



Six Dimensions of Mentoring

In his book titled *The Manager's Pocket Guide to Effective Mentoring*, Norman Cohen suggests that there are six dimensions to mentoring. The following short summary may provide some ideas for how you want to approach how you mentor.

1. The Relationship Dimension focuses on building trust in the mentoring relationship. Trust is built by:

- Empathetic listening
- Asking open-ended questions
- Providing descriptive feedback
- Double checking perceptions (making sure you are understanding feelings)
- Being non-judgmental in responses

2. The Informative Dimension focuses on providing information to help the mentee learn and grow. Mentors provide helpful information by:

- Asking questions about the present
- Discussing and reviewing the past
- Asking probing questions which require concrete answers
- Directing comments to identify possible solutions
- Restating feedback to ensure accuracy and clarity
- Relying on facts

3. The Facilitative Dimension focuses on identifying and exploring alternatives available to the mentee. Mentors facilitate by:

- Asking hypothetical questions
- Uncovering assumptions
- Exploring multiple viewpoints
- Analyzing reasons for goals or behavior
- Reviewing preferences specific to the gifts, skills, and needs of the mentee.

4. The Confrontive Dimension focuses on challenging the mentee. Mentors confront well by:

- Probing carefully

- Openly acknowledging concerns and criticism
- Identifying verbal discrepancies
- Identifying the strategies for change most likely to be successful
- Providing limited, constructive criticism
- Focusing on potential for growth

5. The Mentor-Model Dimension focuses on motivation. Mentors motivate their mentees by:

- Offering their own thoughts and feelings
- Communicating related examples from their own experience
- Having a realistic belief that the person they are mentoring will succeed
- Approaching risk with confidence
- Making statements about action that encourage direct initiative

6. The Vision Dimension focuses initiative. Mentors can encourage their mentees to take initiative by:

- Reflecting on the present and the future
- Asking questions about how the mentee would like to change
- Reviewing choices
- Commenting on strategies
- Expressing confidence in the mentee
- Respecting the capacity of the mentee
- Encouraging the dreams and vision of the mentee.

Would you like to improve your ability to mentor? If so, try one or both of the following:

1. Review the bullet points in the six dimensions of mentoring. Highlight two or three items that you would like to do more of in your next mentoring meeting. Make an intentional effort to incorporate the skill or behavior in your interaction with your mentee.
2. If you are really brave, show the six dimensions of mentoring to your mentee and ask him or her to identify two or three things he or she would like to have more of to improve the mentoring relationship.