

*The Seven Habits & Mentoring* by Gilly Johnson, Director & Founder, Australian Mentor Centre, 2005.



So what makes an effective mentoring partnership – what produces the desired mentoring result? To explore the answer to this question, I wanted to introduce you to the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People – a wonderful resource from Dr Stephen Covey. Like the FISH! Philosophy that I wrote about previously, the 7 Habits provides an excellent framework upon which to build an effective mentoring partnership.

The 7 Habits is a collection of habits that focus on knowledge, skill and desire: knowledge allows us to know what to do, skills give us the ability to do it, and desire provides the motivation to do it. Mentoring at all levels contains elements of knowledge, skills and desire. Let's take a look at how each of the 7 Habits could be incorporated into your effective mentoring partnership.

**Be Proactive.** Being proactive is much more about just taking the initiative – it's about accepting responsibility for our own behaviours (past, present and future). It is about building partnerships and partnerships based on principles. In a mentoring partnership, this means that both the mentor and mentee accept equal responsibility for the partnership.

**Begin with the End in Mind.** Covey encourages us to 'create things twice' – first mentally and then physically. In a mentoring partnership, this habit encourages us to develop a clear vision about our whole of mentoring partnership purpose. In a mentoring partnership this means being very clear about what the 'main purpose' of the mentoring partnership is – then it's easier to solidly say 'yes' to some things in a mentoring partnership and 'no' to others – 'no' to those activities that are not part of the whole of mentoring partnership purpose.

**Put First Things First.** This habit draws upon the second habit of begin with the end in mind. In a mentoring partnership, once you have determined the main purpose of the mentoring partnership it is then easier to focus on working on the most important aspects of your mentoring partnership. For example – in a mentoring partnership this means making it important to build trust, develop rapport and take the time to really listen to each other.

**Think Win-Win.** Thinking 'win-win' is a frame of mind and heart. The focus is on seeking mutual benefit – both for the mentee and the mentor. It is about basing your interactions on mutual respect – it's about sharing information, recognition and rewards. In our P2E Model of Mentoring – we talk about mentoring as being characterised by a 'partnership of equals'.

**Seek First to Understand and then to be Understood.** There's a short saying about why we were given two ears and one mouth – so that we could do more listening and less talking. We often encourage mentors and mentees to consider that mentoring is about listening with the intent to understand rather than with the intent to respond.

**Synergise.** The habit of synergise is about producing a 'third alternative' – not 'my way', not 'your way' – but 'our way'. The key here in a mentoring partnership is not to always fall into the trap of thinking that the mentor has the solutions. Synergise is also described as 'seeking out people who are different from you in order to learn from them and benefit from their strengths'.

**Sharpen the Saw.** The final habit is to take time to review yourself in the areas of life: physical, social/emotional, mental and spiritual. Applying this to a mentoring partnership means taking time to review how the mentoring partnership is progressing – ensuring that the mentoring partnership stays 'fit and fresh'.

So – if you're in a mentoring partnership or about to embark on a mentoring partnership, why not consider how the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People can help your mentoring partnership to be truly effective. If you would like to find out more about the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, visit [www.franklincovey.com](http://www.franklincovey.com)