

MCS 306 - Seven Qualities of a Good Mentor

The desire to succeed can be overwhelming. Despite the most earnest effort and best intentions, most people need help when faced with such challenges.

But where do you start? Mentor pairings can be sought out through an established program or independently, and one-on-one meetings should take place on a consistent basis.

A mentor-mentee pairing requires work, commitment, and follow-through on both sides if it's going to succeed. So, what aptitudes should you demonstrate to make sure that the mentoring you offer is effective and has lasting value?

Consider these seven key qualities that can help you become an effective mentor.

1. Ability and willingness to communicate what you know

It goes without saying that as a mentor, you're regarded as an expert in one or more areas of responsibility. But it's one thing to know what you're doing; it's entirely another to be able to clearly explain what you know--and to be willing to take the time to do it.

2. Preparedness

Being a mentor means making an important, serious commitment to someone, so give your mentee--and the process--the respect he or she deserves. Show your faith in your mentee's abilities and in the process by preparing for each mentoring session.

3. Approachability, availability, and the ability to listen

Once parameters are established, you must keep your commitments wholeheartedly and be ready to listen well and with an open mind, along with providing counsel and advice.

4. Honesty with diplomacy

Provide useful, honest guidance while ensuring that your mentee takes the reins and makes his or her own decisions as to next steps or the best course of action.

5. Inquisitiveness

Always keep an alert eye on trends, topics, and developments that may impact you or your role, both now and in the future. And if your mentee asks you something you don't know the answer to, do yourself and your mentee a favor and follow up to find the answer.

6. Objectivity and fairness

You can be an advocate for your mentee while still retaining your objectivity and fairness and not unfairly influencing any process either of you may be involved in.

7. Compassion and genuineness

Your mentoring relationship probably won't work if you don't show your interest and desire to provide one-on-one help and guidance. You must also be selfless about sharing what you know. Keeping your goal in mind--to remain worthy of someone's trust, model positive behavior and successful performance, and offer guidance and advice toward reaching a specific goal--should be the compass that guides all your actions as a mentor.