



Being a Personal Mentor – A Quick Start Guide

This QuickStart Guide is for you if:

You have been asked to be a Personal Mentor and you want to know what the role involves – to help you to decide whether to take on the role

You are a Personal Mentor starting a mentoring relationship – getting started

You are a Personal Mentor in a mentoring relationship – as a quick reference

You are thinking of proposing a new member – you will have to take full or partial responsibility for mentoring your candidate

You are a newly appointed Lodge Mentor – understand the difference in the role

You are a Preceptor or a Secretary wanting to support a mentoring culture in your Lodge

Should you refer to another QuickStart Guide or resource?

The Initiate's Guide

Using the Mentoring Documentation: A Quick Start Guide

Subjects for Mentoring Discussions: A Quick Start Checklist

Being a Proposer: A Quick Start Guide

Preparing a Man for his Initiation: A Quick Start Guide

The latest versions of all these documents are available as electronic downloads from our web site. Check the Solomon repository of Masonic knowledge at <https://solomon.ugle.org.uk/> for more ideas and information.

Why do we need mentoring?

To welcome new members and to help them fit into our organisation

To help maximise the satisfaction and benefits that members receive from Freemasonry

To understand and guide the expectations of new members

To support members as they make progress on their Masonic journey

To make social introductions and facilitate friendships

To avoid or reduce preventable losses

To ensure that our 'ancient usages and established customs' are understood by explaining: the three great principles and the Masonic project; our ritual, ceremonial and symbolism; our administrative requirements; Masonic etiquette, in all its forms; the organisation of the Craft – its structure and history – and opportunities beyond the Craft.

To ensure that new members are given the encouragement and support they need to introduce and propose suitable family members, friends, colleagues and neighbours as new members of their Lodge.

What is mentoring?

In general terms, mentoring is an arrangement in which a more experienced person helps someone with less experience to develop and achieve his potential. In Masonic terms, it is an arrangement in which a Brother who is more familiar and knowledgeable about Freemasonry, its customs, practices and objectives, helps another less experienced and knowledgeable Brother to understand these things and supports his development and progression in his Lodge, his Province and the Order.

The relationship between a Personal Mentor and his mentee is shaped by three factors:

The establishment and maintenance of a trusting and open relationship

The timely communication of appropriate knowledge

The Personal Mentor's wisdom and judgement in offering guidance that is in the best interest of his mentee, his Lodge and the Craft

What are the ideal qualities I need as a Personal Mentor?

Note that the following list is a counsel of perfection – most of us are not so perfect but we can all learn and develop these skills and attributes. You should:

have the necessary experience, capability and time to support your mentee at and beyond his current level

have good interpersonal skills including the use of open questions and active listening

be insightful in personal relationships – able to recognise the impact you have on others and to moderate your behaviour accordingly

be able to give objective and actionable feedback in a neutral and non-critical way

be well respected in the Lodge and courteous in your dealings with other Brethren

be familiar with your Lodge's customs and practices, and those of the Province

be sociable and outgoing but not overbearing, arrogant or hectoring

have sufficient Masonic experience to answer the questions your mentee may ask at his stage of development, but you don't have to know everything

be willing to ask for and accept the advice and guidance of your Lodge Mentor and the Provincial Grand Mentor when it is necessary and appropriate that you should do so

be willing to report on the general progress of your relationship when required to do so while strictly maintaining any confidences agreed with your mentee

What are the characteristic stages of a mentoring relationship?

Opening stage Establish a rapport with your mentee

This is easiest if you already know your mentee – e.g. if you are already a friend and you are his proposer. More difficult if you have to make the relationship from scratch but easier the earlier you start. Ideally, start the process well before the interview.

Establish the ground rules

Explain the purpose of mentoring

Set broad goals for both the relationship and your mentee's progress

Explain and agree any terms of confidentiality between you

Guide and shape his expectations

Stimulate curiosity and enthusiasm

Allay any concerns and doubts

Moderate over-enthusiasm

Consider and agree the duration and frequency of sessions, and where and when you will meet – you provide the structure.

Some discussions will obviously be suggested by your mentee's progress through the three degrees. Others you may have to introduce to make sure that he understands how and why we do things the way we do.

Use every opportunity to make progress in your relationship but don't overwhelm your mentee. Be sensitive to his requirements. Use the LOI, Lodge meetings and visits to other Lodges as you judge necessary.

Ongoing stage

Regular contacts and planned activities – initially, you provide the structure but ...

As the early events pass (e.g. the Degree ceremonies), your mentee should be able to take more responsibility for setting the pace.

Eventually, the relationship should naturally settle into adhoc contacts driven by the specific questions or needs of your mentee.

Regular reviews of progress – can be more informal as time passes.

If problems arise at any time be prepared to ask your Lodge Mentor for help and, if necessary, make sure that your Lodge Care Team is aware.

Ending

You should find that in the fullness of time your mentee gains sufficient knowledge and experience and requests for advice and guidance become less frequent.

You may also find that your mentee's development outgrows your own experience and that it is necessary to suggest that he finds another Personal Mentor who can support his progress. Ask for the assistance of the Lodge Mentor and discuss the matter with your mentee.

What should I do and when?

Important first steps

Encouraging new Brethren to visit Lodges where their most recent ceremony is to be performed is a useful way of reinforcing and enhancing their own experience and it will help you to explain the ceremony and its symbolism. You should also prepare a new Brother for his second and subsequent meetings so he responds to the summonses correctly.

Ceremony-Based Topics vs Time-Driven Topics

Deciding when to introduce new Masonic topics to a mentee can be likened to the servicing and maintenance of a car. Some service items depend more on the mileage travelled (event driven such as oil change, tyre replacement, timing belt change) and some depend more on the passage of time (time-driven such as brake fluid change). For us, 'event-driven' here means 'ceremony-based'.

The speed at which a new member progresses through his three degrees can vary widely. It could take just three successive meetings within a few months or it could happen over a year or more. If his progress is rapid, then the ceremony-based and time-driven topics can be used together. If there is a significant gap between his Initiation and his Passing and / or Raising, then you may have to look at the topics suggested for discussion no later than 6 months or 12 months after joining us. There are some things that it's reasonable to expect an Initiate to know about masonry after he has been a member for 6 months or 1 year which have nothing to do with the degree ceremonies and their symbolism.

Remember that you can only use the ceremony-based documents after each ceremony but the time-based documents are suggestions on how to structure your discussion about other masonic matters. They can be introduced at any time. Refer to 'Using the Mentoring Documentation: A QuickStart Guide' to understand which documents to use with your mentee. See also 'Subjects for Mentoring Discussions: A Quick Start Checklist'.