

## Mastering Mentoring 25 Explain Why

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



If you are a mentor, your primary role is to help the protégé grow by discussing techniques of leadership and explaining why these methods are effective. It helps to remember that primary role because you have the opportunity to not only show the way but to explain why the method you are demonstrating works for you.

### Real Example

Suppose you are in a staff meeting and your protégé is attending. The meeting is running kind of long, and one manager speaks up that the group seems to be mulling over the same ground several times. As leader of the meeting you respectfully thank the individual for bringing up the frustration and ask the rest of the group to show by a thumbs up or thumbs down if they feel the current discussion is wasting time.

The quickie vote allows you to test the feelings of the entire group without having a long discussion about it. That way you do not make the problem worse.

Later that day you enhance the learning by discussing with your protégé why you took that approach. Each individual has a unique perspective on what is going on. It could be that the individual who complained was the only one in the room that felt things were moving too slowly. Alternatively, most of the other managers might agree with the complaint.

It was important to compliment the complainer and thank him before asking the opinions of the rest of the group. An individual should never feel punished for sharing his perspective. By first being gracious, you upheld trust with the vocal individual while making it possible to test the wishes of the group.

### Base Behaviors on Team Values

You should also point out that one of the team values is that we show respect for one another. By allowing anyone in the group to speak out when he or she feels something

is not going well and praising that action, you are modeling the value of respect, so that also enhances the trust as well.

What you are doing is demonstrating to the protégé that the team values will always be followed. When you take an action that models a value, take the time to explain it consciously to the protégé so he gets the idea of how it looks in real life.

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