

Mastering Mentoring 11 Mapping Progress

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



When working in a mentoring relationship it is a good idea to have a map of where you are going. As with any relationship that involves multiple exposures, it is important to start out with some kind of a plan. If there is no plan, you are both on a ship with no rudder.

Start with some casual conversation about what topics would be of most interest to the protégé. I use a master list of potential topics and test the energy for each one with

a numerical scale. There is time to add other topics that may not be on the master list as the relationship proceeds.

Doing this planning exercise gives some structure to the coaching, and since the protégé selected the topics of highest interest, you get a sense that the time is being used wisely.

Sometimes I will suggest certain topics as being very important as well. For example, I usually suggest we delve into Emotional Intelligence because that topic is absolutely vital to cover for any professional. The individual might not know enough about Emotional Intelligence to include it on the list of high-energy topics.

Emotional Intelligence

An understanding of Emotional Intelligence is essential for any professional. The subject forms the basis for how you understand yourself and how you relate to others. There are four parts to emotional intelligence as follows:

1. **Self awareness** – the ability to understand your own emotions.
2. **Self Control** – the ability to control your own emotions.
3. **Social Awareness** (also called empathy) – the ability to understand the emotions of others.

4. **Social skill** – the ability to control situations so you get the kind of response you want to get.

Professionals who are well versed in the area of Emotional Intelligence have a much easier time performing well in most situations. Those professionals who have only a vague concept of Emotional Intelligence frequently struggle.

Body Language

I also usually recommend some exposure to topics in body language. Not all professionals are aware of how much we communicate through body language. It is a topic that is rarely addressed in schools and universities, yet it is vital to understand.

How we communicate with our body as opposed to words is essential because body language is far more complex and pervasive than verbal language. It takes conscious effort to understand and be able to use this skill.

Create a Map

In addition to the things I suggest we cover, the plan includes things the protégé finds helpful and would like to learn. Developing a kind of map of how these topics fit together into a logical sequence gives us the starting point for building capability.

The plan does not need to be rigid. There are opportunities to diverge into new topics or to sequence things differently than planned based on changing conditions or new interests. The plan is a guide for mapping progress but not a jail to confine us.

If you start a mentoring effort with some kind of map, you will make much more progress and have a more fruitful relationship.

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