

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 through an established program or arranged independently, and one-on-one meetings should occur on a consistent basis. A mentor-mentee pairing requires work, commitment, and follow-through on both sides 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 explain what you know clearly--and to be willing to take the time to do it.

2. Preparedness

Being a mentor means making a serious commitment to someone, so give your mentee — and the process — the respect they deserve. Show your faith in your mentee's abilities and, in the process, prepare for each mentoring session.

3. Approachability, availability, and the ability to listen

Once parameters are established, you must fulfill your commitments wholeheartedly and be prepared to listen attentively and with an open mind, while also providing counsel and advice.

4. Honesty with diplomacy

Provide useful and honest guidance while ensuring that your mentee takes the reins and makes their own decisions about 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 maintaining your objectivity and fairness, and avoiding any unfair influence on 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.