

Build an Ideal Mentor An Exercise for Mentee Trainings

Materials Needed: Flipchart paper or poster board (one for each group, a large number of thick-tipped colored markers, tape (to tape the artwork on the wall when completed).

Objective: This exercise helps mentees to identify the traits, qualities and characteristics of good mentors. Build an Ideal Mentor can be one of the “anchors” of your mentee training. The exercise is easy to do, and really fun, and it gets mentees standing up, moving around and working together.

Instructions:

- Begin by telling the participants that in this exercise they will be asked to build an Ideal Mentor.
- Break up into groups of five to six people. (Two or three groups minimum, are best, but having even one group do the exercise is still enjoyable and it can be effective.)
- With the flipcharts and large colored markers provided, draw a large outline of a person. It doesn't have to be perfect.
- Multiple times, go to the outline, and with colored pens and draw (or if you can't draw write down) qualities of the ideal mentor you would like to have. Draw your symbol on the part of the body where the trait might originate. Example: A well-traveled mentor might have hiking boots.
- Be as creative and artistic as you can. See how many colors you can use.
- Keep drawing or writing down characteristics until everyone has run out of ideas. (Give them 10 or 15 minutes to complete their drawing).
- Later we will display your drawings to the larger group.
- Don't look at the other groups' drawings, as it is important to do your own work.

Facilitator Notes:

- It's good to keep each group from seeing the other groups' drawings, so space the groups out, if possible.
- Walk around and monitor each groups' progress. Give them a three-minute warning before you bring them back together. Tell them to turn the drawings over when finished.
- Bring the finished flip charts to the front of the room. Reveal them only one at a time. Have one or more person from each group come up to explain their ideal mentor to the larger group. This often four or five minutes per presentation.
- Add Drama to the Presentation: Encourage everyone in the room to do a drum roll before revealing each ideal mentor. As you help them reveal their drawing (by holding it or taping it to the wall, or an easel), encourage “Ohhhhs! and Ahhhs!” from the attendees. (People really get a kick out of this.)

- Post each of the drawings in a prominent place so that attendees will be able to see them for the entire day. If someone has a camera, you can take a digital picture and put the photos on your website.
- If you do this exercise with your mentees first, you may want to save these drawings and then show your mentors what the mentees want in a mentor, later, right after the mentors do the exercise. You will be able to point out that mentees want the same things in mentors, that mentors identify in themselves.

Discussion Points.

- Put the drawings side by side on the wall and then ask, “What traits do they have in common?” (Heart and ears are important, as they are on almost all of the drawings.)
- Let the mentees know that you are going to do the same exercise with the mentors, and when they are finished you will show the mentors the drawings they just finished. (You can let them know that when mentors do this exercise, they come up with the same symbols.)
- “When you look for mentors in your life, look for people that have the qualities that you want in a mentor.”
- Remind the mentees that they are mentors too, and that they need to bring out traits like the heart and ears when they are mentoring!