Key Skills of a Mentor and Mentor Expectations

The traditional view of a mentor is someone who shares experience and imparts knowledge. In contemporary mentoring a mentor does a lot more listening than talking. A mentor’s role isn’t to tell a mentee what to do, it is to act as a guide. A mentor asks questions and draws out the mentee’s own thoughts before offering guidance and providing additional options.

A mentor challenges, offers a different perspective, another point of view and provides support. While no two mentoring relationships are the same, all mentoring relationships should start with the same solid foundations.

### ELICIT
Ask questions then listen

### CHALLENGE
Provide a different perspective

### SUPPORT
Encourage and validate

### IMPART
Share knowledge and experience

**MENTORS PULL – THEY DON’T PUSH**
A mentor never “pushes”, whether by telling, instructing or giving advice.

**MENTORS PULL**
- They listen to understand
- They ask questions
- They will paraphrase and summarise discussions
- They can suggest options
- They will give feedback
- They can offer guidance
- They help mentees to solve their problems
Key Skills of a Mentor and What a Mentor Can Expect

A mentor should expect to:

- Encourage mentees to develop their own resourcefulness: mentoring does not mean giving instructions – it is up to the mentee to decide whether to use the information they receive from their mentor.
- Guide the mentee to look at a wide variety of options and consider alternative courses of action in order to solve problems for themselves, rather than to give answers or provide solutions.
- Be a sounding-board and provide a link into other information and people who can help. The mentor doesn’t need to have all the answers.
- Help the mentee gain new personal skills, experiences and knowledge.
- Provide an outside perspective on the mentee and their career.
- Help the mentee to develop new attitudes and behaviour, thereby improving both their personal and business performance.
- Listen, in confidence, to the things that are worrying the mentee about their career.
- Help the mentee by sharing your own experience of failures and successes.
- Give friendly, unbiased support and guidance.
- Facilitate decision-making by suggesting alternatives based on personal experience.
- Provide honest and constructive feedback.
- Provide ongoing support and encouragement.

Remember, sometimes all a mentee needs is to talk to someone and this process in itself will make actions and solutions obvious. The mentoring process then becomes a catalyst for change.