- **Remember the goal.** Your objective is not to produce another “you”. Your motive as mentor is to help your mentee to achieve.

Advice for new mentors

If you are adopting the role of a mentor for the first time, you may find it helpful to ask for guidance from experienced mentors you know. Advice you are likely to receive will include some of the following:

- Always listen patiently.
- Build a relationship. Watch for and take cues from the mentee as to how close the relationship should be.
- Don't abuse your authority. Don't ask mentees to do your personal work (unless it is part of a development goal).
- Help your mentee to develop self-sufficiency. Your goal is not to clone yourself but to encourage confidence and independent thinking.
- Establish “protected” time together and minimise interruptions.
- Share yourself. Invite mentees to see what you do both on and off the job. Tell them about your own successes and failures. Let them see your human side and encourage them to reciprocate.
- Help the mentee to develop a professional network and build a community of mentors by introducing them to your network.
- Be constructive. Critical feedback is essential to build improvement, but do it with kindness and balance criticism with praise when deserved.
- Don't be overbearing. Avoid dictating choices or controlling a mentee's behaviour.
- Find your own mentors. Benefit from guidance by those with more experience.
- Point your mentee in the right direction, but let him/her choose the route.
- Discover how your mentee learns best and adopt an approach based on that knowledge.
- Don't insist on your way. Let your mentee decide and take responsibility for the decision.

- Always be open to learning for yourself from the relationship – you may be the one with the wisdom and experience but that doesn't mean you are the one with all the best answers.
- Encourage the development of self-awareness in any way you can, for example, personality tests or feedback.
- Enable your mentee to identify and be open about his/her strengths and weaknesses.
- Make sure the mentee is clear about goals.

Thinking through the first meeting

Before you undertake anything significant in your life that's new, it can be helpful to take a few minutes to do some planning. Planning is just a way to get clear on what you hope to accomplish - the 'end' - and then to lay out some logical steps to help get you there - the 'means.'

Typically, first meetings allow two people to get to know a little bit about each other, attach a face to a name and gain a bit of comfort. To do so, you need to think about what setting would feel comfortable for both of you, and plan out some conversation. Some of the questions you might want to ask yourself before that first meeting are:

- Where might I meet with my mentee where we both would feel comfortable?
- What are some things I could tell my mentee about myself that would help us get to know each other a little bit?
- What is there about me and my life story that might be interesting and relevant to my mentee?
- What are some questions I could ask my mentee to get to know him/her a little bit without appearing to pry?
- What do I want out of the mentoring relationship - what are my hopes?
- How can I find out what my mentee hopes to get out of the relationship - what questions might I ask?

Experienced mentors recommend that you look over your answers to this planning sheet shortly before your first meeting with your mentee. You might

even bring it along to offer it as a bit of a roadmap for you both to follow. Use your judgment - but remember to at least look your responses over before the meeting - this will make you more comfortable and relaxed.

You might also consider creating a companion version of your preparation template to give to your mentee in advance of the first meeting. It might look something like this:

- Where could I meet with my mentor where we both would feel comfortable - where we can sit and talk?
- What are some things I could tell my mentor about myself that would help us get to know each other a little bit?
- What about me and my life story might be interesting to my mentor?
- What should s/he know about me in order to be a good mentor?
- What are some questions I could ask my mentor to get to know him/her a little bit without appearing to pry?
- Why do I want to have a mentor?
- How can I find out why my mentor wants to mentor me?

Setting up a mentoring programme

In most organisations, mentoring relationships develop naturally, driven by individuals within the business. Some go further and provide active encouragement and support for mentoring. In others, mentoring is seen as a strategic element of people development, implemented through a formalised mentoring programme. An outline agenda for establishing a formalised mentoring programme is shown below:

- Know what you want to achieve through the programme and decide on your objectives.
- Identify and select mentees based on your objectives for the programme and the criteria you establish for selection.
- Identify individual development needs and facilitate the creation of mentee development plans.
- Identify potential mentors based on appropriate criteria.

- Match mentors to mentees based on the knowledge and skills required by the mentees and the abilities of the mentors to meet these needs.
- Determine and communicate the mentoring process, including reporting, time and budget issues and responsibility.
- Engage mentors and mentees in an agreement that will form the basis of the relationship, including confidentiality, time-span, development plans, roles and meeting frequency.
- Decide whether periodic reporting should be an element of the programme and implement as appropriate.
- Agree and communicate the criteria by which a mentoring relationship comes to a conclusion.
- Follow up by evaluating the outcomes and effectiveness of the mentoring using agreed criteria.

Conclusion

The transference of wisdom, knowledge and experience from mentor to mentee is an age-old process that is capable of delivering outstanding value to both parties and, in the business world, to the organisation that employs them. The aim of this Learning Guide has been to help you to focus on the practical issues involved in this process and to understand the expectations of both parties in the relationship. Whether your interest is as a mentor or as a mentee, the Development Activities that follow have been designed to enhance your learning.

Development activities

Balancing pay offs and costs

Whenever we are faced with a choice of actions (or a choice whether to act or not), we may, of course, flip a coin (and that in itself is a choice), or we may use some form of process, either consciously or instinctively, to help us make our decision. The basic principle of personal choice is the balance of “Pay-offs” and “Costs” against the possibilities open to us.

EXAMPLE: I am faced with a decision to either apply for a promotion or not to apply.

Option 1 – Apply

Potential pay-offs

I get the job; more money; feel good; enjoy the new responsibility; move my career forward; get more respect from others.

Potential costs

Don't get the job; feel bad about myself; look foolish to others; I get the job and can't handle it; have to work longer hours – less family time.

Option 2 – Don't apply

Potential pay-offs

No effort required; carry on doing what I know; avoid the stress of the selection process.

Potential costs

Limit my career prospects; people think I'm not ambitious; stay on my current income level.

NOW DECIDE, based on what's in it for you. You might like to try this exercise on the choices – *To become a mentor or not to become a mentor.*

As an individual, you can use this quick balancing tool to help you make decisions. As a mentor, you can encourage your mentees to use it to help them understand the choices they will face from time to time.

Reflections on being a mentor

1. Think back to your early years and consider those adults who stick out in your mind.
2. Who were the adults who really made a positive difference in your life? Write down a list of them.
3. For each person you have listed, make a note of why you think they took a special interest in you.
4. What qualities did they have that made them want to spend time with you or encourage you?
5. What was it that made each of them a great mentor? What did these important people have in common?
6. What might these experiences teach you about how you want to be as a mentor? What lessons can you take away from these role models?

Know your own wisdom and experience

One of the most powerful effects you can have in helping others is to relate your own experience as an analogy to the problem at hand. To be able to do this effectively requires an awareness of those situations that we have encountered ourselves. Consider the following as a starter and generate your own memory bank of the experience you have to offer:

1. Describe the most unusual mentoring experience you have had, what you learned from it and how important it was to you.
2. Describe a situation where you have shared an unusual experience that enabled someone else to gain significant insight into a problem or issue.
3. List what you believe are the three essential rules to develop yourself successfully.
4. Who has inspired you to change the direction of your life in a positive way? How did they do it?
5. Who helped you to get out of a mess you were in at just the right time? How did they do it?
6. What valuable and inspirational sayings or mottos have you picked up along the way that you can share with others?
7. Who has had an inspirational impact on your personal growth? What did they share with you to achieve that?

14 questions to ask yourself before introducing a mentoring programme

1. Will your programme be an integral part of your training and development strategy and open to everyone or will mentoring only be available to certain people?
2. Will participation be voluntary or will those who sign up be obliged to follow it through?
3. What will be your criteria for matching mentors to mentees?
4. How will you measure the progress of mentees?
5. How will line managers fit into the mentoring relationship?

6. What rules, guidelines, frameworks will you make available to mentors and mentees?
7. Will mentees be able to change mentor? Under what circumstances?
8. How will you define when the relationship has come to a conclusion?
9. What links will there be between mentoring and other strategic training initiatives?
10. What support mechanisms and processes will you put in place around the mentoring programme?
11. Who will be responsible for the overall management of the programme?
12. What will your monitoring processes be?
13. How will you define and measure success?
14. Who will be the arbiter in the case of disagreements and/or grievances between mentor and mentee?

Assess yourself as a mentor

Evaluate your potential as a mentor by responding to the following statements and marking the options that are closest to your experience. Be as honest as you can:

- Scoring options:
1. Never
 2. Sometimes
 3. Often
 4. Always.

Add your scores together and refer to the Analysis to see how you scored.
 Use your answers to identify your strengths and which areas you would need to focus on to develop your skill as a mentor.

	Score 1-4
I set high expectations of performance for myself and others	
I act as a role model to encourage professional behaviour	
I feel confident when confronting negative behaviour and attitudes	
I offer meaningful quotations or sayings that give others insight into issues	
I act as a catalyst for self awareness by enabling people to open up	
I am open and honest about what I know that will help others develop	
I will stand by people I believe in when they are in critical situations	
I look for and act on opportunities to give encouragement to others	
I believe in allowing people to take responsibility for their own decisions	
I am open about relevant personal experience, including my mistakes	
I adapt my approach to the learning style of people I am trying to help	
I am not afraid to give critical feedback even if it is met with defensiveness	
I encourage people to think for themselves rather than fix things for them	
I show determination in setting challenging and realistic goals and targets	
I behave ethically and with integrity in my interactions with others	
I am able to offer inspiration to others in the face of problems	
I am well known for my positive approach to life	
I have the ability to look at situations from different perspectives	
I am able to be objective and put myself in the position of others	
I am happy to share my network of contacts with others	
I am good at assessing how close people want me to be with them	
I have a reputation for respecting confidentiality and people confide in me	
I help people to identify and assess the choices they face	
I am confident in expressing my feelings about relevant issues	
I share my knowledge of how the organisation works with others	
I show that I am willing to learn from people at all levels	
I am able to listen to personal problems without feeling uncomfortable	
I enjoy helping people to manage and develop their careers	

ADD SCORES AND ENTER IN THIS BOX _____

Analysis of your score

Score

- 91 – 112** You are an accomplished mentor. If you aren't currently working in a field that enables you to benefit from your obvious mentoring talents, consider switching to one that will.
- 71 – 90** Well done. You display most of the attributes of a successful mentor, but you probably know this already, based on what others have told you. If you want to develop even further, look back to those questions where your scores were relatively low and plan to increase your score in those areas.
- 51 – 70** You have good potential as a mentor. If you want to increase your score, try putting yourself in more situations where you have an opportunity to help others deal with their issues. Not everyone wants to be an excellent mentor, but if you do, you'll find that by improving these skills, other, seemingly unrelated areas of your life will also improve.
- 28 – 50** Don't be disheartened. You really *can* improve, if becoming a good mentor is something that you really want to do.

Ad hoc activities

The following are a few suggestions of activities that you can use on an ad hoc basis to help develop your negotiating skills:

- Make yourself available to listen to other people's problems (within reason, of course!)
- When asked to help someone with a problem, try to focus on helping them to draw their own conclusions and make their own choices. Providing them with an answer and making decisions for them often takes less time, but who is then responsible for the consequences?
- Observe the behaviour of people you regard as good mentors and choose the ones you would like to develop. Practise using those behaviours at every opportunity.
- Observe the behaviour of people you regard as "dictators" and commit yourself to avoiding those behaviours.
- Be proactive in expanding your own network and be prepared to introduce others to it.
- Seek out and develop your own mentoring relationships and learn from them.

This learning guide was written by Bob Jack, an associate at Ashridge.