


Director & Founder's Welcome

by Gilly Johnson

Hello everyone and welcome to the December 2005 edition of Mentoring Today. As you can see from our dates, this edition is a little late 'off the press'. Our delay is due to our big move down south from North Queensland to Victoria. Thank you to all our members and subscribers who sent us messages of 'good luck' for the move – we really appreciated your support. We are now located at the Lakeside Business Centre on Level 4 at 150 Albert Road, South Melbourne. We've also had some 'comings and goings' with our team members as a result of this move. I would like to thank our Townsville team of Kyana and Jason who've assisted in the first six months of Australian Mentor Centre. We now have some new team members and will be introducing these to you in the coming editions of Mentoring Today.

As I reflect on the first 11 months of Australian Mentor Centre, I am excited and challenged by the activities in which we have been involved. These range from managing mentoring programs, presenting at conferences and workshops, creating mentoring information, making and building connections across Australia and overseas, and talking non-stop about mentoring for workforce development.

During 2005, we've discussed the full range of mentoring topics, but some that 'stick out' includes questions such as:

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- How do you clearly distinguish between helper roles such as mentor, manager and coach?
 - How do you transition from mentoring program to mentoring initiative to mentoring culture?
 - Why do I need to attend mentor or mentee training? Doesn't everyone just know 'how' to do it?
 - What do you mean that modern mentoring is 'mentee driven'?
 - Should a mentoring partnership involve an exchange of money?
 - What does a good mentoring partnership look like?
 - Where are the standards and accreditation for mentoring?
 - Why is mentor support and development important?
 - How can we better engage mentees in their own mentoring journey?

As part of our own mentoring journey, we'll be spending considerable time reflecting on the journey of Australian Mentor Centre to date and developing new ways of bringing you up-to-date, relevant and practical information to assist your own mentoring practice. As this edition of Mentoring Today is a little late, we wanted to ensure that it covered a cross section of topics to finish the year, and to ensure it's a relevant edition for all our readers. We are always delighted to hear from you and to ensure the content meets your needs – so why not drop us a line to info@australianmentorcentre.com.au and let us know what you'd like to see featured in 2006!

Finally – at our national conference this year we launched the Friends of Mentoring Journal. The Journal now travels with us around Australia and we invite guests, participants and friends to share their own mentoring thoughts. I'd like to leave you with this wonderful entry made recently after a presentation on mentoring and workplace culture:

'An inspirational talk! You touched on some 'raw nerves' about negative aspects of the 'culture' that I work in, and my battles to try and improve the lot of other members of staff. We have been 'informally mentoring' for some time, in rather an ad-hoc fashion and tonight has helped me to refocus – we need to recommit to the concept.'

(Thoughts shared after presentation - Infusing mentoring into workplace culture.)

We hope that you and your family have a safe and happy festive season. Thank you so much for your support in our first year, and we look forward to 2006 with enthusiasm, excitement, sincerity and passion about mentoring!

share the wisdom

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build connections

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maintain
good practice

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promote
mentoring

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Moving Beyond a Mentor Program ...

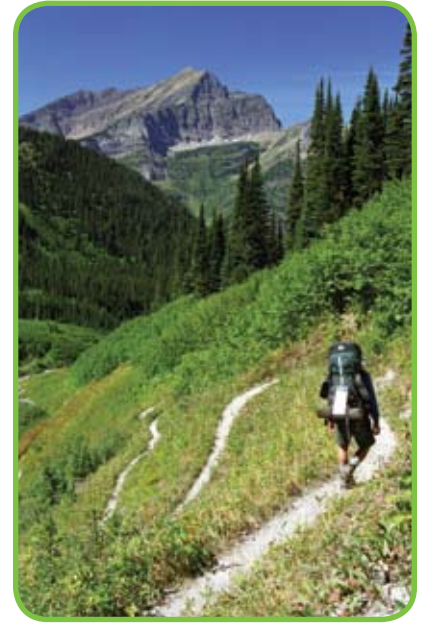
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'Far too many programs fail (or merely survive) because they were not sufficiently embedded in a supportive organisational culture.' (Lois J. Zachary in *Creating a Mentoring Culture*)

Throughout 2005, I have had the opportunity to travel to a variety of conferences and workshops to talk with people about mentoring. Exciting as this has been, it has also opened my eyes to where we are situated when it comes to infusing mentoring as part of our workplace culture.

So often people have said to me: 'We have been allocated some additional funding, and we're going to run a mentoring program.' While I am excited by this on behalf of the person and organisation, I am also concerned that what seems to be 'driving' the mentoring program is the funding, rather than the opportunity to really reflect on how and why mentoring can make an impact to the business outcomes, organisational culture and the people of the organisation. The bottom line of this approach is that because the mentor program is being driven by funding, it is always at the mercy of funding being withdrawn and, therefore, at the risk of not continuing or falling short of reaching any level of maturity. Alongside this are short time-frames in which to 'implement' the mentoring program and, often, an over reliance on a specific individual who is 'driving' the program.

At the risk of sounding simplistic, I would like to recall some of the questions that I have asked people this year to encourage them to *Begin with the End in Mind* when it comes to making the move from mentoring program to mentoring culture – as I believe that this is the 'true' challenge for us as we move forward. My hope is that if you have been 'gifted' with resources to conduct a mentoring program that you will at least pause for a moment to consider the longer-term vision of what mentoring could mean to your organisation's outcomes, culture and people.



Nadine & Clutterbuck in *Implementing Mentoring Schemes* say: 'Mentoring as a process that is "formally endorsed, encouraged and supported by an organisation is a relatively new phenomenon".' If this is the case, it is critical that all of us engaged in the variety of mentoring programs across Australia take the time to consider some 'big picture' elements for the future. While not exhaustive, I would encourage you to reflect on the answers to these questions as they relate to your mentoring program:

- Who is supporting the mentoring initiative?
- How does mentoring align with and support organisational outcomes?
- What value is placed on mentoring as a workforce strategy for the development of people within your organisation?
- How does your organisation make mentoring available to its people?
- What ongoing support and development is available to support mentoring in your organisation?
- What resourcing is allocated to support a sustainable mentoring culture?
- How will you know that mentoring is successful in both the short term and long-term?

In 2006, we will be continuing to encourage you to consider how you can move your mentoring program to a mentoring culture – so stay tuned for information, interviews and case studies on how other people are doing this. Also, a new resource to the market is *Creating a Mentoring Culture – the Organisation's Guide* by Lois J. Zachary. We'll be reviewing this resource and making it available through our Online Shop.

'Mentoring is an organisational practice whose time has come. In today's competitive business climate, the need for continuous learning has never been greater. At the same time, the hunger for human connection and relationships has never been more palpable. Because mentoring combines the impact of learning with the compelling human need for connection, it leaves individuals better able to deepen their personal capacity and maintain organisational vitality in the face of continuous challenge and change. Mentoring is also a smart way to do business.'

(Lois J. Zachary in *Creating a Mentoring Culture – The Organisation's Guide*)

So – let's start right now. If you are starting to move your mentoring program deeper into your organisation's culture – we'd love to hear about it. Drop us a line to info@australianmentorcentre.com.au.

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