



WeHero Mighty Mentor

Empowering others through mentorship!



What Is Mentoring?

Mentoring is an amazing process where one person (the mentor) supports and guides the personal and professional development of another (the mentee).

During their meetings, mentors and mentees exchange information and work together to achieve the mentee's professional goals. Mentors listen closely to the conversation, ask thoughtful questions, and give mentees their full attention. They provide the support mentees need to find direction, and they offer insights into setting goals and priorities. Mentors also use personal experiences to help their mentees navigate their realities.

The Roles And Responsibilities Of Mentees And Mentors

Mentees:

- **Be Proactive:** Grasp learning opportunities, take learning risks, engage your mentor as an active development partner. You own the process!
- **Change Agent:** The mentor-mentee relationship is action-oriented, focused on doing, trying, and practicing vs. telling, listening, and passive acceptance.
- **Contribute:** Share ideas and expertise with your mentor; view the partnership as reciprocal learning and development.

Mentees:

- **Guide:** Leading with questions, freely sharing their views and tips, and reflecting on their own journeys. The mentee drives the agenda!
- **Ally:** Helping others understand how they are seen in the organization - telling it like it is.
- **Catalyst:** Stimulating others to explore new ways of thinking and doing things and challenging assumptions.
- **Savvy Insider:** People connectors and information providers - they know the ropes & the culture. Offer a good sounding board.
- **Advocate:** Champions are powerful voices, honest and frank, accessible and serious.

Listening - "I Hear You"

People think of listening as something passive or don't think about it at all. However, listening is a valuable skill you can practice and learn. One writer compares listeners to catchers in baseball games.

People who know little about baseball might think a catcher does nothing more than wait for a pitcher to throw the ball. For them, all the responsibility rests with the pitcher, who is winding up and

delivering the pitch. Similarly, others believe the responsibility in communication rests with the person doing the talking. But a good catcher is not a passive target waiting to receive the pitch. They concentrate on the pitcher's motions, track the ball's path, and, if necessary, jump, stretch, or dive into making the catch.

Similarly, a good listener actively tries to catch and understand a speaker's words. The following section offers tips for active listening—the most important skill of a good mentor. When you talk with your mentee, remember this:

- Clear your mind of unnecessary thoughts and distractions.
- Sit at the same level as your mentee if they are a child or much smaller than you.
- Consider appropriate eye contact with respect for your mentee's culture.
- Be aware of your body language and pay attention to your mentee's facial expressions, gestures, and body language.
- Ask open-ended questions, such as "How is your current work going?" and follow up with additional questions based on the answer.
- Paraphrase what you think the mentee said to show you're listening and understand them.
- If you don't understand, ask questions and try to see the world from your mentee's perspective.
- Put aside preconceived ideas and refrain from passing judgment.
- Acknowledge you're listening by nodding your head and saying things like "I see."
- Respect your mentee as you would want to be respected by someone you were talking to.

Understanding Levels of Listening

Listening is a state of being. You must consider the different listening levels to understand what makes a good listener. There are several ways of listening, including:

Intolerant Listening: Intolerant listeners don't give the speaker time. Only half listening and assuming they know how the conversation will go, they focus only on responding. As a result, they jump to conclusions and constantly interrupt.

Non-Listening: Non-listeners hear words but don't listen to them, a process summed up by the phrase "in one ear and out the other."

Active Listening: Active listeners are attentive and fully engaged. They show interest and keep up with the conversation, asking questions and clarifying points to help them understand.

Subconscious Listening: Subconscious listeners get a truer feel of a conversation by focusing on body language and other non-verbal cues to pick up on things being communicated but not necessarily being said.

Empathetic Listening: Empathetic listeners understand the topic from the speaker's viewpoint. They use reflective statements like "You feel that..." to indicate that they interpret the deeper emotions behind the words.

Positive Listening: Positive listeners respond by giving encouragement, using supportive statements, and making encouraging noises (like “ah”) and bodily gestures. They acknowledge success and give praise, making the speaker feel motivated and inspired.

Building Trust And Rapport

Establishing trust is crucial for building effective mentoring relationships, especially between strangers of different ages. Mentors enter mentoring programs to help others, and by building trust, they can genuinely support their mentees. However, establishing communication and developing a relationship can be complex. It takes time for mentees to trust their mentors, and mentors who follow a gradual trust-building path find that the support they can offer broadens considerably once trust has been established.

Influential mentors engage in the following practices:

- Seeing themselves as “friends”
- Listening actively
- Being consistent and dependable
- Taking responsibility for keeping the relationship alive
- Involving the mentee in how they spend their time together
- Seeking and utilizing the help and advice of program staff

Having rapport with your mentee encourages open communication and allows them to share their thoughts and feelings. It also informs mentors about how to support their mentees. Finding common ground is an excellent basis for building rapport, taking an interest in the whole person, and matching their behavior, words, and thinking.

Behavior Matching: People are generally drawn to others who behave similarly to themselves. Matching someone else’s behavior builds good rapport. It gives the impression that you understand and share their outlook on life.

Word Matching: People’s words reflect their thoughts and reality. Matching words can build rapport and demonstrate that you are listening to and understand the mentee’s ideas. Beware of overusing this technique, as it can easily come across as parroting.

Thought Matching: Matching the mentee’s thinking style is a powerful way to build rapport. Everyone experiences the world differently based on their preferred senses. Some think visually, some kinesthetically, and others use an internal voice. To match the mentee’s thinking style, use their preferred sensory-based words. This demonstrates that you understand them on a deeper level.

Asking for Permission: Asking for permission is appropriate when sharing an experience, your thoughts, ideas, or opinions, changing the direction of the conversation, or wanting to spend more or less time on an issue. When asking for permission, consider using some of the following questions. You can develop your technique with practice, and it will become second nature.

- May I share...?
- Can we spend some time brainstorming...?
- Would you like to...?
- It sounds like... Can we explore...?

Values

Values are general principles of fundamental importance to individuals. Examples include equality, tolerance, honesty, privacy, security, education, and service. A person’s values may develop during childhood due to the influence of family, peers, religion, culture, and society.

People typically have strong feelings about their values, even if they find them difficult to discuss or articulate. A person’s values significantly impact their:

- Opinions: Views or judgments about a particular matter.
- Beliefs: Ideas of what is true, supported by evidence or feelings.
- Attitudes: Emotions or feelings about things.

If we understand and respect someone’s values, we will connect with them more deeply and establish trust and mutual understanding.

Guidelines For Addressing A Mentee’s Problem

When addressing challenges, remember the following:

- Listen attentively. Sometimes, mentees just want to be heard. Talking about problems in an open and safe environment can be enough to help them get things off their chest.
- Mentors and mentees can practice problem-solving skills and work together to tackle the issue.
- Use the problem as an opportunity for solution-seeking.
- Before offering advice, ask the mentee if they want to hear it. For example, “It seems like you have a problem. Would you like me to share what I would do in your shoes?”

Steps To A Successful Mentoring Session

To ensure a successful mentorship program, guide your members to success from the very first session.

Provide Resources: After pairing mentors and mentees, reach out to them and provide program details, schedule, expectations, and goals. Make sure both parties understand their roles and that mentorship is a partnership.

Prepare Topics: The first session should be about establishing a comfortable relationship. Provide a list of potential topics to discuss, such as learning about their professional experience, career challenges, and what they hope to gain from the program.

Create Goals and Actions: Mentors and mentees work together to overcome challenges. It is useful to understand your mentee's goals and create an action plan to achieve them.

Create A Feedback Loop: Establish a culture where feedback is always welcome. Ensure they understand they can always come to you with questions or concerns.

Mentoring Session Ideas

Provide participants with plenty of ideas for new topics to discuss and new goals to set to keep the momentum going and ensure the mentoring sessions remain valuable:

- Review the mentee's resume and cover letter (if available)
- Help the mentee prepare for an interview or a presentation
- Advise on how to go through a performance evaluation
- Provide advice on how to discuss complex topics with a manager
- Identify gaps in the mentee's skillset and recommend the next steps for filling them

Questions A Mentor Should Ask A Mentee

As a mentor, your role is to help the mentee find the answers on their own and use your guidance to help them move forward. You can do this by asking empowering questions. People learn and develop best when they can discover the answers for themselves.

Before offering advice or imparting knowledge, ask for permission. Then, share information that adds value to the mentee's situation. Ask the mentee if what you've just said could work for them and how they could use this new knowledge.

What Makes a Good Question?

Asking questions is a great way to help mentees learn and solve problems. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- **Keep it simple:** Use plain language, be brief, and ask

one question at a time.

- **Give time to reflect:** Pause and allow time for thought and answers.
- **Prompt for more information:** Repeat or rephrase the question or recall related information.
- **Use open-ended questions:** Let mentees explore answers by providing additional information.
- **Encourage:** Be supportive and constructive, and ask different questions to encourage new thinking.

Asking thought-provoking questions is crucial for learning. It can provide insight into mentees' backgrounds, goals, and thought processes. You can also help mentees learn about themselves, including their strengths and weaknesses. By asking the right questions, you can encourage mentees to find their own solutions to challenges.

Questions for Effective Decision-Making

When making important decisions, it is essential to consider all potential outcomes. The following questions can help with risk management:

- What are the likely outcomes?
- What are the consequences?
- Are there other repercussions?
- What will happen if you do nothing?
- What could be done to improve the situation?
- How might you go about achieving that?
- What specifically do you plan to do?

Questions for Critical Thinking

Developing critical thinking skills is important for learning and growth. Asking questions such as the following can facilitate critical thinking:

- "What are the implications?"
- "What insights have you gained?"
- "What have you learned?"

Questions for Learning and Reflection

Current and past experiences provide important learning opportunities. Consider the following questions to reflect and draw useful conclusions:

- Are there principles that could apply to other situations?
- What could you do differently next time?
- How is this situation similar to others you have dealt with?

Questions for Learning About Your Mentee's Career Journey

To learn more about your mentee's work experience, you should ask specific questions beyond general inquiries about their career. While preparing some questions is useful, don't

stick to a script. Asking follow-up questions about things your mentee has already shared will demonstrate your interest in their experiences. Here are some questions:

- What was your educational background like?
- What was your first job?
- How did you end up in your current career?
- Was your career path planned, or did it unfold naturally?

Questions For Getting to Know Your Mentee

While you don't need to get too personal, asking questions can help you better understand your mentee as a person. Here are some suggestions to consider, or you can come up with questions of your own:

- Where did you learn your values?
- Do you have any role models or people you look up to?
- What do you enjoy doing outside of work?
- What inspires you?

Questions For Mentoring In The Workplace

Mentoring is integral to the workplace. To be an effective mentor, you need to understand your mentee's goals and help achieve them. These questions can help you define the goals and plans for the mentorship.

- What are your short and long-term goals?
- What interested you in having a mentor?
- In what areas of your life and career do you want to grow and develop?

Questions For Strengths And Weaknesses

To be a good mentor, you must also understand your mentee's strengths and weaknesses. These questions can help you identify them:

- What are your strengths?
- In what areas do you need to improve?
- Does your current role help you leverage your strengths?
- In which areas of your work do your weaknesses hinder you?
- How do you mitigate your weaknesses?

Questions For Different Viewpoints

One advantage of a dialogue with a mentee is exploring alternative viewpoints. Examples of challenging questions:

- What are your reasons for saying that?
- What led you to that conclusion?
- Do you think others would see it that way?

Questions For Challenges

Sometimes, your mentee will need your help to work through a challenge. You can provide them with advice and coaching to help them overcome whatever is holding them back. These questions can help you define the challenge:

- What's a challenge you currently face in your career?
- What ideas have you developed to help you overcome challenges and meet your goals?
- What obstacles do you see that might prevent you from achieving your goals?

Questions For Gratitude

Thankfulness is also important. Encourage your mentee to have an attitude of gratitude by asking them some of these questions:

- What are you most grateful for?
- Who is someone you're thankful for in your life? What have they given you?
- In what phase of your life or career did you feel you had the most growth?