

## Director & Founder's Welcome

by Gilly Johnson

Hello, everyone, and welcome to our first edition of Mentoring Today for 2006. The year has started at a fast pace, with lots of new activities for this year. As we move the Australian Mentor Centre forward into its second year of full operation, I wanted to take this chance to thank all of our inaugural members, newsletter subscribers and interested contacts for their support in 2005. We look forward to supporting you again with even better mentoring activities in 2006.

Well – what an edition we have for you this time around! Let's take a look at what's inside.

We are delighted that again we have a range of excellent guest authors in this edition. We've asked our authors to write on a range of contemporary mentoring topics, including:

- **Creating a Mentoring Culture with Dr Lois Zachary**
- **Mentoring and Supervision by Triple Creek Associates**
- **Implementing Group Mentoring with Dr Linda Phillips-Jones**
- **Mentoring Toolkit Questions by Karen Brown**

Alongside our guest authors, you'll also find articles from our team on:

- Mentoring and The Six Thinking Hats
- A Review of the latest article Mentoring by Wire, by Dr David Clutterbuck & courtesy of the Training Journal UK
- An Inspirational Story of a Commonwealth Games Gold Medallist using mentoring

As this is our first edition, I'd also like to take this opportunity to let you know of a few of the key activities that the Australian Mentor Centre will be involved in this year; these include:

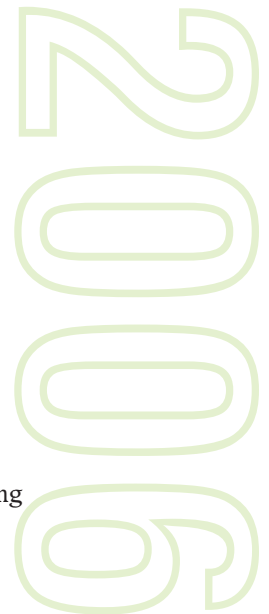
- Completing an extensive website upgrade (underway)
- Offering mentoring education under the Australian Qualifications Training Framework
- Providing access to a range of alternatives in using Open Mentoring® to support your organisational mentoring initiatives (underway)
- Increasing our range of services and product lines
- Increasing our membership offerings
- Increasing our links, both nationally and internationally, to continue our learning about contemporary mentoring

Plus a range of other activities that we'll keep you posted on. Our team will also expand a little, too, and we look forward to introducing you to our new team members during the year. I also thought you might like this short 'nugget of wisdom' from one of the trusty yellow & black books – *Coaching & Mentoring for Dummies*.

'The two key tools for mentoring are sharing: - that is passing on thoughts, insights and "nuggets of wisdom"; and challenging – that is challenging the mentee to "think for themselves".' (Marty Brounstein in *Coaching & Mentoring for Dummies*)

As the year progresses, I warmly welcome you back to reading Mentoring Today and look forward to sharing the wisdom of mentoring with you this year.

Gilly Johnson



share the wisdom

02

build connections

04

maintain  
good practice

08

promote  
mentoring

11

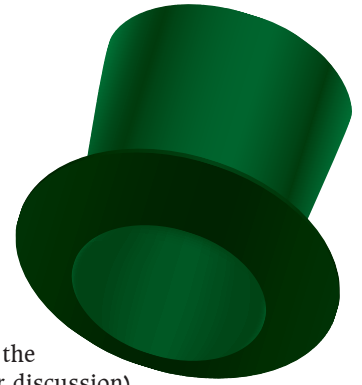
## Mentoring & The Six Thinking Hats

by Gilly Johnson

A large part of mentoring is about discussion and thinking. So, when we consider the 'way forward' in mentoring, we must consider how we 'think' during our mentoring discussions. What process can a mentee and mentor use to undertake cooperative and coordinated thinking? This is where Edward deBono's Six Thinking Hats® can help your mentoring partnership to go beyond traditional ways of thinking.

The Six Hats method is based around the concept of 'parallel thinking', where all parties (both the mentee and mentor) are thinking in parallel—in the same direction. The direction of thinking (or discussion) can be changed at any time but at each moment, each thinker is thinking in parallel with the other. There does not have to be agreement.

The Six Hats method is based around six 'symbolic thinking hats'. Thinkers are encouraged to mentally 'wear' and 'switch' hats to focus or redirect thoughts to the conversation or indeed a meeting. The six hats are:



**The white hat** – standing for neutrality. The focus of the white hat is on information—the facts. Questions to ask surround what information we know and what is missing?



**The red hat** – standing for emotion and intuition (hunches). The focus of the red hat is on emotions - an aspect often excluded from 'rational' discussions. Questions to ask surround how an individual feels about a situation—what hunches do they have?



**The black hat** – standing for judgment. The focus of this hat is on risks—sometimes playing 'devil's advocate' or considering why something might not work. Questions to ask surround spotting the 'difficulties or dangers' of the situation.



**The yellow hat** – standing for brightness and optimism. The focus of this hat is on the benefits and values of the idea or situation. Like the black hat, logic still plays a part under this hat. Questions to ask surround what are the positives of the situation.



**The green hat** – standing for creativity; the possibilities; the alternatives; new ideas. The focus of this hat is on exploring all the possibilities—it's an opportunity for considering the 'vision' of the situation or idea. Questions to ask surround new concepts and new perceptions.



**Finally, the blue hat** – standing for overview. The focus of the blue hat is to manage the thinking process. It's usually 'worn' by the person chairing the meeting or guiding the discussion.

To use the Six Hats method effectively, consider also the following tips:

- Introduce the concept of thinking after building trust and rapport in your mentoring partnership—perhaps learn one hat at a time
- Confirm with your mentoring partner about 'permission' to use the Six Hats method to guide your discussion
- When using the method during your mentoring discussions both of you need to think with the same hat at the same time—it's not just about the mentee doing all the 'six hats' thinking
- Consider the order of hats you use. Do not finish on the black hat – consider finishing on the green or yellow hat
- Use blue hat thinking at various stages of your discussion, for example:
  - Blue hat the beginning of the discussion to define the focus or goal
  - Blue hat during the middle of the discussion to determine the next stage of discussion
  - Blue hat at the end of the discussion to reflect on topics and bring it all together

The Six Hats method can be a useful addition to the 'mentoring toolkit', offering a process of thinking that is both coordinated and collaborative. So why not consider 'how' you might introduce the Six Hats method into your mentoring discussions? For further information, useful resources include:

### Book

- ➔ Six Thinking Hats (the book) by Dr Edward de Bono
- ➔ ISBN: 0-316-17791-1 (hard copy)
- ➔ ISBN: 0-316-17831-4 (paper copy)

### Website

- ➔ [http://www.sixthinkinghats.com/Six\\_Thinking\\_Hats.asp](http://www.sixthinkinghats.com/Six_Thinking_Hats.asp)

### Toolkit

- ➔ See our Mentoring Partnership Toolkit for Karen Brown's ideas on incorporating the Six Hats into mentoring dialogue (see p.14)