

## Mentoring with Dr Mark Hughes

### About Me



I have been actively involved in mentoring since 2001. As Director of the staff development and management consultancy firm [mch](#), my mentoring experience takes many forms. While this overview details my 1:1 mentoring work, my broader staff development work includes delivering training to prospective mentors. Also, through my management consultancy work, I design, deliver and evaluate mentoring programmes. Finally, I am Chairman and Non-Executive Director of a social enterprise and in addition to my governance responsibilities, I provide mentoring support to the organisation's General Manager.

My passion for mentoring stems from two very different 'past lives'. Prior to founding [mch](#) in 2005, I was Chief Executive of [Rumbalara](#), an Aboriginal sporting and community development organisation. I began my tenure with Rumbalara on the brink of insolvency. Furthermore, I had only a rudimentary understanding of Indigenous culture and the local area. Fortunately, Rumbalara's Elders saw the need for mentoring, and two mentors soon made my working life much easier, effective and enjoyable. This in turn helped make life outside of work far more pleasant too.

Prior to Rumbalara, I was a consultant at the management consultancy firm [McKinsey & Company](#). As part of our professional development, McKinsey encouraged peer-mentoring. The value of such mentoring is shown by the fact that after 10 years, my peer mentor and I still provide each other with mentoring support.

Outside of work, I devote most of my time to my young family, maintaining and developing friendships and participating in a wide variety of exercise.

### Experience and Testimonials

While I have mentored young social entrepreneurs and junior teachers, the bulk of my mentoring experience involves working with senior managers, Directors or Chief Executives. The following quotes are unsolicited comments from some of my mentees or their organisations:

"Thank you so much for the mentoring session yesterday. It was so useful to discuss the issues around recruitment and it gave me confidence in my thought processes."

"Mark has a broad knowledge base and he is excellent at developing people and helping them to gain new skills and improve existing ones."

"Thanks a lot. This would not have been achieved without you."

## *My Views on Mentoring*

**"The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him his own."**

**- Benjamin Disraeli**

I do not prescribe to any one definition of mentoring. Instead I'd like to outline my views on mentoring through detailing some of its key characteristics:

**Focus:** As the mentee, you are the focus of mentoring.

**Roles:** Given the focus, you set the agenda. At times, I may challenge that agenda, but ultimately my role is to facilitate it.

**Scope:** The scope is your life. While we often try to compartmentalise our lives I believe different areas invariably influence others (e.g. what's going on outside of work will influence our work and vice versa).

**Source of Influence:** Mentoring is a power free relationship. My influence is purely down to the value you believe I bring.

**Dynamics:** Given the above characteristics, I consider mentoring as an umbrella term for a range of potential relationships which can include coaching, advising and teaching. The extent and timing of each potential relationship will depend on the issue being dealt with, your preferences and the one that I think will be most valuable.

Given this dynamic, a crucial point to make is that mentoring is not just about talking, it's about doing. Furthermore, mentoring is not just for life's big decisions (e.g. Should I accept a new job?), it is also for the day to day (e.g. How can I present my views more effectively?). Consequently, in addition to reflective conversations, mentoring can also involve iterating a key document together or gaining feedback on an important presentation you want to deliver.

One relationship that is *not* covered by mentoring is counselling. Consequently, while your life as a whole remains in scope, if I consider that certain issues require specialist counselling or therapy then we would discuss ways to obtain such assistance, rather than the issue itself.

## *Practicalities*

I believe that my skills and motivations play a large part in my success as a mentor. However, I believe that being flexible is another important factor. Consequently, the following outline should simply be considered as indicative of how most of my mentoring relationships operate.

I meet mentees face to face once a month, with each session lasting for 60-90 minutes. In some instances though, a mentee and I will spend a whole day mentoring and then meet less frequently.

I recommend that mentoring takes place away from your place of work at *mch's* base in Freshford (a village just outside Bath). Freshford provides a range of meeting formats (including walks in beautiful countryside) and it also means that I do not need to incorporate travel expenses into the fee structure. However, I am happy to meet at another mutually convenient location.

Mentoring takes place between normal working hours. Within reason, I am happy for mentees to contact me by phone if significant issues emerge between mentoring sessions. If required, additional unscheduled face to face sessions can also be arranged.

## *Next Steps*

If you would like to explore the possibility of mentoring further, I would suggest an initial phone conversation. If appropriate this would be followed by a face to face conversation to test the rapport of the relationship. Between the phone call and our meeting, I am happy to give you the contact details of some of my existing and former mentees, so that you can gain a greater understanding of my mentoring experience.

My standard approach is to have a six month agreement involving six face to face mentoring sessions. If after six months, you and I would like to continue, we would simply adopt a six month rolling schedule. The exact cost will obviously depend on where and for how long we meet.

## *Contact Details*

Please feel free to get in touch with me by phone or email

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