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Mentoring: Short Dialogue Guide and Food for Thought

For people of any and all intersectionalities, one of the key aspects in the development of leadership skills is the importance of surrounding ourselves with people who can inspire and mentor us. Although there is no miracle recipe, certain principles and points of reflection can help us to forge trusting relationships that are healthy and beneficial for everyone involved.

Coach or mentor?

First and foremost, you should determine whether you are looking for a coaching or a mentoring relationship. Whether you're being coached or mentored, each relationship has its advantages.

Although these two relationships may be quite similar, **coaching is usually associated with the workplace and has the specific goal of acquiring professional skills.** This paid service often relies on the use of specific tools. Coaching can often be highly beneficial in terms of strengthening our professional capabilities.

In contrast, **mentoring is typically characterized by a two-way relationship between mentor and mentoree.** Although discussions may focus on specific issues, they are primarily designed to consider the "whole person", i.e. personal as well as professional aspects. Most importantly, good mentoring relationships are authentic and reciprocal.

How do you find the right person?

There are various ways to find a mentor. One way is to sign up for mentoring programs in specific fields of interest; these are typically offered by companies or associations. WBNB is a great place to start!

Another excellent way to find the right person is to tap into your own network. When attending networking activities, watch out for interesting opportunities and inspiring people. Talk about finding a mentor with people you trust. Feel free to specifically ask someone to recommend a mentor.



PRO TIP

Don't hesitate to ask someone who impresses you for assistance. They may even be willing to become your mentor or might be pleased to recommend someone else.

Short dialogue guide

Mentoring relationships are often based on the technique of appreciative inquiry, i.e. questions that challenge our assumptions, force us to reflect or improve our self-awareness. This short dialogue guide may be used by a mentor, a friend, a sister or even individually, with the aid of a journal. Needless to say, answers to questions will vary, depending on your personal experience and what you are specifically seeking from your mentoring relationship.

TO STIMULATE IN-DEPTH DISCUSSIONS, CONSIDER QUESTIONS THAT REALLY RESONATE WITH PEOPLE, SUCH AS¹:



Tell me about an occasion that was particularly meaningful for you and in which you felt fulfilled? Who was involved? What were their roles? What did you feel?



In your view, what do successful people/women look like? Who are they? What describes this version of success? What would you like to ask them? In your view, what do these people have surrounding them? What is supporting them?



If some of your close acquaintances were asked to describe what kind of person you are and how you act in difficult or stressful situations, what would they say? Would their descriptions be similar to your perception of yourself?



Each of these questions applies equally to mentors and mentorees.

1. Based on Whitney, D. et al., *Thriving women thriving world*, pp. 29-30, 2019.