

## Mastering Mentoring 23 Keep a Journal

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



It is a good idea to keep a simple journal of the decisions and topics covered in a mentor relationship. Many mentor relationships endure for several years. I had a mentor who worked with me for 25 years.

A lot of change happens on a daily and weekly basis, so it is helpful to be able to reference things that happened in the past and document any key learnings. The journal itself does not need to be detailed or a burden; just a few notes along the way will serve as memory joggers.

### See the Progress

It is also important to view the progress that resulted from the relationship. Having a record of the things that have come about as a result of the relationship demonstrates the vitality and progress that have transpired. It provides the reinforcement necessary to keep the effort going.

### Who Takes the Notes?

Depending on the relationship and topics covered, it may be advantageous for both parties to keep some notes in their own words. The alternative is to have one party document the discussions, or you might try alternating between the two people with just one document as the master.

### Evidence of Return

The other advantage of a journal is that it gives tangible evidence of the investment being made. You may be able to estimate the number of hours spent in coaching sessions over the course of a year. That would be helpful information to show the return on investment of time for both people.

### Template for Other Relationships

You can also view the list as a check sheet for other mentor relationships. Having the various topics documented will enhance other relationships because you will not forget what issues were covered. That does not mean each relationship will be the same thing, but it does give a good starting point.

The document should be viewable to both parties at any time. It should not be considered a private listing of topics and issues.

## **Conclusion**

Having a mentoring relationship well documented has several advantages. It is worth the small effort along the way to keep track of the discussions.

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