

## **A Guide to Remote Mentoring**

Mentoring is the development of a relationship between an experienced individual (mentor) and an individual (mentee/protégé) seeking to learn from, and exchange ideas with, someone with more experience in their field.

Because it is a relationship, both individuals should expect to gain from mentoring: the protégé will learn from the mentor; the mentor will also benefit through exposure to new ideas and through the discipline of the mentoring process.

Generally, the mentoring relationship is conducted face-to-face; remote mentoring requires more structure. The following guidelines are offered to facilitate the process of remote mentoring using a reflective diary.

### ***How Mentoring works***

Mentoring is not coaching: it is not about giving advice, or teaching. Mentoring is about encouraging and challenging the protégé to try out ideas, work through dilemmas, and develop new approaches to thinking as a means for dealing with their environment. Sometimes it is about understanding how to balance work/family/study, sometimes it is about issues at work, sometimes it is about issues with professional development.

### ***Roles and Responsibilities***

#### **Mentor Roles and Responsibilities**

- The mentor must be committed to stay with the relationship for the full extent of the engagement:
  - The protégé can withdraw at any time
  - The door should be left open for the protégé to return
- Establish ground rules
  - Based on the guidelines of this paper
- Ensure that expectations are shared and understood:
  - What are the mentor's expectations of this relationship
  - What are the protégé's expectations of this relationship
- Don't give advice
- Giving feedback only if asked:
  - First obtain permission to be personal
  - Don't do the 'feedback sandwich' – “you did well here BUT...” Those receiving feedback stop listening when they hear 'but'
- Through questioning:
  - Lead the protégé through introspection to finding his/her own answer
  - Clarify (often the clarification is the catalyst needed to help the protégé resolve his/her own dilemma)
- Encourage decisions and action
- Summarise to stay on track

## **Protégé Roles and Responsibilities**

- The relationship is primarily for the benefit of the protégé; the agenda must be led by the protégé
- The protégé decides the topics to be covered
- The mentoring journey have a long-term focus or may be a reflection on current (and often unexpected) events and issues
- The mentoring process is about allowing the protégé to find his/her own path with the guidance of the mentor

## ***Reflective Learning***

Reflection is the tool that enables remote mentoring to succeed. The purpose of reflection is to encourage an individual's life-long learning process through developing a habit of constant questioning, assessment and recording of events:

- Why they occur?
- Were they significant?
- How these events, positive or negative, have been managed
- What can be learned from this process
- How the individual has actually learned from the process.

Such reflection often happens unconsciously, but by leading conscious reflection and encouraging the recording these reflections, the process becomes more powerful. The benefit of understanding how 'implicit' knowledge can become 'explicit' knowledge for each individual enhances the learning process.

## **The Reflective Diary**

The Reflective Diary is the key to remote mentoring:

- To provide an ongoing record of the learning process
- To support planning to meet the goals and objectives defined in the beginning of the subject
- To be able to see evidence of learning and improvement.

Reflection on what the individual does know and the synthesis into new experiences will also provide the path to understanding how each event shapes experience and accumulation of more experience and knowledge (wisdom). Because learning is individual for each person, based on what he/she already believes and knows, only that individual can make the particular connections between what he/she already knows (consciously or unconsciously) and new events or information.

## **Purpose of diary**

The starting point of the mentoring relationship should be for the protégé to record major goals and objectives of the his/her professional life; the next step is to define possible milestones or achievements that can be stepping stones to achieve the stated expectations. By defining goals in this way, the individual develops a path to achieve this particular journey. The recording of the starting point, the end point and the outline

of the steps along the way ensure that the purpose will not be lost or diluted by reaction to tactical issues and problems that occur in the professional life.

Not only does the reflective diary record objectives and the planning and action necessary to achieve those objectives, it can also provide a checklist for identifying the activities the individual has practiced – progress or learning:

- Organisation and management of work
- Analysis and reasoning applied to the work environment
- Oral and written communication skills
- Team work
- Recognizing and resolving ethical dilemma
- Increase in maturity and judgment

### **Content of diary**

The first entry of the diary should be the protégé's expectations of the mentoring relationship along with goals and objectives for the ensuing relationship.

The subsequent content of the diary (the events described) should then be driven by these questions:

- What is important about the event that I have described?
- What did I learn from this (experience)? Could I have done it better?
- How can I use this experience to improve my professional work?
- What did I discover that I knew?
- Which single activity have I undertaken this week that is my best achievement?
  - Why is it my best achievement?
  - What have I learnt?
  - How have I matured?

## **Conclusion**

Where face-to-face mentoring is not practical; remote mentoring, using reflective learning is a viable substitute. Reflection by the protégé (using the reflective diary) is the tool that enables remote mentoring to succeed.

To discuss your mentoring needs, contact:

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The number of protégés supported at any time is strictly limited. Mosaic and Dr. Bourne reserve the right to refuse to provide mentoring services to any applicant at their sole discretion and without being required to provide reasons for their decision.