

CAN YOU BE A GREAT MENTORING PARTNER?

Have you thought about being in a mentoring relationship but were not sure if you have what it takes. The successful mentor and mentee relationship depends upon your level of commitment toward the mentoring relationship and your willingness to work with your mentoring partner to achieve agreed on goals and development plans.

People who are committed make time for mentoring because of the value it holds for them personally. They can be trusted to take actions that follow through on their promises because they value seeing the relationship succeed and the goals for the relationship realized. They find the time to make the relationship work by holding it as a high priority for themselves, ensuring they give the relationship the attention it needs and deserves.

In addition to commitment there are effective and ineffective characteristics of mentees and mentors. These positive traits can be achieved by anyone willing to make an effort – and they can be learned. It takes effort and the results are well worth it. You will grow and become a better mentee or mentor which in turn will enhance the mentoring relationship.

The following two charts highlight effective and ineffective characteristics of mentors and mentees.

MENTORS	
<i>Effective Characteristics</i>	<i>Ineffective Characteristics</i>
<i>SPOT POTENTIAL IN OTHERS Positive view of others increases amount of learning transferred.</i>	<i>TOO BUSY TO MENTOR Miss scheduled meetings, are not accessible in an hour of need, etc.</i>
<i>ARE NETWORKED GUIDES Act as repositories of information and provide just-in-time learning.</i>	<i>USE THE MENTEE AS HELP Pass off responsibilities and extra work they do not want to do.</i>
<i>DISPLAY PATIENCE & TOLERANCE Use mistakes and experiences as learning opportunities.</i>	<i>OVERLY CRITICAL Believe being mentors gives them the right to point out all mistakes.</i>
<i>GIVE ENCOURAGEMENT Consistently build mentees' self-esteem; encourage them to try.</i>	<i>NOT WITH THE TIMES Unaware of current trends, issues, strategic business cases, etc.</i>
<i>SEE THE BIG PICTURE Bring up points that mentees would otherwise not consider.</i>	<i>EGO STRIVING Feel vulnerable if mentees become more successful than they do.</i>

MENTEES	
<i>Effective Characteristics</i>	<i>Ineffective Characteristics</i>
GOAL-ORIENTED <i>Place a high value on setting and accomplishing goals.</i>	TOO SELF-PROMOTING <i>Constantly position themselves or name-drop.</i>
SEEK CHALLENGES <i>Are vocal about wanting and accepting new challenges.</i>	TOO BUSY <i>Cannot give the time and attention required to be successful.</i>
TAKE INITIATIVE <i>Are willing to spearhead a positive learning activity.</i>	UNINTERESTED IN TARGET AREAS <i>Do not show a drive to excel in the mentors' areas of mastery.</i>
SHOW EAGERNESS TO LEARN <i>Are curious and able to ask for assistance or resources.</i>	LACK FOCUS <i>Never fully commit to anything; hop from one thing to the next.</i>
ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY <i>Do not shift blame, procrastinate or become easily distracted.</i>	OVERLY DEPENDENT <i>Are overly needy for approval or require constant supervision.</i>

An honest evaluation of yourself as a mentee or mentor, can better support your mentoring partner and help your mentoring relationship flourish. Always keep in mind that these characteristics are learned, and can therefore be unlearned. So the answer to the question is that you can be a great mentor or mentee.

There is a great person who makes everyone feel small. But the really great person is the one who makes everyone feel great.—**Chinese Proverb**