

Thinking about Mentoring

If you want to get on in your career and progress quickly, get yourself a mentor! Defined as a wise and trusted counsellor or teacher; having a mentor enables you to benefit from their mistakes without making them for yourself! It also offers you the chance to repeat their successes. In so doing you are able to accelerate your career. If you have the ability to listen, ask questions and reflect on the answers you have the skills need to be both a mentor and a mentee.

Mentoring is also described as a relationship with an experienced individual happy to pass on their advice, guidance & wisdom to someone with less experience and a nurturing and supportive relationship to support someone to develop in their career. The key word in both of these descriptions is relationship. Forming a trusting relationship where it is ok to admit that you don't know what to do and it's ok to ask for help is the foundation of effective mentoring.

In thinking about who you might approach to be your mentor, you may want to consider the following questions:

- Do you admire what they have achieved in their career?
- Are you interested in finding out how they have done that?
- What can you learn from them?
- Have they shown any interest in your career?
- Do they have time to support you?
- Do you trust them to give you advice?
- Do you have a pre-existing relationship with them to build a mentoring relationship upon?

If you are thinking about becoming a mentor, you might want to reflect on these questions:

- Which mentees are you interested in working with?
- What will you get out of this relationship?
- What time are you able to commit to mentoring?
- What would you expect of your mentee?
- What experience are you happy to share?

Being clear about what each party brings to the mentoring relationship is also important. Whilst some professions have formal mentoring relationships established, there is no harm in approaching someone to be your mentor. Most mentors are flattered to be asked and will be happy to work with you.

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