

“...the best book I’ve read on the subject...”

Richard Juneau, consultant, trainer and coach

Mastering Mentoring and Coaching

with Emotional Intelligence



Patrick E. Merlevede
Denis C. Bridoux

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Ever since we started training and coaching people to increase their emotional intelligence, we have been getting requests to help to increase the emotional intelligence of organizations as a whole. In this book we aim at helping you to increase your own jobEQ in such a way that you can help others to increase theirs and thus to achieve better results together. As you'll notice in the section to come, we will invite you to learn more from the experiences you have already had, in a similar way that mentors use their experience to help others to become better at their jobs.

From caterpillar to butterfly

When you were a child, you may sometimes have wished you had an older, wiser friend whom you could trust, whom you could go to for advice or to share your triumphs with, who could perhaps just give you a shoulder to cry on or act as a bouncing board for ideas you had—in short, someone who would listen, a patient confidant of the good and the not-so-good days.

Or, perhaps, you were one of the lucky few who did have such a friend in whom you could confide when you had problems or just difficulties. You would visit them, open your heart and, as you talked, as if by magic, your problems would seem to sort themselves out. Difficulties would be turned into challenges and, yes, you could now face them with renewed assurance and resolution, triumphing against the odds and, possibly, even other people's expectations.

What would it be like if you could offer somebody else such support so that they might get enough chances to succeed? This could be a new colleague at work, a pupil or student, or

Oprah Winfrey has had the benefit of a mentor in the person of Maya Angelou.²

“Since the moment I opened *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, I’ve felt deeply connected to Maya Angelou. With each page, her life seemed to mirror mine ... Meeting Maya on those pages was like meeting myself in full. For the first time, as a young black girl, my experience was validated. And it still is, only now I sit at Maya’s feet, beside her fireplace, hardly believing that, years after reading *Caged Bird*, she is my mentor and close friend. When we met in Baltimore more than 20 years ago, our bond was immediate. We talked as if we had known each other our entire lives; and throughout my twenties and in the years beyond, Maya brought clarity to my life lessons. She speaks of what she knows ...

Now we have what I call a mother/sister/friend relationship. She’s the woman who can share my triumphs, chide me with hard truth and soothe me with words of comfort when I call her in my deepest pain. When I am with Maya, unimportant matters melt away—her presence feels like a warm bath after an exhausting day. In our hours together, we can set aside all pretensions and just be: two women barefoot in a living room, sharing the most intimate parts of our lives.”

maybe a relative, a member of your sports team or art group, or anybody else for that matter.

How would you like to make this kind of a difference in the life of another, so that they can access resources within them that even they may not know they have, so that they can address the challenges of living and working in the twenty-first century, so that they can grasp with both hands the opportunities they see coming their way, so that they even might find opportunities they weren’t aware of, so that they can shine and share with the world all that they have to offer?

What would it be like for you to know that you have been instrumental in the development of a special human being?

How would *that* be for you?

In case you didn’t know, *that’s* what we call mentoring, and we will show you how you can do it to your satisfaction and that of your protégé.

Many famous people who have significantly contributed to the world have had the benefit of a mentor, without whom they would not have been who they were, done what they did or had what they had. Indeed the world would be a much poorer place if the concept of mentoring had not occurred.

Very few people actually are one hundred percent self-made. If you look closely you’ll probably find a mentor behind virtually every significant person you know in life (even if that mentor might not have had that “title”). A website, called *The Mentor Hall of Fame*¹ has made a list of famous mentor–protégé pairs and even a quick browse through this makes edifying reading.

As you are engaging on the road to mentoring, you, too, are part of the long chain of learning that stretches back to well

¹ See <http://www.peer.ca/mentorpairs.html>

² See http://oprah.oxygen.com/omagazine/200012/omag_200012_maya_b.jhtml

before known history began. And how does it feel to realize this?

For all you know, you, too, may appear on this list one day.

Before you engage on this path, imagine the future now: try it out for size. Allow yourself to dream. Ask:

- What will it be like once I become a great mentor and advise people in the best possible way?
- What will it be like for other people to benefit from my mentoring skills?
- What will it be like for my organization?

Action

If you want to become a mentor, you may want to take the time to ask yourself the following questions:

- If somebody was mentoring me, or had been mentoring me at a given time in my life, what would I have wanted them to have been like? In what terms do I think of them? What metaphors come to my mind that would best represent what I would think of them as?
- What would I have liked them *not* to be like? What metaphors arise here?
- How would I have liked them to behave toward me? *Not* to behave toward me?
- What values would I have liked them to display that would have enabled them to help me become the best possible me?

Draw a mindmap of what the subject represents in your mind.

Seven steps to ensure an effective mentoring relationship

Dividing the flow of a mentorship relationship into steps seems to be a research topic all by itself.⁶ We do not claim to have the “ideal” number of steps and we know that in reality these steps may intermingle. After all, as Peter Senge, the author of the widely acclaimed *Fifth Discipline* and renowned systemic thinker, said at the First World Conference for Systemic Management (2001):⁷ “A process design made for machines is perfectly predictable, but as engineers we had to learn that when you make a design for humans, you can’t predict how reality will turn out afterwards.”

One thing is sure: the relationship will have a start, a middle, and an end. It will also evolve over time, at first bringing partners closer, then gradually separating again. First there may be a growing admiration, then the independence of the protégé will grow again.

The importance of “chunking” the relationship—subdividing it into several steps—is that it allows you to point out some issues that may occur over a period of time as the coaching relationship develops. It may also enable you to identify why a relationship doesn’t work as well as expected. You may, for example, skip a step in the mentoring process, and discover later on that not addressing these issues may explain why the relationship is going less smoothly than it could. Or maybe you and your protégé will discover that the relationship just doesn’t work out, and that puts an early end to it.

⁶ In her book (1996) *Le mentor: Transmettre un savoir-être*, Renée Houde compares how several authors chunk the mentoring process. Unfortunately, she chooses to explain how in her model three phases include all the rest. We are more concerned with the various process topics you’ll encounter and therefore discerned a larger number of steps.

⁷ First World Conference for Systemic Management, Vienna, 1–6 May 2001, organized by the Institute for Systemic Coaching and Training.

Characteristics of the protégé

Potential

The person has proved able to perform and wants more.

Willingness to learn

The person sees more potential in themselves and feels responsible for developing it, and is open to feedback and mentoring advice.

Step 1: Choosing a protégé

If it's up to you to choose, mentor a person because you admire them, maybe because you recognize something of yourself, because you know there is a lot of potential present or because you just know this person might learn a lot from you. All these reasons will work just fine as long as there is a willingness to learn from you on the part of the protégé. But they also include a danger: the purpose is not to mold someone in your image, or try to make them realize the dreams you *didn't* realize. The goal is to help the protégé realize *their* dreams. Maybe that's why mentoring will work better if the request to be mentored comes from the protégé.

In the case of the famous couturier Yves Saint Laurent, it was his mother who got in touch with Michel de Brunhoff, the editor of *Vogue* at the time, for him. In turn, Michel de Brunhoff opened the door to Christian Dior once he was convinced that young Yves and Dior would mutually benefit from this professional relationship. Often, mentors are chosen because they were the protégé's professor or supervisor before, because they are a friend of the family, or because they are amongst the stars of their profession.

If your protégé is a member of your own organization, there should remain some distance between the two of you. We recommend that you be at least two steps ahead of this person in terms of the career ladder and that the person work in a department other than yours, so that there should be no risk of your undermining their line manager.

Whom *not* to choose?

a. People you cannot respect or do not admire for their potential. In other words, people who are the opposite of the picture we have just painted.

b. Your children or life partner. Good mentoring requires objectivity, being able to see a person's weak spots, point them out and get them to work on it. It also requires having enough knowledge of the problem at hand (maybe knowledge of the

industry or the company). When it comes to our loved ones, we could well be compromising our objectivity. It may be hard to avoid taking sides, because we are too much involved in their wellbeing and may also be too protective. The last thing they need is someone playing their “advocate”, arguing for their rights, since in most cases this may mean throwing oil on the flames. Also, there is only a slim chance that you will be considered by, say, your child as “the” person in the discipline to turn to. More commonly, you’re probably the *last* person suitable for the job!

Of course, we can have mentoring moments with our beloved ones, applying the mentoring principles from this book whenever this is appropriate. Some mentoring relationships have occurred within a parenting context (Mary Catherine Bateson was just as much mentored as she was parented by Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson), a husband–wife relationship (there is evidence that Marie Curie, née Slodowska, mentored both her husband Pierre and her daughter Irène), and a loving relationship (Ruth Benedict was Margaret Mead’s mentor as well as her lover). However, in order for these to work, the objectivity we referred to above was demonstrated and appears to be a prerequisite.

c. People you supervise. As a supervisor, you have an agenda other than as mentor: your agenda is linked to obtaining the desired results for your unit. At times supervisors will find this agenda “incompatible” with helping their collaborators grow to their potential, especially if that means that this person leaves your unit. It could also create other conflicts of interest between the wellbeing of the group and what’s best for the individual. For instance, suppose other employees get the impression that your protégé is receiving favorable treatment.

Of course, a lot of mentoring principles also apply to any supervisory relationship: you should offer support to your staff, be their coach and give performance advice. So-called “nonmanagerial supervision” has a lot in common with both coaching and mentoring—you could even say that it *is* a type of mentoring.

Seen from the other side: characteristics of a great mentor

Partnership-driven

The mentor is not out on an ego trip, doesn’t want to control or exercise their power.

Openness

There is a climate of trust, in which both parties can tell the truth without consequences.

Passion and generosity

The mentor loves to give others the opportunity to learn, and is passionate about sharing wisdom.

the words they use for a reason, usually because they approximate most closely to what they have in mind at the time. If you reflect back what your protégé tells you using different words or type of language, you may distract them from their train of thoughts or make them feel that, although they were listened to, they were not heard. In addition, just reflecting back is easier to do than paraphrasing, so why make things harder for yourself than you need to?

Communication skills: dos and don'ts of feedback in the mentoring relationship

Brian van der Horst, an American living in Paris, France, says that, when the French really appreciate you, they will tell you exactly what you did wrong and what could be improved. The same is true for mentoring: sometimes the biggest gift we can give our protégé is truly telling them what went wrong or which capabilities they need to develop. The goal of feedback is to make the protégé learn from their mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes every now and then, so it doesn't help to blame persons for making mistakes, as long as they learn from them and don't repeat them.

Trust but verify.

Ronald Reagan

In some large organizations, the contrary is sometimes true. In *Jack: Straight from the Gut* (2001), Jack Welch tells us that, in the late 1970s, appraisal at General Electric (GE) meant being nice: the boss would usually write "fully qualified to assume the next position", even if they both knew this wasn't true. A negative feedback would be so exceptional that headquarters would ask to get rid of the person.

Those things that hurt, instruct.

Benjamin Franklin

In countries such as Japan or in the Arab culture some caution may be appropriate as well. Giving negative feedback may be seen as embarrassing for the person on the receiving end or may be taken as a personal attack. In those situations you might want to give the criticism indirectly and include praise for some good points and assure that you have high regard for the person.

Guilt manipulation

Guilt messages often signal a meta-emotion. The person feels angry, hurt, or sad and projects the responsibility for that on the “guilty” person. Because this often works, this is easier than looking into one’s personal role in the issue at hand. And this “technique” may even help getting what you want. However, everyone is responsible for their own emotions.

To cope with guilt manipulation, check for the facts underlying the issue and whether you have trespassed any boundary or made a mistake. Don’t take the blame if this is not needed.

The message is, “Before giving feedback, know your culture.” If you want to give your feedback differently from the way it is ordinarily done, make it part of your own frame of operation within the mentoring process. Unless you manage to find ways of changing your company’s culture, use its traditional way of giving feedback outside the mentoring.

Well-delivered negative feedback isn’t about finding a person guilty and condemning them. As the American management consultant W. Edwards Deming advocated, quality thrives only in a situation where fear is driven out, so that people speak freely and can admit their mistakes. When we deliver feedback our focus should be on how we can make sure it is understood, and on what it takes to make a message stick. Four important factors make the difference:

1. Building rapport

Much of the mentoring relationship is about just “getting along”. Your protégé must feel that you, as mentor, are committed, feel concerned, and care for them. The issue at hand is often less important than the relationship. Separate negative emotions linked to the issue from your emotions toward the person. For example, you can be angry because a salesperson missed a deal because he was selling too aggressively, and that put off the prospect, but overall you still can appreciate the motivation this salesperson has for getting your product sold. The worst you can do is show an unmanaged emotion of anger, as expressed through your words, your tone of voice, or your body language. As mentor you need to communicate that you want to help, and not hurt, your protégé. One of the questions feedback should answer is, “What are the needs of my protégé? What’s necessary for them to improve in this area?”

2. Timing

Feedback usually works best when your protégé invites the feedback or, at least, allows you to give them feedback. Asking permission is important: for instance, when your protégé is

stressed because of a heavy work schedule, it might make sense to find a more appropriate time to deliver your feedback, and to find a time when your protégé is more receptive. Also, check for the right location: giving negative feedback in front of others will often be taken badly. On the other hand, don't postpone feedback for too long: it should be sufficiently close to the event being discussed to be quite fresh in the protégé's mind.

3. Form

The facts have to be expressed specifically enough, precisely formulating the incidents in terms of your protégé's behavior and double-checking the facts, so that they cannot be denied. While the facts should remain separate from your feelings about the incident, expressing these feelings is important as well, so that your protégé fully grasps the impact of their behavior. Explain what the impact was on you, the team, or the organization. When delivering a value judgment on how other people have reacted on the incident, make sure you focus on their behavior, what they did, and how they did it, not on attacking them as a person. Finally, check whether your message has been received clearly.

4. Flexibility of behavior

If your protégé cannot address the issue at hand, or doesn't feel supported to change the behavior, the feedback won't have much effect. Find different ways of saying what you want to say that might ensure a better reception.

Except for negative feedback as mentioned above, *positive* feedback is also welcome. Whereas the goal of negative feedback is to stop someone from doing something (and to encourage them to *do* something else instead), the goal of positive feedback is to reinforce good behavior and to keep them motivated to keep moving in the right direction. In that case you tell a person exactly what was done right and explain what made this action right. Saying, "You did a good job" is weaker than saying, "Your presentation yesterday was great: you used exactly the right

After asking permission, what do you do if your protégé says no? You can either temporarily back off and put the issue on the agenda for the next session, or tip your toe in the water: you can decide that the issue is important and just give a hint in a nonconfrontational way.

Check the facts

Remember playing the "Chinese Whispers" game as a kid? A message starts being passed around a circle of people, being whispered in the neighbor's ear. The person at the end has to tell what they heard—and the result invariably had little in common with the original message! Try getting facts from the source instead of at second hand. The more persons between you and the source, the more the story tends to change.

Beliefs

Another mentoring issue at the same level as values is about helping the protégé to deal with limiting beliefs. According to one dictionary,⁴¹ beliefs are “the feeling of certainty that something exists or is true”. You could say that a belief is a thought that one validates by consciously or unconsciously saying “yes” to it.⁴² By doing so, we incorporate it into our worldview system.

Beliefs can be motivating, when we believe that we can do something, are worth something, etc. On the other hand, beliefs can also be limiting or demotivating, when we believe we are *not* worth it, *cannot* do it etc. When we ask a person what stops them from doing something, the answer we get will often take the form of a limiting belief.

Even when expressed positively, a belief can limit us when it is not supported by resources that it would need to be manifested. One calls such type of belief a self-delusion. A person who has delusions of competence or self-grandeur that are not backed by evidence or supported by inner skills and resources can be a very dangerous individual indeed, like a person driving a car who has not taken the necessary lessons and demonstrated their driving ability by passing their driving test.

As Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948) put it, “Freedom and slavery alike—they are mental states. The moment the slave resolves that he shall no longer be a slave—his shackles fall. He frees himself and shows the way to others.”

You can enable your protégé to identify beliefs that limit them, either because they prevent them from achieving something, or because they need to be backed by evidence and resources in order to truly become valid. You may point out where and how they can acquire these skills so that those beliefs actually become true.

⁴¹ *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*, 2001, (online dictionary), <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>.

⁴² A process called “meta-yes and meta-no” has been developed in neurosemantics to help you do just that. This is presented in the neurosemantic foundational training “Accessing Personal Genius”.

Most of our thought originates in the whole culture and pervades us. We pick it up as children from parents, from friends, from school, from books, from newspapers, and so on. We make a small change to it; we select parts of it which we like, and we may reject other parts. But still, it all comes from that pool.

David Bohm, On Dialogue

Beliefs: Those things we hold to be true despite evidence to the contrary.

Joseph O'Connor

Our demons are our own limitations, which shut us off from the realization of the ubiquity of the spirit ... each of these demons is conquered in a vision quest.

Joseph Campbell

Belief assessment

In his book *Visionary Leadership Skills*, Robert Dilts points out six statements one can check to assess whether a person really believes in an outcome:

- It's desirable and worth it
- It's possible to achieve it
- We can do it (we have the competence to do it)
- What we have to do is clear, appropriate, and ecological
- We deserve to achieve it
- The responsibility to do it lies with us

Pick a goal and indicate to what degree, from 1 as lowest to 5 as highest, you agree with each of these statements in relationship to your goal. The lowest one is probably the one that may prevent you from achieving your goal, or sabotaging your efforts and needs resolving.

Ask yourself, "What do I need to do, to have, or to be to believe this more?"

Some limiting beliefs that are overcome sound downright spectacular. Consider the story of the American football legend Rocky Bleier, who was severely injured in his right foot when he served in Vietnam. He was discharged with 40 percent disability. But then he received a postcard from Art Rooney, the owner of the Pittsburgh Steelers. Rooney had written only, "We'll see you when you get back." Bleier says, "The impact of these simple words was immediate. It was then that I determined that I would be back. I would fight this thing with everything I had."⁴³ The Steelers allowed him on their injured reserve and four years later, in 1974, he was playing in their core team, to win the Super Bowl with them. Bleier overcame a limiting belief instilled by a doctor but removed by Rooney, whose words and decision to put him back on the team illustrate what a mentor can do.

The following process helps a person to revisit a belief with the opportunity to achieve a breakthrough. It is based on the observation that human reasoning often isn't as "rational" as we'd like to believe it is. Often we believe something, because it is "to the best of our knowledge", i.e. "what I know and understand from the information that I have". Thus, it may be sufficient to realize that one was working with incomplete information when one made the decision, or that one's decision process has a logical flaw in it. Despite what most economists tell us, even "business" decisions are not as "rational" as they seem.⁴⁴ The same can be said about many other decisions we take during our lives, such as when we decide to believe that there are limitations we can't overcome.

⁴³ See <http://www.pittsburghsteelers.co.uk/steelers/players/rocky%20bleier.htm>. Rocky Bleier's life has been described in the book *Fighting Back* (1980) and a ABC-TV movie with the same title.

⁴⁴ To be fair, a limited number of economists have been dismissing the "rational customer" theory. In 1988, Robert H. Frank, a professor of economics at Cornell University, wrote *Passions within Reason*, in which he shows how we actually benefit from "emotional, irrational behavior". In 2000 Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky edited the book *Choices, Values and Frames* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK), which contains a multidisciplinary collection of articles presenting an alternative for the rational "*Homo economicus*".

Exercise: Overcoming limiting beliefs

Step 1: Write down the limiting belief

e.g. It's hard to find qualified staff nowadays

Step 2: Write down the evidence you have that supports the belief. Be as complete as you can.

e.g. When I place an ad, I only get a limited number of reactions.

I can't take into consideration most of the reactions I get, because either the people are not competent, or they are unionized.

Step 3: Write down the counterarguments that exist

e.g. My ad may not be appealing to my target audience.

Formal qualifications don't say everything, people may be self-educated

Not all unionized people are unqualified

Step 4: Write down the logic: How did you come to this conclusion, based on the evidence? Did you decide this for yourself, or did you pick up the belief from someone else? Did you take the counterarguments into account? Does this conclusion still hold today?

e.g. in the example given (a real "case" that came up during a "7 Steps to Emotional Intelligence" seminar), after listing the counterexamples, the person wasn't any longer convinced. In case your protégé remains convinced, you can use the "logical" reasoning of your protégé to help to come to other conclusions, e.g. after presenting a number of counterexamples over the period of time it takes the protégé to become convinced.

There is an infinite number of possibilities. There is a limited number of days. So, why have one of those days ruined by an "impossibility"?

Unknown participant in the INLPTA trainer's training, 1996

Mastering Mentoring and Coaching with Emotional Intelligence

The material included in this book has emerged over several years of mentoring, coaching and training. Following a qualitative survey, the authors identified the key components of both mentoring and coaching and the need to clarify the similarities and differences between them.

The book updates the area of mentoring and coaching with emotional intelligence and includes:

- Coaching and mentoring questionnaires to assess skill level
- Powerful techniques for both short-term and long-term interventions
- Practical tips and exercises
- Strategies suitable for mentors and coaches
- Convenient resources for protégés and clients

"For mentors, coaches, clients, and HR people alike, this how-to book teaches you the ancient art of mentoring. Contains very practical, clearly presented and easily applied tools. An essential read if you want to acquire the mindset that will enable you to be a good coach and/or mentor in the widest possible circumstances and contexts."

Julian Russell, a leading UK executive coach and the founder and Managing Director of PPD Consulting Ltd, business leadership development specialists

"A well-researched compendium of processes and questions, through which coaches and mentors can take their clients and protégés."

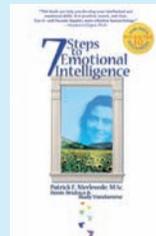
Shelle Rose Charvet, author of *Words That Change Minds*



Patrick E. Merlevede coaches consultants and managers to increase their work-related emotional intelligence. He is the President of jobEQ.com, which features several tests based on the principles explained in this book.



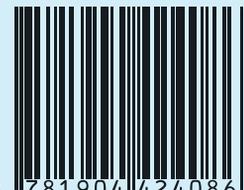
Denis C. Bridoux is an international trainer who runs NLP and Neuro-Semantics courses with applications to coaching and mentoring. He practices life coaching and executive coaching and is an experienced mentor.



Patrick E. Merlevede and **Denis C. Bridoux** are co-authors of the successful *7 Steps to Emotional Intelligence*, isbn: 978-189983650-5.

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