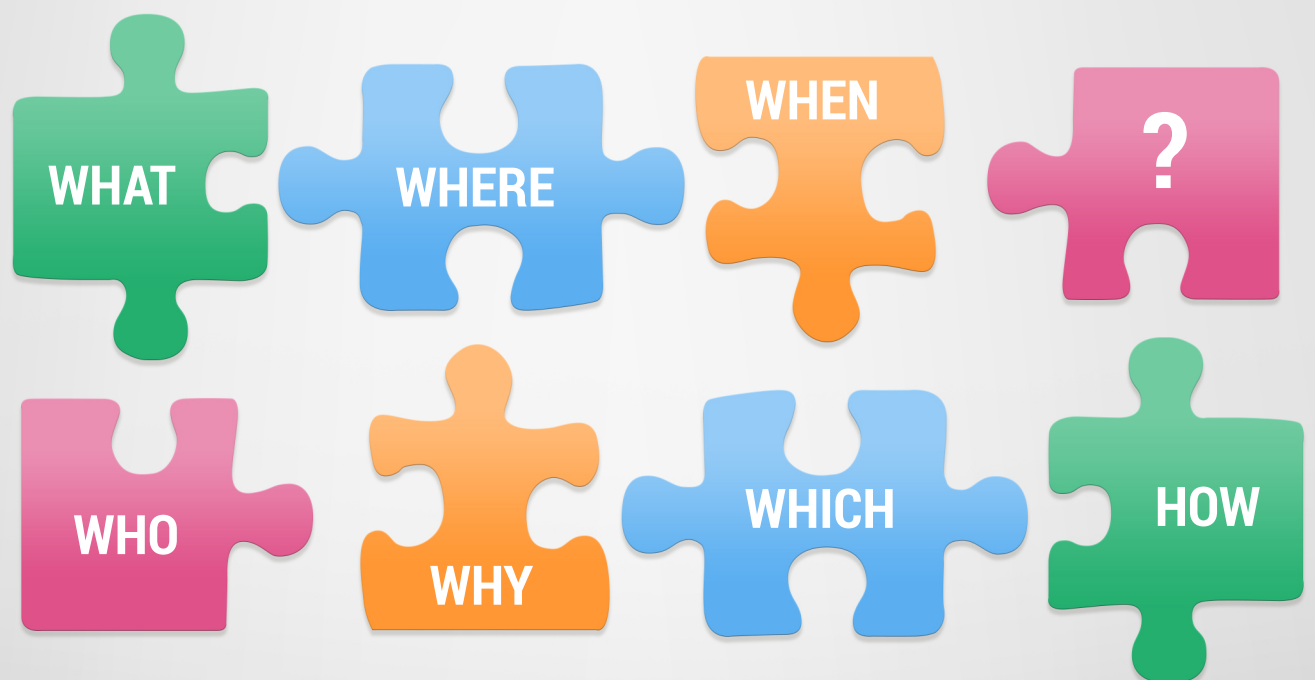


# MENTORING SCENARIOS

## HANDBOOK

effective questioning techniques  
*for the MENTOR*



**The Mentoring Series: Book One**  
by Lesley Petersen



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## How to use this handbook

This handbook is for the mentor. It presents 18 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 mentor use different questioning techniques to manage the mentoring conversation.

Associated with each scenario are some suggested conversation-starters and questioning techniques the mentor 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 mentor.

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. Some of the questions aim to help the mentee think about how they would manage a situation, rather than the mentor advising them on what to do. For example, in Scenario 11, one of the questions the mentor could ask the mentee is “*What strategies do you think might help you in this situation?*” In this question, the mentor doesn’t necessarily expect the mentee to come up with a long list of strategies straight away but it is important and useful for the mentee to be encouraged to come up with their own ideas and approaches.

### Asking Good Questions

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I have included two Questioning Models which I have developed to provide mentors (and mentees) 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 mentor and the mentee 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 mentor 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 is another way that you could approach this?
- What do you think would happen if.....?
- Why do you think.....?
- How did you decide to.....?
- What could you do differently?
- 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

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

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This is a simple model that helps the mentor 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 mentor can finish the mentoring conversation. The SCF Model™ aims to help the mentor and the mentee get as much value-for-time in the mentoring meeting.

## The Scenarios

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There are 18 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 mentee.

The flow of questions in each scenario has been structured using the **SCF Model™**, suggesting questions you could ask to *Start* the 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, mentors and mentees 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
<p><b>START</b> Start the conversation</p>	<p>What would you like to talk about today?            How have things been going since we last met?            How are you?            What have you achieved since we last met?            What shall we focus on today in this meeting?            What's going well for you at present?            Where would you like to start today?            How about we start reviewing your goals            What's been happening since we last met?            What do you want to get out of this meeting?            What would you like to discuss today?            What do you want to achieve from today's meeting?            How about we have a look at.....            Tell me a bit more about what's going on.....</p>
<p><b>CONTINUE</b> Keep the conversation going</p>	<p>So, what would happen if....?            What are your thoughts about this?            What could your next step be?            How can I help?            Tell me more about this....            How important is it for you to.....            Who else can help you with this?            How will you know when you have succeeded/achieved what you set out to do?            How do you feel about what we have discussed so far?</p>
<p><b>FINISH</b> Finish the meeting</p>	<p>What are you going to do before our next meeting?            How do you feel about what we have discussed today?            What can you do before we next meet?            What do you want to work on next?            What questions do you still have?            What is the next step for you?            Let's make a date and time for our next meeting</p>



# Snapshot of a Mentoring Meeting

## Tips for your first meeting

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- 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

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1. Consider the **purpose** of the mentoring partnership that you are entering into
2. Think about **what** you want to achieve through mentoring, whether you are the mentor or the mentee. 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, in 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

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**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

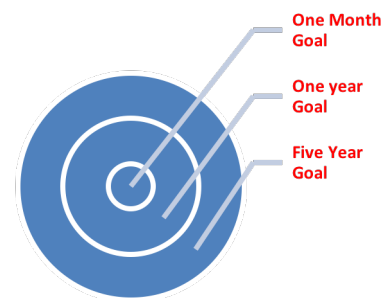
## D.E.V.A™

### Describe

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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

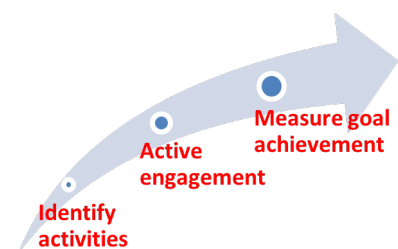
The Mentee spends some time focusing on the things they value about themselves and the value they place on certain aspects of their personal and professional lives. The Mentee identifies what is important, who is important and the value placed on each of these factors. The Mentor encourages the Mentee 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™

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

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

## The 3Es Questioning Continuum™

LEVELS OF QUESTIONING	DEFINITION	QUESTION STARTERS
<b>ESTABLISH</b> (level 1)	“Initiate or bring about; To introduce”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about.....</li> <li>• What happens when.....?</li> <li>• What was your intention when.....?</li> <li>• What are your goals? What do you need to do to achieve these goals?</li> <li>• What did you do?</li> <li>• What made you think that....?</li> <li>• Why would you choose that (method/technique/approach)?</li> </ul>
<b>EXPAND</b> (level 2)	“To open up (unfold); To express in greater detail; Make more extensive”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is another way you might...?</li> <li>• What do you think would happen if...?</li> <li>• What needs to change in order for...?</li> <li>• What do you see happening if you...?</li> <li>• What other approaches have you considered?</li> <li>• How important is this to you?</li> <li>• Explain what you mean by.....</li> <li>• How important is this to you?</li> <li>• What could you do differently next time?</li> </ul>
<b>EXPLORE</b> (level 3)	“Search, probe and examine; To make a <i>careful</i> search; Explore the relationship between”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What will support you in making changes?</li> <li>• How might your assumptions about...have influenced how you are thinking about...?</li> <li>• How do you think your expectations might have influenced this situation?</li> <li>• What evidence do you have?</li> <li>• What can you plan to do differently next time?</li> <li>• What do you need to do to make the changes you want?</li> <li>• How willing are you to change from what you have been doing?</li> <li>• Ideally, what would you like to do differently?</li> </ul>

## Scenario 1: Open Communication

“We actually don’t communicate with each other very well. I am finding it increasingly difficult to work with the mentee when they won’t look at me, they give vague responses to my questions and often they look pretty bored. I’m not sure how I can support them when we don’t talk openly and discuss things in the meetings.”

### Key Points

- Has the mentee identified their goals and how they want to use the meeting time?
- The mentor may need to ask the mentee how they can support them.
- An agreement needs to be written up as well as the mentee identifying and writing down their goals at the first meeting, so that the mentor (and the mentee) can refer back to these when meetings become stilted.
- Has the mentee been ‘sent’ to get mentoring? If so, they may be resistant and uncommunicative because they probably do not see the purpose of the mentoring. If the mentor finds this is the case, this is a useful conversation to have with the mentee.

Questions the Mentor could ask	S/C/F	D.E.V.A.	The 3Es
Do you know why you are at this meeting?	Start	Describe/Evaluate	Establish
What would you like to achieve from this meeting?	Start	Evaluate	Establish
What do you understand about mentoring?	Start	Describe	Establish
What would you like to talk about?	Start	Describe/Evaluate	Establish/Expand
What do you think is the purpose of these meetings?	Start	Evaluate/Value	Expand
You seem reluctant to discuss this. Is there a problem with talking about it?	Continue	Evaluate/Value	Expand
How can these meetings be useful for you?	Continue	Describe/Evaluate	Establish/Expand
How do you think the mentoring can help you?	Continue	Evaluate/Value	Explore
While we have these meetings, what would you like to work on [in your professional development]?	Finish	Evaluate/Action	Explore
What is the best way to make the most of these meetings for you?	Finish	Evaluate/Value/ Action	Explore



## Scenario 2: The Evasive Mentee

Your mentee seems very unwilling to open up to discuss their situation. They have indicated that they don't have any particular goals for their development. You know that the mentee has been struggling with aspects of their job and that they have received a written warning about this from their manager. However, you need the mentee to raise these issues first before you can talk about how the mentoring can help them.

### Key Points

- The mentor could initiate the [next] meeting with asking general questions about the mentee's job role.
- The mentor doesn't need to be in a rush to address the issues immediately. The mentee needs to have some time to feel okay about sharing this information.
- The mentor could ask the mentee about their past work as a way to lead in to the current situation.

Questions the Mentor could ask	S/C/F	D.E.V.A.	The 3Es
Tell me about the team you work in	Start	Describe	Establish
What are your goals for developing in your job?	Start	Describe/Evaluate/Value	Establish/Expand
Tell me about your job – what aspects do you enjoy the most?	Start	Evaluate/Value	Expand
What parts of your job do you find challenging?	Start	Evaluate/Value	Expand/Explore
When you have difficulties (of any kind) in your job, how do you usually manage these?	Continue	Evaluate/Action	Expand/Explore
What was the job like last year? Have there been any changes this year?	Continue	Describe/Evaluate	Establish/Expand
How are you finding the expectations of the job?	Continue	Evaluate	Establish/Expand
If you wanted to change something in your job what would it be?	Continue	Evaluate/Value	Explore
What other processes or people help you manage the expectations of your job?	Finish	Evaluate	Establish/Expand
How can you get something useful from these mentoring meetings?	Finish	Evaluate/Value/Action	Explore



