

## **Top Tips for MRS Mentoring**

Mentoring involves helping individuals to develop their career, skills and expertise, often drawing upon your own experiences in the process. It is important to know what the key skills and behaviours of a good mentor are before getting started.

## **We consulted with our experienced mentors at each of our recent Mentoring Network Days on what advice they would give to new MRS Mentors:**

- Make sure you spend some time getting to know each other and build a relationship.
- Set expectations and boundaries at the start of the relationship.
- Be honest if you don't think it's a suitable match or if the chemistry isn't there (better to do this early rather than drag things out due to a sense of duty)
- Don't go in with a 'rescue' mentality.
- Help mentees by breaking down goals into chunks.
- Ensure your mentee is aware of how you can meet up. Try mixing it up, not always the same. It's tempting to do everything virtually but try to include some (and if you can, the first sessions) f2f sessions.
- The [Schein Career Anchors Test](#) is quite a nice tool to get mentees to reflect on what's important to them in a role.
- Talk to another MRS Mentor – Other MRS Mentors are contactable via our [MRS Mentoring LinkedIn Group](#).
- Remember it's a 2-way process.
- Schedule the next session whilst you're together.
- Be aware of your own style of support.
- Remember everyone has something to give.
- Try to be flexible.
- Be bold.
- Be open, honest and authentic. Be yourself!
- Be realistic (you can't fix everything).
- Learn to 'actively' LISTEN (takes practice).
- Avoid the advice monster! Don't solutionise, however tempting it is.
- Have the confidence that you'll help.
- Have fun, enjoy it!
- Try the [GROW model](#).
- Be open to learning.
- Learn to say 'no' well.

## **Here are 3 useful questions for the mentor to ask at the end of each session:**

- What have you taken away from our mentoring session today?
- Was the session useful?
- Is there anything you would like me to do differently during our mentoring sessions?

**We also asked what advice they would you give to new Mentees:**

- Think about what you want to get out of the scheme before you apply.
- What do you really want help with? Would a broader advice/mentoring /coaching help?
- Think about what your goals for the relationship are. Focused goals, short and long.
- Be specific – you’ll get far more from the relationship if you’re clear about the challenge you’re trying to address.
- Be committed – your mentor won’t have all the answers – you need to be prepared to commit to this and to be motivated to make whatever changes are required. Don’t expect your mentor to tell you all of the answers.
- Be open minded – the idea of having a mentor is to give you a new perspective to embrace the thoughts/ views that might come from a very different business/ sector etc from the one you work in.
- Be flexible.
- Be open, honest and authentic.
- Be realistic.
- Be patient.
- Be brave/honest – if it isn’t working, say so.
- Take responsibility for keeping notes – Fill out the session record form.
- Set the agenda for your meetings with your mentor. The Mentee needs to own the process.
- Remember it’s for everyone.
- Take time to reflect between sessions.
- Fulfil your actions.

**We asked what they had personally valued most about being a Mentor:**

- It’s very rewarding.
- Given me a purpose.
- Two way street – feel like they are learning something too.
- Feel liberating – not burdened by line management – e.g. appraisals.
- It’s a joy to see people blossom!
- Feel good factor of helping someone. Giving back/investing in others.
- Helps you appreciate value of your experience/what you’ve learnt.
- Makes you aware of different ways of approaching an issue.
- Encourages you to practice what you preach.
- Become a better listener/active listening.
- New connections you wouldn’t normally have made.
- Nice spot in the diary – time out.
- Broadening perspective.
- ‘BS’ free zone.
- More candid conversations.
- Self-growth.
- Self-awareness.
- Overcoming prejudice/bias (losing your own).
- Empathy.

**Books recommended:**

The Coaching Habit and The Advice Trap by Michael Stanier

