

## Why mentor?

Mentoring is successful if you can help your mentee discover answers to *her own* questions by providing pathways, insights and resources to further knowledge and understanding. Whilst the mentee has come to you for guidance, she is not necessarily looking for you to provide all the answers. Your mentee will grow and benefit more if you show the way but don't give your solutions to *her own* questions.

## A Definition of Coaching and Mentoring

*A process to assist a mentee or coachee to address a specific purpose within a particular context as part of an ongoing development relationship* (David Megginson & David Clutterbuck: **Techniques for coaching and mentoring**, Butterworth-Heinemann 2005)

Coaching and mentoring are not the same thing but *the process and techniques* used by a Coach or a mentor are the same.

## The Essence of Coaching and Mentoring

In summary, coaching and mentoring are:

- Part of an *ongoing development relationship*.
- Processes that involve:
  - Holding the mirror for the person who is being developed, to look and see what *they* see.
  - Guiding the conversation and ensuring the conversation remains on track.

## What does the 'Coach Approach' offer?

According to the Dr Stephen R. Covey, in his book *The Eighth Habit* – feeling understood by others is of paramount importance to each and every one of us. In summary, he was saying:

- *'What air is to the body, to be understood is to the heart'*
- *'If the heart feels understood, it will no longer need to be motivated by someone else.'*
- *'People who feel understood are willing to engage in creative thinking.'*

Coaching and mentoring touch on this deep-seated need that each and every one of us has.

## Key points to remember

- The mentee is responsible to drive and derive value from the relationship.
- A successful mentoring relationship is built on mutual trust. This means:
  - All conversations are confidential – what is said during mentoring cannot be disclosed outside to third parties without the mentee's express consent.
  - Being fully present – get rid of distractions including phones, laptops etc. Focus on the person in front of you.
  - Being open - No judging and criticising.
  - Showing respect for the mentee's perspective and views – , i.e. avoid :
    - talking too much
    - advising without paying heed to the mentee's wishes
    - interrupting and problem solving. Let the mentee try to problem solve and come up with her own ideas first.
- Remember to apply the 80/20 rule to 'airtime'. The mentee speaks for 80% of the time! Your main focus is to listen to help the conversation move forward.
- The mentoring relationship is a partnership. This means:
  - The key to success is for you, the mentor, to become very curious, listen and ask lots of questions to enable your mentee to make discoveries about herself.
  - The process is not about you; it's about the person you're working with.
  - This is not a management conversation – you are not there to tell the mentee what to do or take over the role of a workplace manager, if the mentee has one.