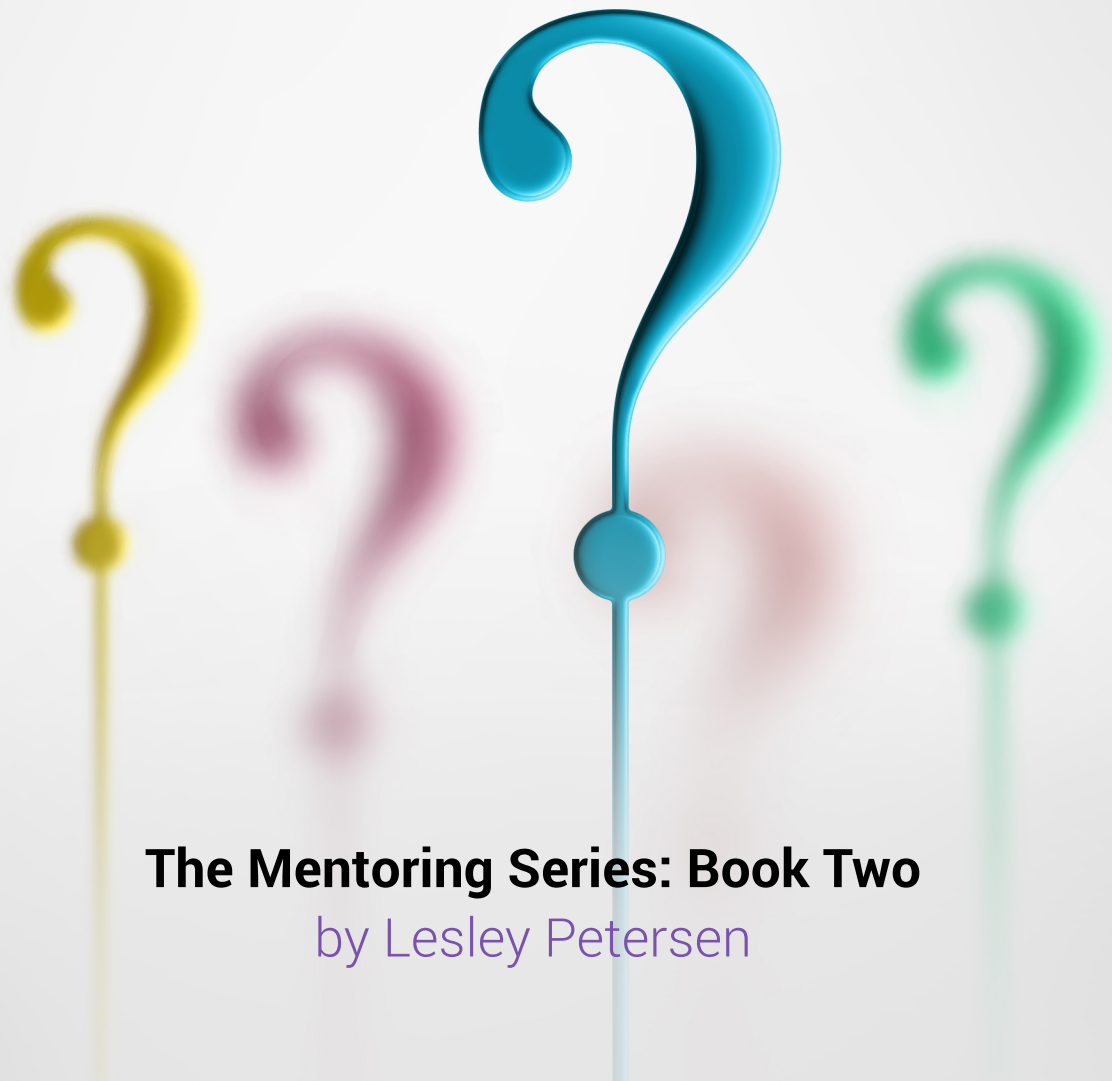


MENTORING SCENARIOS

HANDBOOK

effective questioning techniques
for the MENTEE



The Mentoring Series: Book Two
by Lesley Petersen



Petersen Consulting

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How to use this handbook

This handbook is for the mentee. It presents 10 mentoring scenarios which can potentially occur in the mentor-mentee partnership. The scenarios relate to the critical relationship developed between the mentor and the mentee, and are specific to helping the mentee use different questioning techniques to manage the mentoring conversation.

Associated with each scenario are some suggested conversation-starters and questioning techniques the mentee could use. The suggested approaches in this book are not definitive. You may have other ideas and views about how you would manage the situation and what questions you would ask. Following each scenario is a blank *Scenario Planning Template* which you can use to develop your own questions to manage the mentoring conversation. At the back of the book you will find an additional supply of planning templates which you can use to fill in your own mentoring scenarios and identify the types of questions you would or could ask, in your role as a mentee.

The questions and conversation-starters in each scenario aim to open the conversation between the mentor and the mentee. Some questions encourage the mentee to think deeply about themselves, their skills, knowledge and interpersonal qualities, as well as what they want to achieve and how the mentor can support them in this.

Asking Good Questions

I have included two Questioning Models which I have developed to provide mentees and mentors with a bank of question examples. These are described in more detail on pages 10-13.

The **D.E.V.A. Model of Questioning & Listening™** and **The 3Es Questioning Continuum™** provide a range of questions and question-starters which you can choose from as they suit the mentoring situation. These questioning models can be used by both the mentee and the mentor to help structure and guide the mentoring meetings and explore the mentoring partnership in more depth. The D.E.V.A.™ and the 3Es™ questioning models are also available as reference card sets, which provide you with a quick guide for examples of questions you could ask before and during your mentoring meetings with the mentee. Visit my website shop for more details.

Both models use a range of question ‘types’ including paraphrasing, probing, clarifying, summarising, open-ended and closed. Although closed questions have a useful place in the communication process between people, use open-ended questions as often as possible, otherwise the mentoring conversation can become very stilted if the questions asked by the mentee are predominantly closed and only elicit a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer.

So what are paraphrasing, probing, clarifying and summarising questions? Here is a brief description of each, to add to your repertoire of questioning techniques and question bank:

Paraphrasing (re-stating someone’s words to check meaning)

- So what you mean is that.....?
- If I heard you correctly, you said.....?
- So you want to know if.....?
- Am I right that you are asking about.....?

Probing (the act of exploring and searching)

- What do you think would happen if.....?
- Why do you think.....?
- How did you decide to.....?
- What are the key influences on your beliefs about this?

Clarifying & Summarising (to understand)

- Could you explain that in a more detail.....?
- Tell me a bit more about what you mean
- Let me see if I have understood. You said that.....
- If I summarise your main points, they are....
- So you think that.....?
- Tell me more about that

Listening

And of course, with effective questioning comes effective listening. Listening and good questioning are skills that need to be a conscious act by the mentee and the mentor, requiring regular reflection, refinement and practice. How good a listener are you? Consider the questions on the following page and be honest – do you really listen to others?

1. Are you a 'lazy' listener or are you actively listening all the time?
2. Do you have poor concentration and memory or are you able to fully concentrate on the speaker?
3. Do you debate what the speaker is saying or do you carefully consider what they are saying and reserve judgement until they are finished?
4. Do you create distractions by doodling, gazing around the room, or daydreaming or do you fully concentrate on the speaker and what they are saying by taking notes and remembering the key points in their message?

How to Start, Continue & Finish the Mentoring Meeting: The SCF Model™

This is a simple model that helps the mentee decide how to start the mentoring conversation, how to keep the conversation going and how to finish the mentoring meeting. Have a look at the SCF Model™ on the next page which provides examples of conversation-starters, questions to keep the conversation going and ways the mentee can finish the mentoring conversation. The SCF Model™ aims to help the mentee and the mentor get as much value-for-time in the mentoring meeting.

The Scenarios

There are 10 scenarios in this handbook. For each scenario, there is a boxed section containing 'Key Points'. These are considerations about the scenario – for example, why this situation has arisen in the mentoring partnership, and suggested strategies to manage it (in addition to the questioning techniques).

The questions suggested for each scenario apply the **D.E.V.A. Model™** and **The 3Es Questioning Continuum Model™**. Some of the questions may seem similar. This is deliberate to provide you with different options for the questions you would feel most comfortable asking the mentor.

The flow of questions in each scenario has been structured using the **SCF Model™**, suggesting questions you could ask to *Start* the mentoring conversation, questions for *Continuing* the

conversation and questions for *Finishing* the meeting. Also, the blank planning template following each scenario is for you to compose your own questions which you would ask to manage the situation. Through the key skills of active listening and effective questioning, mentees and mentors create opportunities to share their opinions and experiences, share their learning, learn together, and receive support for the decisions they make and the goals they set to achieve their desired future. These two key skills contribute to creating and sustaining quality mentoring relationships.

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How to Start, Continue & Finish the Mentoring Conversation: The SCF Model™

Mentoring Conversation Stage	Conversation-Starters & Questions
START Start the conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What shall we talk about today? ○ Let me tell you how things have been since we last met ○ This is what I have achieved since we last met ○ What I would like to focus on today in this meeting is..... ○ Things that are going well for me at present are..... ○ Where shall we start today? ○ How about we start by reviewing my goals ○ Since we last met, I have been..... ○ This is what I want to achieve from this meeting ○ I would like to discuss..... ○ How about we have a look at..... ○ I will tell you a bit more about what's going on with.....
CONTINUE Keep the conversation going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ So what do you think would happen if I....? ○ What are your thoughts about this? ○ What could my next step be? ○ How can you help? ○ Tell me more about what you think ○ Who else do you know who could help me with this? ○ What are the indicators of your success? How will I know when I have succeeded or achieved what I you set out to do? ○ I'd like to know what you think about what we have discussed so far
FINISH Finish the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are you going to do before our next meeting? ○ What shall I focus on before our next meeting? ○ So what we have discussed today has been..... ○ What can you do before we next meet? ○ What can I do before we next meet? ○ What shall I work on next? ○ Is there anything else we should explore before we finish? ○ Let's make a date and time for our next meeting

Snapshot of a Mentoring Meeting

Tips for your first meeting

- Establish the parameters or boundaries of the partnership. This may include role definition, need for commitment from both partners, confidentiality
- Both mentee and mentor clarify their expectations of the purpose and process of the mentoring/mentoring meetings
- Set agreed ground rules
- Decide on the structure for the meetings; for example, what to begin with each time you meet, each meeting includes a review of goal achievement by the mentee
- Mentee identifies their goals for development which the mentoring can support
- Decide on the meeting processes such as frequency of meetings, venue, length of meeting, who will organise the meetings
- If desired, sign a mentoring contract which identifies the roles and responsibilities of the mentee and the mentor and establishes an agreed purpose, process and structure for the mentoring partnership

Steps in Developing a Mentoring Plan

1. Consider the ***purpose*** of the mentoring partnership that you are entering into
2. Think about ***what*** you want to achieve through mentoring. What will you aim to achieve? What outcomes will indicate you have achieved this?
3. Begin to plan ***how*** the partnership will proceed. What challenges might you expect in the beginning? What strategies will help manage or avoid these challenges?
4. A good idea is to create a time-line together, at the beginning of the partnership. Within this time-line, list milestones, indicators of progress, actions steps and expected completion dates for achievement of identified goals

Suggested Structure

First 10 minutes: Each partner talks about ‘what’s on top’ for them – what’s front of mind, what has been happening since the last meeting.

Next 40 minutes: Focus the conversation on the purpose of the mentoring support agenda. This might involve reviewing goals and actions taken since the last meeting, discussing a particular topic, exploring an issue, sharing knowledge.

Final 10 minutes: Review how the meeting has worked and decide on any actions each partner intends to take before the next meeting. Set a time and date for the next meeting.

Questioning Models

The **D.E.V.A.TM** model aims to provide the mentee with a wide range of questions that they can:

1. Ask of themselves to help them consider what is important, what goals they want to achieve, what support they would like from the mentor, and how to get the most value from the mentoring meetings.....and
2. Ask the mentor to clarify, prompt, explore and/or verify the mentoring discussion and the mentor's comments and advice.

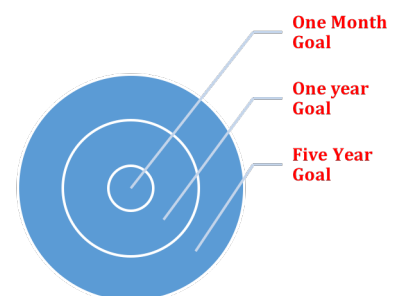
The **D.E.V.A.TM** model has two Question Banks (set of question examples), one for the mentee's own use and one for questions to ask the mentor depending on the mentoring conversation.

D.E.V.A.TM

Describe

The Mentee describes their current situation – roles, responsibilities, successes, issues, professional and personal development needs. The Mentor encourages and helps the Mentee identify what they want to use the mentoring support for. This is an opportunity for the Mentee to explore what they would like to change and identify their goals. Agreement is reached between the Mentee and Mentor as to the purpose and process of the mentoring partnership.

- ⇒ Current situation
- ⇒ Identify goals
- ⇒ Clarify purpose of the mentoring support
- ⇒ Agree on mentoring partnership focus and process



Evaluate

The Mentee is encouraged to reflect on their current situation, skills and capabilities and evaluate how well they are managing, what internal or external factors are influencing them and identify their strengths and areas for development. The Mentee analyses how much each of these factors will impact on their goal achievement and their engagement in the mentoring partnership.

- ⇒ Reflect on self and current situation
- ⇒ Identify what is going well/not so well
- ⇒ Complete a skill/knowledge check
- ⇒ Evaluate strengths and areas for development
- ⇒ Identify influences of internal and external factors

Value

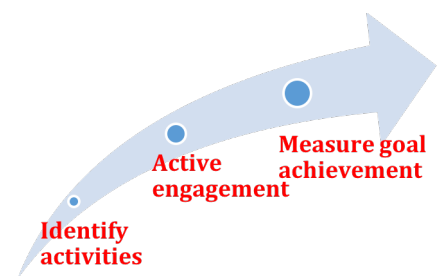
The Mentee spends some time focusing on the things they value about themselves and the value they place on certain aspects of their personal and professional lives. The Mentee identifies what is important, who is important and the value placed on each of these factors. The Mentor encourages the Mentee to explore how the things of value could influence the success and outcomes of the mentoring support they receive.

- ⇒ Identify who is important in personal and professional lives
- ⇒ Identify what is important
- ⇒ Determine the value placed on work/job role/career/expectations/work-life balance
- ⇒ Explore how the key values could influence the mentoring outcomes

Action

This is the stage when the Mentee determines the actions they will take and activities they will engage in that will contribute to the achievement of their goal/s. This stage also involves the Mentee actively engaging in the identified activities, the Mentor supporting them throughout this process via the mentoring partnership meetings. The Action stage also involves the Mentee regularly measuring the outcomes of their goal achievement. This may result in a re-evaluation and/or re-configuration of their original goals or the identification of new goals.

- ⇒ Identification of actions and activities to support achievement of goals
- ⇒ Active engagement in goal achievement
- ⇒ Active engagement in activities to achieve goal/s
- ⇒ Measurement of goal achievement outcomes
- ⇒ Mentor support throughout the whole process



The D.E.V.A Question Bank I: Mentee Self Evaluation™

The following selection of questions aims to provide you with a range of questions that you can ask yourself to consider and decide how you want to use the mentoring meeting time and the support you would like from the mentor. You will notice that each question indicates how it can help you apply the **D.E.V.A. Model™**.

1. What are my career aspirations? *(Describe)*
2. What would I like to achieve in your job? *(Describe)*
3. How important are my current goals? *(Evaluate)*
4. What are my goals? What do I need to do to achieve these goals?
(Describe/Value/Action)
5. Is there anything stopping me from achieving your goals? *(Evaluate)*
6. What professional development would most help me improve or develop my skills?
(Value/Action)
7. What did I do to achieve a past goal that was important to me? *(Evaluate)*
8. What will help me achieve my goals? *(Action)*
9. How will I measure achievement of my goals? *(Action)*
10. How would I describe my strengths? *(Describe/Evaluate)*
11. What am I passionate about? *(Value)*
12. What opportunities am I looking for in my job/career/life? How can I create these opportunities? *(Describe/Evaluate/Value/Action)*
13. What drives me? *(Evaluate/Value)*
14. How can I channel my energy into the things that are of most important to me?
(Evaluate/Action)
15. What will support me in making changes? *(Value)*
16. How do I measure my success? *(Value)*
17. What helps me make decisions? *(Evaluate)*
18. What is the best decision I have made? What or who supported me in making this decision? *(Evaluate)*
19. When am I most inspired/motivated/determined? *(Describe/Evaluate)*
20. What two or three actions could I take right now that would have the most impact on my skill development, knowledge gain, career enhancement, or job satisfaction?
(Action)

The D.E.V.A Question Bank II: Asking the Mentor™

The following selection of questions aims to provide you with a range of questions that you can choose to ask the mentor during the mentoring meetings, depending on the situation. You will notice that each question indicates how it can help you apply the **D.E.V.A. Model™**.

1. What advice were you given when you started in the job? *(Describe)*
2. How important are your current goals? *(Evaluate)*
3. What are your goals? What do you do to achieve these? *(Describe/Value/Action)*
4. What professional development have you found helpful to improve or develop your skills? *(Value/Action)*
5. What is an important goal that you achieved in the past. How did you achieve this?
(Evaluate)
6. How do you measure achievement of your goals? *(Action)*
7. How do you create opportunities in your job/career?
(Describe/Evaluate/Value/Action)
8. What drives you? *(Evaluate/Value)*
9. How do you channel your energy into the things that are of most important to you?
(Evaluate/Action)
10. What supports you in making changes? *(Value)*
11. How do you measure your success? *(Value)*
12. What helps you make decisions? *(Evaluate)*
13. What is the best decision you have made? What/who helped you in making this
decision? *(Evaluate)*
14. When are you most inspired/motivated/determined? *(Describe/Evaluate)*

The 3Es Questioning Continuum™

This questioning model specifically aims to help you decide what questions to ask the mentor during your mentoring meetings. The 3Es Questioning Continuum™ suggests that there can be different levels of questions you can ask. For example, you may be seeking some initial information from your mentor to ‘set the scene’ for the mentoring conversation (Establish questions), whilst other questions will ask for more in-depth answers from them (Expand and Explore questions).

LEVELS OF QUESTIONING	DEFINITION	QUESTION STARTERS
ESTABLISH (level 1)	“Initiate or bring about; To introduce”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you tell me about your experience with.....? • What happens when you do this? • How do you think you can support me? • What did you do? • What made you think that....? • Why did you choose that (method/technique/approach)?
EXPAND (level 2)	“To open up (unfold); To express in greater detail; Make more extensive”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is another way you think I might...? • What do you think could happen if I...? • How important is this to you? • Explain what you mean by..... • What would you do differently? • What advice were you given when you first started in the job? • Why would you choose that approach?
EXPLORE (level 3)	“Search, probe and examine; To make a <i>careful</i> search; Explore the relationship between”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What suggestions do you have that would help me? • What do you think we need to do to.....? • How can you support me to.....? • What could be some possible barriers to reaching my goals? • What areas can you help me with? • How do you think we can get the most value from these meetings? • What is your understanding of the purpose of these meetings?

Scenario 1: Valuing the Mentee

You have been meeting fortnightly with your mentor over the last three months. You have felt from the start of the partnership that the mentor does not value your opinions or ideas and often discounts them as naive or unimportant, based on their comments such as “No, that won’t work” and “You wouldn’t know that because you are too new to the role”. Your mentor has made it clear that they think you are there to learn from them because they are an expert in their field and have much more experience than you. You are beginning to really doubt your own abilities.

Key Points

- The mentor needs to be asked how they can assist you, what they can bring to the mentoring meetings
- It’s not enough that the mentor only comments on what you can’t do rather than offering suggestions or solutions to help you identify what you can do and/or plan to develop
- By asking the mentor what they think will work, you may gather some ideas that you wouldn’t have thought of

Questions the Mentee could ask	D.E.V.A.	The 3Es
“Why do you think this won’t work for me?”	Describe/Value	Expand
“Can you please explain why you think that is the case?”	Describe	Expand/Explore
“How do you know my approach won’t work?”	Evaluate	Expand
“What support can you give me?”	Value/Action	Establish
“How did you manage when you were new in your job role?”	Describe/Action	Explore
“What advice were you given when you first started in the job?”	Describe	Expand
“Can you tell me what I can do rather than what I shouldn’t do?”	Describe/Evaluate/Action	Expand/Explore
“What suggestions do you have that would help me?”	Value/Action	Expand/Explore
“Are you prepared to listen to some of my ideas as well?”	Value/Action	Establish
“My thoughts and ideas are important. Are you willing to acknowledge that?”	Value	Establish

[illegible]

Scenario 2: Getting the Right Match

“I’m not really getting much out of the mentoring. I was matched with a mentor who can’t really help me. I am keen to be involved in the mentoring programme but I am actually getting more support from my colleagues than from my mentor.”

Key Points

- Has time been spent in the first meeting identifying the purpose of the mentoring and discussing the mentoring structure and process?
- It is important that early conversations occur in the partnership so that you and the mentor find out about each other and how the mentor can support you in your professional development
- By identifying specific goals for your development early in the partnership helps to provide a clear direction for the consequent meetings
- Perhaps you need to discuss this with the programme coordinator. A different mentor may be necessary

Questions the Mentee could ask	D.E.V.A.	The 3Es
How do you think you can support me?	Describe/Evaluate	Establish/Expand
What is your understanding of the mentoring?	Describe/Evaluate	Expand
I’m not sure how much you can help me. What do you think?	Evaluate	Explore
What do you think is the purpose of these meetings?	Evaluate	Establish/Expand
What do you think we need to do to make these meetings more productive?	Value/Action	Establish/Explore
Perhaps there is someone else you could suggest who can help me in this area?	Evaluate/Action	Expand
Do you think these meetings are worthwhile? Why do you think that?	Evaluate/Value	Expand

SCENARIO 2: Getting the Right Match

What questions would you ask?