



Mentoring Trouble Shooting Guide

ISSUE	QUESTIONS AND RECOMMENDED APPROACHES
We don't seem to have anything to talk about	<p><i>Is the purpose of the relationship clear? Are you both agreed on the expected outcome?</i> Mentees often feel they have to bring problems to you, when there is often more value in focusing on opportunities.</p>
We don't have much rapport	<p><i>Which elements of rapport is missing? Does the mentee actually want to be there? Is there a good match?</i> Bring the issue into the open and emphasise the importance of rapport to making the relationship work. Talk through rapport together and agree what you can do to build it.</p>
We've run out of steam/ Our discussions are shallow	<p><i>Has the relationship already delivered what the mentee needed?</i> If not, the most common cause of this problem is that the mentee doesn't know how to challenge her/himself. Help her/him or her envision possible futures, then explore what they would need to change in themselves and their circumstances to bring about the most desirable of those futures.</p>
My mentee doesn't respond	<p><i>What is preventing them from saying what they think or feel?</i> The worst thing to do here is increase the amount of talking you do, to compensate! You don't have to fill the silence, but when you do, you can build their confidence with a limited amount of self-disclosure – for example, about your own fears in an unfamiliar situation. Reassure them about confidentiality. Demonstrate a real interest in them, their aspirations and their values. Remember that introverts often like to take time to think things through. Also some people prefer to communicate visually, so encouraging them to draw an issue can be highly effective.</p>
My mentee feels the world is against him/her	<p><i>Perhaps it is?</i> Don't rush into accepting or rejecting their perspective. Focus instead on what has made them think this way and try to summarise the self-limiting beliefs they hold. Ask them which of those beliefs they would most like to change... and take it from there.</p>
We keep missing meetings	<p><i>How committed are you both to the relationship?</i> With few exceptions, the main cause for postponing mentoring meetings is that "something more important has come up". If this becomes a pattern, bring it forward as an issue and review your expectations of each other.</p>

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<p>My mentee is unrealistic in his/her ambitions</p>	<p><i>What would help them see different possibilities?</i> Some of our most successful leaders are people, who were written off as having little leadership potential at some point in their careers. It's important to maintain a balance between encouraging them to pursue their ambitions and helping them to be realistic. You can work through with them all the steps from where they are now to where they'd like to be – this either shows that a dream is possible to achieve, or not.</p>
<p>My mentee ignores my advice</p>	<p><i>So what's the problem?</i> Whatever you feel about the wisdom of their decisions, accept its legitimacy and help them to think through the implications this choice of action will have. The more they feel that you support them in making their own decisions, the more they are likely to listen to you next time!</p>
<p>My mentee wants me to sort his/her problems</p>	<p><i>How might you be encouraging this expectation?</i> Only in very exceptional cases should you sort out a problem for the mentee. Help them instead think through and act upon their own solutions. Explain why you are taking this approach. Often the reason is that the mentee is unable to cope with the stress of a situation and is looking for a rescuer. In such cases, consider whether counselling would be appropriate.</p>
<p>My mentor keeps giving me advice when I just want to brainstorm ideas</p>	<p><i>Have you agreed how you will work together and what mentoring style you prefer?</i> It helps to establish right at the beginning, how you prefer to work/your learning style. Have a discussion with your mentor about how you each prefer to work. If you are not getting what you need, speak up and be clear about what you want instead.</p>
<p>My mentor cancelled the last meeting and now I feel embarrassed to request a replacement time</p>	<p><i>Your mentor more than likely volunteered to be your mentor, so they want to spend time with you!</i> Mentees, especially when they are several roles "lower" than their mentor or much less experienced, can sometime feel in awe of their mentors. Remember, your mentor not only agreed to be in a mentoring relationship with you, but is most likely getting as much out of the relationship as you are.</p>

CONTACT US

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