

## Mentoring with Dr Mark Hughes

### About Me



My passion for mentoring stems from my experiences in two very different 'past lives'. Prior to founding [mch: positive impact](#) in 2005, I was Chief Executive of [Rumbalara](#), an Australian Indigenous sporting and community development organisation. When I joined Rumbalara, the organisation was 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 with the help of two mentors my working life became 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, nearly 20 years later, my peer mentor and I *still* provide each other with mentoring support.

In addition to my staff development work, I also have Board level experience, having been Chair of the awarding winning social enterprise, [Evidence to Impact](#), over a number of years. My experience of being both a CEO and a Chair can be particularly useful for those with leadership roles, who are looking for mentoring support.

### Experience and Testimonials

I have mentored people in a multitude of different roles: CEOs, senior managers, fundraisers, board members, grant givers and social entrepreneurs. I have also worked with an entire senior management team on a one-to-one basis (save for the chief executive). Some have been part of very large organisations, others have been sole practitioners. They have worked in a whole array of areas, from sports clubs to hearing loss, musical inclusion to reducing drug and alcohol dependence. A myriad of issues have been discussed and acted upon during, and between, mentoring sessions.

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."*

**Increasing the positive impact of individuals and organisations through staff development**

Positivity House 1 Stanley Hill Freshford Bath BA2 7US UK

† +44(0)7932 918 767 e [info@mchpositiveimpact.com](mailto:info@mchpositiveimpact.com) w [www.mchpositiveimpact.com](http://www.mchpositiveimpact.com)

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*"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 subscribe to any one definition of mentoring. Instead I prefer 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 can 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 an umbrella term for a range of potential relationships:



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. Is it time for a career change?), but 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/conversation you want to deliver/have.

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; with respect to when, where and how often we meet, is another important factor. Consequently, the following outline should simply be considered as illustrative.

### **Method**

Generally, we would meet face-to-face, although once a few face-to-face sessions have been conducted; coaching *via* phone/skype can prove very effective in certain instances.

### **Duration**

I try not to be too prescriptive on the length of a session. Consequently, sessions can range from 45 minutes to two hours. In some instances, I have spent a whole day mentoring.

### **Frequency**

The frequency of sessions is largely driven by you. You may like to meet at the same time every month, or have several sessions over a number of days. Alternatively, you may prefer to arrange sessions on an 'as and when' basis.

### **Location**

I recommend our sessions take place away from your place of work. This prevents disruptions and many people find that a new location prompts a new way of thinking. While alternative office space can invariably be found, you may prefer to use a quiet café, or to incorporate a session into a walk in the park or countryside.

### **Timing and Contact**

Mentoring takes place between normal working hours, although exceptions can be made, particularly if time zones have to be factored into arrangements. Within reason, I am happy to be contacted by phone if significant issues emerge between mentoring sessions.

## *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 an initial session 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 clients, so that you can gain a greater understanding of my mentoring experience.

If your organisation is paying for the mentoring sessions, it is important to stress that the content of all conversations between you and I will be confidential. I will not share any information from our discussions unless required to by law, or if maintaining confidentiality is likely to endanger you, me or a third party.

As indicated earlier, mentoring is first and foremost a relationship. Consequently, the situation may arise where you, I, or both of us do not feel an effective mentoring relationship can be developed. If such a situation arises, I would be happy to try and recommend other mentors that may prove suitable.

## *Contact Details and More Information*

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

Mark Hughes, Director, *mch: positive impact*

Telephone: +44 (0)7932 918 767

Email: [info@mchpositiveimpact.com](mailto:info@mchpositiveimpact.com)

For a fuller overview of mentoring go to:

<https://www.mchpositiveimpact.com/mentoring/overview>