

Starting Strong as a Mentor

A Successful Mentoring Experience

is largely dependent on relationship skills – how well the mentor and mentee “click”. When you first registered, you took a Visual Personality Survey to help find compatible personalities to help facilitate this process. As a mentor, however, you still have a responsibility to contribute to creating an environment of trust and openness. If you already know your mentee and have worked with them in the past, this may not be an issue. However, there will be times when you will be meeting someone new or someone you do not know well.

While being a good mentor encompasses many activities, it also has much to do with *asking the right questions at the right time.*

The questions on the right can be used in your initial meetings to help foster a connection with your mentee, and will give you some additional insight on how you can be a better mentor to the individual as a person. Some of these questions might naturally arise as a result of filling out your Partnership Agreement together.

Do Mentors Make an Impact?

The California Nurse Mentor Project found that mentoring reduced RN attrition, saving hospitals between **\$1.4 million and \$5.8 million** over three years.

Source: Joyce F. Mills, MS, RN, PHN and Anna C. Mullins, DNSC, RN, “The California Nurse Mentor Project: Every Nurse Deserves a Mentor”, Nursing Economics, Nov. 25, 2008.

- Tell me about your job – How long have you been here?
- What are the principle responsibilities of the job you do?
- Who is your supervisor?
- What do you like about your job?
- What is challenging about your job, or what don't you like about it?
- What do you do well?
- What work have you been most proud of and why?
- Do you feel like there are any obstacles in your path right now? If so, what?
- What does success look like to you? Describe the types of activities or work you'd like to be doing in a future where you are successful.
- What are you not doing well that is preventing you from moving forward with your goals right now?
- Are you currently doing anything to change that?
- If mentoring were to have a significant impact on your career, what would it look like?
- How would you like me to support you in accomplishing your goals?
(e.g. Are you best motivated by being gently encouraged, or forcefully pushed? Do you want continual challenge, or need acknowledgement about what's going well to maintain your motivation?)
- How would you want me to react when you haven't completed something we've agreed to?
- In what ways do you appreciate being acknowledged for successes? (e.g. Write a note? Public acknowledgement? buy you coffee?)



As Your Relationship Progresses,

you will naturally start to develop a personal relationship with your mentee and continuing to ask connection questions will help you guide your mentee in their decision-making processes. However, the majority of your time will be focused on helping your mentee reach their goals.

- Can you give me an example?
- Explain why/how...?
- Are you saying ... or ... ?
- What do we already know about this?
- How does this relate to your ultimate goal?
- What else could we assume?
- How did you come to that conclusion?
- What would happen if ... ?
- Do you agree or disagree with ... ?
- You seem to be assuming ... ?
- Why? (asked a few times)
- What evidence is there to support this?
- What do you think causes ... ?
- Why do you think that is happening ... ?
- How could this be refuted ...?
- Another way of looking at this is ..., does that seem reasonable?
- Who benefits from this?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of ... ?
- What if you compared ... and ... ?
- Why is ... necessary?
- What are some other ways of looking at this?
- Then what would happen?
- How does ... affect ... ?
- How does ... fit with what we learned before?
- What is the best ... ? Why?
- What would the consequences be if ... ?
- How could ... be used to ... ?
- Why do you think I asked that question?
- What else might I ask?
- What does that mean?

The learning process is much stronger when people are able to “discover” knowledge.

While giving advice is certainly part of your role as a mentor, the learning process is much stronger when people “discover” knowledge rather than being given knowledge. If you are more prone to giving advice than questioning, using the Socratic method of questioning will help you to challenge the accuracy and completeness of your mentee’s thinking in a way that prods them towards their ultimate goal.

The Socratic method challenges clarity, assumptions, rationale, perspectives, and consequences. Use the questions on the left to jump-start your mentee’s thinking as you talk.

Do Mentors Make an Impact?

Gallup estimates that actively disengaged employees cost U.S. businesses about \$450B-\$550B annually.