

Mentoring: Power of 2

The New Style of Mentoring

by Kathleen Haase
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In many ways, today's mentoring relationships function quite differently from those of the past.

In the traditional style of mentoring, the primary goal was a one-way transfer of a broad range of knowledge or information. The mentor was the authoritarian source of this information, and directed all other aspects of the mentoring relationship. The mentee was a passive recipient and often had little say or control in the relationship. The relationship lasted for a set period of time, and a mentee would have only one mentor. Mentoring would only occur on a face-to-face basis.

Today many mentoring relationships have evolved to become more focused on learning. Unlike the traditional model, learner-centered mentoring is a dynamic and two-way relationship that involves critical reflection and full participation by both partners. The mentor assumes a role of a facilitator. The mentee becomes a proactive and equal partner, helping direct the relationship and set its goals. The mentee can also have multiple mentors over a lifetime, and even concurrently. There will still be face-to-face interaction, but mentoring can also occur by phone, e-mail, texting, twittering, Facebook or other means.

There is no right way to mentor. Every mentoring relationship is as unique as the individuals involved in it. However, no matter whom the individuals are or what shape the relationship takes, setting some goals and completing some groundwork can help create a stronger and more productive relationship. Mentoring can be difficult at times. As the relationship progresses, there are several things that the mentor and mentee can do to make it work better. These include: strong communication and candid feedback and pro-actively working to overcome obstacles.