

The Communications Doctor



COACHING AND MENTORING TO ACHIEVE PEAK PERFORMANCE

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The doctor's diagnosis is IN: Good communication is contagious!

Susanne Gaddis, PhD, CSP, and CEO of The Communications Doctor recognizes there is an epidemic of unhealthy interactions in today's society. The good news is – she shares prescriptions – easy and engaging tips and techniques that help foster a climate for positive, diplomatic and motivational communications. As a communications professor, Certified Professional Speaker (CSP), author and member of the National Speaker's Association, Susanne Gaddis, PhD, has taught the art of successful communication since 1989. A recognized interpersonal communications expert, Susanne has appeared on nationally syndicated radio, TV and video programming and has authored articles appearing in: *The Journal of Training and Development*, *The Whole American Nurse*, *Shape Magazine*, *The Handbook of Public Relations*, *Corporate Meeting Planner*, and on *Entrepreneur.com*. Current clients, benefiting from Susanne's action-focused, solution-oriented tips, and techniques include NASA Johnson Space Center, The American Nurses Association, Oracle, SAS, Blue Cross & Blue Shield, and Bayer Corporation. For additional information on Dr. Gaddis or to subscribe to receive her FREE newsletter, call 919-933-3237, e-mail: gaddis@communicationsdoctor.com or visit: www.CommunicationsDoctor.com, Twitter: @TheCommDoctor Facebook: CommunicationsDoctor

“Keepers”



Jeepers, Creepers, Where'd you get those “Keepers”

Handwriting practice lines consisting of ten sets of three horizontal lines. Each set is preceded by a small circle containing a vertical line, serving as a starting point for the letter 'K'.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COACHING AND MENTORING

The difference lies mainly in what you are trying to achieve and over what sort of time scale. A workplace coaching programme can be quite short – maybe less than a day – or it can develop over a long period. By contrast, the workplace mentor’s relationship with a mentee usually takes place over a longer time scale. It could often be six months to two years – or indeed a lifetime.

Let’s look at the differences between the coach and the mentor.

The coach Seeks either to build someone’s confidence or teach them the skills or knowledge so they can achieve something.	Whereas the mentor Provides job or career advice and support, based on the wisdom they have gained through experience.
The coach Is often (but not always) an expert or specialist in the skills that the coachee wants to learn.	Whereas the mentor Is an expert in helping someone to learn, helping them to reflect and to make decisions for themselves.
The coach Is mainly concerned with the short or medium term improvement of performance and development of skills.	Whereas the mentor Is mainly concerned with the longer term acquisition of skills and attitudes in a developing career.
The coach Has a professional commitment to the relationship.	Whereas the mentor Makes a personal and professional commitment to a learner’s success.

Having looked at the differences, here are some similarities:

- A coach can also be a mentor and a mentor can be a coach, or the roles can be rolled into one.
- Mentors and coaches use the same skills to help people reach significant decisions and take appropriate action.
- Successful mentors and coaches both depend on building a relationship based on trust and openness.
- Neither are there to solve problems but rather to help identify issues and plan ways through them.

The key point is that whatever role you play, it’s vital to give the person being coached or mentored unbiased support and guidance.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COACHING AND MENTORING

There is often confusion between these two functions, because the one of the functions of a good mentor is to coach a mentee.

Although mentors utilize coaching skills to serve the mentee, mentoring involves additional tasks, which can include:

- Being a role model—literally displaying the specific actions and behaviors that are role specific
- Consulting—sharing information about the industry, company or business unit that mentor believes is relevant to mentee
- Brokering—making introductions to powerful, influential, and otherwise useful individuals in the industry or organization
- Advocating—for mentee's work assignments or career development to support the mentee's growth and development

Good mentors use a coaching process and coaching skills to help mentees:

- Be clear about big picture career goals
- Identify and develop leadership qualities
- Develop sound structures and accountability to accomplish the important long-term development goals (vs. the urgent performance ones)
- Understand their own value and needs
- Leverage their best qualities and talents

The value of training mentors in the use of a coaching process, and in coaching skills (refined communication skills combined with an intense service orientation) cannot be underestimated. The key benefits to organizations of training mentors and administering mentoring programs are:

- Increased communication of corporate values
- Decreased learning curves for informal systems (the way things are really done around here)
- Greater sense of belonging right away (for new employees)

These key benefits have been shown to bottom line benefits such as:

- Reduced employee turnover
- Increased innovation and loyalty
- Improved sense of team spirit
- Increased productivity

COACHING AND MENTORING PRINCIPLES

There are five key principles that underpin coaching and mentoring. These principles link to the International Coach Federation's code of ethics. They describe the style and approach of the coach in relation to the mentee. These principles are also fully applicable when we bring a "coach-like" approach to other roles. They can be used in leading, coaching, building relationships, training, work and personal life.

Trust the Client:

Actively believe the participant is capable, creative, wise and good. Coaching is client-powered. A positive belief in the qualities of the person being coached.

Accept, Blend, and Create:

Use what's offered. Accept what's so. Improvise! Create from everything.

Possibility:

Orient toward creating, not problem-solving. Choose conscious creation over reaction. Focus on vision and purpose - what is wanted - what's possible.

Partnership:

Coaching is a relationship of equals: based around conversations that are purposeful, flexible, mutual, and sustainable. Build alignment.

Mentor Qualities

If the mentor is to be effective in relating to the protégé, he/she must have:

Self-understanding—The goal is not to encourage the protégé “to become like the mentor!” Assessing the needs of others and then finding the best means to meet those needs is no easy task. Mentors can “get in the way” unless they understand their own strengths and weaknesses.

Self-esteem— Unless the mentor has very positive self-esteem, the relationship with the protégé can soon deteriorate into one of resentment or self-pity. One cannot nurture in someone else that which is not possessed.

Patience— Responsibility for personal and professional development lies with the individual. The mentor may become frustrated with the progress being made and abandon the mentor role, only to become a “manager” and disempowering the protégé. This is a developmental process, with as many setbacks as advances. Patience rather than frustration must be the rule; consider counseling, motivating or teaching. The critical line separating mentor from manager/supervisor should never be crossed.

Openness to learn from you—This is a relationship and the mentor should also expect to learn from the protégé. Differences in gender, ethnicity, culture, education, experience, business unit or even personal perspectives are valuable to the mentor. Discussions focusing on these differences should be pursued at every opportunity. Mentors are encouraged to ask “What do you think about this/that?” and to be attentive to the responses of the protégé.

Mentor Role and Responsibilities

Role of the Mentor

The key to becoming an effective mentor is to understand that you are a coach or teacher to a less experienced student. Being an effective mentor may take on one, or a combination of roles:

Teaching – helping the protégé learn particular skills by increasing the learning pace and giving him/her the opportunity to display technical competence

Guiding– facilitating the protégé's growth in technical and organizational knowledge. This enhances career potential and develops self-confidence by reducing the potential for failure and increasing the level of risk-taking. The key is to facilitate; not directly develop.

Counseling– helping the protégé accurately describe problems, suggesting insights and then working through a process that is productive, positive and supportive of job performance.

Challenging– addressing the protégé's level of performance. This may involve informing the protégé of performance issues and developing strategies to address them.

Confronting– discussing the impact of not meeting expectations, and providing timely, objective, constructive feedback.

Responsibilities of Mentors

A successful mentor accepts the responsibilities of mentoring, and attempts to:

- ✓ Create and build trust and respect.
- ✓ Maintain confidentiality.
- ✓ Share time and energy.
- ✓ Dialogue with the protégé's supervisor.
- ✓ Listen carefully to your protégés, act as a sounding board and help to identify and achieve reasonable goals.
- ✓ Understand without judging.
- ✓ Share experiences, skills, knowledge, networking strategies and lessons learned.
- ✓ Develop your interpersonal and motivational skills.
- ✓ Confront negative behaviors and attitudes when appropriate.
- ✓ Understand the professional culture and how to effectively work within it.
- ✓ Be a positive role model: coach, teach and set the best example of behavior.
- ✓ Ask for advice or help from the protégé.
- ✓ Offer encouragement and counsel when appropriate.
- ✓ Respect individual differences.
- ✓ Bring out the best in the protégé.

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Key Elements of the Mentor Role

The mentor's role cannot be overstated. As indicated below, there is considerable investment on your part, with each of your protégés.

Mentor Role	Benefits to the Protégé	Most Significant Mentor Investment
Listening Counseling	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Establish rapport.2. Enhance self-esteem3. Provide "Pep talks" regularly4. Agree on purpose and ground rules for the relationship	Time
Teaching	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Instruct in organizational skills, management and leadership practices2. Emphasize standards of conduct3. Cultivate corporate social graces4. Teach "tricks-of-the-trade"5. Sensitize to corporate politics6. Share "inside information"7. Co-author development plan	Self Engery Time
Intervening	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Seek exposure and advancement opportunities for protégé2. Intercede on protégé behalf in corporate settings	Organizational Relationships Reputation
Sponsoring	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Transfer mentor role to the protégé2. Recommend protégé for promotion, succession program3. Carefully coordinate activities with protégé supervisor	Reputation

Planning the Mentoring Relationship

For the mentoring relationship to be successful, it requires careful planning. Successful planning helps you and the protégé to:

- Clarify what needs to be accomplished, when the step must be completed and what resources are required.
- Identify and coordinate activities.
- Accomplish a step or task by a specified time.
- Identify difficulties that may arise.
- Determine actions to overcome those difficulties.
- Agree on how and when to involve the supervisor in the process.

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Protégé Roles and Responsibilities

The primary role of the protégé is to learn new knowledge and skills from the mentor; however, the protégé should challenge the mentor and provide him/her with new ideas on professional, personal and leadership practices.

The protégé also has responsibilities that should be communicated at the beginning of the Mentoring relationship:

- Master the skills and competencies needed to succeed in his or her current job.
- Take responsibility for one's own development.
- Cooperatively (with the mentor and supervisor) set specific, measurable, aligned, realistic, time-driven objectives.
- Actively listen to the mentor and determine how to best-apply the guidance provided.
- Acquire and develop new skills and competencies needed for the future.
- Build trust and respect, and expect the best in the relationship.
- Take the initiative in managing the relationship.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Be receptive to new ideas and approaches, coaching and feedback.
- Objectively and continuously assess progress.
- Recognize and respect individual differences.

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How Coachable Am I?

Do you wonder how receptive you might be to coaching? Here's a simple questionnaire designed to enlighten and inform you as to where you might be in relationship to receiving coaching that could move you ahead in all aspects of your life.

Directions: Make a note of the number that comes closest to representing how true the statement is for you right now. Then, score yourself, using the key at the bottom of the page.

Scoring: Score each of your answers with one through five, corresponding to the item listed below which applies . . .

1. Not true
2. Less true
3. Not sure
4. More true
5. True

How true are these statements?

1. I can be relied upon to take coaching seriously.
2. I believe this is the right time for me to accept coaching.
3. I am fully willing to do the work and let the coach do the coaching.
4. I keep my word without struggling or sabotaging.
5. I will give the coach the benefit of the doubt and try out new ideas.
6. I will tell the whole truth to myself.
7. I am a person who can express what I need or expect, and I can share this as soon as I sense it.
8. I am willing to change self-defeating behaviors which limit my success.
9. I see coaching as a worthwhile investment in my life.
10. I am someone who can share the credit for my success with the coach.

_____ **TOTAL SCORE (add the numbers up)**

SCORING KEY

- 10 - 20 Not coachable right now.
- 21 - 30 Coachable, but more willingness would permit faster progress.
- 31 - 40 Coachable.
- 41 - 50 Very coachable; find a coach.

Preparing for the Mentoring Relationship

To ensure success, it is important to establish clear mentoring goals upfront. This will save time and money.

Step 1: Establish Mentoring Goals upfront

Step 2: Plan for the initial interview discussions

Step 3: Manage the relationship

Goals are simply end results. They describe what you are going to do in order to accomplish “something”. The goals you establish for this program should be among the performance-based objectives you set with your supervisor. Setting goals helps you to:

- ✓ Establish a clear picture of jobs and assignments
- ✓ Identify action steps to achieve goals
- ✓ Prioritize action steps to achieve goals

Each goal and action steps should contain an action verb to indicate the desired behavior to be achieved, and how success will be measured. Words like “know” and “understand” communicate nothing about what the protégé is expected to be able to do. Express goals in terms of “behavior,” since it is only individual behavior which can be controlled. Words like design, develop, or implement are examples of acceptable verbs.

Additionally, make sure that goals pass the “SMART goals test.”

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Time-based

The GROW Model



The GROW Model is deservedly one of the best known and widely used coaching models. It provides a simple yet powerful framework for navigating a route through a coaching session, as well as providing a means of finding your way when lost. The GROW Model is described here as it applies to an individual session but part of its strength is that it can equally well be applied to a part of a session, or to series of sessions. In each case, the principle is the same.

The GROW Model is described in a number of coaching books, including John Whitmore's excellent book (*Coaching For Performance: Growing People, Performance and Purpose*). GROW is an acronym for:

Goal
Reality
Options
Will

Goal - Firstly, a session must have a Goal or outcome to be achieved. The goal should be as specific as possible and it must be possible to measure whether it has been achieved. So, having identified the goal, questions like "How will you know that you have achieved that goal?" are useful here.

Reality - As well as knowing where you are trying to get to, you need to know where you are starting from - the Current Reality. It is surprising how often this is the key part of a coaching session and that by just seeing clearly the situation (rather than what was thought or imagined to be the situation), the resolution becomes obvious and straightforward.

Options - Once you know where you are and where you want to go, the next step is to explore what Options you have for getting there. A useful metaphor for GROW is a map: once you know where you are going (the goal) and where you are (current reality), you can explore possible ways of making the journey (options) and choose the best.

Will - But this in itself is not enough - you must also have the motivation or Will to make the journey. The "W" is often taken to stand for a number of other elements of a session, all of which are important. Myles Downey in his book "Effective Coaching" suggests it stands for "Wrap-up"; others have it standing for What, Where, Why, When and How. But whatever is emphasised, the desired outcome from this stage is a commitment to action.

The GROW process has been presented sequentially here. In practice, it is a much less linear process which may start anywhere and revisit each of the stages several times.

The CLEAR Model

The CLEAR model was developed by Peter Hawkins of The Bath Consultancy Group (www.bathconsultancygroup.com) in the early 1980s. This model outlines the components of a successful coaching session.

CLEAR is an acronym for:

Contracting: Opening the discussion, setting the scope, establishing the desired outcomes, and agreeing the ground rules.

Listening: Using active listening and catalytic interventions the coach helps the coachee develop their understanding of the situation and generate personal insight.

Exploring 1.: Helping the coachee to understand the personal impact the situation is having on themselves.

Exploring 2: Challenging the coachee to think through possibilities for future action in resolving the situation.

Action: Supporting the coachee in choosing a way ahead and deciding the next step.

Review: Closing the intervention, reinforcing ground covered, decisions made and value added. The coach also encourages feedback from the coachee on what was helpful about the coaching process, what was difficult and what they would like to be different in future coaching sessions.



What To Say When You're Stuck!

- ⌚ What would you like for me to do with this information?
- ⌚ You have a solid understanding of what the situation is, therefore I want you to help us arrive at a solution.
- ⌚ So what would you prefer to do?
- ⌚ Educate me on how you see this working.
- ⌚ What would you like to see happen?
- ⌚ So what you need from me is . . .
- ⌚ Is there anything else that I can do to help you . . .
- ⌚ Then you think we should proceed by?
- ⌚ Could you elaborate/expand on that?
- ⌚ Is there anything that I/we can do?
- ⌚ Do you want me to listen or would you prefer that I give you suggestions?
- ⌚ It looks like we're on the right track, and I'd like to see . . .
- ⌚ Have you explored other ideas/options?
- ⌚ Is there anything else that you'd like to tell me . . .
- ⌚ In order to make this happen I/we'll need . . .
- ⌚ So what is going to get us back on track?
- ⌚ In order to answer you I need . . .
- ⌚ So what are our next steps?
- ⌚ So how can we resolve this?
- ⌚ So knowing this, what should be our plan of action?
- ⌚ So what's your plan on how to get through this?
- ⌚ So what's your plan on how to get started?
- ⌚ What is your proposed solution?
- ⌚ So what are our options?
- ⌚ What outcome are you looking for?
- ⌚ Are you open for suggestions?
- ⌚ What is it that you'll need to move forward?
- ⌚ What result would work for you/your team?
- ⌚ So, what will your response be?
- ⌚ What can I/we do to help?
- ⌚ So what have you learned from this experience?
- ⌚ So we all agree that . . .
- ⌚ Give me some examples.

Writing Behavior-Based Goals

To help you write clear goals use behavior-based language. Understand that your goals may change during the course of your mentoring experience. Use behavior-based words like those in the following table.

Goal	Associated Behaviors
Rsearch	collect, assimilate, consult, review, locate, differentiate, extract, categorize
Diagnose	describe, investigate, demonstrate, evaluate, interpret, appraise, derive, synthesize, specify
Determine	select, itemize, ascertain, analyze, estimate, extrapolate, interpolate
Establish	set, limit, compare, deduce, evaluate, correct, change, generate
Develop	program, interpret, perform, translate, alter, solve, adapt
Design	illustrate, render, draw, create, structure, diagram, graph, pattern
Obtain	get, seek, consult, review, appl, substitute, permit, define
Budget	calculate, delineate, limit, elaborate, cost, price, estimate, dedicate, forecast, allocate, assign, compute, formulate, compile, reduce, limit, count, establish, review
Regulate	chart, enumerate, refine, plot, program
Improve	refine, fix, amend, design, correct, change, generate, evaluate, correct
Store	file, document, alter, group, systematize, divide, tabulate, straighten, insert, stock, save, distribute, catalog, reject
Assign	select, allocate, designate, consult, review, interpret, locate, decide, choose
Initiate	invite, dictate, write, draft, compose (policy, directive, procedures, rules)
Orient	negotiate, direct, familiarize
Evaluate	match, apply, interpret, restate, compare, conclude, deduce, assess, review, verify, prove, connect
Lead	designate, communicate, order, direct, initiate, command, negotiate, orchestrate, form with, interpret, institute, consult, regulate, volunteer, advocate
Train	show, tell, sell, assist, relate, demonstrate, present, explain, praise, question
Develop	educate, teach, show, present, praise, critique
Motivate	listen (actively), praise, communicate, empathize, relate, model
Facilitate	orchestrate, demonstrate, participate
Appraise	assess, review, collect, time, verify, prove, connect, question, weigh
Implement	participate in/with, decide, solve (problem), schedule, operate, activate

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Protégé Development Worksheet

1. Identify your four most important personal and professional developmental needs. Include input from supervisors, clients, peers, appraisals and your own assessment.
2. Identify the significant key factors you feel will contribute to the accomplishment of each of your needs and your success.
3. Identify any possible barriers that may block your success. Barriers may be people or policies that prevent you from taking action or limit the amount of action you can take. These barriers may not be real, but you perceive them to be real.
4. Define how a mentor can help you achieve success and overcome the barriers.
5. Identify the goals you would like to accomplish with your mentor.

My personal & professional developmental needs	Significant key factors to success	Barriers to success	How a Mentor can help me
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
Mentoring Goal(s):			
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Work Plan - Defining Your Goals and Objectives

Instructions to the protégé:

Complete this worksheet with your mentor.

Goal(s):

Use the space below to record your goal(s).

Objectives:

Use the spaces below to identify objectives to accomplish your goal(s). Then assign a priority to each action step and record the number in the box.

Work Plan - Identifying and Overcoming Barriers

Instructions to the protégé:
Use the space below to identify actions to overcome barriers that may prevent you from completing your objectives.

Possible Barriers	Actions to Overcome Barriers

Work Plan - Identifying Resources, Cost and Deadline

Instructions to the protégé:

Complete this worksheet with your mentor.

Objectives	Resource(s)	Cost	Completion Date

If-Then Planning

According to NYU psychologist, Peter Gollwitzer, one of the world's leading experts in research in motivation science and goal attainment, no matter what goal you are working on; whether it's developing career goals, stopping negative self talk, or losing weight, etc., one of the best ways to set goals that makes it 2 to 3 times more likely you'll meet them is to use If-Then Statements. In fact, in one study, Gollwitzer conducted, 91 percent of people who used an If-Then plan stuck to an exercise program, versus 39 percent of non-planners.

By using this powerful formula, we set our mind up for success. So how can you make If-Then planning work for you? Just follow this easy formula:

If X happens/occurs, I will do Y.

X = a situation, event, time or place.

Y = your specific plan of what you will do when X happens/occurs.

The reason that If-Then Planning works is because it makes your goals clear and concrete. Rather than saying "I want to lose weight," which is a vague goal with no action plan attached, If-Then planning allows you to think about the actual behaviors you will commit to in order to reach your goal.

If-Then statements are particularly helpful if your goal is to stop doing something and start doing something else like eating less junk food, controlling your temper, not working on weekends, or procrastinating. If-Then statements allow you to address the places where you feel most vulnerable and formulate a plan of action for when you are most likely to relax into a bad habit. They allow you to prepare in advance what you will do when situations occur, so that you can have an action plan in place for just about every obstacle you encounter.

For instance if you know you want to stop eating junk food, you can greatly increase your odds of achieving your goals by:

- 1)** Thinking about the potential situations that you will encounter. This is the IF statement.
- 2)** Indicate what behavior you want to do on a regular basis. This is the THEN statement. This is where you determine what action you will take if and when any obstacle occurs. It spells out what you will do when the critical situation arises.

For instance:

"If I go to a fast food restaurant, then I will order only low calorie items."

"If I go to the grocery store, then I will buy whole foods and nothing that comes prepared in a box."

"If I am up late, then I will not eat after 8pm."

"If I have a colleague bring sweets to work, then I will take only two bites, or "If it's not my absolute favorite desert, I will not have any at all."

"If I fall off of the diet wagon for one meal, then the next meal I will get right back on track."

If-Then Planning Exercise

Below please write one goal that is important to you.

Now challenge yourself by writing 5 if/then statements to help you achieve your goal.

If _____, then

If _____, then

If _____, then

If _____, then

If _____, then

Providing Support and Encouragement

It is extremely important to support and encourage the protégé as he/she learns new knowledge and skills. Supporting and encouraging the protégé means that you use the appropriate **coaching** and **motivational** techniques. Successfully providing support and encouragement can help the protégé:

- Improve performance.
- Increase the amount of effort put forth to reach a goal(s).
- Build confidence in his/her ability to successfully perform or accomplish a task.

Coaching

“To coach” is to move a person from where he or she is to where he or she wants or needs to be. Coaching is the process used by the mentor to empower the protégé to put forth his/her best effort(s) to reach the limits of his/her abilities. Coaching offers an opportunity for you to help the protégé learn new skills or master existing ones. Studies have shown over and over again that people learn and use more of the things they discover and experience themselves, which is why coaching is such an essential skill for a mentor to master. Use coaching to:

- Nurture and develop the protégé.
- Follow up a feedback session.
- Encourage the protégé to improve performance and productivity.
- Help the protégé manage difficult situations.

Good coaches support their protégé’s needs, create choices, focus on improving performance, seek commitment and provide opportunities for new experiences. Tips for coaching include:

- Plan and prepare for the coaching session.
- State the problem.
- Be clear about what you are trying to help improve.
- Describe the current behavior and the effect you see.
- Use your experience and the experience of the protégé to develop new actions.

Coaching “Do’s”	Coaching “Don’ts”
Suggest	Reprimand
Listen and consider	Belittle or exclude
Admit when you don’t know something	Cut off and ignore
Evaluate actions	Assume the process steps were followed
Be clear and specific	Make Assumptions

Feedback Tips

To make sure that your feedback is accepted and favorably received, use the following feedback tips:

Be descriptive— Focus on behavior. Identify what you saw the other person do, or what you heard the other person say. Give specific examples. Don't use language that is judgmental. Rather, describe the situation as it actually is and avoid "preaching" about it.

Stay focused— Be clear, specific and unambiguous. Don't use labels like: "unprofessional," "messed-up" and "irresponsible." "I was disappointed that you missed the Friday deadline that we had agreed to." is more effective than "You've been irresponsible again, and I want to know what you're going to do about it!" Stick to the point at hand and resist the temptation to generalize or judge.

Cite examples— Avoid being vague by citing specific, clear examples when giving feedback.

Be brief— Be sure to keep your feedback short. Once you are sure the protégé understands the point-stop. Don't exaggerate. Be exact. Exaggerating only invites the recipient to argue with the exaggeration rather than respond to the real issue.

Keep it simple— Concentrate on only one issue.

Be aware of timing— Know when to offer feedback. Give feedback immediately or as soon as possible after an event is observed. Determine whether the moment is "right."

Consider the protégé's needs—Match the feedback to the person and the severity of their actions. Even if your position/rank is higher than that of the recipient, strive for an adult/peer context. Using "power over" or "talking down" to anyone undermines the feedback attempt; it is just poor leadership!

Check for understanding— Check to be sure your feedback is clearly understood.

Speak only for yourself— Don't refer to absent or anonymous people. Encourage others to speak for themselves.

Don't give feedback when:

- You don't care about the circumstances of the behavior.
- You don't care about the person.
- You will not be around long enough to follow up on the aftermath of your feedback.
- The feedback is about something the person has no power to change.
- You or the recipient is low in self-esteem.
- Your motive is not really improvement but rather to put someone on the spot, or to demonstrate how much smarter you are.
- The time, place or circumstances are inappropriate.

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“Appreciative Inquiry” Exercise

What do you want to achieve the most in the next three years? _____

What one or two things do you want more of? _____

Describe a high point or peak experience in your life? _____

Describe your three greatest accomplishments to date? _____

What has made these accomplishments stand out for you? _____

What have you learned from the past that will help you achieve goals now and in the future?

How do you want to keep moving forward for yourself? _____

List five adjectives that describe you at your best? _____

What's a small step that could take you in the direction of doing more of what you want?

Describe the times when you are at your best. _____

Who do you admire for their skills and abilities in achieving goals? _____

What successes do you see yourself celebrating? _____

When you are faced with challenging adversity, what do you do to keep yourself motivated?

Recognition and Reward Techniques

One way in which to increase protégé motivation is to reward or recognize them when they do things right. To reinforce good performance and encourage repeat performances, it is important to let the protégé know when they have done a good job, why you appreciate it and the impact of their action(s). Sometimes a simple “Thank you” is all the reward a protégé needs. You can reward and recognize the protégé:

Directly - Verbally praising him/her.

Indirectly - Telling a superior about the protégé’s performance and letting the protégé know you told someone.

Formally - Writing a letter of praise and/or recommendation or a positive performance review.

To make sure your reward and recognition has the maximum impact on the protégé, it should:

- Match the reward to the person’s style
- Match the reward to the achievement
- Be sincere

Setting and Managing Expectations

Mentors and protégés alike have expectations for the relationship. Interpersonal communication skills and a shared sense of optimism play significant roles in how the relationship develops and progresses.

Remember, this is a relationship in which both mentor and protégé have invested. An important skill in making it work is the ability to give truthful, constructive feedback. This raises your awareness of specific behaviors and their impact on each other and provides for the opportunity to modify those behaviors if necessary.