

I ask you to count to 5 and think of one person who's helped you in your career?

I feel very grateful to have achieved what I have in life and my working career and I know that many of you do too.

Brought up by my dad and gran, I left school having done okay, but not really a high flyer.

I had a part time job in Tesco whilst studying a year's secretarial course. My course was coming to an end and my dad said 'do you think you should ask Tesco to keep you on full time'. But I had an ambition of being a secretary. I dreamed of sitting on a desk with a typewriter. For Christmas one year I had an electronic typewriter and I absolutely loved it. I used to sit on my small dressing table in my bedroom typing away pretending to be working in a busy office

After a year of a secretarial course, and at the age of 17, I started my first job. It was with a small enterprise agency in Carmarthen. I remember now my first day watching my colleague answering the phone and being absolutely petrified. We never had a phone at home and I really didn't know what to do.

Julie was the office manager, I looked at her and wanted to be just like her. She was confident and good at what she did, but more importantly she believed in me and wanted me to succeed and do well in life. With Julie's support as a mentor she taught me the ropes and invested her time in me, and from the age of 17 to my early 20's I climbed to be the office manager but not just for one office I ended up managing 3 offices.

So, I ask you again, who's helped you? And how are you giving back?

In my late twenties I wanted to be a 'Julie' to someone else. I had this urge to 'give something back' and I learnt about the Princes Trust Leaving Care Mentor Scheme.

Jade had left care and was sofa surfing, she had aspirations to be social worker.

She wanted someone to talk to, she wanted advice on how to write a CV, she needed help finding a flat, she didn't want to always speak to a paid social worker.

I supported, advised and guided her through the challenges she faced. I'll never forget the day I picked her up for her move to her new flat. I was fussing and had made many assumptions over plans for the move but when I picked

her up all she had was one black bin bag of her things. That image and experience will always stay with me. With my listening and guidance and with the help of others Jade worked hard at her GCSE's and went on to continue to study and is now a social worker

I ask you again, who's helped you? And how are you giving back?

Having joined the NHS in 2018 I experienced the power of coaching. I was struggling with some work issues and was recommended a coach. The coaching sessions gave me time out and a safe space to talk through some sensitive issues.

My coach provided a listening, ear she presented me with feedback, which helped me see things from different perspectives and helped me see the big picture

My coach didn't give me any answers, but worked with me while I become more aware and came up with my own solutions and ideas. It was really powerful. As a result, I studied to become a coach myself and learnt a lot of useful tools such as the OSCAR model

Becoming a Coach and mentor has helped me become a better listener. not just with those I coach, but in all my relationships.

Being a coach has helped me to be still and to lower the volume of my internal chatter. Being a coach had made me less judgemental – I don't jump to conclusions as I did and I am better able to understand other people's views and experiences. A big benefit of being a coach is learning the art of asking good open and probing questions that stimulate thinking and problem solving skills. I've gained a growing capacity to focus on strength instead of weakness in everyone that I meet. And it's given me the opportunity to give something back and there is no better feeling. I have used the coaching Oscar model on my kids and they sometimes complain 'you're doing that thing on me again'. But I feel it teaches them to find their own answers which hopefully builds them up to be resilient individuals in the future.

The OSCAR model mentioned earlier stands for Outcome, Situation, Choices, Action and Review

We use the model by moving through the framework, using a mix of open and probing questions

O	Outcome	Which desired outcome (end goal) does the coachee expect from the coaching sessions?
S	Situation	What is the coachee's current situation?
C	Choices	What choices does the coachee make?
A	Actions	Which actions does the coachee carry out?
R	Review	How and when will the coachee review?

The Differences Between Mentoring and Coaching

Mentoring is often longer-term relationship.

No qualifications are required for mentoring,

Mentoring is about the mentor sharing their knowledge, experience and skills, telling the mentee and guiding them through direction.

Coaching is often shorter-term

There are a lot of coaching qualifications available, I would say that to be a truly effective coach you would need the training and qualifications.

Unlike mentoring, coaching is non-directive which means that it is about posing the right questions, providing the space, trust and confidence for the individual being coached to consider how they can achieve more and reach their goals through finding the capabilities within themselves.

The Skills Required for Mentoring

First-hand experience, knowledge, and insights into the area in which you're providing mentoring

Dedicated long-term time commitment is important because if you start a mentoring journey with someone, it's vital to see it through.

Motivating, encouraging, and inspiring energy throughout all mentoring meetings.

Helping to identify the mentee's goals is crucial. This can take some self-reflection from the mentor, in order to help the mentee and work out where their goals should be.

The Skills Required for Coaching

A relationship of equals where the coach and coachee have mutual understanding and respect.

The ability to recognise strengths and really challenge the individual being coached, in order to propel them forward.

The skill to tackle problems head on and not dwelling,

To be able to ask challenging questions and probe, coaching can be really uncomfortable.

Some example questions to ask: -

What are you ready to change?

- What are you willing to do in the next week?
- What do you think you're afraid of
- So what happens if nothing changes?
- What would be the easiest most doable next step?
- What's one change you could make that would move you closer to your goal?

Can coaching work in the NHS?

Yes, it can, and it does. As many of you have experienced culture is a huge issue in the NHS. When I joined I didn't understand why colleagues were referred to and badged by their salary banding. People would come up to me and say I am a band 5 or 6 and I have no idea what they meant. I'll always remember a member of the team being invited to a staff drop in event on our new strategy and came to me and said 'I was told as I'm a band 4 that it's not relevant to me'. I remember thinking that person could be the next chief executive I thought, they have aspirations, and they wanted to learn about the organisation.

Here are some examples of quotes from colleagues in the NHS who have received coaching

"Comfortably the most helpful 90 minutes of my time to date in the NHS".

"It is really useful opportunity to get a chance to reflect and talk things through – coaching has helped me to develop as a clinical leader.

What are the Key Benefits to Mentoring and Coaching

Both can increase employee engagement and retention. We know that retention is a huge issue within the NHS and recruiting staff in the first place – and we want to keep them.

Both mentoring and coaching can increase confidence and the interpersonal skills of the person providing the mentoring or coaching, and the person receiving it.

Both can dramatically improve individual performance.

The International Coach Federation (ICF) research showed:

- 70% improved work performance
- 80% improved self-confidence

From an organisational perspective - the vast majority of companies (86%) said they at least made their investment back.

“Coaching is releasing a person’s potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them” and each person holds so much power within themselves that needs to be let out. Sometimes they just need a little nudge, a little direction, a little support, a little coaching and the greatest things can happen” Pete Carroll

So, we started my story with me at 17 starting my first job. Next year I am 50 and I can honestly say without the Julie’s in my life I would not be where I am today.

I very much feel passionately, if we all made a conscious effort to give something back and help other people ‘climb’ or give them ‘a leg up’ , the world or the workplace anyway would be a far better place.

As I reflect today I still feel lucky to have achieved what I have, I’m lucky to be in a senior role in the health board with exciting plans in our area to build a new hospital, but I’m also looking out for people around me, both in and outside my team who want to progress and just need a bit of help to get there.

So, what can you do. A few things to take away:

Maybe to consider learning how to ask open probing questions to help people find their own solutions

Contact your L&D team and Sign up to become a coach or mentor.
Contact the Princes Trust or local universities about their mentor schemes
Look around you and offer to coach or mentor someone, someone at work or
in your community.

So, for one last time I ask -

Who's helped you? And how are you giving back?