

GO FIND YOURSELF A MENTOR

Sometimes when we're not clear about what we want to do with our lives, it can be helpful to have a supportive person around us. Someone who can support us to make the most of what we have.

Often it's best if this person is not a parent or a close friend, but rather someone who's a bit more removed, like a mentor. Well picked, a good mentor doesn't tell us what we should be or tell us what to do. They can support us to discover this for ourselves!

There are 3 simple steps to setting yourself up with the right mentor.

1. **Work out what you want** from the mentoring relationship and the mentor (Use the 'Work Out What You Want' sheets)
2. **Find the right person.** (Use the 'Find The Right Person' sheet)
3. **Set up the mentor relationship.** (Use the 'Set Up the Mentor Relationship' sheets)



STEP 1 - WORK OUT WHAT YOU WANT (pt 1)

A **MENTOR** is a more experienced person who acts as a guide or model for a less experienced person. They might provide...

CHALLENGE: inviting you to consider ways of thinking/acting that are not serving you

LISTENING: serving as a "sounding board" when you have decisions to make

A SELF DIRECTED LEARNING OPPORTUNITY: helping you to develop your own approach to problem solving

KNOWLEDGE: offering you information gained from years of experience

NETWORKING: providing access to other people who can be of assistance

SUPPORT: providing you with "behind-the-scenes" support

COACHING: guiding and actively encouraging you in the development of skills and positive attitudes that will help you to achieve your outcome and potential.

Of these things above, what are you looking for?

WHAT QUALITIES AM I LOOKING FOR IN A MENTOR?

Circle the qualities that are most important to you:

ABILITY TO NURTURE: willing to support others to grow and develop / ability to provide a learning environment / helps you face errors positively / nurtures the spirit as well as the mind

STRONG INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: is good at interacting with people / communicates effectively, listens, is assertive and has empathy / takes the time to explain

LEADERSHIP SKILLS: inspires and motivates others / confident / able to set outcomes, plan and give feedback

COMPETENCE: has skills needed by the project / can locate and develop relevant resources and learning experiences

TEAM SPIRIT: has their role in perspective / shows a willingness to share credit, give recognition to others and step out of the limelight / does not claim the project work as their own, nor does your work for you

RISK TAKER: encourages others to have a go / has the patience and courage to let you take risks and make mistakes / can find the balance between providing support and preventing unnecessary mistakes.

COMPATIBILITY: able to relate well / not overly serious / is responsive to the backgrounds, abilities, needs & experiences of the person they are mentoring

AVAILABILITY: willing to give their time / reliable & prompt / keeps their word.

STEP 1 - WORK OUT WHAT YOU WANT (pt 2)

Consider what you want from the mentoring relationship. Answer these reflection questions.

1. WHY DO I WANT A MENTOR? WHAT DO I HOPE TO GAIN? WHAT NEEDS WILL BE MET?

NOTE: Some people want a process mentor that will help them to work towards a goal they have set whereas some people want a technical mentor who has skill and experience in a specific area.

2. WHAT IS IT I EXPECT FROM THE RELATIONSHIP?

List your expectations. What do you want to happen (encouragement, accountability, job connections etc) AND what do you want not to happen (bossiness, not enough time with your mentor etc)

3. HOW DO YOU WANT THE RELATIONSHIP TO WORK?

How do you want to communicate with your mentor (face to face, phone, face time)?
How often do you want to meet? For how long? Over what period of time?

4. WHAT ELSE MIGHT COME OUT OF THE MENTORING?

What other things might come out of it? What concerns do you have? What other things do you have to consider?

STEP 2. - FIND THE RIGHT PERSON

1. IDENTIFY SOME POSSIBLE PEOPLE

Here are three areas of your life where you could look. You may find the right person in these groups or you could ask people within them to help you find the right person. Where you look for them will depend on the kind of person you need.

Try and come up with a few names for each area...

<p>PERSONAL e.g. friends, family, youth workers..... Sometimes this can work well and sometimes not. If you're <u>too</u> close it can get difficult if things don't work out. <i>List people that might be a good fit:</i></p>	<p>WORK e.g. work colleagues, people associated with a field of work. <i>List people that might be a good fit:</i></p>
<p>SOCIAL e.g. contacts through clubs, community activities, church, sport, education, hobbies and recreation activities. <i>List people that might be a good fit:</i></p>	<p>OTHER <i>List people that might be a good fit:</i></p>

2. CONSIDER THESE POSSIBLE PEOPLE

1. Consider each person against the criteria of what you want (as identified in step 1) and select your top three.
2. Email each of them and let them know you are looking for a mentor and that you would like them to consider whether they might be interested in becoming your mentor. NOTE: You might like to use or adapt the email template at the end of this document, just fill in all the sections in [brackets].
3. Consider their responses and decide who you want to meet. If you decide you don't want to proceed with any person along the journey, it's good to let them know your decision, explain why and to thank them for their time and consideration.

3. MEET YOUR TOP PICK/S

Arrange a meeting with your top pick/s. This can be done face to face, on the phone or on a video call. Again, if you are meeting more than one person, let them know that you are meeting a number of people to gauge interest and suitability

STEP 3. - SETTING UP THE MENTOR RELATIONSHIP (pt 1)

When you have arranged a meeting with a potential mentor make sure you discuss the following things before you decide on each other.

1. What is the outcome we both want in the mentoring relationship?

Does it involve skills development, support, ideas, contacts. You can have a specific outcome and yet remain flexible so that as the relationship unfolds, different things can happen.

2. What roles do we take, what are our expectations of each other, what are our responsibilities?

An honest discussion about expectations at the beginning can prevent problems later on. A simple list of do's and don'ts can help. (e.g. latest hour for phone calls, confidentiality, the role of the mentor/mentee)

3. How long do we envisage the mentor relationship lasting?

Set a trial period. The trial period could be one month to 3 months, with a review at each month.

4. How often shall we meet and how much time commitment is involved

Be flexible here. Don't go over board and then have to give up because it is too much. Decide if you will combine face to face with phone calls and emails. Will your time together include specific activities. Will you connect weekly / monthly for 1 hour or more?

5. What if it doesn't work?

Recognise that like some relationships, a mentor relationship may not fulfil all our expectations. It could be helpful to agree at the beginning that if either partner for any reason, wants to end the mentoring relationship, they are free to do so without blaming and resentment. But agree to communicate with each other openly and honestly if this happens.

6. Do we need a written agreement?

Are we agreeing to try the mentor relationship? Do we need time to think about it? Sometimes it can help both parties if they have something in writing to which you have both contributed and agreed. It can help you stay on track and could include the agreed outcomes/s, expectations and ground rules. Later on you might want to change it together. Remember a formal agreement is not absolutely necessary if you feel more comfortable with a more relaxed relationship.

7. Action

Prepare a plan for the next month, including meetings, venues, activities and outcomes.

STEP 3. - SETTING UP THE MENTOR RELATIONSHIP (pt 2)

THE MENTOR AGREEMENT

We, (mentee) _____ & (mentor) _____

have agreed to enter into a mentor relationship.

The following areas have been discussed :

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | • Confidentiality | <input type="checkbox"/> | • Proposed activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | • Expectations | <input type="checkbox"/> | • |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | • Frequency & method of contact | <input type="checkbox"/> | • |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | • Desired outcomes/objectives | <input type="checkbox"/> | • |

Agreements reached:

- Desired outcome: e.g. for Bob to set a life direction and develop a plan of action
- Duration of the mentoring relationship: e.g. 3 months
- Likely frequency of meetings: e.g. weekly on a Monday from 5 – 6.30pm
- Mentoring activities: e.g. meeting for a walk to chat followed by a coffee at Jim's house to document the actions for the next week.
- Special features of the mentor relationship:

Date: _____

Signatures

Mentee: _____

Mentor: _____

MENTOR EMAIL TEMPLATE

Dear [...]

I am writing to you because I am at a place in my life where I think it would benefit me to have a mentor. Specifically, I am looking at [...] as my life direction and want some support to assist me in working out the best way forward.

I am looking for someone who has qualities of [...], and has experience and skills in [...].

I am looking for someone who would be able to meet with me [face to face/ via phone / facetime], [1/2/3/4] times a month for [1/2] hours over the next [3/6/12] months.

I am writing to you as well as [1/2] others to gauge your interest and whether you think you are a good fit.

I would love to hear back from you with your initial thoughts and whether you would be interested in meeting up with me to discuss it further.

I look forward to hearing back from you soon

All the best [...].