

THE ROLE OF THE COACH / MENTOR

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have just accepted, or are considering one of the most valuable roles in our club - that of Coach or Mentor. This assignment can bring a large amount of satisfaction, as you watch the transition of a new club member, with their reasons for joining Toastmasters, personality, and skills/life experiences - transform and bloom into a fully functioning member of the club.

According to the dictionary, a "Coach" is an instructor or trainer. A "Mentor" is a wise, loyal advisor. Your role should be a combination of both. In this role, you have the opportunity to share your wisdom, knowledge and experience with a new Toastmaster who wants to learn, grow and achieve.

Most new members join Toastmasters because they have problems and/or needs that relate to public speaking. Research has shown that a majority of these men and women equate the self-improvement they seek from Toastmasters with career advancement or professional development. So, it is vitally important to most new members that they solve their issues and meet their speaking-related needs.

Yet many new members fail if simply left to "sink or swim" with no guidance other than that provided by speech evaluations. It's a mistake to assume that they can succeed without psychological or other support. They need reassurance that their goals and the effort required to attain them are worthwhile. They need practical advice from someone who thoroughly understands the Toastmasters program. They need someone who understands what they are wanting out of the Toastmasters program. In short - they need someone like you!

New members have the same needs - to have their needs and expectations managed, and also that they understand the club culture. An important part of this process is for the new member to complete the New Member Profile found in the Visitor Booklet, along with the Application Form 400. This should be used as a basis for the mentor, and also the Vice President of Education to start liaising with the new member.

The following are the stages and steps for successfully fulfilling your role as a coach/mentor:-

TO BEGIN WITH

Build a personal rapport with Mentee

Get to know each other – share stories on why you both joined Toastmasters. This can be done informally during the meetings, during the breaks, or by setting aside a time when you can get together just for a chat.

Club Culture

As all organisations are different, so are Toastmaster clubs. While the new member is becoming acquainted with the clubs style and expectations, this is the ideal time to educate on the unspoken but very important aspects that make Parramatta Toastmasters Club a club to be proud of. Issues such as arriving on time for meetings, adhering to times allotted on the speaking program, advance notice of absences should be advised. Well run clubs don't just happen – all members contribute to the on-going success of a fun, informative and educational meeting. New members need to appreciate the commitment and consistency that is expected of all active members of the club.

THE NITTY GRITTY

Discuss the Mentees needs and expectations

Using the New Member Profile as a guide, secure an understanding of what the mentee wants to achieve, what the expectation is of the Toastmasters membership, and also what they understand of the Toastmasters program. Active listening and reflecting skills are invaluable at this point.

Translate the Mentees needs into Toastmasters program levels

Once the mentees needs have been clarified, convert their goals into Toastmaster related accomplishments. For example, wanting to overcome nerves in a job interview, or wanting to produce a WOW presentation. This may be related to achieving the Competent Communicator. Or, wanting to be a more effective manager at work could be equated to completing Advanced Leader Silver award. It is also advisable to

Set specific goals and objectives for the Mentee

Agree upon a realistic set of goals – taking into account current level of commitments with work, family and time. Write them down – including time frames.

Discuss the effort and commitment needed to meet these goals

Most Toastmasters establish a set behavioural pattern from the beginning. Emphasis the need to prepare diligently for each assignment – whether it is a prepared speech or a minor assignment. Demonstrate how maintaining a good club culture of regular attendance, becoming involved in club activities and being teachable enables goals to be reached while enjoying the process.

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

Monitor the Mentees performance and progress

This is the on-going part of your role as coach/mentor. Your role officially only lasts as long as the first three speeches, but in reality it could, and should, last a lot longer. Basic things that you need to discuss and communicate with your mentee include:-

<u>IceBreaker</u>	Provide additional feedback regarding their performance compared to their initial self appraisal. Are there any things that can be addressed easily and quickly that will enhance future presentations? Keeping the new member motivated is vital at this early stage.
<u>First Few Speeches</u>	Supplement the verbal and written evaluations with both education and validation.
<u>Meeting Program</u>	Ensure your mentee is actively involved in club programming and is being given the opportunity to participate.
<u>Monitor Progress</u>	Check with Mentee their progression towards their goals.
<u>Offer Advice</u>	Be watchful of all Mentees meeting assignments. Are they keeping to time? Do they understand what is required? Are they assimilating into the club? A kind and helpful word offered can have a tremendous affect on someone who is new and wanting to learn.
<u>Be available</u>	Offer help, even if it is not asked. Show that you are interested in their progress.
<u>Other Opportunities</u>	As an experienced Toastmaster, you will be aware of other events outside the club, and the multitude of opportunities that are available. New members may not be aware of Area or Division contests, Sunday Seminars, fund raising activities for example. People can only participate in what they are aware of. Make sure your mentee fully understands that the Toastmasters experience does not stop at the end of a meeting. If they are wanting to be more involved, there are many events that need enthusiastic participants.

DUAL / TRANSFER MEMBERS

All new members to a club deserve a Mentor

With a club as popular as Parramatta Toastmasters, we can also increase our membership base with existing Toastmasters wanting to join us. They therefore come into our club as Dual members.

Many are already experienced Toastmasters - so why is it beneficial to have a mentor?

One of the benefits of having an assigned mentor is to help the new member assimilate into the club. As all Toastmaster Clubs are run differently, this relationship is a gentle way to let a new member know the different expectations and culture. For example, forward apologies, how meeting assignments are communicated (via the web), or even where the club resources are held.

The other benefit of having a mentor assigned to an experienced Toastmaster is the additional feedback. The extra advice can go a long way to enhance an already skilled Toastmaster, and project their presentations to the next level.

Mentoring and Coaching are very much a part of our club culture. It has many benefits to both the Mentor and the Mentee. You will feel a sense of pride as you watch the new members start to progress through the educational pathways, especially those who you take a personal interest in.

The Mentor / Mentee relationship is one to treasure. You never know what gold you may find just below the surface.