How to be a Better Mentor

The Ten Be’s for Better Mentoring

• Be patient – building trust takes time.
• Be approachable – be relaxed, friendly and responsive to the needs and concerns of your mentee.
• Be positive – doing so can help to bolster sagging self confidence.
• Be honest – if you make a mistake, admit it.
• Be reliable – follow through on commitments made to your partner.
• Be a good listener and demonstrate that you respect your mentee’s point of view.
• Be realistic – encourage goals that can be broken down into small, achievable targets.
• Be non-judgmental – try to understand and appreciate a different point of view. Don’t apply your own standards or experiences as a template for the relationship. Remember to celebrate differences because sometimes ‘it’s the differences that make the difference.’
• Be a sounding board for your mentee’s problems, ideas or plans for advancement.
• Be an advisor when discussing complex situations that may not have a single right answer or approach.

A Good Mentor Helps a Mentee by:

1. Modeling ONA’s vision by caring for members in a strong, united and respectful manner.
2. Exploring various options to challenges or problems and providing constructive feedback to the potential resolutions presented.
3. Never forgetting to work with the mentee in establishing a network of supports.
4. Taking the risk of sharing their own experiences – both successes and failures – and by offering insights that only come with experience.
5. Offering observations and identifying skills that can be developed to enhance advancement within the Union ranks.
6. Referring the mentee to additional learning resources when appropriate (i.e. education sessions, guides, policies etc.).
Tips for Giving Feedback

_____ DO schedule a non-stressful time for giving feedback, when both of you are least likely to be rushed or called away.

_____ DO begin by asking for your mentee's perspective on strengths, areas needing more work, etc.

_____ DO NOT overload your mentee with feedback.

_____ DO be aware of some possible solutions to problems beforehand.

_____ DO help your mentee turn negative feedback into constructive challenges.

_____ DO verify your mentee's understanding by asking them to summarize what was covered in the session and add your own points of emphasis.

_____ DO remember that successful feedback describes actions or behavior your mentee can do something about.

REMEMBER: a difficult conversation can make the difference between success and failure for a mentee. Care enough to hold the difficult conversation.

Five Ways to Remain in Control of any Situation

**Develop a Plan**
Devise a plan before one is needed. Decisions made before a crisis occurs are more likely to be more rational than those made when on the receiving end of emotional outbursts.

**Use a Team Approach**
Nearby assistance providing support and back up can allow you to remain calm.

**Use Positive Self-Talk**
Just as saying, "I can't deal with this" might cause you to behave in one fashion, saying to oneself, "I know what to do" will cause another response.

**Recognize Personal Limits**
Sometimes the best decision is to let someone else with more experience take over, if that’s an option.

**Debrief**
Be sure to debrief after a major incident. Doing so can relieve some of the stress and is also a good time to start planning for next time: what was done correctly, what could have been handled better, how the response could be improved if a similar situation occurs.

Five De-Escalation Tips

1. Give the person your undivided attention.
2. Be non-judgmental.
3. Focus on the person’s feelings, not just the facts.
4. Allow silence.
5. Use restatement to clarify messages.

The Mentee Mantra

I will take responsibility for visioning my goals.
I will be prepared to identify the actions I need to achieve my goals.
I will, in consultation with my mentor, schedule time to meet and have open dialogue on my progress.
I will be open to new ideas and ways of doing things.
I will ask for and accept feedback and when appropriate act on it.
I will ask for help when I need it.
I will take ownership for working to resolve my own problems.