

## Chapter 2

# Positive Mentoring: Learning to Shape and Nurture Talent and Confidence

*I love to argue with people who do not disagree with me too profoundly.  
And I like to laugh.*

James Baldwin—*Notes of a native son.*

**Abstract** This chapter will assist the reader in gaining a rich understanding of the mentoring relationship. It offers practical insights for establishing and understanding mentoring relationships.

## 2.1 Introduction

How positive mentoring is for the mentee is shaped by the quality of the relationship. Firstly, positivity in mentoring refers to the possibility of a formidable learning relationship. In today's fast-paced world, whatever one's career stage, working or studying, leading, raising a family or volunteering, learning and discovery are the mainstays of an active life. Secondly, will positive mentoring make an affirming difference for the mentee? If so, how will this be measured and understood? Thirdly, is mentoring used to counter negativity in the mentee? If in creating a positive milieu, will the mentee feel comfortable in voicing concerns; feel listened to and assisted in dealing with the issues? Fourthly, does positive mentoring mean that there is no opportunity to explore the shadows of life? Finally, is positivity achievable and more importantly, necessary for an authentic life? If the mentee is not optimistic, how does the mentor assist the mentee achieve their goals, influence others and at the same time, remain authentic and reflect the essence of their unique individuality?

Positive mentoring is about the openness of the relationship that the mentee experiences. They will feel reassured if the mentor is accepting of them and their circumstances. How does mentoring achieve this? The answer lies in two parts. The first is that it is through a mutual relationship between the mentee and mentor that

leads to a learning experience. What is learnt are the critical dimensions of positive mentoring. Mutual learning is shared and acknowledged (based on Krauss and Fussell 1990s 'mutual knowledge' concept). It is essential for what unfolds and drives the relationship forward.

Shared learning facilitates the path of mindedness: what each knows and does not know about the issues and circumstances under discussion. Without this precondition, mentoring will not be positive as each will continue conversing on the basis of what is individually articulated rather than pooled. The reciprocal nature of pooled learning is indispensable. This learning is reinforced verbally and non-verbally (e.g. hmm-hmm, nodding, eye contact) and provides meaningful feedback especially from the mentor without dominating the conversation. The second element of positivity is being content with being you. One thing that is obligatory is the mentor creating an open space for the mentee to investigate and try out new facets of their individuality, new ways of thinking, knowledge and skill development.

Interactions between mentors and mentees are formed by how mentoring is initiated, the nature of the profession and other situational contingencies. A typical mentoring relationship involves a more experienced person, a reliable counsellor and the mentee, or the latter referred to here as a mentee. 'Mentee' is a descriptor referring to a person who has a mentor whereas a mentee conveys potential and untapped talent and, therefore, active learning. Whatever form it takes each mentoring relationship has its unique qualities. The nature of mentoring is shaped by the individuals' circumstances; the prospective outcomes; the empathy between the mentor and mentee and eventually the trust that is built; the inspiration that ignites interest and enthusiasm as well as the importance of the relationship between both parties. For the mentor how serious s/he takes on the role and for the mentee how important they regard it in a developmental sense.

The attributes of mentoring relationships include the ratio of power, mutuality of respect and support, and skills in communications and having an aptitude for conducting difficult conversations. For learning to occur, the social exchange between the mentor and mentee involves mutual influence. The last requires abilities to problem-solve, negotiate, and confront.

However, influence between the parties in this relationship is never unidirectional, with only one being shaped by the other. It is important that the mentee does not feel dominated, and this depends upon the most experienced person doing everything to neutralise the essential power imbalance between them. The best way to describe this exchange is 'mobilisation'. Moreover, while mentorship is mostly characterised as dyadic, with differential experience between the mentor and mentee, this is not always the case as will be demonstrated.

The focus of this chapter is on understanding mentoring and the reasons for its endurance over the centuries: mainly for imparting knowledge, skills and acculturation.

## 2.2 What Is Understood by the Terms: Mentoring, Mentor and Mentee?

Mentoring is the backbone of most *learning* relationships such as coaching, consulting with clients in an array of settings both corporate and institutions as well as person-centred counselling and so on. These processes should not be thought of as motley of disconnected processes as each share something in common and in practice, all of them have overlapping elements. The commonality of processes is linked to the notion of self-influence, a term first used by Manz (1992). In basic terms, self-influence is a process through which mentees, coachees and clients in counselling learn with the guidance of a mentor, a coach or a counsellor how to achieve the self-direction, self-observation and self-motivation if you like to act in ways that assist them to realise their goals.

In this section, positive mentoring is considered. To be positive is a position that is rarely questioned either in the striving or achievement of it. Positive mentoring requires a theoretical or analytical approach even though it is an applied practice. Many applications are underpinned by a theoretical framework. Mentoring is essentially initiated by a narrative, usually told by the mentee. The mentor joins into assist with framing and managing the meanings (Bolman and Deal 2008). The mentor is positive in that they display confidence in their approach. The mentee will observe the mentor's approach and may feel more optimistic as a consequence; or by the same token feel they are or never could match this approach or experience. It may lead them to feel more pessimistic if that is their predisposition prior to meeting with the mentor. Just as introversion should be more highly valued than it is, a pessimistic stance can also be positive if it leads the mentee into questioning things below the surface.

For example, the mentor facilitates this process by directing the mentor to reflect on attitudes and ways of thinking, their actions and outcomes linked to these. Mentors challenge mentees to evaluate their assumptions, beliefs and attitudes as a way of directing them towards positive self-talk. They also encourage mentees to consider how they go about doing things or not and encourage them to focus their attention on what they can do rather than what they cannot do.

Mentoring and indeed positive mentoring creates self-dialogue that generates knowledge focusing the mentor on thinking of their issues as 'mundane' as opposed to 'abnormal' so that mentees can see themselves as being within the boundaries of what society privileges as 'normal' (based on Foucault 1977).

Positive mentoring is tapping into (a) the positive orientation towards self, professional and future (Caprara et al. 2010) as well as into (b) the positive learning (Seligman et al. 2009). Mentors would orientate mentee to see the positive aspects Seligman et al. (2009) (i) as a remedy to counter dejection; (ii) a way to increasing professional satisfaction and (iii) to improve learning and generate creative thinking as a way of encouraging mentees to follow up with these new or revitalised thought patterns and actions outside of mentoring. The rationale for positive mentoring is that people need to feel inspired and optimistic in the light of inevitable

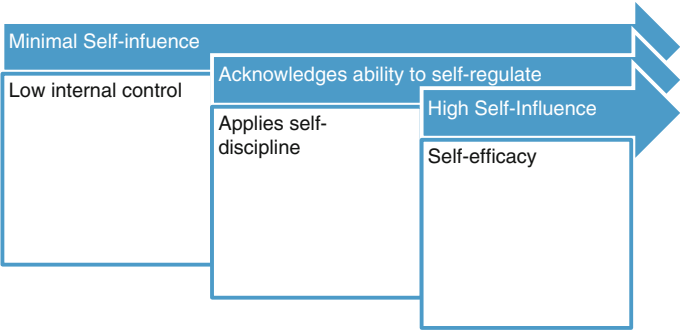
disappointments that they experience. Increases in well-being are likely to produce increases in learning because positive mood produces broader attention (Fredrickson and Branigan 2005; Rowe et al. 2007), more creative thinking (Estrada et al. 1994).

Mentoring is aimed at enhancing self-awareness first and foremost which ultimately will lead the mentee to manage themselves better especially in relation to goals where they doubt their capability or politicised. Self-awareness includes self-observation that is being aware of how one’s actions in response to specific triggers: people, context, etc. It also includes self-goal setting that addresses identifying areas of aspiration or need and know how to attain these as well as self-acknowledgement that is being realistic about when improvement is necessary and knowing when a good outcome has been achieved. Self-regulation is principally about managing emotions and time. In short, the mentor works with the mentee to encourage positive responses and actions that lead to effective outcomes for the mentee. Figure 2.1 is based on Manz (1992) and Bandura (1991).

Secondly the mentor works with the mentee to challenge them around why they tend to seek out certain tasks, roles and what their perceptions are for doing so. Challenging the mentee is related to the third aspect of positive mentoring which is thinking: self-analysis and questioning belief systems, creating positive mental images of self and performance outcomes in conjunction with positive self-talk.

Another important aspect to consider is self-control and its relation to being positive. Positive mentoring suggests that mentees can learn how to influence and control their thoughts and in turn actions to impact positive outcomes.

In contrast, a negative mood, the opposite of feeling encouraged (Seligman 1991) narrows the mentee’s focus of attention (Bolte et al. 2003) and leads to more critical and analytical thinking (Kuhl 2000). Since mentoring is a form of problem-based learning, both forms of thinking are required. However, one form may be more motivating for people at specific times than the other, or they may need to be used in combination. A mentor will assist the mentee in achieving this balance. Positive mentoring would seek to heighten creative thinking in mentees.



**Fig. 2.1** A continuum of self-influence

Many of the problems brought for discussion by the mentee, often take the form of solving problems, which are both revealing and enjoyable. One way to encourage a self-analytical mindset for the mentee is for the mentor to hypothesise the problem, that is create ‘what if’ scenarios. An example of this is when the mentor picks up on the issues and reflects them to the mentee as questions so that the mentee can consider the issues from an alternative perspective. In that way, the mentee can defamiliarise them and take a more objective view of the situation.

Mentoring is a narrative, conducted through episodic (or serialised) conversations often in a cyclical way. These accounts reported to the mentor by the mentee are a set of their experiences, constructions and reconstructions of reality. They have become codified in the mentoring conversation: firstly by the mentee in the telling and re-telling of them and then by the mentor and mentee together through their reflection and analysis. The mentee and mentor consider the various themes and threads of their conversations from one meeting to the next. They look to find the linkages between the various themes with the help of the mentor so that the mentee can see the unified meaning of what has been explored, identified and developed for action. The point is that there is some higher level of organisation of the narrative taking place in mentoring initially by the mentor, then by the mentee. Only when an issue is maintained over a number of conversations does it become a structuring force, assisting both the mentor and mentee to organise the themes and sub-themes in relation to each other so that they can start to see the threads more clearly and therefore, be enabled to address the problem more comprehensively. This organising is purposive. It is one that rarely takes place in everyday conversations. The mentee’s stories combine into psychological wholes and become the artefacts of mentoring, taking on a reality of their own through the relationship between the mentee and the mentor.

Mentoring is a representation of the reality outside of mentoring for the mentee. Every story told by the mentee is essentially orientated towards a goal, the reason for the mentee telling it to the mentor in the first place. That is the mentee wishes to “... make a point, to transmit a message...often to bring about some sort of ...evaluation or implied critical judgement...” about what has happened (Polanyi 1985, p. 21). The observant mentor realises that the point of the story is the underlying goal and it requires further evaluation. It is for the mentor to uncover or unravel the goal and to reveal it for their sake and more often than not, the mentee’s.

### **Structuring Mentoring Conversations**

Narratives in mentoring are complex due to the porous boundary between, within and outside the mentoring relationship. This complexity could exemplify problems experienced by the mentor in managing the boundaries and limits the relationship with the mentee. In other words, the mentor attempts to take on too much in especially if the mentee is demanding or needy. Mentors need to accept positively their limitations either actual or bounded by the relationship itself. Often mentees will raise a matter that connects with the mentor as a person or their history. Mentors need to find a balance between feelings of vulnerability or being in or out of control.

While it is useful for the mentor to consider the conversations of the mentees along these lines, it is not as straightforward as that. Although the stories related by mentees follow a narrative line; they are not necessarily in the order in which a narrative might unfold. For example, a mentor will always start with an introduction or way of orientating the mentor to the story and/or viewpoint; the actions that occurred; followed by an evaluation of the actions and outcomes, for the purposes of seeking a resolution. A coda signals the finale (the aftermath following mentoring or outside of mentoring) and requires further reflection (see Labov 1972, p. 363).

Mentors need to be alert to how the conversation is initiated by the mentee. Their starting point is not necessarily the beginning of the “real story” so to speak. However regardless of this how they introduce it and what follows is highly significant to the problem in that it is stated as a way of orientating the mentor but not necessarily the initiating force of the problem itself. Even taking that into account, it is important for the mentor, and also the mentee, to understand that mentoring is not a purely formulaic process. It has natural flow and will be constructed by what the mentee and mentor each makes of it as well as what they make of it together. The element of their “togetherness” will characterise the value and outcomes of mentoring for the mentee as well as a degree of satisfaction. What is suggested here is a way for making sense and bringing some structure to the conversations. However, mentoring conversations have their own status and are and should be different to everyday conversations as there needs to be a focus on the themes and issues for their own sake.

A mentoring conversation, as stated, is not a routine conversation between two people, rather it uses particular methods by which the mentee and mentor engage together developing a fund of learning that is mutually shared during the duration of the relationship which is capable of constant development throughout it (see Bohm 2003). According to Senge (1994), dialogue helps people travel beyond the boundaries of their thinking. Through a process of mutual and reflective investigation, a deeper understanding of issues materialises with alternative constructions, bringing new insights into familiar patterns of thinking and experiences. The mentor is the ‘facilitator’ who ‘holds the context’ of the dialogue together (Senge 1994, p. 243).

The mentoring conversation is “the flow of meaning” and is catalytic in assisting people transform their current thinking by considering constraints imposed by them and others (Bell 1996). ‘Dialoguing’ has been discussed as a process of interactive learning together (Ballantyne 2004). The process for the mentee needs to be prompted guided by a thoughtful purpose to reach learning outcomes for the mentee. It is not an unbounded aimless conversation that a person might have with a colleague or a friend. Mentoring requires and demands ‘openness’, mutual engagement, genuine collaboration such that might not have been experienced by the mentee previously. It is not about conversing for the sake of it rather it will only proceed if trust, genuine self-reflection, exposure of clear and tacit ways of thinking, and willingness to grow through risk characterise the relationship (Bokeno 2007). There are three premises to this which are important and explored further in this chapter, Chaps. 4 and 10 specifically. Mentees learn how to be more creative

and innovative in their thinking and problem-solving. Secondly, they acquire a greater self-awareness and acceptance and finally with reflection, how they can affect change within themselves and their situations. To achieve this requires them going beyond one's "habitual way of thinking is to make the unfamiliar as easily digestible as possible. Normally people's perceptions are "automatic' or minimal'" (Lemon and Reis 1965, pp. 4–5).

In mentoring, it is important for the mentor to notice and steel themselves to attend to all aspects of the narrative, what is being said, what is not being said, how it is being related which refers to the non-verbal communication e.g. tone and pace of voice, facial expressions, eye contact, gestures and posture. Just as the mentor attempts to defamiliarise the mentee from their issues to provide the freedom for them to stand back, it is also important to defamiliarise themselves to become aware of their own perceptual barriers and filters for noticing, holding attention, bearing meaning and so on. The mentor needs to see the ordinary in an extraordinary light. While, in everyday conversations, parties may become aware of this either during or after the conversation, often either one or both let the issues intermingle in the narrative without foregrounding them in any way.

One of the distinctive features of mentoring mindedness is a realisation firstly by the mentor then by both mentee and mentor that the viewpoints presented by the mentee deviate from a "common sense" version of reality. A mentor may wish to employ the notion of mind style to reflect on how the mentee projects their worldview, a particular way of perceiving and making sense of the world:

A mind style may analyse a character's mental life more or less radically; may be concerned with relatively superficial or relatively fundamental aspects of the mind; may seek to dramatise the order and structure of conscious thoughts, or just present the topics on which a character reflects, or displays preoccupations, prejudices, perspectives and values which strongly bias a character's world-view but which s/he may be unaware.

(Fowler 1977, p. 103).

It may be necessary for the mentor to demonstrate the differences between the aspects of the story being presented and the prism through which the mentee is presenting them. The mentor needs to distinguish between literal and figurative accounts, both of which could be non-literal. The mentor has to employ strategies through questioning etc. to construct the mentee's intended meaning.

Language is the main vehicle used in conversation by the mentee and mentor apart from non-verbal communication. Language is social and relational (Bakhtin 1981) and is concerned with action that usually has an interpersonal purpose and outcome. The mentor is listening to the story in relation to the previous story or in relation to their own ideas and experiences which means that not only is there continual dialogue between the mentor and mentee but also within the mentor and separately within the mentee. This can create not only an internal struggle for each but an interpersonal one between the mentee and mentor especially as the conversations move to reflection, questioning and evaluation.

The outcome is that mentoring is multi-voiced not only in terms of the internal voices of the mentee and mentor, the voicing between them but also the voices which they carry inside their heads from significant others.

A mentoring framework requires a schema: “essentially, the context that someone needs to make sense of individual experiences, events, parts of situations or elements of language is stored in background memory as an associative network of knowledge. In the course of experiencing an event or making sense of a situation, a schema is dynamically produced, which can be modelled as a sort of script based on similar situations encountered previously. New experiences and new incoming information are understood by matching them to existing schematic knowledge.” (Stockwell Stockwell 2002, p. 255).

The term ‘mentee’ rather than ‘protégé’ is used in this book to refer to the broad range of individuals, as previously indicated, who may be in the role of “learner” within mentoring relationships, regardless of the age or position of the mentee and mentor. Speaking of relationships, whether one is called a mentee or protégé depends on the relationship with that of the mentor. For example, the protégé-mentor relationship is used when a less experienced person shadows or is chaperoned by an “expert” in a professional and organisational learning context. However, the reverse mentoring relationship is more suitable for peer to peer situations including professionals, friends and volunteers working together on community projects.

Further, the use of the term ‘protégé’ signifies a more limited learning role. For example, protégé suggests the less experienced person has been selected or chosen to work with a mentor, who is more likely to supervise their professional practice or chaperon them in a specific role in a range of contexts, anywhere from business, legal, health, scientific, teaching through to creative arts and performing roles. Whatever the circumstances, mentoring needs to be encouraged rather than imposed so even if a formal program is established, participants need to be invited to participate and given reasons for doing so as well as explaining the benefits and outcomes to them. It is also important to identify and acknowledge their preferences for mentoring and a mentor before deciding upon, or indeed imposing any pairing arrangements on them.

### ***2.2.1 The Context of Mentoring***

The nature of mentoring depends on whether it is (a) professional and/or workplace based or (b) community, network or relationship-based. Another consideration is that if the former, a mentee is likely to be in regular, frequent face-to-face contact with the mentor, more formal than the informality that may ensue in a mentee-mentor relationship. The latter is likely to meet less frequently say anywhere from weekly to monthly, although consistently using a variety of media and not only limited to face-to-face. However, there is another caveat: in today’s world it is highly likely that Skype or similar may be used if the mentee is remotely



situated e.g. any professional working in a national or international, regional setting.

In the example of (a) above, the mentee seeks a mentor for professional, training purposes as they start out or progress their early career. In this case, the mentor needs to identify the qualities together with the mentee that the latter wants to develop. Effective mentors need to demonstrate a meaningful relationship otherwise the mentee and also the mentor eventually will come to see it as a waste of time. In addition, a positive regard toward the mentee will manifest itself through the mentor's respect, encouragement, and support of them. Actions underlying effective mentoring include facilitating, guiding and sponsoring. The mentor relationship is more about teaching and sponsoring the less experienced person for a specific purpose, or so they can hone a skill or range of skills. In this case, the mentor is highly experienced and specifically trained in the mentee's field. That is not to say that a novice could not take on a mentor for non-specific purposes such as career development. If so, the relationship would be a mentee-mentor one. Sometimes the mentee is referred to as a protégé.

### **2.2.1.1 Use of Social Media**

One issue that arises in mentoring and also in coaching today is the question of whether a mentor should Google a mentee, prior to meeting with them, to ascertain information about them. This is a serious question for mentors to consider both from a process and an ethical perspective. The mentor could argue that the mentee has posted information about them online and, therefore, it is public information. No one could argue that this is not the case. However, the information about individuals online has been posted over usually a significant period, and much of it could have changed. The other issue is how relevant is it in regard to professional mentoring. While mentors do not need to be registered to guide mentees there remain ethical considerations regarding the following:

- a. Informed consent to search online about the mentee
- b. Failure to disclose that a search has been conducted by the mentor
- c. Potential harm caused by the mentee feeling that they have been intruded on
- d. Motives for wanting to conduct an online search
- e. If permission is granted, when this best is done and should the mentee be present
- f. What information will the mentor deem necessary or relevant, or conversely which will be dispensed with and the reasons for each

### **2.2.1.2 Choosing Mentors**

In formal mentoring programs, individuals who are deemed desirable (a teacher, a good student, a good citizen, a good manager) are usually invited to become mentors. However what is more important in selecting mentors is ensuring they can

form positive relationships with the resources and capability to contribute to the learning of the mentee. Mentors do not always require the technical expertise to be successful. In many circumstances, the personal qualities of a mentor make a big difference: being a good listener is vital, capable of encouraging and creating opportunities to realise hidden talents and wanting to help people develop and succeed.

### **2.2.1.3 Mentoring as a Bridge to Self-sufficiency**

One of the most significant issues that mentees may harbour in mentoring concerns choice. The word harbour is used as mentees themselves may not recognise nor acknowledge it as an issue even though at a deeper level they will have preferences and feel frustrated if they cannot make an informed choice about mentoring and more importantly, the mentor.

The concept of making a conscious choice is essential. The choice is about more than providing a variety of options; it extends to ensuring people are fully informed and are able to make choices that take into consideration their capacity to understand the information presented to them and the implications of their actions. Ascertaining capacity can only be carried out through person-centred approaches in mentoring. It goes without saying that to apply a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is poor practice and fails to appreciate that each person is different and will have various views as to how they wish to receive mentoring.

The choice is so paramount that it needs to be evident in the mentoring process itself from the outset. The mentee's right to choose can make all the difference to what some mentees will be comfortable with including the preferred setting and what information they are entitled to have remain confidential and private. Control over these factors not only will impact the mentee's self-esteem but also contribute to expediting a trusting rapport with the mentor. It also will equalise the power between them and make them feel less inadequate should such feelings be present. The mentor may not be in a position to assess this from the outset.

Further, the range of approaches needs to be clearly explained to the mentees, so that they have a say in whether they wish to proceed, how they wish to proceed and that there are no repercussions should they decide against one or other of these.

Allowing potential mentees to state their preferred choice and selection is important. Using social media is one way of achieving this. Establishing mentoring groups, according to special interests, is another way. Facilitating people to link with a group with common needs through a website is a good way to achieve this too. Support for informal group creation, either by the mentoring program administrator or the participants themselves, including searches of mentor and mentee profiles to facilitate group formation are advisable. A SharePoint with designated areas for group discussions, Q and As, group event notices, project postings and document uploads, encouraging interaction and collaboration among group participants. Group administration and moderation are essential to assure program monitoring, evaluation and safety.

### ***2.2.2 The Mentee's Gender***

When selecting mentors for mentees, perceptions and assumptions about gender and gender identity are important considerations for a number of reasons. Being male or female is multifaceted. A woman may not feel feminine or masculine for that matter although she knows what it feels to be a woman as is the case for men. However, the gender composition of the mentoring dyad may influence

- a. the ease of discussion and immediacy of engagement in the mentoring process
- b. a willingness to be open and not self-protective—some mentees will be more open to others of the same gender, and this needs to be assessed. Equally, the same gender of both may facilitate the mentor being more readily able to relate to the mentee (Underwood and Moore 1982). However, a balance needs to be maintained to ensure there is a degree of partiality too (see Sect. 8.1).
- c. the ownership of issues;
- d. the signs of distress or embarrassment; and
- e. past experiences with one or other in a parallel process such as previous mentoring, coaching, counselling and so on.

Pairing up with a mentor is about the individual preferences of the mentee and whom they feel most comfortable with regardless of gender. More importantly, gender preference is related to the issues that the mentee wishes to discuss. The mentee's perceptions of whether the mentor will understand these and be able to guide them based on their own experiences or knowledge of the context will determine the choice of mentor. What is important is how connected the mentor is with the mentee (see Sect. 2.3.5).

### ***2.2.3 Gaining Agreement About Process***

As in everyday life, difficulties arise in mentoring, and these largely relate to communication issues. What largely goes amiss is the failure to establish a shared understanding rather than agreement. Mentoring aims to establish a “shared social reality” between the mentee and mentor. It is important to keep in mind that people in a relationship do not assume that they operate on the same information, assumptions and interpretations. To achieve this requires continuous checking largely through a questioning process.

To minimise communication deficits, it is important that the mentor, in particular, is continuously observant to conflict and errors in information sharing and identifying this as a possibility with the mentee. The approach by the mentor needs to be constructive (an element of positive mentoring) by either personally attributing the error to him/herself or to a situation. In both cases, the checking needs to facilitate inquiry rather than lay blame. This approach will reinforce

cooperative learning, enhance the sharing of information with both parties adjusting as they see fit. The approaches used in mentoring are discussed in further detail in Chap. 3.

In some mentoring relationships, the issue of silence is a challenge experienced differentially by both the mentee and mentor. Silence is open to misconstruction. Sometimes in conversations, silence means agreement, and it can equally mean disagreement. Sometimes both mentees and mentors are disinclined to raise personally and politically sensitive matters. From the mentee's perspective, it may be through fear of being judged. From the mentor's perspective, it may be uncertainty about the resilience of the mentee to cope with this. Silence is explored further in Chap. 7.

Although mutual expectations within a mentor-mentee relationship might not always be explicit, a commitment to the agreed objectives, a willingness to learn within the mentoring relationship, a resolve to devote the necessary time and energy to the agreed goals, and an expectation that the mentee becomes increasingly independent are essential prerequisites.

### ***2.2.4 Mentoring Stages of Learning***

To define mentoring in stages does not always reflect the reality of the developing relationship and the evolving conversations. The stages or phases of mentoring and the nature of conversations within this are shaped by the mentee's needs such as whether they require skill development, career guidance, transitioning from one role to another. Career advancement or relocation, repatriation, retirement, or disappointment in not getting the highly sought after promotion are all reasons for a person seeking mentoring. Each of these will have a different focus although each might contain elements of the other, albeit nuanced. For role transition, the focus might be on identification, internalisation and accommodation or the transition from peer to the teacher is a difficult one especially if the mentee's colleagues are more likely to have problems with letting go and acknowledging the new status of the formerly junior colleague. In each case, there is development from establishment through to redefinition which both the mentee and mentor need to address both interpersonally and circumstantially. One will be affected considerably if the mentoring relationship is required rather than based on the mentee's preferred mentor. Where mentoring has been imposed, the relationship may take longer to establish and for each to connect as the mentee will be warier of the mentor's motives and confidentiality. The effectiveness of mentoring depends on a resolution of each of the phases in mentoring to the satisfaction of the mentee. Table 2.1 summarises the alignment of the purpose of mentoring with the nature of the relationship.

**Table 2.1** The alignment of the purpose of mentoring with the nature of the relationship

Purpose of seeking mentor	Type of mentoring relationship
(a) Guidance in a general or specific (e.g. professional area, identity, role clarification)	Protégé-mentor relationships
(b) Early career development	Protégé-mentor relationships
(c) Assistance in navigating professional and/or institutional structures including conflicts and contradictions	Protégé-mentor relationships
(d) General personal development questions or issues as a professional or employee	Mentee-mentor relationship
(e) Broad career development	Mentee-mentor relationship
(f) Ethical and moral guidance	Mentee-mentor relationship
(g) Moral and ethical concerns	Mentee-mentor relationship

### 2.2.4.1 How Do Mentees Learn?

Mentees learn through of process of gaining insight, which entails observing, noticing what is being observed and then realising and drawing from the subsequent knowledge that arises from this. This process is conducted conjointly with the mentor. The mentor and mentee need to test the observations through a questioning process e.g. How does the mentee feel about the observation? This is an important question. The first answer may be different if the mentor asks the question again later in the conversation when the mentee has had a chance to explore it further first. Another question to ask is: Is the mentee focusing on the totality of the situation or a selected component of it? Are they open to considering it from a different or new perspective?

The mentor will guide the mentee back to the point of problem initiation or where the mentee feels this issue first arose. Together the mentor and mentee will uncover the evidence through questioning, explore what is discovered and eventually hypothesise alternative ways of seeing this. At first, the mentor needs to start this process with the points of greatest foci for the mentee. Otherwise, they will lose interest and see it as irrelevant (for further questioning also see Sects. 3.3 and 10.2). Observations include the target of the observation, any one or all of the following: attitude, action, relationships or an event. In order to understand these and gain insight it is important to view them as objectively as possible without evaluating them. Mentors work the mentee to assist them to observe it as if seeing it for the first time as well.

As information is revealed, issues and concepts can be further explored. A further way to consider doing this is by choosing an appropriate set of lenses. Analysis through a ‘lenses’ approach is a micro process used within mentoring or a macro-process that encapsulates the mentoring relationship. An example of this is learning through three lenses: transformational, humanistic and emancipatory

(Merriam et al. 2007). The first, transformational, facilitates mentees to discover meaning within their own experiences through critical self-reflection (Mezirow and Taylor 2009; Taylor 2008). The second perspective, humanist, allows mentees to develop or hone their critical thinking skills by using existing knowledge and motivations to develop their own approaches to self-learning through their own or mentor's direction. Once the information and understanding are creatively opened up them, the mentor and mentee seek to make sense of it gaining further practical understanding and skills.

In the third, emancipatory perspective (Mezirow and Taylor 2009), mentees become positioned for action based on an analysis of role and context: (a) organisational and legal contexts; (b) cultural including political situations; (c) learning about technical systems and processes e.g. policy context; and (d) motoric techniques e.g. performance of techniques through to the overall performance of a role e.g. clinical relationship with clients. Essentially, there are very few instances when issues cannot be resolved in some way. Many issues are created, exacerbated or suffered because people do not seek to stop, observe and explore them further. On more occasions than not, the way to resolve them is embedded in the challenge that the person is experiencing, and the issue is either how the person is viewing it, a lack of observation or within the relationships. This is what is meant by mentoring mindedness.

By opening up a situation for observation, exploration, reflection and analysis, some resolution can be found. If not, then the mentee can perhaps use the insight to gain an understanding of how to accept or use it as a turning point in their life. Many creative opportunities emerge from such realisations.

Reflection can be initiated by a “big picture” view using a qualitative, unstructured, open-ended, spontaneous approach guided by the mentor. At some point, this approach needs to become more focused and organised around the issues or questions that the mentee needs and wants to address.

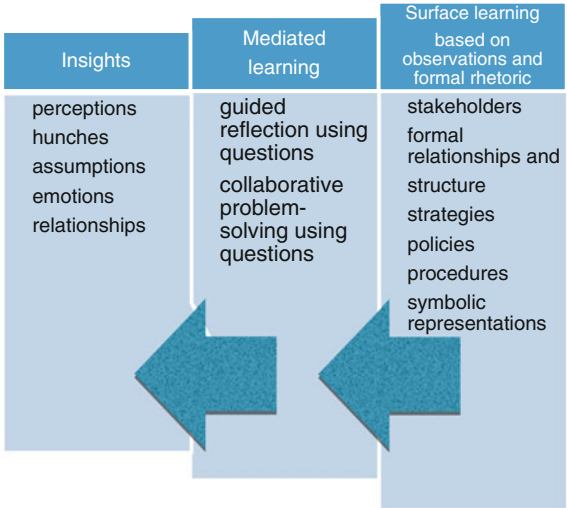
### **Gaining Insight**

Becoming insightful is picked up from cues that people detect instinctively and deliberately through focused concentration (Bautista et al. 2011). Further, the more people know, the more they use this knowledge to gain insight into new areas or to challenge their thinking. Both increase a mentor's capacity for insightfulness.

One of the main reasons that a mentee may request a mentor is that they realise they are cannot get a handle on the situation. They sense there is something deeper although unsure about this and have no way or system for “testing” their hunch. This sensation is a form of cognitive dissonance and mentees feel blocked. The positive side of this is that the mentee through their discomfort is keen to learn how to get out of it. Mentoring is not about a quick fix to resolve the mentee's level of discomfort rather it about working with the mentee to develop an approach where they can learn to lift themselves out of the dissonance by themselves. Table 2.2 is an outline of an approach to achieve this outcome. The mentor commences the process using examples familiar to the mentee to encourage the development of insight—a form of learning.

**Table 2.2** Gaining insight in mentoring

Mentee’s approach	Mentor’s approach	Learning principle
Discusses uncertainty about current context, role, stakeholder perceptions of them and to other	Wide—ranging experience of different organisations and workplaces	Use an analogy to draw the comparison between past situations that the mentee knows well with the current one
Undetected misunderstandings	Questions to drill down into misunderstandings and errors in assessment of the current situation	Queries the mentee on how they arrived at their mistaken conclusion
Understanding is based on superficial descriptions and structures in the situation	Questions the mentee so that they look beneath the surface	Uses examples that the mentee can identify with showing the difference between the tangible representations of the situation and people and the less perceptible
Thinking is chaotic rather than working through a guided approach such as the five “W” questions	Asks the five “W” questions focusing on why, what, who, when, where + how	Asking questions and not accepting things at face value nor taking observations for granted
Tends to rely on what they have learnt technically and through observation	Encourages mentee to distinguish how they know things: technical knowing; through observation; through reading and listening and using these forms to diagnose what they need to know in a professional or work context	Provides feedback and chooses another example for practice. Insight learning is useful for problem-solving especially where people are uncertain about the outcome or disagree about this



### 2.2.4.2 Divergent Thinking

Taking these various frames as reference points, the joint focus of the mentee and mentor is not only about the purpose of the connection, either cognitive dissonance, a perceived capability gap both identified by the mentee, or about relationships with their supervisor, peer or significant other but also role and context. The deficit may be more tangible for example, having to do with the mentee taking their next career step, changing careers or widening their influence or engagement in circles other than their immediate professional or work spheres.

It is the task of the mentor to work out whether or not the perceived gap is real or merely a perception. Even if the latter the mentor needs to work with the mentee to alter the perception if it is impeding further development of the mentee in desired directions. In doing so, the mentor needs to work out with the mentee whether there is a tacit acceptance of the gap or whether there is tacit capability or other capability gaps that the mentee is oblivious to.

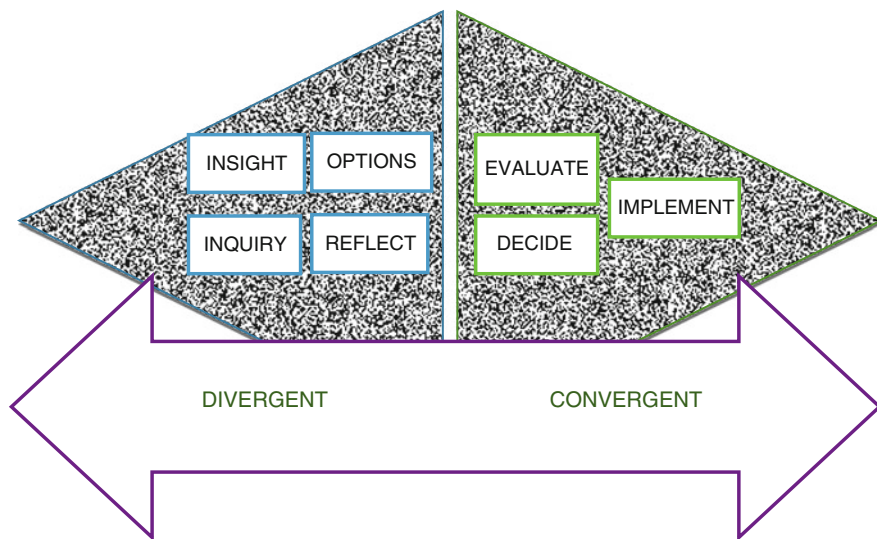
Mentors need to assess their own capability including potential gaps for assisting a mentee, either through self-assessment or peer-review through a colleague or friend. Mentors have a responsibility to establish a good relationship with the mentee through example and modelling, to maintain satisfactory standards in their own professional role of mentor (as well as their role outside of mentoring); to remain up to date not only in their professional knowledge of mentoring but also in maintaining an awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses. The focus of the mentor is in creating high standards of mentoring through an engaged process built on mutual learning.

It is then that the mentor can focus on the nature of the capability gap for the mentee, real or perceived. They both work together to understand and then figure out what the issues or questions that brought the mentee to the mentor. Then potential goals need to be planned and prioritised. A mentor intervenes in the learning process through listening, facilitation, challenging and providing overall support to assist the mentee in identifying and examining these aspects and seeing whether these are aligned to actions and plans. A formal mentoring conversation usually includes preparation, dialogue, commitment and closure to each meeting. It also involves agreement about goals around the process, accountability of each party to each other, and a plan of action. Following and identifying outcomes, opportunities for further development or advancement, assessing progress towards goals, and using feedback are important in producing the desired learning.

In terms of learning, mentoring draws upon two broad approaches: divergent and convergent thinking.

The divergent mode is open-ended, exploratory, inquiry-based focusing on the future and is used in the early phases of mentoring especially in the first meeting. A mentor will employ this mode throughout the process. Often some mentors become frustrated with what they see as a time-consuming approach and quickly want to get to some answers, especially if the mentee appears anxious in this regard too.





**Fig. 2.2** Divergent thinking is supplemented by convergent thinking

Divergent thinking is supplemented by convergent thinking which is more analytical, evaluating the options that emerged through the divergent process. While the elements of the learning process generally occur in a particular sequence, there is no one right linear path. Mentoring is flexible and creative, providing the linkages and the flashes of insight that form it and lead to great outcomes for the mentee (Fig. 2.2).

Throughout the divergent learning process, mentors do not try to persuade or coerce, rather *encourage and challenge* their mentees. This is the phase for inspired learning, imagining what might be, followed eventually by a phase of pragmatic planning as they both move together towards convergent thinking—the end stage of mentoring. Between the beginning and end phases of mentoring, the mentee and mentor interweave divergent and convergent thinking depending on the issues at the end.

During the divergent phase, the mentor needs to assess the mentee's readiness for the mentoring process and then in the convergent phase, their readiness for commitment to implementation action plans arising from the mentoring. The mentoring readiness is relatively straightforward as it depends on the mentee-mentor relationship and how this develops. Compared to 'implementation readiness' this is much trickier as it depends on the professional context, supporters of the mentee, resources such as time and energy, resilience to withstand push back and so on.

Once readiness in the implementation phase is confirmed, then mentoring is based on supporting the mentee in this process. This will include assisting them prepare the ground for making changes such as applying for a new role inside or

outside their current employer, providing comment on a business case for a new project, communicating with key stakeholders, building a personal brand and so on. However, it may be nothing more than the mentor encouraging the mentor to remain focused, assess priorities and make decisions as appropriate.

### **2.3 What Is It About the Mentoring Relationship that Allows a Person's Potential to Emerge, Be Shaped or Flourish?**

Learning is, more often than not, accidental or unintended, whether it is planned or not. Mentoring facilitates the mentee to progress from inadvertent learning towards intended learning, self-knowledge and building the personal capability to deal satisfactorily with the ups and downs of life. This type of learning is positive in that it builds self-awareness, knowledge and ultimate resilience.

An unfolding narrative facilitates an exploration between the participants to find out what is going on in the situation under focus and what does it mean for them. What can they learn from this? People get little practice or opportunity for intrapersonal reflection. Mentoring offers the opportunity to learn this skill with a person who is prepared to explore, challenge and listen and reflect together on the responses and outcomes.

Let's consider the broader question of what a mentor offers the mentee and how this influences them throughout the relationship and beyond. In many situations, public and private, people learn from each other informally through observation, modelling or shadowing, and also through conversations and conflicts. How many times does one hear the expression "if only I'd thought of that at the time" indicating that people reflect on past conversations after the event and learn from the further contemplation about the experience. Mentoring facilitates deeper contemplation, either during or post conversation. It is through this process where further self-learning occurs, not only the process but also useful outcomes.

While mentoring varies from situation to situation, at a macro level it requires the following three dimensions: issue exploration, identification of the prime issue, agreement and then analysis about where to from here. To further demonstrate the learning component of mentoring, take the example of a younger, less experienced person working with a seasoned mentor where the mentor is assisting the mentee in steering a new or career-changing direction. Part of the exploration is working out the reasons for the change, making explicit the assumptions on which the analysis is based, the purpose for doing so and the risks associated with the likely outcomes. In this brief scenario, the mentee and mentor have to trust each other's openness, to believe that any proposed new direction is emanating from the mentee principally and not being imposed as well as it being in the mentee's best interest and for the mentee to accept that the mentor is acting in good faith. Trust is crucial for "un-picking" the current action and formulating new goals. Furthermore, trust can be

divided in terms of emotional and instrumental trust (based on Zhu et al. 2013). The former focuses on sentient, and interpersonal aspects of the relationship whereas instrumental trust represents the characteristics of the mentor and mentee such as their capability and consistency within the relationship. Emotional trust facilitates the relationship between the mentor and mentee which points to the magnitude of affective trust as it involves the deeper emotional state of the mentee. Affective trust allows individuals to be honest about their susceptibilities and diminishes fears and lack of confidence which may hinder learning and performance in their roles beyond mentoring. The emotionally arousing nature of trust leads to mutual exchange and rapport which eventually translate into positive work outcomes for the organisation (Zhu et al. 2013).

Building new personal capacity requires expanding our network of relationships and this also takes time. So often in mentoring, the mentee has to step back rather than forward, a process that is never easy those mentees who are keen to progress rapidly. Helping mentees to take a step back is never easy nor is supporting them to rethink and to fortify their personal capability. Both are crucial for their future development.

### ***2.3.1 The Role of Confidence***

Confidence is a cognitive skill which is equated with self-efficacy, defined as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” Bandura (1986, p. 391). Simply expressed, self-efficacy is self-belief in what a person can or cannot achieve. This is very powerful. The beliefs people have about their capabilities are significant in shaping not only their own perceptions of their capability but also those of others. If a person believes they will not succeed, this is communicated to others subliminally.

Upon commencement of the mentoring relationship, some mentees may present, experiencing low confidence, which is inevitably inhibiting their overall capability in some way. This wearing down of self-confidence is often a gradual process over time so that by the time the mentee presents in mentoring, their low morale is apparent, and they have realigned their expectations accordingly. In other words, their talent resource is eroded too.

In other cases, a low self-belief may be less apparent as the mentee has now become skilled in covering it up. This is harder for the mentor to detect and if sensed, discuss. However, a similar pattern may be occurring where the mentee has downgraded their expectations about possibilities, which is also part of the “covering up” that they have achieved.

In both scenarios, people learn to become risk averse. Their personal judgments about their capability to perform can influence how they think, feel and behave, especially as work tasks increase in demand. If the demands become too great, mentees may become overly prudent in taking up challenges leading others to make

negative evaluations of their capability. These external assessments are more to do with mentees in this situation being overly cautious than the capability *per se*.

Often self-confidence originates due to comparisons, real or false, with others e.g. peers, supervisors, and is intensified when those others are also evaluating the mentee's performance and indirectly, their capability.

The experience of low confidence may be a tacit one. In mentoring, a person's self-efficacy can be viewed through a prism of their achievements, their perceptions of situations and their comparisons with others that they bring to the mentor for discussion.

One approach is for mentors to suggest new approaches with mentees to see how willing they are to take on something novel or unfamiliar to them. Mentors who give mentees options may observe them consistently taking the less challenging option. Mentors can use such insights from these conversations to work with the mentee in getting to the source of the issue, which is whether it is low confidence, poor capability, both or some other factor.

Self-efficacy is learned and, therefore, is a skill. It is important that mentors understand the process structuring these conversations and how they can work with mentees to enhance their self-efficacy in the same way that any other skill is learnt and developed.

The mentoring relationship can falter if mentors neglect to develop the self-efficacy of their mentees, especially if this is at the heart of the matter for the mentee. If neglected, the mentee with low self-efficacy is likely to become disheartened as they had hoped that mentoring may be a chance to re-invigorate and boost their confidence. If the mentor does not engage on this level with the mentee targeting the nub of the issue, mentees will become easily disheartened, and either gives up on mentoring or if in a formal program, go along with it until they can be released from it without losing face. They certainly will not call upon their mentor to assist them further.

On the other hand, the mentor may find that they invest an inordinate amount of time trying to re-invigorate mentees or to reassure them over and over again. For example, Karen, a hardworking team member volunteered for formal mentoring to assist her take the next step in her career, a team leadership role. After some weeks of getting nowhere with her mentor, Karen was offered another mentor to replace her current one who was leaving the organisation. With much persuading, Karen admitted she had lost confidence in her desire to move forward as she felt her mentor had not assisted her in keeping her embryonic aspirations of becoming a leader alive. This led to a useful discussion of realistic expectations for herself with her new mentor. Eventually over a few more meetings, Karen re-engaged and set out a career plan with actions for this future prospect.

When a mentor does not boost, or worse, deflate the self-efficacy of the mentee by not dealing with it directly, the relationship will stall and become ineffective. From thereon in, mentoring is a waste of time. Whenever the real issues are not discussed, this is the outcome. See Chap. 3 on how to structure the mentoring conversation.

As self-efficacy of the mentee decreases and the longer this occurs, there is increasing probability that they will not achieve the required competence to prepare them for the next step, which is a double jeopardy for them leading to increased anxiety and opportunities for them to opt out. Dealing with this predicament is a must.

Past performance accomplishments are the most dependable source of information that influences self-efficacy judgments because they rest on actual mastery experiences (Bandura 1977). The relationship expectations of self-efficacy and outcomes are reciprocal. When a person feels in control, they align their expectations accordingly, and this influences their performance including what opportunities they will engage in, being less cautious about this, re-attempting after a failed first attempt, the amount of effort expended and the duration of effort and preparation for what lies ahead. The cumulative effects of this process increase a person's perceived control of a task, especially if this is accompanied by trusted feedback from a mentor. When mentees better understand their past performances and why and how they achieved the outcomes they did, they are more likely to feel efficacious. A sense of efficacy motivates their determination to success. Consequently, they are more inclined to try again and apply what their learning in specific situations to broader ones; and take similar risks in a new one. In addition, mentees may persist if at first they do not succeed, learning more about how to improve their performance and outcomes in diverse contexts, and in this way increase their sense of control, which feeds into their self-confidence.

There are several ways to do this: confidence is developed more sustainably where mentees achieve tasks which are relatively straightforward but have not been attempted previously with negligible external assistance and also on more difficult tasks (Bandura 1986). Once mentees have tried it for themselves, this is enormously powerful and confidence-building for them.

To summarise the approach and to experiment it within the mentoring context first as follows:

- (a) A mentee reflects on past situations. The mentor works through these with open questions.
- (b) A mentee reflects on comparisons with others. The mentor works through these with open questions. In conversation, it is more than likely that (a) and (b) will be integrated.
- (c) For both (a) and (b) above, the mentor explores the situations by asking
  - I. Why aren't you good enough? Waits for a response.
  - II. In response I am not good enough to take on that role or perform the task, the mentor can ask, "who says?"; "compared with whom?" It is useful to work with the mentee to uncover and deal with their faulty logic especially if they are basing it on an idealised version of self.
- (d) The mentor provides and elicits feedback and observes the mentee's emotional expressions including commenting on if there is a detectable change in conversational climate.
- (e) The mentor elicits key thoughts from the mentee about their observations.

- (f) Together they plan a new cognitive approach using a specific situation—start with a successful one then work to one which is more challenging.
- (g) The mentor guides discovery through planned risk-taking by the mentee in a given situation fully supported.
- (h) A time is set aside to reflect and work out what worked and what didn't.
- (i) The mentor assists the mentee to apply fresh understanding and new actions.
- (j) Then the mentee practises, practises and practises with the mentor.
- (k) Then applies it in a real situation without the mentor.
- (l) The process of reflection with the mentor is recommenced working through what happened in (i) above.

### ***2.3.2 Self-sufficiency***

Whereas, in Aristotelean times, autonomy was predominantly used to describe city states, now autonomy is interpreted as self-sufficiency and applies to individuals. Relational accounts of autonomy have proposed to widen the perspective to the social context of choice (Berofsky 1995). Philosophically, personal independence (self-sufficiency) and the capacity for decision-making (or competence) is related. All things considered, self-sufficiency is the capacity for people to make choices and act on them based on their own reasons, desires, values, commitments and emotions at any given point in time. Decision making occurs following a period of deliberation—short or long—by the person.

### ***2.3.3 The Value of Self-sufficiency***

Fostering autonomy is one of the main purposes in mentoring to assure a strong mentee and mentor relationship. A mentoring relationship needs to be open, reassuring and accepting. Self-sufficiency or sense of personal autonomy (albeit semi-autonomy) is valued in most societies albeit in varying degrees both historically and situationally. The issue for the mentor and mentee is to become self-sufficient by questioning for: why, in what circumstances and how? For instance, self-sufficiency is considered to be a public good in society on the grounds that the moral and legal rights of individuals are respected and protected. It also guards people in both states and institutions against total authority and exploitation and indeed, over-protectiveness (e.g. the Nanny-State). Moreover, most societies pay lip service at least to ensuring that children are reared to be self-sufficient as this is associated with upstanding, moral purpose and values. However in most societies there are children growing up “on-the-street” and who survive on “their wits” by being self-sufficient and resilient although not necessarily acting morally or legally, either out of the necessity of subsistence or otherwise. The same could be said for

individuals participating in many different settings including institutions, work situations and community locales. Regardless of the circumstances self-sufficiency is important. Otherwise, individuals experience low self-efficacy and resilience, low accountability and responsibility and feel less authenticated which leads to a sense of uncertainty, low self-esteem and eventually anxiety.

In these settings moral purpose and rationality are taken-for-granted but this varies depending on a person's understandings, capacity to control or influence the situational contingencies such as formal/procedural processes as well as substantive ones.

Reflective understanding is paramount in considering the struggle for self-sufficiency for the mentee regardless of which stage they are in their professional life cycle. In an age of entitlement, many people are now struggling with wanting something and wanting it immediately, even though it is may never be attainable.

There is also the issue of lack of self-sufficiency by default—automatic response without reflection. In short, the person is not reflective enough to realise that they have some control over the situation and if the action that is expected does not fit in with their preferences, they do not need to follow.

The second issue is the moral purpose and rationality underlying the action and to the extent that the mentee supports it or not or indeed is obliged to support it legally or by virtue of the profession that they have signed up to perform.

Teasing out legal and professional reasons from personal preferences and emotions allows the mentee to prioritise preferences and choices as a way of sifting through the parameters of significant decisions to act in one way as opposed to another. It also means that the person's sense of self and their right to act on their needs is taken into account as well as the value pluralism of the contexts in which they participate.

The mentor needs to be able to assist the mentee to question their world view, their perception of the contextual factors and participants as well as their beliefs, desires and preferences. It is through this process that self-sufficiency further develops which is associated with self-efficacy and resilience.

The notion of world-view is a very important concept for the mentor to use as a tool. By examining the mentee's world view, the mentee is able to view different perspectives and how and why they took them in particular situations. From this both the mentor and mentee can engage in making inferences and test out how the mentee's actions may be being evaluated by others (Ruby and Decety 2004). This tool is a salient one for the mentor in considering issues such as blame, guilt, silence and loyalty in the latter half of this book.

However, the mentee needs to be within the bounds of the morally permissible to count as (genuinely) autonomous (Meyers 1989). Self-sufficiency means that individuals self-legislate according to their interpretation of the moral dictates of the situation as far as they realise it (O'Neill 2003).

Self-sufficiency has its limits due to the evident pluralism of values and assumptions of rationality within modern societies. Mentors and mentees face the challenge of being sufficiently broad to be compatible with this pluralism, but also

pragmatically attuned to how this is applied in relevant settings for mentees. It is a challenge because people assume that at least once they reach early adulthood they have the right to self-determine and in doing so often do not meet standards of substantive rationality. In fact, respect for individual autonomy within liberal states includes the legal protection of irrational, 'unwise' choices.

Collective efficacy is the relationship between the mentor and the mentee that is required for effective mentoring. Collective efficacy could also be used beyond this relationship as the mentee learns to build a network with others for support.

### ***2.3.4 The Role of Influence in Mentoring***

Throughout such processes, the success of mentoring is about the mentor influencing rather than "telling" the mentee. The main process for this is 'listening' to the mentee, which sounds simple enough. However, the failure to listen well is a frequent barrier. It leads to a faulty exploration between the mentor and mentee, conversations that go nowhere, overly prolonged mentoring or an eventual breakdown in the mentoring relationship. Mentors need to understand that they do not need to come up with answers for everything.

Influence relies on this important listening skill. If a mentor listens well, a mentee will follow suit eventually. Each is subjected to the other's energy, control and resistance. The mentor influences the mentee, although as stated previously, this is never a one-way exchange. Influencing each other flows from the deepest source of human understanding. The challenge for each is to accept or counter the other's influence depending on the nature of the persuasion and to what purpose it is being addressed. The mentee should never be dominated by the mentor, who may be revered for their achievement or status (seniority) as this would defeat the purpose of mentoring. However, the mentee needs to be open and also listen to consider alternative questions if they are to explore well and learn. Indeed, one of the outcomes of mentoring is to improve one's capability to influence others and not to be dominated by them, particularly where one's own ideas are being subjugated.

Mentoring reveals the role that power and influence play in every relationship and how to act vigorously to participate in this process and not stand on the sidelines. Selecting an appropriate mentor is important in learning to find and balance power in this relationship so as to experience and learn from it. Further, mentors need to be well connected so they can call upon these resources, although ideally they should not be the mentees' supervisor as the capacity to be open may be thwarted due to their potential power to reward and sanction. That is not to say that supervisors cannot use mentoring as a device for developing skills in their staff teams as it can work in general terms.

An unsuccessful mentoring relationship is like an accident that makes people reluctant to participate in again. "A negative relationship can affect morale, stress levels and even turnover rates. Those who have a bad experience with mentoring



are often reluctant to take part in another relationship.” (Cranwell-ward et al. 2004, p. 209). Empowering participants rather than incapacitating them is the key to exerting positive influence with mentees.

### ***2.3.5 What Makes a Successful Mentoring Relationship?***

Firstly, as already suggested, mentees are required to commit to acting on their new learning and make decisions about how to modify their actions, their thinking and their approach to others. This is as much about refreshing mindsets, self-reflections, re-evaluating and a commitment to change. It is a form of learning where the mentee has to ‘be’ in the present and not ‘absent’, unlike in other learning situations, such as the classroom or in a clinical therapeutic situation where the “learner” can “switch off” does not necessarily “buy into” the process. If mentees become disinterested or preoccupied, the mentor needs to be attuned to this and bring them back into the moment.

Secondly, mentoring takes time. The amount of time devoted to mentoring will vary depending on its nature and the roles and experience of the people involved. Some pairs will meet regularly and frequently while others will agree to get together as needed. The former is suited where young and less experienced mentees are involved and the latter where it involves professional equivalents or differently experienced people of similar status. Whatever the circumstance, successful mentorship requires frequent meetings at the beginning of the relationship so as to establish a good foundation for moving forward. Meetings do not always require personal contact and could be achieved through Skype, email or phone. Peer mentoring can be done in a similar way and through electronic discussion fora too.

Thirdly, for mentoring to be effective, sponsorship needs to be a significant feature of the mentoring relationship whereby the mentor can draw upon their influence and networks to gain some advantage for the mentee e.g. additional resources, career opportunities, and the like. For example in Australia and other western countries, women aspiring to become board members of listed companies are seeking out formal mentors with the expectation that this will give them a real opportunity to gain a seat on boards (Korporaal 2010). It will not if they have not built up a track record of effective board participation, and this usually starts with an introduction by a mentor to a board or committee that is within their early experience.

## **2.4 The Outcomes of Mentoring**

A core benefit of mentoring for both parties is multi-dimensional learning. Learning through feedback, how to make decisions, impact others as well as understanding how to align individual goals with actions, resources and plans are often dealt with

simultaneously. Learning is two-way: mentors offer valuable knowledge and skill development based on their experience to provide a pathway out of life's cul-de-sacs. Equally, mentees can offer valuable resources to the mentor to reciprocate their support (Mezias and Scandura 2005). Moreover, mentoring provides for both, individually and together, feedback about their assumptions and roles (Hall 1996) and is an effective way for both to broaden their vision on career development (Liu et al. 2009).

Other benefits from a positive mentoring relationship are feeling more self-aware and self-confident; more closely connected to the organisation and finding work more satisfying and meaningful. Mentoring maximises knowledge and can be passed onto others outside the relationship. "It helps people build new relationships and strengthen existing ones; people become more collaborative in their performance and learning, and individuals feel more prepared to offer themselves as mentors to others" (Zachary 2005, p. 9).

## 2.5 How Is the Mentoring Relationship Qualitatively Different from Other Types of Relationships?

Mentoring is a primary *conversation* whereby the mentees need to feel "*protected*" by the mentors and that the mentor is "there" for them. This is particularly important for Generation Y workers who respond well when they are provided prompt feedback and credit for results achieved (Martin 2005; Southard and Lewis 2004).

It revolves around a personal, intimate conversation transmitting shared meaning; it is responsive, deeply satisfying, trusting and influential (Nezlek 2001). All of these characteristics make life more fulfilling and *positive*. Intimacy inherent in mentoring is impossible in situations where there are more than two people present, such as group training sessions, apprenticeships or on-the-job training. Consequently, a one-on-one mentoring relationship becomes extremely significant and worthwhile if it works. So while mentoring does *occur within, overlap* and *parallel* other forms of collaborative, learning relationships, these rarely contain the particular ingredients and benefits that mentoring affords its participants, both for the mentor and the mentee (Tenner 2004).

Mentoring covers the full gamut of learning relationships from the novice (who is highly educated and wanting to learn more in a specific field) to the highly experienced (someone who has wide-ranging experience and is able to know a situation based on their past experience). Elements of counselling, coaching and team building comprise mentoring. Although the learning outcomes are critical for the mentees, the value of mentoring as distinct from other learning relationships is that the process itself is as important source of modelling, transforming and self-development. A focus on process entails unpacking the thinking and feelings of the mentee, reflecting on the degree of coherence between emotions and reasoning,

intentions and aspirations, implementation and follow-up. What contributes to the effectiveness of mentoring is the degree of self-engagement and the nature of the interpersonal communication between the mentor and mentee and how this affords them a store of information including sensitivity to contextual meanings, perceptions, interpretations as well as being able to tease out the distinctions between these. In other words, the communication is primary.

### ***2.5.1 Types of Mentoring***

Mentoring Relationships are established in various ways. Some of the major ones are considered here used exclusively or in conjunction with one or more of the others.

#### *Traditional One-on-One Mentoring*

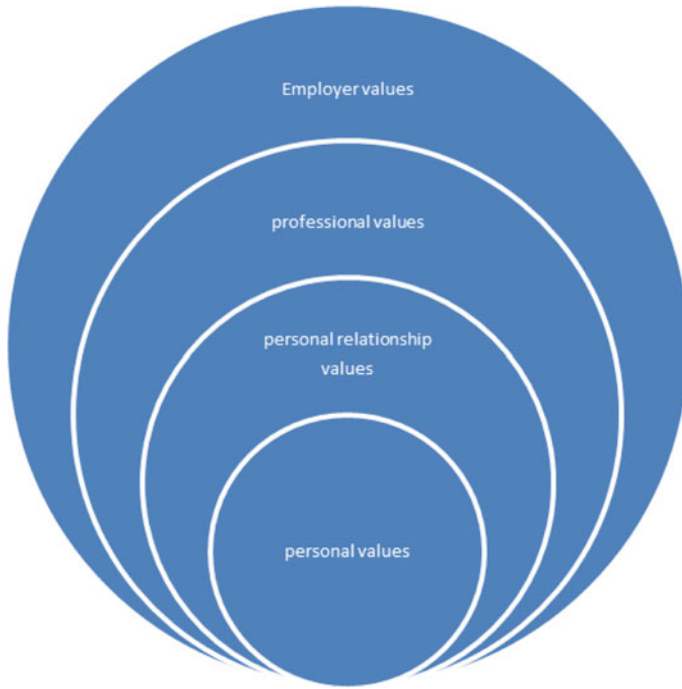
Traditional one-on-one mentoring is a type of apprenticeship whereby the most junior mentee learns from a more experienced mentor. As the label suggests, its aim is to groom the mentee for their next step, focusing on the values, decisions and performance. This is often formalised, although rarely compulsory, and the mentor or mentee are often selected and matched. It is used in schools and all types of organisations for supporting people to develop or learn new skills. However, mentoring can be informal where one or other party is sought out by the other. Whether it is formal or not, traditional mentoring may vary in its philosophy in regard to whether the mentor's viewpoint is that the mentee's thinking needs to be 'aligned' to that of say an organisation (dubbed 'alignment mentoring') or allows the mentee to come to their own position through reflection and reflective practice, more akin to professional mentoring.

#### *Professional Mentoring for Practitioners*

This is similar to traditional One-on-One Mentoring and primarily focuses on reflective inquiry into how the junior professional is improving the quality of their decisions and actions as a practitioner, for example, a medical practitioner, lawyer, teacher, social/youth worker, counsellor or nurse. Professional mentoring is often mandatory such as peer supervision for psychologists, coaches and the like. It provides a standards and an ethical base that enable the practitioner to evaluate their own approach, analyse their dilemmas and work through problems to resolution.

#### *Mentoring versus Sponsoring*

Sponsoring is a form of mentoring with one difference: "Sponsors go beyond giving feedback and advice; they advocate for their mentees and help them gain visibility in the company" (Ibarra et al. 2010, p. 83).



**Fig. 2.3** The spheres of cultural influence

### *Cross-Cultural Mentoring*

Culture is an integral part of person’s identity and, therefore, cross-cultural considerations need to be taken into account. Cultural values are realised from a person’s family of origin, family of procreation, friends, profession, religious institutions and the surrounding society. Figure 2.3 exhibits the spheres of cultural influence.

The mentee’s values can equivocate between different sets of values depending on the strength of relationships with each, incentives, conflict or dissonance at relational interfaces and other situational dependencies. If a mentee is from a collectivistic culture, its dominant values are group orientation, coexistent with a religious ideal, with nature/land as is the case with indigenous peoples in particular and/or focus on the past. A person’s cultural orientation will influence the choice of a mentor and mentoring as well as its impact. Both may need to be adapted accordingly. Suffice to say that mentorship has the potential to offer opportunities for genuine acculturation and cultural competence.

Culture not only influences how mentees and mentors think and feel but also their identity and their perceptions of how they think the other sees them. Identity is significant in all facets of a person’s life and changes albeit slowly throughout life’s course from a small child, student to a fully-fledged employee or professional.

In mentoring it is important for mentors to appreciate both the interfaces and intersections of the mentee's cultural values and belief systems. In professional relationships, people can maintain a certain distance (i.e., objectivity, neutrality) from the other whereas in mentoring it can be highly personalised and emotionally charged to all involved (Buckley and Foldy 2010).

Identity, on the other hand, is another multifaceted aspect of social and personal functioning that identifies the individual and gives them credibility and some self-esteem. Cultural identity highlights a person's uniqueness and could include, for example, gender, ethnicity and occupation.

Cultural identity combined with personal attributes influences the way a mentee presents initially and how they approach mentoring and realise its benefits. For example, a mentor needs to take into account a person's ethno-social position e.g. consider a Muslim woman working in a male-dominated western institution and the potential stressors for her in relation to her colleagues especially male; her home life that she leaves and returns to each day; her personal attributes and capacity to integrate with this organisational culture; any culture-bound beliefs; practices; codes of conduct and expressions of distress. It is inevitable that cultural identity will be fluid and may well change in response to a number of factors especially during mentoring. It is essential that mentors take this into account.

All mentoring should be conducted from a cross-cultural perspective. Cross-cultural mentoring not only refers to ethno and religious spheres but also the different value systems imposed on the mentee by virtue of their professional orientation and employment. Understanding mentoring from a cross-cultural perspective encourages and assists the mentee to probe into their underlying assumptions, values that impact on their perceptions and actions in the host culture. It is mentoring between people of different cultures such as in "ex-pat" situations. It works through an approach whereby the mentee is required to walk along two paths. A good example of this would be integrating an indigenous approach within the mainstream culture, especially where the mentee has to relate to people from their cultural background. Napier has explored the cross-cultural exchanges between foreign 'experts' who work as mentors in developing countries and local 'learners' who possess a great deal of locally-relevant knowledge that the foreigner needs and lacks (Napier 2006). The dialogue, learning, teaching and support across cultural differences are a vital component of cross-cultural mentoring relationship. The interaction between the two parties happens within the institutional context, and the decision to engage in those actions is influenced not only by the individual, but also by the institution's culture, faculty expectations, mission, and history.

### *Peer Mentoring*

Mentoring between peers of similar status such as school or University students is also beneficial in sharing information, problem-solving and support for each other. It overlaps with informal mentoring and is probably the most common and therefore, invisible form of mentoring. The key factor here is that peer mentoring includes personal approaches that are not always dealt with in formal programs.

### *Reverse Mentoring*

The mentee stereotype is typically conceived as a young or “junior” status person is paired with a more experienced, older person assisting their advancement (knowledge and skill development, work or career opportunities, job promotion) (Wanberg et al. 2003). Effective mentors could just as easily have less experience and provide a basis for new learning for others regardless of individual characteristics or experience. Similarly, the notion of Generation Y approaching work with different expectations compared to previous generations may also be over simplified. Over the ages, humans want, more or less, the same things from their working life regardless of whether it is a short or long career, continuous or not, that is, they desire security, satisfaction, belongingness, acknowledgement and growth. Many motivational theorists and research attest to this. Consequently, the stereotypes applied to Gen Y could just as easily be applied to the over 50s group. If one thinks of the baby boomer generation, the amount of change and innovation that has occurred in their lifetime has far outstripped that of Gen X or Gen Y. They were the first teenagers, the first hippies and transmogrified into “yuppies” and more recently, “sea and tree changers”.

While structured mentoring schemes are well-established for senior mentors and junior protégées, reverse mentoring schemes are relatively new (Greengard 2002) whereby the over 50s generation are paired with a Gen Y, for example, with a specific purpose in mind. However, there is widespread recognition that reverse mentoring, broadly defined as a one-on-one relationship in which the senior person learns from a younger/junior one, is more common than is acknowledged, if only because it happens informally and goes unnoticed. Reverse mentoring originates in the trend away from concepts of knowledge and power that parallel traditional mentoring to an equal relationship, whereby all participants, regardless of age, have something of value to contribute (Darwin 2000; Tempest 2003).

Trust is also essential in reverse mentoring especially where one member acts as a sounding board or takes on the role of the questioning partner: “why are you doing that? What are you trying to achieve? Wouldn’t you be better doing it this way?” and so on. (Welch and Welch 2006). This approach benefits younger people, giving them a voice in the leading to feeling more confident and valued by others (Cotugna and Vickery 1998; Leh 2005; Morgan and Streb 2001). This approach may be of particular value to Generation Y, whom some authors claim to be more interested than earlier generations in the moral, civic and social value that their work provides (Allen 2004; Cone 2006; Crampton and Hodge 2009; Glass 2007; Pekala 2001). The benefits of reverse mentoring open up networking and other benefits for young people (Leh 2005; Wong et al. 2008; Zanni 2009).

### *Group or Situational Mentoring*

While learning is often best served through a traditional one-on-one mentoring experience, sometimes it works better when people interact with multiple learners (group mentoring) or with multiple experts (situational mentoring). Different learning situations are important (Emelo 2010) and various approaches may need to

be trialled and used. Peer coaching and mentoring circles are alternatives to encourage relational learning beyond the one on one. For example, some employers have experimented with forms of peer coaching for cultural change and personal transformation. Others have established mentoring circles for the purpose of facilitating development. An example of this is where a senior leader, trained in managing group dynamics, meets with a small circle of people regularly to discuss particular issues that may be shared among them and uses the group's skills and knowledge to learn.

### ***2.5.2 General Approaches to Mentoring***

There are many approaches to mentoring including person-directed learning (Hezlett and Gibson 2005; Jones 2012; Lankau and Scandura 2007) and is often ignored (Allen et al. 2006; Baugh and Fagenson-Eland 2007; Eby and Lockwood 2005; Parise and Forret 2008). The approach selected is often determined by the mentor or the human resource management department if conducted in an organisational setting. The range of approaches is primarily dictated by the focus which is often determined by the mentee including:

- (a) Attaining specific goals e.g. career,
- (b) Exploring future opportunities e.g. change of career or life focus, developing a new specialisation; or changing organisations or locations,
- (c) Gaining higher levels of understanding,
- (d) Assuming greater responsibility for developing capability in a specific or range of areas,
- (e) Dealing with specific conflicts professionally, in the workplace or in personal life,
- (f) Re-energising their thinking for professional purposes, and
- (g) Dealing with diversity e.g. self in relation to others.

Each approach may require the mentor working in different ways: focusing on some issues and not others that emerge in the conversation, working with the mentee in contrast to guiding them; setting goals with or for them or not; questioning openly or challenging; giving examples; interpreting; permitting the mentee to control the rhythm and pace of the relationship or just being an “ear” and listening.

The important thing is that the approach is discussed and actively selected by the mentee with the mentor's guidance; adjusting the approach to the needs of the mentee as it flows. The nature of the conversation, the questions, amount of listening, pause and silence are each aligned with the general approach. This is discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

Within the selected approach, there is an important foundation for mentees and mentors to consider, which becomes evident as the dialogue between them

continues. The conversations will manifest mutually consistent interpretations between the mentee and mentor about issues under discussion, inconsistent interpretations as well as some that do not make any sense immediately. All three standpoints are useful for discovery and reflection, and so this warrants further questioning as follows:

- a. What are the commonalities of interpretation?
- b. What are the differences in interpretation?
- c. What are the ambiguities and complexities that neither mentee nor mentor appreciate and that need to be teased out further? and
- d. What purpose does each of (a), (b) and (c) above serve, especially in the mentee's world beyond mentoring?

One of the learning points for mentees is that learning uncovers resistance both within themselves and within their relationships. A mentee might want to discuss that they are dealing with a cohesive team, that is riddled with tension. Moreover, a cohesive group may disagree with the leader. However, their dissent has not been broached openly for various reasons. The mentee confronts the conundrum and brings it to mentoring for discussion (See Chap. 7).

### 2.5.3 *Diversity*

Since diversity is a critical fact in professional and work life, this approach will be discussed first as many of the other methods listed above are co-related. While most people experience their world as diverse, most have a limited exposure to the complex nature of diversity. Globalisation and commoditisation of products, services, travel and social media have made our experiences of diversity more varied than probably any previous decade or time in history. Most institutions whether they are government, business, education, health, defense or religion respond to diversity through political measures, laws and legal norms surrounding minority rights as well as framing a new language and syntax in an attempt to be inclusive of social groups. Some people would regard the latter as banal and purely cosmetic rather than a truly felt value. Despite this, diversity means different things to different people with many being indifferent to its social and political significance. As developing countries take their place in the supply chain of globalisation as they supply labour and resources, diversity is further nuanced through “the emergence on the political stage of local communities, indigenous peoples, deprived or vulnerable groups and those excluded on grounds of ethnic origin, social affiliation, age or gender, has led to the discovery, within societies, of new forms of diversity. The political establishment has in this way found itself challenged” (Unesco 2009, p. 4).

Diversity is often distinguished between dimensions of difference that are considered either “given” or “assumed” (e.g. age, ethnicity, gender identity, race, physical abilities, sexual orientation) or “adaptable” through education, belief,



social status and so on. Both are visible in the sense that Alcoff (2006) describes although some are more permanent and less variable for obvious reasons e.g. race, age, gender—although this too is changing.

How tangible diversity is in most people's everyday lives is an interesting question. Part of the answer lies in whether a person or not is largely representative of mainstream society or not. This question is relevant for mentoring that is, how people define and perceive diversity. The significance attributed to diversity will depend on the degree of palpability of the felt identity by individuals and how this creates differences between themselves and others; whether this is personally or socially attributed or both. Perceptions of group composition especially of the “in” group and the “outgroups” are related to how accepted people feel, how the institution values diversity and lives up to its policies and language. Diversity points what is valued and in relation to career and career prospects, this is vital.

### ***2.5.4 Gender and Social Inclusion Focus in Mentoring***

Diversity is a value that most institutions publically claim; how it is experienced by staff and other stakeholders is an open question. Whether public or private, most organisations protect the ‘goodwill’ of their business and do everything they can do to preserve it. Goodwill is an asset, something to be quantified and valued like reputation and brand, especially at the time of either selling the business, takeover or merger. It is also used in calculating the performance of the Board and the CEO. Goodwill has both a qualitative and quantitative aspect in terms of an organisation's standing as a ‘good employer’ or a ‘good service provider’. The “good employer brand” is powerful in trying to attract the best and brightest talent.

And yet diversity and efforts in striving to become socially inclusive does not always form a significant part of goodwill or the organisation's “good employer” brand. To be fair, an increasingly number of employers today perceive themselves as such, at least philosophically even if they cannot always directly apply their policies to the fullest extent or attain the desired targets. Most large organisations have a charter of equality on their official website accompanied by images depicting the diversity of their staff, customers, and clients as well as marketing collateral to that effect. In the banking industry, for example, it goes without saying that banks play a significant institutional role in most economies, given their huge workforces and dominance on the listed market. There are a number of other similar non-listed institutions in the financial, education, health and commercial sectors of most economies. Universities are another important example given the value of the education to export markets. It is safe to conclude that such institutions are important in leading diversity even if they are not always making significant progress in real terms.

Just as gender and ethnocultural inclusion are important aspects of institutional branding, these organisational attributes are critical to the employment relationship and its associated aspects (e.g. appointment to positions of power, remuneration,

role and managerial transitions) as is a disability. Gender, for example, plays different roles in people’s professional development as well as their cultural identities. The existence of a glass ceiling has been well documented (Cotter et al. 2001; Maume 2004; Elliott and Smith 2004). The reverse for men working in female-dominated professions is not founded by research; in fact men experience a certain amount of favouritism in recruitment, selection and promotions to higher-paying, more prestigious positions in these fields (Budig 2002; Snyder and Green 2008). However, the research also shows that men from mainstream backgrounds are more likely than minority men to benefit from working in female-dominated jobs (Wingfield 2009). This reality affects mentees and is an issue that frequently precipitates the search for a mentor. What is going on here?

Figure 2.4 outlines the situation in any given workplace and attempts to explain the interaction between a number of key factors used in the professional milieu, industry and workplaces. Specifically, employment is guided by merit, variously

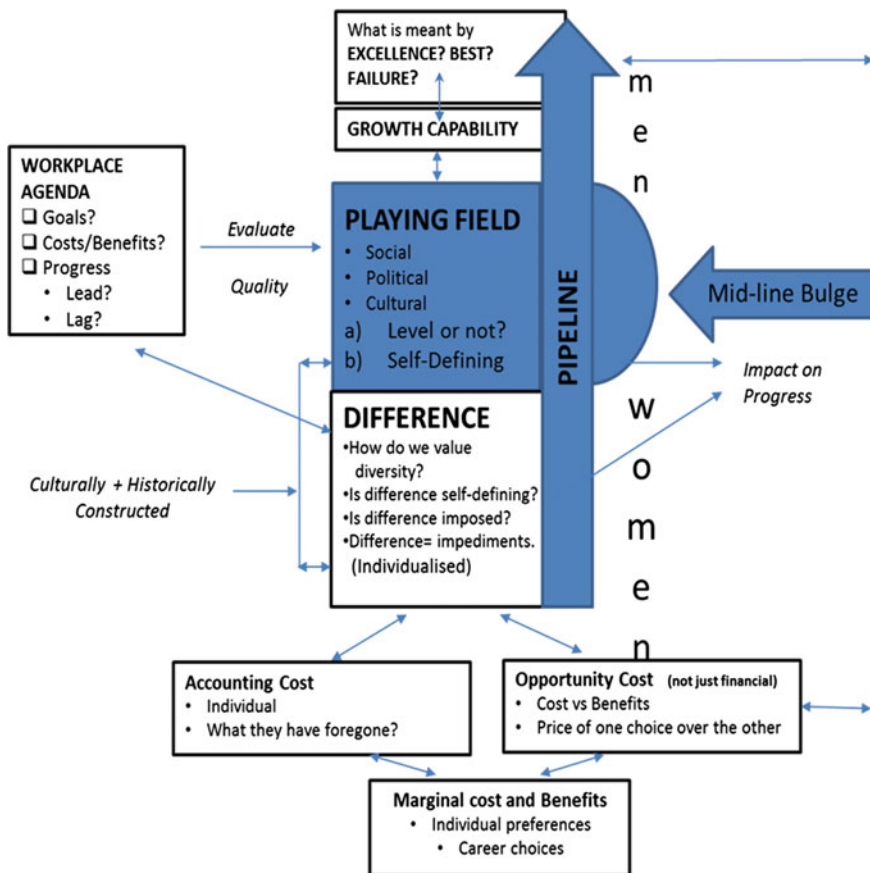


Fig. 2.4 Workplace culture, goals and the pipeline

referred to as seeking to employ the “best” talent. Many decisions that are taken based on this, however, have an adverse impact on building the talent pool which depends on growing capability especially for the pipeline of talent, diversity, equality and individual performance and progress. This point will be demonstrated below. Each factor applied to any given workplace seems fine at face value. However within the state of affairs depicted in Fig. 2.4, there are opportunity costs for all, especially women, and those from diverse cultural backgrounds and with disabilities.

In this context, an opportunity cost is a depleted value to the business of some people not being employed or promoted at the expense of others. In selecting staff, it is rare for this to occur that is, to quantify and qualify the value of two individual’s capability, current or prospective experience is evaluated against the benchmark of merit. Noting that merit is often not explicitly defined other than being thought of as the “best” person for the job or in some cases, indicators such as revenue growth, cost savings, new services, etc. It is important to analyse what is meant by opportunity cost. In the case of talent decisions it includes both

- a. quantitative factors (e.g. budget capacity to hire, skill acquisition and development, training costs, familiarisation costs, capacity to work non-flexibly, level of experience (often narrowly conceived and assumed), salary costs) as well as
- b. qualitative ones (e.g. unrealised performance and outcomes, learning capacity, new ideas, considering lateral experience, motivation, fitting in with a team, working collaboratively, leading culturally) and the
- c. trade-offs within selection decisions.

In hiring and promoting staff, selectors are evaluating the costs (usually only quantitatively) between appointing one person over another. In the variables [(a)–(c) above], subjective assessments are made on each rather than any objective evaluation. No harm in that on the face of it. However, decisions based on merit are assumed to be purely objective and when merit is discussed this issue is rarely raised. It is what happens in how selectors deliberate on these factors that render them highly subjective and this fact is never really made evident.

Consequently opportunity costs are often unstated and therefore, overlooked in selection decisions making. Factors such as the value of (1) social diversity to an existing team, (2) any differences that women, staff from culturally diverse backgrounds or those with disabilities may bring due to their experiences, and (3) their work being at least equal or greater to the person being selected. These opportunity costs are feasible and may have significant value longer term, not only on productivity for example but also in regard to cultural transformation, even though they may not have an immediate efficiency or monetary value. Because opportunity costs remain tacit, selectors are blind to their effect on decision-making.

The question to ponder is what is the opportunity cost to organisations, when employers continue to select and appoint people from a narrow subset of the talent pool, usually male and from mainstream backgrounds as the statistics attest, to midline and higher order positions within industry, professions and organisations?

The opportunity cost also includes the value of extending the talent pool as well as demonstrating tangible commitment to the organisation's policies on social inclusion, flexible work, family friendly and the like. This is one of the great challenges in thinking and applying diversity, that is addressing and overcoming conscious and unconscious bias at critical points in decision-making in regard to decisions about selection, promotion and performance and so on. One way to address this is to ensure that people who participate in selecting talent, mentoring, coaching or sponsoring staff are aware of bias, and this is best achieved through training and development.

The following example shows that overlooking the opportunity cost of appointing women for example in flexible roles does have an effect on the bottom line of the organisation. This example is based on the *Ernst and Young Productivity Pulse Wave 3* study, where researchers found that women in flexible roles waste only 11.1 % of work time, compared to an average of 14.5 % for the rest of the working population. Given that in this study's sample, 43.2 % of women in the workforce worked part-time, compared to 13.5 % of men, this translates into an important quantitative indicator that few selectors measure or consider in their trade-off decision-making when selecting staff. More importantly, the researchers found that women working flexibly contribute an extra week and a half of productive work per annum, simply by using their time more wisely. The E and Y researchers conclude that for every 71 women employed in flexible roles, an organisation gains a productivity bonus of one additional full-time equivalent staff member.

Mentors in particular but also mentees need to appreciate how to evaluate opportunity costs if they are to influence the culture of their professions and workplaces and turn around the inequality (both explicit and implicit) present. In decisions about staffing, the value of the seemingly "next-best" person may in fact not be the best outcome overall, especially in the longer term e.g. productivity, pipeline effect and a positive cultural outcome showing tangible support for policies.

While, in the past, opportunity costs have been considered for things like environmental issues, it is time to consider them in regard to the talent pool. For example, the *Ernst and Young Productivity Pulse Wave 3* determined the extent of Australia's female productivity potential. It also quantified how much low female workforce participation is costing Australia for example, which is relevant to other OECD economies. The Ernst and Young (E&Y) report demonstrated that after 2002 in Australia some gains in female workforce participation have been attained, with the rate rising by just over 4 %, largely due to older women re-entering the workforce, post child-rearing. Australian research attests to this too. For example as shown in Fig. 2.5, Australia's major banks remain well short of their own gender diversity targets, despite continuing efforts to achieve greater balance on their boards and in senior management ranks.

The Australian Newspaper (March 12, 2015) reported that the percentage of women on the Boards of Australia's major four banks remains has barely altered over the last five years, although female membership at executive committee level as increased—4 more since 2010. Like many institutions referred to in the first

### Women on major bank boards and executive committees

		Board		Executive committee	
		2015	2010	2015	2010
	Westpac	2 (8)	3 (10)	2 (11)	1 (13)
	ANZ	2 (8)	1 (8)	2 (12)	3 (10)
	NAB	2 (11)	2 (13)	3 (10)	3 (12)
	CBA	3 (11)	2 (9)	5 (13)	1 (11)
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>9 (38)</b>	<b>8 (40)</b>	<b>12 (46)</b>	<b>8 (46)</b>

**Fig. 2.5** Female representation in banking. *Source* The Australian Thursday, March 12, p. 23. *Note* Number in brackets is the sample size; for example, two of Westpac's eight directors are women

paragraph of this section, banks have growing numbers of women in the pipeline but there is a bulge at the midline.

By the financial year (2012), the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) recorded male labour force participation at 79, 14 % higher than the female rate of 65 %. The labour force participation rate was higher for males than females across all age groups. The E&Y report also explored opportunities about how to increase representation of women across all industries and at all levels.

Based on the evidence provided by this E&Y report, it can be seen that most selectors of talent operate within a narrow set of decision parameters, and many easily pass over opportunities for talent growth not only within their immediate and broader pipelines but also in the case of individuals. Most selection decisions are made without thinking more broadly about how this interfaces or interacts with other policy decisions. As a result, selectors avoid pursuing value-maximising opportunities, assuming that the best is defined quantitatively. Instead, workers slave to achieve target production goals and avoid any changes that might hurt their short-term performance, for which they may be continually evaluated.

When selecting people for positions and roles it is time to consider that:

1. Most people will overlook opportunity costs.
2. Opportunity costs are tangible and affect the triple bottom line. By choosing from a narrow subset of the talent pool, the cost of the decision made assumes the cost of the option not taken (Edgeman et al. 2015).
3. Opportunity costs are often not realised until later; every attempt needs to be made to make them explicit and attempt to quantify and qualify them within every workplace and professional setting.

How do we address these issues? Using a logistics pipeline analogy; there are a number of factors pulling women up the line e.g. properly implemented policies and a number of push factors which suggest that women have a talent impediment (e.g.

lack of experience or skill mainly as this is evaluated differently to that of men or that women sabotage their own chances by psychologically impeding their own progress).

Needless to say, that both sets of factors are resisted. In regard to the pull factors such as organisational policies and targets, these are often resisted by those concerned, that they are being overlooked for promotion and claim that merit is being thwarted. In pushing or encouraging women to hang in there or “lean in” there is push back from women who opt out of being considered or exit the organisation completely, due to the burden of having to work beyond expectations so as to avoid the implication that merit is being breached. Sponsoring women, which is in such short supply is required urgently to overcome these push factors. The real impediment is the specific culture of the organisation and the assumptions, values and norms it reinforces to support both the push and pull factors. As indicated in Fig. 2.5, diversity like ‘risk’ should be placed on the agenda of every meeting of a division, unit, subunit as well as other committees that may transverse these. For example, if safety rather than diversity was being discussed, then much stronger attention would be placed on it. A diversity culture like a safety culture is synonymous with climate. The question would be asked: what are the essential characteristics of a ‘good’ safety culture and how might they be best measured, what are the reliability, validity and utility of existing measures of safety culture, and how does the concept contribute if at all, to good safety systems and performance. This framework needs to be applied to diversity.

And if an employer was trying to improve their safety they would target both best practices as well as quantifying outcomes in terms of a number of incidents and so forth. A suggestion for improving the diversity culture is to develop ‘targets’ into ‘quotas’ making explicit the guidelines for merit decision-making within these. One reason why the introduction of quotas is resisted so strongly is that the resisters know that merit is a policy that often lacks substance or real application in decision making. It is imperative that there is much to be gained from a rigorous and controlled focus on both merit and the diversity culture. Another suggestion is to ensure that at least 50 % of candidates on interview shortlists are female, that all interview panels have more than one female member and that the 50 % rule applies to all talent development and workforce planning. Other initiatives include invited women leaders to address fora on a regular basis in organisations for both men and women. In other words, all programs addressing diversity should contain 50 % men.

Dismissing opportunity costs, knowingly or unknowingly, goes to the heart of the professional and workplace culture. Employees decide whether to trust their organisation or professional body based not only on the policies that are developed but also the commitment to those policies through the decisions made and actions taken. A further test is whether or not these met the employees’ expectations about not only what is in their best interest but what is right in any given context (Barbalet 2009; Hetherington 2005; Giddens 1990; Rousseau et al. 1998).

Professional and organisation trust is based on goodwill as to whether a system is operating in the best collective interest and competent in dealing with issues or problems (Das and Teng 2001; Malhotra and Lumineau 2011).

As indicated at the outset of this section and in the context of this discussion, goodwill needs to be understood apart from its usual accounting concept which even there can be a bit of a black box. It is one thing to understand goodwill it is another to experience it in action. Like opportunity costs, it has quantitative and qualitative aspects (Dahmash et al. 2009; Dorata 2009). Drawing on the work of Johnson and Petrone (1998), two main perspectives on goodwill can be observed, i.e. a top-down perspective and a bottom-up perspective. From the top-down perspective, goodwill may be little more than expedient for an organisation to proclaim its values, reputation and brand (Cooper 2007). In addition, goodwill could include the value of non identifiable intangible assets such as important stakeholder relationships and synergies e.g. government, business, professional associations, educational institutions. From a bottom-up perspective, goodwill is perceived by those working within the profession and organisation. The values employees observe may be somewhat at odds with the official line. What they observe and experience needs to make sense to them and also be aligned with the organisation's brand and reputation. These cultural artefacts are a crucial link between institutional trust (Schyns and Koop 2010; Tan and Tambyah 2011). Diversity is an important aspect of this. As the talent pool widens and opens its narrow neck at the centre to more diverse employees, it becomes the vehicle to introduce new ideas and concepts into the organisation, enables concurrence of cultural artefacts, reorders thinking around the status quo and taken-for-granted aspects such as "best" and "excellence" and challenges thinking that resolves incongruities (Leung et al. 2008). Making sense of the world is key and making social comparisons plays a significant part in shaping choices, decisions and outcomes all leading to enhancing or diminishing trust (Dunn et al. 2012).

Returning to the notion of triple bottom line (TBL), mentioned briefly above is an important way to view the "bottom line" of organisations because the social and people aspect is brought into the picture and takes account of opportunity costing. Using TBL ensures sustainability of diversity and the pipeline effect. Sustainability reporting is the practice of measuring, disclosing and being accountable to internal and external stakeholders for organisational performance toward the goal of sustainable development of its diverse talent pipeline.

### ***2.5.5 Gender and Social Exclusion—Barriers to Effective Mentoring***

Gender and social exclusion are frequent barriers to effective mentoring. Why? Firstly, mentors tend to choose mentees who mirror themselves. Even if the mentor and mentee differ by culture, ethnicity, religion or gender, both the mentee and mentor may need to work harder to gain mutual understanding, gain *simpatico* with



each other and resolve misunderstandings. It also increases the risk of incompatibility and mentoring ultimately being less effective. Secondly, mentors are likely to have greater personal or positional power in relation to the mentee and may use this to assuage the differences between them. This may become a barrier. Where the mentee is able to have a shared history or understanding, it stands to reason that they may be able to maintain better well-being than those who are unable to do so.

Can similar barriers in the workplace be addressed through mentoring or will they just mimic each other?

Women are not minorities. While the participation of women in the workforce and in education has reached unprecedented high levels, representation of women and other diversity groups has not kept pace with this. For example, diversity groups are rarely represented or integrated within in senior leadership teams, or even in some industry sectors. Populations are diverse. Australia, which is geographically distant from most other continents, has one-third of its population born overseas.

Women's careers are dampened by their unequal access to powerful mentors, and conversely having potent mentors would improve their prospects for advancement. Mentoring or rather mentoring by a sponsor is essential for most women, as Having a sponsor-mentor influences the outcome of career success. In academia for example and equivalent roles, women with mentors have more publications, more time spent on research activities, and higher overall career satisfaction (Poteat et al. 2009). Similarly, individuals experiencing extensive mentoring relationships reported receiving more promotions, had higher income, and were more satisfied with their pay and benefits than individuals experiencing less-extensive mentoring relationships (Dreher and Ash 1990).

Barriers to the advancement of women and others from diverse groups include discrimination, lack of appropriate mentors and sponsors, and lack of or poor policies for career development and advancement or ineffective implementation of these. Women, as discussed above, may find it difficult to secure a senior female mentor or sponsor. Even if they do, this may not prove to be beneficial, if the female mentor does not give peer support and open up opportunities for networking for the mentee.

Issues in mentoring relationships exclusive to women and especially female minorities include family obligations, gender protocols, patriarchal family structure, performance pressures, isolation, and limiting role expectations. It may be that a member of a female minority is not permitted a male mentor, even if one is available and willing. Female professionals from minority groups lack the availability of role models, mentors, and sponsors.

Women's career development and prospects substantively influence them in real ways and emotionally. Women are concerned about how to present "self" at work and in particular roles, and struggle with this in terms of their own perceptions and those of others. Women are more concerned than men about expressing emotions at work as well as initiating and maintaining personal relationships and usually these are with men. So women may self-exclude in terms of social functions by virtue of avoiding developing personal attachments or lack of time due to family commitments. Attachments and relationships play a central role for women in both identity-formations professionally and lead women to disempower themselves at work. The



phases of a woman's career life cycle may incur limits too. Early adult transition years (ages 17–29) may find women concerned over educational attainment or early partnerships; ages 30–40, in addition to requirements of career development, may require women to focus on their “biological clock,” and middle adulthood in rearing children and then, increasingly in later adulthood having to care for elderly parents or relatives. They are also disadvantaged by age as they near retirement with less financial resources than men due to lower remuneration and career gaps.

Issues for diversity groups in mentor-mentee relationships are even more complex, especially for women from specific cultural groups. A Muslim woman working in the Finance industry in Australia seeking a female Muslim mentor would be an example of this. Despite expanding Muslim communities in some parts of the country. Although minority women are reportedly more likely to mentor others from similar backgrounds or disadvantage, the number of mentor-ready women available to serve is limited.

Racial, ethnic, or gender identities are ‘visible identities’ a term coined by Alcoff (2006), i.e., where she argues “what” people are as well as “where” they are socially located has implications at work, organisationally and so on. She goes on to argue that such identities lead to separation, reification, and reasoning problems as each has its own assumptions about the nature of what they represent and the nature of their difference to each other. Firstly “strongly felt” ethnic, racial, or cultural identity separates people from each other. The second problem claims that when strongly felt or represented these identities reify the abstractness of such identities. Furthermore, since these categories come with scripts, determined by social expectations and stereotypes, they serve to undermine individual autonomy. The third issue assumes that strongly felt social identities interfere with the status quo, especially concerning political, ethical, and cultural matters. Strongly felt identities, and the expectation of loyalty and authenticity that comes with them, interfere with the so-called natural order of things which is largely Western, male and white.

Simply put, critics charge that identity politics compels individuals to value the good of their group over that of the common good.

It may be that diversity programs have the opposite effect than that intended on benefits for women and members of diversity groups. While no one doubts the intentions, there may be time to rethink the approach. Mentoring alone will not work nor will mentoring and sponsorship in all situations. Targeting women and members of diverse groups for preferential treatment or to meet targets or quotas is having the opposite effect including those who are the potential beneficiaries. No amount of positive mentoring will alter this. Mentoring can address the consequences of the discrimination that women and minorities experience and how to deal with it but mentors alone cannot address the structural inequities existing in most organisations (Ibarra et al. 2010). In a few Australian organisations, especially in the banking and financial sector where women are increasingly powerful customers, groups are being set up to deal with this. However most have a narrow remit and need to be encouraged to commission research so that they can institute remedies for structural barriers that their members identify.

Effective formal mentoring programs “are attentive to differences across gender, race, ethnicity, culture and generational lines” (Cariaga-lo et al. 2010, p. 21). The

challenges here are that usually women experience more mentoring than men while men are more likely to be the direct beneficiaries of sponsorship (Ibarra et al. 2010). Men mainly introduce other men into their networks and are usually promoted through the ranks more quickly than women.

In a 2008 Catalyst survey of more than 4000 full-time professional men and women, 83 % of women and 76 % of men say they had one or even more mentors at a certain time in their career. However, more mentoring does not necessarily lead to career advancement. A 2010 follow-up survey showed that men received 15 % more promotions than women. One of the main reasons that are mentoring failed women in terms of promotion is the difference between having a mentor and a sponsor (Ibarra et al. 2010). Compared with men who are more ready and willing to both offer and seek a mentor, women mentors need to be encouraged and sought out (Laff 2009). And they will provide more psychosocial functions since they are more relationship-oriented (Okurame 2007).

Further, women's mentors usually possess less hierarchical power due to their position in the organisation. In the 2008 Survey, 78 % of men and 69 % of women were actively mentored by a CEO or other senior executive. A mentor's position in organisations is closely related to mentee's career advancement.

One way to address this challenge is to reduce mentoring from a top-down, one-to-one relationship to cohort associations based on flexible networks of support Sorcinelli and Yun (2007, p. 58), with men and women engaged in parallel as mentees. Women would be able to observe directly the strategies that men employ. The diverse characteristics of the participants in the mentoring relationship can affect how individuals participate and benefit from the mentoring experience. At the conclusion of formal mentoring programs, mentoring relationships will inevitably lead to deeper relationships and spawn new mentoring arrangements. This creates an ideal setting for wider learning communities.

Mentors for women and members of diversity groups need to be selected with due consideration. The issues that mentoring deals with are sensitive both personally and culturally. Given the unique challenges involved in cross-gender mentoring especially, it is important to assess the overall goals and the receptivity of available mentors. Further, addressing the dynamics of mentoring and how to prevent issues both at an interpersonal and legal perspective is important for successful mentoring to take root in any organisational setting.

## **2.6 What Are the Benefits for Mentors and the Different Ways of Mentoring Which Are More Effective Than Others?**

Mentorship is not a situation where one party acquires all the benefit and the other very little, as is often assumed. Sometimes a mentor is viewed as the one giving all or even making sacrifices for the other. However this is rarely the case. The benefits

to each participant will vary according to the quality of the relationship that is generated between them. Mentors learn a lot about mentoring and themselves from their mentees which can heighten their performance and acknowledgement, especially where outcomes are substantiated (Ragins and Scandura 1994; Russell and Adams 1997). This in turn can afford them enhanced career satisfaction, renewed effort and interest from collaborating with others (Johnson 2002, p. 87).

The mentoring relationship is a microcosm of the mentee's behaviour. As a result, mentors not only assist mentees and provide them with feedback on their interpersonal dynamics but also find that they learn to communicate more effectively themselves regardless of whether it is a traditional or reverse mentoring relationship. Being a mentor inevitably fosters one's understanding of how other people think, feel and act and their interrelationships. Seeing life through the eyes of others is an important learning source for mentors (Eby and Lockwood 2005; Wanberg et al. 2006) and one that is often overlooked. Different perspectives such as these broaden the mentors' understanding and allow them to address some of the challenges they face in their own lives. Through self-reflection activated during the mentoring process, mentors learn by appreciating how they (or their roles) impact others and how this leads them to modify their approach as well as enhance their communication with people who have different values and backgrounds.

Mentoring makes a difference when it is voluntary even if participating in a formal program and both respect each other and believe each is achieving some value from it. Voluntary mentoring relationships have a better chance to succeed because of the self-motivation to engage. Take the Lawyers Encouraging and Assisting Promising Students (LEAPS) project for example. This is a workplace learning program for students working with a lawyer mentor currently employed and provides them with the opportunity to learn about the profession as well as assist them with their studies and career planning (Australian Youth Mentoring Network 2010). No doubt this is followed by lawyers sponsoring students into jobs once graduated. The benefit of the profession is they get to select from an elite group of high-performing students and the socialisation into the profession has already commenced with less teething problems upon the commencement of employment.

## **2.7 Does It Make a Difference the Way the Mentoring Relationship Comes About?**

The manner in which mentoring programs are established leads to differential outcomes. Men and women usually find their mentors by themselves instead of relying on formal programs.

Formal and informal mentorships vary in the ways they are established and acknowledged. Often informal mentorships are established by selection of participants based on mutual appeal and convenience, which may not be officially

endorsed by management. On the other hand, the institutional orchestration of formal mentorship means that formal mentors may not view the mentee as worthy of special attention and support; mentees may be seen as undeserving of the benefits of mentorship or the special attention it affords them. Such “assigned” relationships may lack compatibility, interpersonal ease, as well as the longevity required to develop trust and the provision of psychosocial dynamics so critical to achieving the best outcomes (Chao et al. 1992).

Further, mentors in formal programs may be more visible and, therefore, less able to sponsor and promote their mentees because these actions may be construed as favouritism by co-workers (Ragins and Cotton 1999). DeLong et al. (2008) see a disadvantage. They claim mentoring often relies on the selection of ‘A-grade performers’, that is, the top 10 % of the internal workforce, and do not include the ‘B- or C-grade performers’, that is, the bulk of the internal workforce who are good, albeit invisible, workers who get more than the lion’s share of the work done, especially the burdensome work and often remain loyal to the organisation for longer periods. However, much of the value of those exclusive, one-on-one, power-dependent mentoring relationships depends on context-specific knowledge, which is less and less relevant to sustaining career learning especially as career mobility increases (Darwin 2000).

A formal mentoring program is likely to match the aims and attributes of the parties more effectively than informal ones with a more beneficial outcome. In a 2010 follow-up survey, women receiving formal mentorship were more likely to be promoted than those who found mentors by themselves (by a ratio of nearly three to two) (Ibarra et al. 2010). Leaders need to be responsible for seeking out “ways to help people foster their own developmental networks that include relationships providing various types and amounts of support” (Chandler et al. 2010, p. 49).

Mentoring helps ascertain information about, for example, what is it like to join this organisation as a newcomer, student, staff or client, customer or manager? What does it feel like to be promoted or not promoted here? How are people treated when faced with leaving? What do we learn when we take on a new management or leadership role? What is it like to change career focus? Answers to these questions are vital for designing mentoring programs.

## 2.8 What About Training for Mentors?

Potential mentors and mentees need to be identified in all institutions, whether staff, students or leaders. This allows a development path to be planned for each depending on how their knowledge and experience is to be developed and utilised. This way the new recruit, student or staff is assigned a mentor and tracked. Similarly, a training pathway for the mentor can be designed and planned. This

approach can suit one-on-one mentoring or a circle of peer mentors. Performance feedback training for mentors will be of value in terms of their effectiveness as a mentor as well as their retention in the organisation.

### ***2.8.1 Handling Conflict in the Mentoring Relationship***

As conflict and change are inevitable in relationships, conflict handling is a vital skill for effective mentoring. Influence, conflict and negotiation are important parts of mentoring especially for the mentee to learn and test their skills and reactions to conflict. No matter how productive conflict is between two people, it is still challenging. Mentorships will sometimes produce disagreement, strain relationships and consequently be distressful for individuals (Johnson et al. 2000; Johnson and Nelson 1999; Levinson et al. 1978; O'Neil and Wrightsman 2001). Learning to cope with conflict and examining both sides of an argument, while suspending judgment is a critical outcome.

### ***2.8.2 Communication***

Communication training boosts confidence and credibility with the mentee and strengthens the mentor relationship. In particular, people are less likely to listen today for a range of reasons: less time and are likely to interrupt, they think they should have the answers and, therefore, do not ask questions or worse still, they think they know the answers. Consequently, people often do not hear what is said or certainly do not remember it.

Mentors need to listen well so as to give those frequently not heard, a voice in what sometimes can be described as “silent culture” in the organisation, where difficult issues are not voiced and avoided. In learning how to voice issues, mentees gain a sense of being a more powerful unique self.

A good question for a mentor to ask is: “what do you need to know right now?”

Listening lessens the likelihood of conflict as each has more understanding of the situation and less likely to be across purposes.

### ***2.8.3 Team Building***

Training in team development is critical to mentoring. It permits diverse perspectives to be shared so as to facilitate a common outlook on issues, which in turn is more likely to engender trust and transparency amongst team members and leaders (Jones et al. 2007; Reilly and Lojeski 2009). In spite of best efforts and attention, some people will be poorly suited to mentoring.

### **2.8.4 *Boundary-Setting in Mentoring***

All human relationships have boundaries or “rules” about what is or isn’t allowed in the relationship. Boundaries are expectations of what can be achieved and are essential for framing a mentoring relationship and distinguishing it from other relationships. Boundaries set in mentoring assist the mentee establish boundaries in other aspects of their life. The following typology is a way to consider boundaries:

- (a) Physical boundaries include access to a person’s body and possessions e.g. whether or not a person shakes hands with another; lends their personal possessions, such as your money, car, clothes, books, food, or toothbrush.
- (b) Space boundaries pertain to an individual’s personal and cultural space and their rights to privacy.
- (c) Mental boundaries apply to thoughts, values, and opinions. Questions here include: Are you easily influenced? Have they formulated their own ideas, values and philosophies? How flexible are they in their thinking?
- (d) Emotional boundaries: how easy is it to distinguish responsibility of role or profession from felt emotions?

Boundaries are significant in the mentoring relationship and in the mentee’s life. It allows them to understand where to “draw the line” with regard to taking responsibility for themselves, or for another. It also assists in dealing with guilt (see Chap. 6). Further if people find it difficult to control their emotional highs and lows it may lead them to consider re-setting their boundaries so they can gauge their responses to situations.

For this reason, mentors need to think in advance about setting appropriate boundaries, expectations, accountability of each with their mentees and discuss these to reach an agreement about them from the outset. For example, respect is an important boundary in any relationship and is relevant in informal mentoring and peer mentoring.

Confidentiality is an essential element here too. Mentors need to establish rules of confidentiality in the relationship and discuss it with the mentee at the outset. Regardless of the type of mentoring, personal issues are likely to be explored in mentoring situations to some degree especially when interfere with the mentee’s positive feeling about themselves in the school, workplace or organisation.

## **2.9 Mentoring Is More Than a Fleeting Connection**

Before anything else, the mentoring process needs to be strengths-based and gender-sensitive. Mentorship, if effective, can become the mainstay of a significant learning relationship for both mentors and mentees and even a friendship that extends beyond the initial need. Durable mentoring is vital for young people in particular. In order to maximise the benefits, design and plan a mentoring program

according to the principles outlined in this chapter, assuring quality and consistency and preparing potential mentors and mentees in advance even from the time they enter their organisation. Mentoring requires strong support from within institutions and the community to encourage as many people as possible to volunteer and participate. Mentors should not be paid.

This chapter has shown how mentoring occurs and how it contributes to learning, improved critical thinking, analysis and understanding values as well as outcomes. Economic and social changes have somewhat transformed us and the communities in which we reside and the institutions in which we study and work. Mentoring connects both mentor and mentee to these changes. Increasingly people are engaged in small to medium sized organisations with flatter hierarchies, with people working alongside their “bosses” or collaborating with their teachers or lecturers. Although there is increasing ageism, it is not the inter-generational issues that are the points of difference between different experience levels in mentoring. People today are concerned about the environment, education, the economy, refugees, and their futures. There is a greater expectation for social justice, “fair play” in all aspects of their lives with a belief that our leaders have an obligation to deliver this through procedural fairness. People want better lives and given that work and study is a fair chunk of this, they want leaders and followers to work together on common challenges and endeavours. Mentorship is an important micro-relationship to assure that this happens at the macro-level.

The challenges are to integrate the view of all layers of society into a defining vision and reflect this in laws, regulations, opportunities and educational programs. By reconciling the financial imperative with social justice and innovation, mentoring harnesses the power of relationships to develop a resolution to numerous social and economic issues.

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