

Coaching versus Mentoring

Transcript

Appearing

In order of appearance:

1. MAJ David Stephens
2. LCDR Peter Kenworthy
3. MAJ Ali Heenan
4. CHAP Andrew 'Red' Taylor
5. MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd)

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Transcript details

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| MAJ David Stephens | So, Peter, tell me a little bit about, you know, this idea of sort of coaching and mentoring. For you, what are the key differences when we talk about those two concepts? |
| LCDR Peter Kenworthy | When I think about it in, absolute context, Dave, that is there is a definition of formal definition in our standing operating procedure that we've got from a coaching program. |
| LCDR Peter Kenworthy | So it's quite clearly laid out there. Also think about, what we are doing here at ADFA, so we have the staff mentoring program, and also, we obviously have the leadership coaching program. So, the difference I see between those two programs is the staff mentoring program. The mentees choose the mentors. And in the coaching program, the actual coaches, allocated to the coaching counterparts, not through that allocation of the coaching counterpart choosing the coach. |
| LCDR Peter Kenworthy | So, it's a different type of relationship and that different type of relationship in that mentoring sphere is that is the mentees channel generally choose a mentor because they see them as someone who has walked in their shoes and someone that, they can sort of look up to and perhaps share their experience around what they've been through. |
| LCDR Peter Kenworthy | And by sharing that experience, telling them a little bit about some of the things that they've done that might be helpful. Whereas I see in that coaching relationship, we're not sharing that experience. There will be times when perhaps there's opportunities after we've explored all the options that you could ask permission, would it be helpful if we shared an experience that was similar to you would that be helpful? |
| MAJ David Stephens | Yeah. Okay, a follow-on question would be in your experience of coaching some of the trainee officers, do they have good expectations of what coaching and mentoring is about when they turn up for the session? I mean, we do cover some of that when we're explaining to them what the program's about, but in your experience, when that person, you know, turns up, what are their expectations? How do you manage that? |



- LCDR Peter Kenworthy Yeah. So in that first session around really the contracting of the whole coaching program, with the coaching counterpart, there's the opportunity there to really explain the difference between coaching and mentoring, because I believe that a lot of them have an expectation that you're actually going to be a mentor. So, by having that clarity at the beginning of the relationship, hopefully that sets them mind straight that you'll be doing that coaching.
- LCDR Peter Kenworthy There's opportunities along the way, if they still think that you're a mentor, that you have opportunities to actually correct that, and make sure you're actually staying in the coaching relationship.
- MAJ David Stephens Great, thank you. Peter.
- MAJ David Stephens Ali noting that that what we're doing here, we're talking about the leadership coaching program, not a mentoring program, what are your reflections on some of the differences between those different approaches and what we're trying to achieve here through the coaching program?
- MAJ Ali Heenan So I think it's really important to understand the difference, and I think the two can often be conflated. For me, I view coaching in my role as a coach is to ask questions and tap into the coaching counterpart's own potential, help them expand their perspectives, but where they do a lot of the tough mental work. On the flip side, mentoring, well, it can still involve those sorts of questions.
- MAJ Ali Heenan I think a key part of mentoring is reflecting on my own professional and personal life experience and different situations I've been in where I may be able to share what worked for me or what didn't work for me, that may be relevant to the person I'm mentoring, I think an example of where that might show up, and where you can be really clear as a coach, in a session.
- MAJ Ali Heenan I'll use a recent example, where my counterpart asked me my opinion on something. And, this particular example was, "What does arrogance mean to you?" Now, from a mentoring perspective, I could draw upon my own personal opinions, my own experiences, and provide my answer. What I did to stay in a coaching mindset first was I'll answer that with the same question.
- MAJ Ali Heenan So reflect that question back to my counterpart and ask my counterpart, "What does arrogance mean to you?" And explore their ideas first. Then I have the choice, after exploring their own thoughts and maybe asking some deeper questions and getting really curious and specific, then I have the option to intentionally put on my mentoring hat and give my own opinion as well.
- MAJ David Stephens And how would you do that? Practically? How do you give your own opinion? Do you just say, this is what I think about this topic? How would you approach that in in that setting?
- MAJ Ali Heenan So I will generally ask them the question first without even offering my opinion, and once we have really explored and challenged, I might ask them challenging questions, of their own opinion.



MAJ Ali Heenan I will then make an offer and say, now that you have a good understanding what it means to you, would you like me to share my thoughts? So, it is invitational, and in this particular case, the individual said 'Yes'. And because they already had a really sound foundation and what it meant to them, they were then able to broaden their view, hear a different perspective, after already doing a lot of the tough mental work themselves, not just being given the answer.

MAJ David Stephens Right. Thanks Ali.

MAJ David Stephens So, Red, tell me a little bit about the differences between sort of coaching and mentoring. How does that play out, in terms of the coaching that we're talking about here?

CHAP Andrew 'Red' Taylor It's a challenging one because if you Google the differences between coaching and mentoring, there'll be a huge amount of responses. So, it's not simple.

CHAP Andrew 'Red' Taylor I think when I first got exposed to this whole concept, there was people that thought coaching was one thing and mentoring would be described the same and people who thought that mentoring was one thing, and coaching would be described in the same way.

CHAP Andrew 'Red' Taylor I think in the context of how we do it, in the ADFA space, the way that it's helpful for me to understand is that coaching is really about facilitation. So, drawing out, what a person is trying to work through, as an issue or a goal that they're working towards?

CHAP Andrew 'Red' Taylor And one of the strengths of that is I don't have to be a subject matter expert in whatever it is that they're trying to draw out. So coaching is about facilitating them processing their understanding of an issue and walking them through. Mentoring, in the way I think about it, is a little bit more about collaboration.

CHAP Andrew 'Red' Taylor So there's an aspect of me wanting to still focus on the person. I help them think through a process, through whatever it is they want to work through, but there's maybe a little bit more collaboration in the tone and the way that we do that a little bit more side by side a little bit, on me introducing a perspective they may not have considered from my own context, because that's what they're looking for and wanting,

CHAP Andrew 'Red' Taylor but the key thing is, that I have to work with what they need rather than what I think they need.

MAJ David Stephens Thanks, Red.

MAJGEN Roger Powell (Rtd) I think the difference for me, the fundamental difference and the sort of the underwriting of our SOP is that mentoring is about building your relationship. It's a journey. And the conversation you have at the beginning of a mentoring relationship is very much different to the sorts of conversations that might occur, once the relationship has matured to a point where any barriers, in terms of what might be shared between the mentor and the mentor's counterpart, is all open.



MAJGEN
Roger Powell
(Rtd)

That's not to say that coaching isn't designed to do the same thing, but it's more to do with the specific, schools-based journey where you're looking at someone's ability to cope with the environment. It's based on specific issues. I think a mentor, having been in a similar journey to the mentee, will look to, seek permission to go into a coaching experience where there is a benefit that the mentor sees that he or she can bring to the mentee.

MAJGEN
Roger Powell
(Rtd)

Fundamentally to finish that, response off, I think the key to, the relationship, are the filters that anyone has on what they are willing or not willing to share, in terms of their inner workings, with the mentor. And so the mentor skill of being able to disarm that web of concern about sharing what might be a challenge to someone - that's really the essence of mentoring.

