

## **Mentoring: What are we really talking about?**

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In essence, Mentoring refers to someone who's a tutor or a coach working together with a given person to discover and develop the person's inherent abilities. The purpose is to assist that person in reaching his/her goals.

**Mentors** are also called "helpers" and they provide various Mentoring styles that range from constant encouragement to build our self esteem and confidence to a taskmaster coaching us to appreciate excellence and outstanding performance.

**Context:** Simply put, it's about human development in the broadest sense, as Mentors are not only closest confidants at work or in other professional - volunteer endeavors we might undertake. Mentors are people with lots of experience, knowledge and skills, willing to offer guidance, suggestions, ideas and a helping ear to move us forward on our respective paths.

**Passive Mentoring:** This is a style of Mentoring, often with elders, that expect the mentoree to go to the Mentor for advise as needed. Mature relatives and closest friends play this role at times ...

**Active Mentoring:** This style offers a more dynamic approach as both Mentor and metoree are actively engaged in the discovery and learning process; the Mentor doesn't wait for the mentoree's call or visit but take some initiative and maintain - nurture an ongoing dialogue with the mentoree. Thus, it's about investing time, energy and resources in others.

**Volunteering or at Work:** Within your organization, there most certainly is a number of individuals who can be Mentors. However, Mentoring is not necessarily for everyone. Mentors need to be made aware of the time commitment involved, and the skills they have to offer to the mentoree. All this can be discussed between the parties and come to an agreement that both can honor.

**If you're involved as a volunteer in a given organization**, and feel you need the regular guidance of "someone" to move forward, that "someone" might be a potential Mentor. Talk to your supervisor, the volunteer coordinator, etc. and explore the option of having a "mentor" to work with you on the programs, events, or activities you have been assigned to.

And remember to have fun while either Mentoring or being mentor!
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◦ Suggested reading: Mentoring: A practical Guide, by Gordon F. Shea  
Crisp Publications, Inc. Menlo Park, California (1992)