

Mastering Mentoring 24 Recap

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It is helpful occasionally to recap the topics covered and check if the information shared is being used well. There can be several reasons why the protégé may not be using the information that was shared. I will share a few of the reasons and give an example for each one below.

The Protégé Did Not Understand

The protégé may have heard the words used to describe a skill or technique but not internalized them to the extent he could apply the technique when given the opportunity.

Suppose the skill was to avoid micromanaging people. The protégé knows what micromanagement is but is not sure how to avoid it when the timing is critical and people are not doing things right.

The Protégé is Not Comfortable From a Style Perspective

The mentor may advocate that, for small mistakes, it is better to let the employee fail and learn from the mistake than to intervene and save the employee from messing up. The coaching is to follow up after the event and underscore what was learned by the mistake.

The protégé may feel it is cruel to intentionally lay back and let the employee do it wrong then try to translate the failure into a learning experience.

The protégé may feel that an employee can learn just as much from preventing an impending problem than from failing. In addition, he can elicit gratitude from the employee that the protégé did not let him become embarrassed by a mistake.

The Protégé May Not Agree With the Skill Being Taught

There may be a difference of opinion on how or when to employ a specific tactic. Suppose the mentor believes that strategic timing of the delivery of information can prevent some small issues from blossoming into major problems.

For example, there may be a projected need to reduce the size of the workforce later in the year. The mentor advises waiting until the month of layoffs to disclose the information to the entire population. The rationale is to reduce the potential for sabotage.

The protégé has a different interpretation of transparency that advocates letting people know of significant disruptions as soon as they are known. That course of action allows the employees more time to make adjustments to the new conditions.

Conclusion

These are just a few of the issues that can come up in a mentoring relationship. Having a recap discussion on occasion, allows both parties to assess how well the lessons are being applied. It may also point out some areas where the protégé can argue for a different view from what the mentor was advocating.

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