

Learning how to learn

Mentoring

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Mentoring is defined as a process whereby an experienced, highly regarded and empathetic person (mentor), guides and provide opportunities for development, growth and support to a less experienced individual (mentee).

Thus, mentoring is in essence, a learning relationship between a mentee who wishes to develop specific learning areas and a mentor who fulfills the role of expert for those particular learning areas.

Mentoring involves three important components: the mentee, the mentor and the mentoring relationship. Certain characteristics and qualities should be present in each of the three components for mentoring to be successful.

A **mentee** is suitable if he/she:

- Has a desire for learning and self-growth
- Has a genuine interest in being helped to advance his/her career
- Has the potential and time to be proactive
- Is trustworthy, non-judgmental, ethical and self confident
- Is a good listener

A **mentor** is suitable if he/she:

- Has knowledge and experience in areas of interest to the mentee
- Has genuine interest in helping and guiding others
- Has the ability and time to be supportive
- Is trustworthy, non-judgmental, ethical and self confident
- Is a good listener

A **mentoring relationship** is perfect when it is:

- Based on respect and mutual appreciation
- Collaborative, with both the mentor and mentee playing a partnership role
- Responsive, with both parties being sensitive to the goals, needs and perspectives of the other
- Based on confidentiality and honest expression

As a way of learning, mentoring takes place out of formal classes and happens overtime in a spontaneous and relaxed manner. In addition to gaining knowledge and skills, the mentee more importantly acquire positive attitude through viewing the mentor as a role model.

In Sudan, mentoring is deeply rooted in the national culture and always exists though in an unnoticed and unstructured manner. Religious men (mostly sofies) have been playing the role of guide, advisor and apostle for people regarding life affairs and future directions. This represented a powerful form of mentoring because the relationship is based on high respect, trust and accountability. In the medical arena in Sudan, mentoring is also common though also unrecognized. Many health personnel have decided on their careers and gained certain attitudes based on their links and attachment with older experienced professionals. Thus learning through mentoring could be a highly suitable method for Sudanese people.

Sources

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