

It's that time of Year again

Will you be adding "Getting a Mentor" to your list of things to do differently in 2012?

85 % of us go into the January of each year determined to make some positive change in the following twelve months whilst only 12 % actually achieve what they set out to do.

Is it time to hire in some professional help?

Mark Shields takes a closer look

Think about all those conversations you have with friends and family every year about how it's going to be different next year, "I am going to lose weight, stop smoking, get fitter and so it goes on and doesn't it sometimes feel like Groundhog Day.

We all, or 85% of us anyway begin the year with all the best intentions and plans to improve, lose weight, get fitter and does it happen. Well it does but only to around 12% of us.

Think about this for a second. Imagine all of those disappointed islanders when it comes to March and once again they find themselves giving up, making excuses, after all there is next year.

With private mentoring becoming more available and more affordable, and the need for them greater than ever, perhaps its time you joined an expanding group of people that have turned to private mentoring to help them unlock that potential that we all have inside.

So let's have a look at this in more detail and you can decide whether you think this is for you, and maybe next year you won't have to revisit those old chestnuts called New Years Resolutions as 2012 could be your year.

What is mentoring?

"Mentoring is to support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be."

Eric Parsloe, the Oxford School of Coaching & Mentoring

The word "mentoring" comes from the earliest of historical times. The Greek storyteller Homer wrote about the Ithaca king, who asked his friend Mentor to take care of his son Telemachus while he went away to fight in the crusades.

The Big 5 Skills to find in an Experienced Mentor

Individual mentoring can take place in many forms, in the workplace often delivered by managers and some by internal or external coaches, or mentors.

Outside of the workplace mentors can take on various roles and guises. For Example a personal trainer would mentor and client into getting fit, a life coach would mentor their client into getting their life in order, and a business coach may guide his client into sorting out his business and becoming more profitable.

In contrast a best friend may mentor their friend in getting over a relationship, getting a job, going to the gym and so on, the list is endless.

With a professional mentor however they are completely objective, unlike the friend that means well but is generally very subjective, constantly helps you make excuses why you can't move forward.

Robert Dilts defines the different skills and activities of mentors as follows:

Guiding: the process of directing an individual or a group along the path leading from present state to a desired state.

Coaching: helping another person to improve awareness, to set and achieve goals in order to improve a particular behavioral performance.

Teaching: helping an individual or group develop cognitive skills and capabilities.

Mentoring: helping to shape an individual's beliefs and values in a positive way; often a longer term career relationship from someone who has 'done it before'.

Counselling: helping an individual to improve performance by resolving situations from the past.

What's the difference between Coaching and Mentoring?

A mentoring relationship can often last for a long time with no fixed period however coaching tends to have a set duration. Mentoring is less formal and meetings and interaction tends to follow the needs of the client, where it is common to have regular face to face, telephone, email and text conversations. Coaching is far more structured with meetings set on a regular basis for example weekly.



Mentoring tends to focus on the development of the mentee as a person where coaching works on the development of a skill or a set of actions.

What's in it for you?

Being able to change/achieve your goals more quickly and effectively than working alone.

Building a network of expertise to draw on can benefit both yourself and others.

Drawing on the skills and knowledge of an expert in your field of expertise.

Modeling the success of your mentor using proven success strategies and ideas that work.

Feeling your part of a team with an expert team leader working in partnership to assist you with your own personal development needs and goals.

How Much does it Cost?

I have found when researching this topic to enable the Life Practice to open its own mentoring part of the business costs vary enormously.

It is important to establish from day 1 what your needs are as a mentee and make sure your mentor has the time and capabilities to meet your needs. To work this relationship has to be free of any time constraints, logistical constraints and financial constraints.

In addition trust and rapport are vital ingredients in any relationship and are no different in this one.

It is normal today to find a good mentor with unlimited contact and support from around £300 per month.

Summary

So there you have it. It certainly seems affordable and in my experience more and more personal development organizations are adding mentoring to their list of services.

I am sure we will see more of them as we progress through 2012.

Best wishes for a fantastic start to 2012.

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