

What Makes a GOOD MENTOR? And How to be a Better One



Zone Workshops
USA Swimming Officials Committee
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QUALITIES OF A GOOD MENTOR

Mentors Listen	They maintain eye contact and give Mentees their full, undistracted attention
Mentors Provide Insight	Mentors use their personal experience to help their Mentees avoid mistakes and learn from well-honed skills, thoughts and ideas
Mentors Criticize Constructively	When necessary, Mentors point out skills that need improvement, but never focus on personal likability, personal habits or intangibles
Mentors are Supportive	No matter how painful the experience, Mentors recognize Learning comes from Mistakes, and Supports and Encourages Improvement
Mentors are Specific	Specific advice is provided on what was achieved and done well, and on the areas that can be corrected an improved
Mentors Care	True interest and compassion are key to the Mentor-Mentee Relationship
Mentors Listen (Again and Again)	More listening is done than talking. Mentors advise; they don't preach.
Mentors Say Thank You	Mentors learn from their Mentees and remember to thank them for the opportunity

Mentor Qualities and Skills



#1 – Ability and Desire to Communicate

Mentors are regarded as “experts” in their field, but that’s the easy part

- It’s much more difficult to have an ability to clearly explain
 - what
 - how
 - show it
- It’s essential to share
 - the lessons
 - the guidance
 - tips
- Communicate the intricate details in a way that makes sense, is logical and can be understood by your Mentee

Mentor Qualities and Skills

#2 – Be Prepared

- Good Mentors make serious commitments to their Mentees because they have expressed the Desire to Learn and Improve with YOU
- Respect the Mentee's commitment on any level by
 - Doing your Research
 - Communicating
 - Being prepared
 - Develop a Plan



Mentor Qualities and Skills

#3 – Be Approachable and Available, and Vice Versa

- Your Mentee **MUST** feel comfortable approaching you for advice
 - Be accessible
 - Keep conversations and advice confidential
- Likewise, set times when your Mentee is comfortable being approached for Feedback
 - When?
 - Who initiates the Feedback?
- Maintain a welcoming, cheerful and positive Attitude



Mentor Qualities and Skills

#4 – Consistently Act in Ways that are Ethical

- You **MUST** show you are Respectable, Consistent, Dependable and Trustworthy
 - Avoid making inappropriate remarks
 - Refrain from profanity
 - Never engage in inappropriate or unwanted physical contact
 - Never violate the law or USA Swimming's Code of Conduct
- Actions Speak Louder than Words
- Be THE Role Model for Proper Behavior



Mentor Qualities and Skills

#5 – Be Honest with Tact and Diplomacy



- **You owe it to your Mentee to be Candid and Honest**
 - Facilitate and Open
 - Offer Constructive Feedback
 - Tell your Mentee
 - When they're performing well
 - What they need to do to improve
 - Be Honest
 - Let the Mentee know what can be achieved and the benefits of trying
 - new skills, or
 - altering a current skill
- **Avoid pre-conceived notions or prejudice**

Mentor Qualities and Skills



#6 – Be Current; Keep up Your Own Skills

- **You MUST be informed of Rules and Interpretations**
 - Take a Position Test...or two...or five...every year
 - Read the Newsletter, magazines and websites
 - Attend Clinics and Briefings
 - Be aware of Technology Changes
- **Work Meets with Swimmers of all Levels**
 - **Try New Skills Yourself**
 - Your Mentees can Teach YOU a lot!

Mentor Qualities and Skills



#7 – Remember Objectivity and Fairness

- **A Mentoring Relationship Doesn't Need a Friendship to Succeed**
 - If you're Objective and Fair, the Mentoring Encounter will Succeed
 - Close Officiating Friends are Rarely the best ones to honestly Mentor –
 - Avoid Hidden Agendas and Ulterior Motives
 - Be a Genuine Mentor who isn't looking for Accolades or Followers
 - Repeating a Level is Better than Advancing an Ill-Prepared Official
 - Mini-Me's are not Wanted or Needed
 - Be Careful Using Stories from Others
- **Avoid Making Promises to a Mentee Official that can't be kept**

Mentor Qualities and Skills

#8 – Leave your Mentor Ego in the Circular File

- **The First Step to Successful Mentoring is Rejecting the Behaviors that come with Perceived Power and Influence or... Being on THE LIST**
 - If you Think Mentoring is Easy, be Prepared for Your Own Failure
- There is NOT a More Difficult Position to do Well than to Mentor –
 - Every Mentee Prefers a Different Approach to Mentoring – Are You a Karma Chameleon? Can you Be One?
 - Are you Willing to Admit that YOU Have Challenges at Mentoring?
 - If you Can't Help an Official Improve, WHO is at Fault?
 - Can you Accept Your Mentee has Better Skills in a Position than You Have?
 - Are YOU willing to Learn from Your Mentee?



Mentor Qualities and Skills



#9 – Put Yourself in Their Shoes

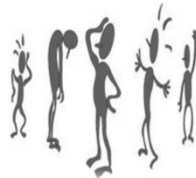
- **They are:**
 - Recognizing and Admitting
 - Asking you to help them
 - Volunteers in this organization
- **They may NOT:**
 - Know if they're ready
 - Understand the Evaluation and Certification Process
 - Know how to put the tips in the Professional Documents into their action plan
 - Understand the difference between an LSC Championship and a National Championship
 - Know enough to have Officiating Goals



Mentor Qualities and Skills

#10 – Be Aware of Your Body Language

- **Avoid:**
 - Shaking your head
 - Slapping at the air towards your Mentee
 - Blowing out air in exhaustion
 - Covering your face
 - Shaking your finger
- **Avoid Public Demeaning Verbal Comments**
 - Praise in Public, Criticize in Private
 - Be Aware You're Always Being Watched



Mentor Qualities and Skills

#11 – Consider *Your* Communication Effectiveness

- When Mentoring Others, People Will Remember:
 - 7% of the Words You Used
 - 38% Your Tone of Voice
 - 55% Your Body Language During Interaction
- The Emotional Element

“They may not remember everything you said.
They will remember how you made them feel.”





Mentor Qualities and Skills

#12 – *WII-FM*: What's In It – For Me

- SATISFACTION
 - Helping and Encouraging Others
 - Creating Positive Change and Improvement

What's In It – For US?

Reservoir of Talented and Confident Officials

THANK YOU!