



**RESOURCES FOR
MENTORS & MENTEES**

Know yourself

Understanding my approach

Our upbringing, values and experiences shape how we interact with others. They influence our understanding and perception, our motivation, our strengths and the way we interpret others.

BEING AWARE OF OUR OWN TENDENCIES

MOTIVATIONS: We are all motivated by different things, whether its outcomes, process, or people.

STRENGTHS: We draw on a different set of strengths to achieve our goals. While some may draw on their strengths of analysis, others are ambitious, social or considered. Everyone has unique strengths and it is important that these are surfaced and honoured.

OVERDOING IT: We might lean too heavily on a strength at times. Although this can look and feel like a weakness, it's not – we're all trying to use our strengths.

Strength based relationships:

- As a mentor or mentee, the way we approach a situation, why we do what we do, and the strengths we draw on will likely be different! And that's ok!
- Acknowledge that your approach might not be the best way for everyone. Be open to different ways of doing things – have an open mind and prepare to be challenged.
- Assume positive intent, we're all doing things for the right reasons (in most cases).

WE'RE BIASED!

Without realising, we make assumptions about people and situations. It's inherently human and how we make sense of the world. Knowing this, there are some assumptions (biases) we need to be aware of in your mentoring relationship.

Did you know:

- We listen out for information that confirms our own beliefs.
- We prefer information that we already know over new information. This means we are less likely to change our opinions when new information comes our way.
- We expect a person to have certain qualities without information to support that belief.
- We are drawn to, and prefer people who remind us of ourselves.
- We place too much emphasis on experiences that are fresher in our memory.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO CONFRONT BIAS

- Accept that its happening whether we like it or not.
- Challenge your own assumptions. Try asking yourself – what might I not be seeing?
- Reframe, reframe, reframe. Always offer or consider more than one perspective.



Are We Biased? Exploring Biases in Coaching Practice | Institute of Coaching



Go Put Your Strengths to Work by Marcus Buckingham

Know yourself

Listening

One of the most important skills in a mentoring relationship is listening. This may seem easy, but too often we default to imagining our responses to situations rather than listening to understand one another. The tips below might help to build and maintain connection.

LISTENING FOR UNDERSTANDING

P - Paraphrase and acknowledge the words and feelings.

“What I hear you saying is...”

A - Ask for more information by using direct questions.

“Can you give me an example of...”

C - Check your understanding of what the other person means by giving an example of your own.

“... would that be an example of what you are saying?”

R - Respond with your own point of view.

“Well I see things slightly differently...”

- Remember, it isn't really listening if you are thinking about your reply
- Remove distractions if possible – turn the phone on silent and put on your do not disturb
- Be comfortable in silence to allow yourself time to think about your response
- Harness your curiosity – you are both here to learn!



The Advice Trap by Michael
Bungay-Stanier



[Box of Crayons Homepage](#) –The
Power of Curiosity

Build the relationship

Building trust

Effective mentor and mentee relationships are built on foundations of trust.

Trust is built on two foundations:

- a) The **character** of the individual and;
- b) Their perceived **competence**.

A person has good **character** if they demonstrate **integrity** and have clarified their **intent**.

HOW TO SHOW INTEGRITY	HOW TO COMMUNICATE INTENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make and keep commitments • Give your honest account • Disclose all relevant information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear with your agenda • Show generosity • Demonstrate respect

A person is deemed **competent** if they prove they are **capable** and deliver **results**.

HOW TO SHOW CAPABILITY	HOW TO DELIVER RESULTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know your purpose • Use your strengths • Know where you're going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take responsibility for outcomes • Deliver on your promises • Make an effort to right any wrongs

In what ways do you feel you show good moral character or competence?

What might you need to be mindful of to ensure you can actively build trust in your mentoring relationship?



The Speed of Trust by Stephen M. R. Covey



[SCARF Model Influencing Others with Dr David Rock](#)



[Trust: Building, Maintaining, and Restoring It - Brené Brown – Dare to Lead Podcast \(brenebrown.com\)](#)

Build the relationship

Questioning

During mentoring conversations, it's best to keep focus on the mentee. The proven way of doing this is by **asking open-ended questions**.

MENTORS	MENTEES
<p>Asking Questions</p> <p>A rule of thumb for mentors is to try to talk 10% of the time and prompt the mentee the remaining 90%.</p> <p>Thoughtful questions, like those highlighted below, may help to focus the conversation.</p> <p>What do you want?</p> <p>This helps to define the outcomes and goals for the relationship.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where are you now? This helps to deepen understanding of the current state. 2. What could you do? This question helps the individual to explore options and possibilities. 3. What will you do? This helps the individual to commit to specific actions, supports and next steps. 	<p>Answering Questions</p> <p>The tips below may help mentees to prepare for a conversation primarily based around questioning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forget about the idea of 'always having to know the answer' - this process is often one of discovery. • It may feel uncomfortable with the focus solely on you at first - you'll get used to it. • Be prepared for your thinking to be challenged, and to think outside the box. <p>Your conversations will likely take the following structure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Talk broadly about what you want to achieve and issues to focus on. 2. Identify obstacles in your path and strengths to leverage. 3. Brainstorm all options available to you (unrealistic and realistic). 4. Act! Think about taking this reflection forward.

EXAMPLES FOR MENTORS

01

"What other things concern you at the moment?"

02

"What is working at the moment? What is not working?"

03

"Who is someone you trust? What would be their suggestion?"

04

"Which way forward is the most exciting?"



[What is the GROW Coaching Model? \(incl. Questions + Examples\) \(positivepsychology.com\)](https://www.positivepsychology.com)



[These Coaching Questions Get Results – Coaching for Leaders](#)

Build the relationship

Conveying empathy

As mentoring conversations unfold, past experience and challenges invariably come to the surface. Having awareness and understanding of the emotions and feelings of the other person is critical. Displaying empathy builds trust and shows the mentee or mentor that the bounds of your interactions are a safe space.

It is not uncommon for returners to feel self-doubting or apprehensive when they re-enter the workforce. They may feel embarrassed or ashamed to admit their true feelings. Conveying empathy can be the antidote to shame, encouraging openness and allowing both the mentor and mentee to think creatively about solutions and outcomes.

MENTORS

Showing empathy to your mentee conveys the message:

- I am listening
- I seek to understand
- I validate your feelings
- I want to support you
- I offer patience and acceptance.

TOP TIPS TO CONVEY EMPATHY

- 'Sit in the mud' – hold the space and let your mentee command it. Avoid offering solutions or providing a silver lining.
- Listen without judgement. You might not personally agree with your mentee or approve of their actions. Your role is not to agree.
- Validate the feelings that arose for your mentee by reflecting back i.e. 'it sounds like your time away from the workforce really challenged your sense of self and belonging'.



[How Great Coaches Ask, Listen, and Empathize \(hbr.org\)](https://hbr.org)



[Brené Brown on Empathy - YouTube](#)



[Shame and Accountability - Brené Brown \(brenebrown.com\)](https://brenebrown.com)

Focus on outcomes

Encouraging open exchanges

Feedback is the backbone of constructive mentoring and mentee relationship. Giving and receiving feedback can be challenging and may feel uncomfortable. The tips below may support more positive interaction and strengthen learning opportunities for the mentor and mentee alike.

MENTORS	MENTEES
<p>DELIVERING FEEDBACK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider feedback as a conversation with a two way dialogue. • Establish yourself as a listener and allow space for your mentee's self-assessment. • Use questions to encourage your mentee to think outside the box, consider alternative options (ideal state/best possible outcome) and make their own decisions. • Be clear with your mentee as to whether you are providing objective information or giving your opinion. • AVOID: criticising, providing unsolicited advice or rescuing your mentee. • Convey empathy by showing interest, reassurance and acceptance. 	<p>RECEIVING FEEDBACK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You and your mentor are partners in this process – you are allowed to agree, disagree and provide your own point of view • Acknowledge that your mentor has distance and experience that you do not. Their point of view may not be popular, but it might be valid • Focus on your next steps and consider small ways that you might take on board the feedback.

Sounds like:

"That's interesting, tell me more."

"Why do you think that might be the case?"

"My intent when completing that was..."

"Understanding this now, I think a better approach could be..."



[Why Feedback Rarely Does What It's Meant To](#)
– HBR



[The Joy of Getting Feedback | Joe Hirsch | TEDxTarrytown](#) - YouTube



[What Managers Get Wrong About Feedback](#)
(hbr.org)

Focus on outcomes

Disengaging with gratitude

Even the most effective mentor or coaching relationships can run its course. For various reasons, you may realise you are no longer serving your mentee, or you might feel like you are not getting what you need from your mentor. Knowing when it's time to move on in a considered and considerate way is also an important part of the mentoring and mentee relationship.

MENTORS	MENTEES
It's time to end the mentoring relationship – how do we know?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I no longer have capacity to support my mentee • I don't have the right expertise or skills to support my mentee to achieve their goals • They are seeking to grow in a new direction • I have helped them to achieve their objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am no longer learning from my mentor or coach • There is no chemistry or connection • My mentor is not a good match • I have achieved my objectives
The art of disengaging – ending things professionally	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider whether the relationship can be recharged. Give each other an opportunity to adapt with you • If you don't think it's working, don't let the other party invest their time and energy to be polite – it wastes your time and theirs • Disengage with gratitude. Thank each other for the time and attention, share what you have learned from working with one another and how this is likely to help you in future • Be positive, honest and transparent and leave the door open to the possibility of future collaborations. 	

Sounds like:

"Given my change in focus, I wonder if getting together regularly is the best use of your time."

"Thank you for investing in me with your time and your knowledge."

"I've had time to reflect on my own style, and I think I need a mentor who has a similar approach."

