

Mentoring Works



Mentoring and Positivity By Ann Rolfe

Looking at the past can predict the future - if you focus on the right things. There is an increasing awareness that positivity - seeing, saying and doing helpful, constructive or happy things builds strengths and resilience. That doesn't mean we have to view the world with rose-coloured glasses; we need to have a realistic awareness of negativity but there's a tipping point, concentrated negativity leads to failure but the right balance of positivity and negativity enables people to flourish.

Positive feedback is like the wind in our sails, we need plenty of it to progress. Yet we do need some negative feedback because it acts as a rudder so that we can correct our course. It's the proportion of positivity to negativity that is critical. The magic ratio that enables people to flourish is 3:1.

Mentors use the magic ratio when they provide a positive and supportive environment but also challenge and provide a different point of view.

One of the skills mentoring teaches is reflection - the ability to look back and learn. By focusing on positivity - achievements and events that brought joy or satisfaction, mentors help mentorees to get in touch with their values and see their strengths more clearly.

Mentors lead reflective conversations, by asking good questions and listening well, to skillfully draw out the mentoree's aspirations, values and priorities.

Looking forward, mentors use the magic ratio as they help their mentorees to set goals by identifying the gap between the ideal situation and the real or current situation.

When strengths and values lay a foundation for goals people are empowered and inspired. So it's important that the mentor enables the mentoree to check their alignment with the goal.

Then, before jumping into action planning, mentors help review past achievements and strengths thus providing a springboard for success. That's how mentoring works.

Reference

Barbara Fredrickson Ph.D. (2009) *Positivity*. Three Rivers Press