



Choosing a mentor

"Mentoring is to support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be."

Eric Parsloe, The Oxford School of Coaching & Mentoring

What is a mentor?

Mentoring is a partnership between two people, the mentor and the mentee. They both normally work in a similar field or share similar experiences. It should be a helpful relationship based upon mutual trust and respect¹.

When do you need one?

Mentors not only help with careers but also life, business, networking, spirituality, education, and financial situations. Therefore you should consider having more than one and it is worth identifying a few key mentors as your personal "board of advisors" for the areas you want support with.

What will a mentor do for me that I can't do myself?

- ✓ A mentor will help you work out not just "what" needs to be done, but also "how".
- ✓ They will help you believe in yourself. If your mentor has already "been there, done that" they are testimony to the fact it can be done.
- ✓ A mentor will inspire you. If you admire them for their achievements having someone to look up to inspires us to work on our dreams.

- ✓ A mentor will challenge you, they will question you over and over and push you out of your comfort zone.
- ✓ A mentor will show you shortcuts. They learned how to get where they are by new methods and they will help you overcome obstacles so you can progress faster.
- ✓ A mentor will answer your questions. Maybe not always in a straight forward manner, as they are likely to answer your questions with their own. A good mentor helps you find your own path and your own answers.
- ✓ A mentor wants you to succeed. They will give you that extra nudge.

How do you find the right one?

It is rare that one person can mentor you for all your needs so it's worth considering the following:

What do you want them for?

- Career development
- Work/life integration and balance
- Spiritual
- Industry knowledge,
- Professional/trade knowledge
- Reflective practice
- Technology
- Education
- Organisation knowledge
- Customer knowledge
- Work/process knowledge
- Financial





Professional Experience

Do you want to work with someone newly qualified they can keep you up-to-date with new current thinking and trends? Perhaps, someone on the same professional level as you, a peer mentor, where you both benefit from one another? Or a mentor that is a couple of years your senior, professionally, they can help you as they are likely to have recently experienced the same situations that you now face. Or a far more senior, experienced, mentor who is better able to distance themselves from problems and offer a wider perspective.

Where are you going?

Find someone who is where you want to be in x,y,z number of years. This may include a "One Year Mentor", "Five Year Mentor" and "Ten Year Mentor" – so "I want to be where you are in x,y,z, number of years - help me get there".

Someone you know or a professional mentor?

Some times you may know whom you would like to work with, whom you admire and who inspires you. Other times you may want support and not know anyone who can offer what you need, both types of mentor have their advantages and disadvantages. The key is working with someone that you can have an open, honest and supportive relationship with.

What about you?

As a mentee you also have a responsibility, not only for your self-development, but also for the mentor/mentee relationship. You need to take initiative and be assertive.

Explore your strengths and weaknesses and set your goals.

It is your role to set a Mentoring Agreement if you want one, and plan agenda's for the meetings.

You should communicate honestly, frequently, directly and provide feedback. It's up to you to re-assess your goals, set new ones and inform your mentor when your priorities have changed.

Mentoring services

Graham Botfield provides a personal mentoring service; supporting business, clinical and personal development for students, start up practices and seasoned practitioners. Graham helps advise on clinical cases, building a successful business, and developing clinical skills. With over 20 years business experience and 8-year clinical supervision experience, Graham has been mentoring practitioners for over 8 years.

For more information contact grahambotfield@btinternet.com

Useful links:

<http://naturalhealthpractitioners.org/mentoring-and-coaching-links.html>

Mentor App:

<https://itunes.apple.com/app/id593471217>

References:

- 1) <http://www.mentorset.org.uk>
- 2) <http://www.becauseicandoit.com>

