



What Contributes To The Success Or Failure Of A Mentoring Relationship?

Many factors contribute to the success or failure of the mentoring relationship. As the relationship matures you may find a need to redefine it. You need to be prepared to move on if the mentoring relationship is not working.

Below is a list of traps to be aware of within a mentoring relationship.

Mentoring Traps	Things to keep in mind
Not clearly defining your goals.	<p>Some people choose a mentor before they have clearly defined their goals. They may select the wrong mentor for them.</p> <p>Sometimes what the mentee wants may seem to conflict with what is best for the organisation. The mentor may feel that they can no longer work on behalf of both the mentee and the organisation and shy away from mentoring activities. With this developing imbalance we might see a conflict arise.</p> <p>Define your goals and review them regularly.</p> <p>Reflect on the tools within this kit to assist in building an effective mentoring relationship.</p>
Reliance on a single mentor	<p>Don't put all your eggs in one basket and expect one mentor to provide you with all you need.</p> <p>The mentee needs to take responsibility for achieving their mentoring goals. Whilst a mentor may assist them, they need to build their own networks in the areas they want to go.</p> <p>Seeking out mentors in different areas of the University broadens your influence base and increases your choices.</p> <p>This also helps in moving out of any one mentoring relationship that is no longer viable.</p>
There is a power imbalance within the mentoring relationship.	<p>Issues related to equity, power and dependence can have negative consequences.</p> <p>A mentor should be someone who will not gain or lose because of your decisions or because you move to another area.</p> <p>Mentors can become dependent on their mentee, particularly if the mentee is successful.</p> <p>Adjusting to being a colleague to a former mentor requires you to recognise that you have achieved a certain maturity in your work life that changes your needs and expectations towards your mentor. Often mentors realise this before you do.</p>
Your mentor has become too controlling	<p>Sometimes you may find that mentors have personality characteristics that you do not like.</p> <p>A mentor who is very controlling might be worthwhile in the short term. They may be quite bossy and authoritarian in their manner yet have the experience and expertise that you respect and admire.</p> <p>They may seek to make the mentee over in their own image rather than fostering individuality and independence. There may be pressure to conform to traditional ways of doing things. Their methods worked for them so why shouldn't a mentee be successful in the same way?</p> <p>However, if the positives outweigh the negatives it may be worth staying in the relationship until you have reached your particular mentoring goals.</p>
Respect for the mentor	<p>Mentors inevitably model some behaviours you admire and you as the mentee will do the same.</p> <p>You do not have to like your mentor but you do need to respect them. Respect for age, experience and diversity are important. The mentee must see the value in working with a more experienced person.</p> <p>The mentor must also be flexible enough to tolerate different approaches and to weigh the merits on outcomes, not style.</p> <p>Realising that your mentor is imperfect is inevitable. Be aware of each other's shortcomings but don't let them get in the way of developing a mentoring relationship if you think their strengths are important for your particular needs.</p> <p>Sharing and learning from each other's experiences can and does change the relationship.</p>

Mentoring Traps	Things to keep in mind
Knowing how to handle constructive feedback	<p>Mentors may confront behaviour that they think is counter-productive. It is important for the mentee to adjust to criticism and to use it constructively.</p> <p>If over time the feedback is not helpful then you need to discuss this with your mentor.</p>
Clashes in beliefs and values	<p>Being clear about your own ambitions, career goals and personal preferences is essential to monitoring a mentoring relationship.</p> <p>Mentors have ambitions, career goals and personal preferences too. Yours and theirs may be incompatible.</p> <p>If this incompatibility is coupled with role confusion then the relationship may be challenging. It might be better to move away or end the relationship and admit your differences without blame.</p>
Time constraints	<p>Either party's priorities and commitments may change over time, allowing less availability to undertake mentoring activities.</p> <p>Rather than allowing the relationship to simply drift or disconnect, it is important to have an open conversation and discuss goals and needs.</p> <p>Celebrate what has been achieved to date and allow each other the freedom to move on graciously.</p>

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