CHAPTER 10:
HELPING OTHERS DEVELOP AND GROW

One purpose of this chapter is to convey information that will help students recognize their responsibility for the growth and development of others. A closely-related purpose is to provide concepts and skills to facilitate the process of developing the skills necessary for helping others in the workplace develop and grow.

CHAPTER OUTLINE AND LECTURE NOTES

Although not specifically stated in most job descriptions, workers have a responsibility to help each other learn, grow, and develop. For example, much of job training occurs as coworkers instruct each other on work procedures and techniques.

I. BE A NURTURING, POSITIVE PERSON

A major strategy for helping others grow and develop is to be a nurturing, positive person. A nurturing person promotes the growth of others. Nurturing (or nourishing) people are positive and supportive. A toxic person stands in contrast to a nourishing person because he or she dwells on the negative. Toxic people have been described as energy vampires because they suck all the positive energy out of you. Three nourishing attitudes and actions are as follows:

1. Recognize that most people have growth needs.
2. Team up with a coworker in your department or from another one so the two of you can form a buddy system.
3. Be a role model for others.

Being a nurturing, positive person is a life-long process, rather than a tactic that can be used at will.

II. BEING A MENTOR TO CO-WORKERS

A mentor is generally defined as an individual with advanced experience and knowledge who is committed to giving support and career advice to a less experienced person. The less experienced person is the protégé (from the French word for protected). As long as a person is more experienced and wiser than a coworker in some important aspect of the job, he or she can be a mentor. Mentoring supports the team-based organization.

Serving as a mentor is an excellent way of helping others on the job. Mentoring is also gaining acceptance off the job. To be a mentor, a person engages in a wide range of helping behaviors, all related to being a trusted friend, coach, and teacher. Mentoring behaviors include the following:
1. **Sponsoring.** A mentor actively nominates somebody else for promotions and desirable positions.

2. **Coaching.** A mentor gives on-the-spot advice to the protégé to help him or her improve skills.

3. **Protecting.** A mentor might shield a junior person from potentially harmful situations or from the boss.

4. Sharing *challenging assignments.* In some situations a fellow team member can request that the protégé help him or her on a difficult task.

5. **Acting as a referral agent.** The mentor sometimes refers the protégé to resources inside and outside the company to help with a particular problem.

6. **Role modeling.** An important part of being a mentor is to give the protégé a pattern of values and behaviors to emulate.

7. **Giving support and encouragement.** A mentor can be helpful just by giving support and encouragement.

8. **Counseling.** A mentor listens to the protégé’s problems and offers advice.

9. **Providing friendship.** A mentor is above all a trusted friend, and the friendship extends two ways.

10. **Encouraging problem solving.** Mentors help their protégés solve problems by themselves and make their own discoveries.

11. **Explaining the ropes.** A general-purpose function of the mentor is to help the protégé learn the ropes.

12. **Teaching the right skills.** Mentors can help protégés develop skills such as those related to information technology, customer service, and achieving high quality.

13. **Encouraging continuous learning.** Part of encouraging lifelong learning is to emphasize that formal education and an occasional workshop are not sufficient for maintaining expertise in today’s fast-changing workplace.

Mentoring is a complex activity. To develop mentoring skills, a person needs to offer help to several people for at least six months.
Mentoring, as conducted by senior managers and coworkers, has become recognized as an important vehicle for the advancement of minorities in the workplace.

III. COACHING AND TRAINING OTHERS
Two direct approaches to helping others in the workplace are coaching and training. In the new workplace, team members share responsibility for coaching and training. An example is the leaders in learning program at the travel firm, Rosenbluth International.

A. Coaching Skills and Techniques
In the workplace, coaching is a method of helping workers grow and improve their job competence by providing suggestions and encouragement. Coaching is mostly for managers, but with a helpful attitude, coworkers are likely to accept coaching. Eight suggestions for coaching follow. Note that they should be combined with active listening.

1. Provide specific feedback.
2. Encourage the person you are coaching to talk.
3. Ask powerful questions.
4. Give emotional support.
5. Give some constructive advice.
6. Coach with "could," not "should."
7. Interpret what is happening.
8. Help remove barriers to good performance.

One implication of the coaching suggestions just presented is that some people are more adept at coaching than others.

B. Fallacies About Coaching
Overcoming misperceptions about coaching can help a person be a better coach. These misperceptions include (1) coaching only applies in one-to-one work, (2) coaching is mostly about new knowledge and skills, (3) coaching beyond knowledge and skills becomes psychotherapy, (4) coaches need to be experts, and (5) coaching has to be done face to face.

B. Training Others
A direct way of helping others in the workplace is to train them. Training is the process of helping others acquire a job-related skill. As organizations operate with fewer managers, coworkers have more responsibility to train each other. Certain time-tested principles facilitate learning, and, therefore, training.
1. **Encourage concentration.** Not much learning takes place unless the trainee concentrates carefully on what is being learned.

2. **Use motivated interest.** People learn best when they are interested in the problem facing them. Explain to the trainee how the material to be learned will benefit him or her.

3. **Remind learners to intend to remember.** We often do not remember something because we do not intend to commit it to memory.

4. **Meaningfulness of material.** The material to be learned should be organized in a meaningful manner.

5. **Give feedback on progress.** As a person’s training progresses, motivation may be maintained and enhanced by providing knowledge on progress.

6. **Ask the trainee to reflect on what he or she has learned.** If you think carefully about what you have learned, your retention of the information increases.

7. **Deal with trainee defensiveness.** Training is sometimes retarded because the person being trained is defensive about information or skills that clashes with his or her beliefs and practices.

### IV. HELPING DIFFICULT PEOPLE

**A difficult person** is an individual who creates problems for others, yet has the skill and mental ability to do otherwise.

#### A. Types of Difficult People

Dozens of types of difficult people have been identified, with considerable overlap among the types. Following is a sampling of the many type of difficult people.

1. **Know-it-alls** are experts on everything.
2. **Blamers** are workers who never solve their own problems.
3. **Gossips** spread negative rumors about other and attempt to set people off against each other.
4. **Dictators** bully, cajole, and intimidate others, and are insulting.
5. **Repulsives** have poor personal hygiene, eating habits, and appearance, and also use foul language.
6. **Yes-people** agree to any commitment or deadline, yet rarely deliver.
7. **No-people** are negative and pessimistic, and quick to point out why something will not work.
8. **Jekyll and Hydes** are pleasant when dealing with superiors and customers,
yet tyrannical as bosses.

9. *Backstabbers* pretend to befriend you and encourage you to talk freely about problems you face. Later they report this information to the person you mentioned in a negative light.

B. Tactics for Dealing with Difficult People

How one deals most effectively with a difficult person varies somewhat with the type. Nevertheless, the following techniques have wide applicability for helping difficult people change to a more constructive behavior pattern.

1. **Give ample feedback.** The primary technique for dealing with counterproductive behavior is to feed back to the difficult person how his or her behavior affects you.

2. **Criticize constructively.** Criticize in private and begin with mild criticism. Base criticism on objective facts rather than subjective impressions.

3. **Help the difficult person feel more confident.** Many counterproductive employees are low in self-confidence. Work with your team leader or manager to help the difficult person succeed on a task.

4. **Use tact and diplomacy.** Tactful actions can sometimes take care of annoying behavior by coworkers without having to confront the problem. Tact and diplomacy can also be incorporated into confrontation.

5. **Use humor.** Non-hostile humor can often be used to help a difficult person understand how his or her behavior is blocking others.

6. **Work out a deal.** Negotiate a solution such as asking for reciprocity when the difficult person asks for help.

7. **Reinforce civil behavior and good moods.** When a generally difficult person is behaving acceptably, recognize the behavior in some way.

The tactics for dealing with difficult people described above require practice to be effective.

**ANSWERS TO DISCUSSION AND REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Explain your position on whether workers have a responsibility to help each other grow and develop.
The answer to this question depends to a large extent on the student’s values. In a team-based organization, however, workers are supposed to help each other in many ways including growth and development.

2. What is your opinion of the potential effectiveness of the buddy system in your career?

Students who are socially minded and who have at least average needs for affiliation will probably endorse the buddy system.

3. If you were to have a mentor (or do have one), what roles would you want (or do you want) that person to play?

The answer to this question is subjective. Selecting the preferred roles, however, will serve as a good review of the potential contributions of a mentor.

4. If you were choosing a mentor or protégé, to what extent would the person’s sex be an influential factor?

Today many more people feel comfortable having an opposite-sex mentor or protégé. In the past, more people were concerned that others would perceive the pair as being involved romantically. To avoid complaints of favoritism, many men and women would avoid having an opposite-sex mentor. (The complaints about favoritism usually surface when a woman is promoted by her male mentor.)

5. In what way does a coach in the workplace function much like an athletic coach?

Workplace coaches have much in common with athletic coaches. The workplace coach spots an incorrect move and makes a suggestion for improvement; he or she gives encouragement, and at appropriate times may discipline. At other times the workplace coach may "trade" a team member by transferring that person to another department, or may ask the person to leave the team (be fired).

6. Describe any barrier to good performance you have encountered. How might your boss have helped?

This question might elicit some useful data that could be shared with classmates. Among the barriers that might surface would include replacing broken equipment, buying new equipment, or dealing with a difficult coworker who was an encumbrance.

7. Many career-minded workers today hire their own coach, much like a personal trainer for solving job problems and advancing. Explain whether you would be
willing to invest money to hire a business coach for yourself.

The practice of hiring a business coach with personal funds is growing rapidly. The workers who hire the coach (a) believe that coach would be helpful, and (b) take their career seriously enough to make such an investment.

8. Do you think trainee defensiveness is a bigger problem in teaching technical or interpersonal skills? Explain.

Defensiveness is typically a much bigger problem when teaching interpersonal skills because most people are defensive about their interpersonal skills. For example, a person will readily admit that he or she needs help in producing a Web site for the Internet. Yet the same person is less likely to admit to poor listening skills.

9. To what extent do you think it is worth the effort to try and change the behavior of a difficult person?

It can be discouraging attempting to change the behavior of a difficult person because the efforts will often fail. Yet, a difficult person in the work environment is a potent stressor, so attempting change is usually worthwhile. If the change efforts do not work, the person attempting the changes will be content that he or she at least tried to bring about constructive change.

10. How might humor help you deal with the repulsive type of difficult person? Supply an example of a witty comment you might use.

Joking or kidding about the person’s repulsive behavior might get across the point in a non-threatening manner. The person might then be in a better frame of mind to deal with constructive criticism. Developing a witty comment is another opportunity to practice creative thinking. Here’s a sample comment, intended to be witty: The repulsive person is eating non-finger foods with his hands instead of using a fork. His behavior is grossing out his coworkers seated at the company cafeteria. You say, "I’m sure the cafeteria manager would be happy to know that you are saving on plastic forks. But we’d appreciate eating with you even more if you were less frugal with forks."

ANSWER TO CASE QUESTIONS

The Nightmare in the Logistics Department

This case illustrates how deviously and destructively an office backstabber can operate.
1. What devious technique might Rudy, or another coworker, be using against Larry?

Somebody is definitely backstabbing Larry. Ellie must be getting her misinformation from a third party.

2. What motivation might a coworker have for raising questions about Larry’s job knowledge and loyalty to the company?

Raising questions about Larry’s job knowledge and loyalty to the company might prompt management to think less of his capabilities, thus lowering his chances for promotion. If Larry is removed as a rival for promotion, the back stabber is in a better position to be promoted.

3. How should Larry deal with his suspicions?

Larry should confront the issue both with his boss and Rudy.

4. How effectively has Ellie dealt with her two concerns about Larry?

Ellie did not deal with her concerns very professionally. She seemed to have accepted the rumors without verifying them. At the same time she put too much faith in the back stabber’s comments.

**COMMENTS ABOUT QUIZZES AND EXERCISES**

*Attitudes Toward-Helping Others*

An intended value of this self-quiz is to sensitize students to the fact that attitudes contribute heavily to being a helpful, nurturing person. Students who choose to work in a team environment would do well to have a positive attitude toward helping others. Part of a team member’s responsibility is to share knowledge and skills.

*The Nurturing, Positive Person*

A subtle message emerging from this role-play is that personality characteristics contribute heavily to one’s ability to be nurturing. For example, if a person does not project warmth it will be difficult to be supportive. A person who is not naturally warm will have to work extra hard at being supportive and nurturing.
Selecting a Protégé

The purpose of this exercise is to help students think through the type of characteristics they would admire in a protégé. The exercise also highlights the fact that a mentoring relationship is one of friendship.

Characteristics of an Effective Coach

The major purpose of this exercise is to help students recognize that many of the characteristics that contribute to effective coaching can be developed. Also, the importance of action plans is reinforced once again.

Coaching a Good Performer

Here is an opportunity to practice coaching about an important workplace behavior: displaying poor teamwork.

Designing a Training Program

The point of this exercise is to help students appreciate the complexity of designing an adequate training program. The exercise also serves as a reminder that an effective training program incorporates principles of learning.

Helping Difficult People

Even if students do not agree entirely with the scoring of the alternatives, the scenarios and alternative solutions offered provide good discussion points about dealing with difficult people.

Dealing with Difficult People

Doing the role-plays required here will help students realize that dealing with difficult people is really a subset of conflict resolution.
EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

Multiple Choice

(c) 1. A major characteristic of nurturing people is that they
   a. feed off of other people.
   b. are late bloomers in their career.
   c. promote the growth of others.
   d. conduct serious negotiations over lunch.

(b) 2. A toxic person is so named because he or she
   a. spreads poisonous rumors about people.
   b. dwells on the negative.
   c. smokes in nonsmoking areas.
   d. has negative chemistry with most people.

(d) 3. An energy vampire is said to
   a. enjoy getting into fights with others.
   b. mooch from other people.
   c. suck the blood out of management.
   d. drain the positive energy out of other people.

(a) 4. The buddy system in a job setting refers to a pair of people
   a. sharing information that could affect their careers.
   b. recommending each other for good assignments.
   c. sharing career expenses and clothing.
   d. rating each other’s job performance highly.

(b) 5. In a mentoring relationship, the mentor
   a. trains the protégé to be his or her replacement.
   b. gives support and career advice to a less experienced person.
   c. requests that the protégé recommend him or her for promotion.
   d. chooses a career path for the protégé.

(a) 6. Which of the following is the most likely to be a mentoring behavior in
      relationship to the protégé?
      a. giving support and encouragement
      b. downsizing the individual
      c. acting cold and distant
      d. getting romantically involved with the individual

(d) 7. Which one of the following is the least likely to be a mentoring behavior?
      a. counseling with the protégé
      b. being a role model for the protégé
c. helping the protégé "learn the ropes"
d. solving problems for the protégé

c)  8. Which of the following behaviors is expected of a protégé in a mentoring relationship?
   a. Show the mentor the ropes.
   b. Be a role model for the mentor.
   c. Publicly support the mentor.
   d. Counsel the mentor.

d)  9. Research suggests that minority group members who are successful in business
   a. made it on their own without a mentor about 90 percent of the time.
   b. typically chose mentors outside their own industry.
   c. typically paired up with a middle-age, white male mentor.
   d. often had a role model/mentor who helped the achieve career goals.

(a)  10. Feedback in coaching should be
   a. specific about the area needing improvement.
   b. general to avoid pinpointing blame.
   c. confined to the first coaching session.
   d. avoided unless requested.

(b)  11. A recommended way of giving advice is to
   a. wait until the person has a good day.
   b. put your advice in the form of a question.
   c. first make the person feel guilty.
   d. offer a reward for accepting the advice.

(c)  12. A key role for the coach, in relation to the person being coached, is to
   a. create barriers to good performance.
   b. hold back on emotional support to teach self-reliance.
   c. ask powerful questions.
   d. telling the person what he or she should do.

(d)  13. When coaching another person, it is better to suggest what the person
   a. will do to improve.
   b. ought to do to improve.
   c. should do to improve.
   d. could do to improve.

(a)  14. An interpretation in coaching means that the coach
   a. explains why the person being coach acted in a particular way.
b. finds a subtle way to blame the coached person for making a mistake.
c. explains company policy to the person being coached.
d. explains why the person made a mistake.

(d) 15. An effective way to use modeling in coaching is for the manager to
a. set high standards of performance.
b. challenge the group member’s ethical models.
c. sketch a mathematical model of coaching.
d. demonstrate how a task should be done correctly.

(b) 16. Which one of the following is considered to be an important characteristic of an effective coach?
   a. confrontational style
   b. diplomacy and tact
   c. competitiveness with team members
   d. impatience

(c) 17. Which of the following is considered to be a fallacy about coaching?
   a. Coaching is mostly about helping people with underlying habits.
   b. Coaching applies to teams as well as individuals.
   c. Going beyond providing knew knowledge and skills becomes psychotherapy.
   d. Coaching can sometimes be done by e-mail or telephone.

(a) 18. As a trainer, you explain to Susan that if she learns to find relevant information on the Internet well, she will be eligible for promotion. You are making use of the learning principle called
   a. motivated interest.
   b. concentration.
   c. meaningfulness of material.
   d. deal with trainee defensiveness.

(d) 19. Which one of the following is the most likely to facilitate learning?
   a. avoid feedback to minimize apprehension about learning
   b. focus on skills, not the meaning of what is being learned
   c. enhance trainee defensiveness
   d. intend to remember

(a) 20. Reflecting on what you have learned is likely to
   a. enhance retention of the information.
   b. decrease retention of the information.
   c. increase your defensiveness about learning.
   d. hamper the development of soft skills.
21. A defining characteristic of the *yes people* type of difficult person is that he or she
a. avoids promising to meet deadlines.
b. says yes to the boss, but no to coworkers.
c. says no to the boss, but yes to coworkers.
d. rarely delivers on promises.

22. Which one of the following is a recommended way of dealing with difficult people?
a. Give feedback in a group setting.
b. Give feedback about the person’s characteristics.
c. Give feedback about the person’s behavior.
d. Give feedback about the person’s values.

23. Which one of the following is *not* a recommended way of dealing with a difficult person?
a. use non-hostile humor.
b. be direct rather than diplomatic.
c. lower the person’s self-confidence to bring about humility.
d. give ample feedback on the difficult behavior.

24. When criticizing a difficult person,
a. base your criticism on objective facts.
b. base your criticism on subjective impressions.
c. begin with harsh criticism, then shift to soft.
d. conduct the criticism in a group setting.

25. Which one of the following is a recommended way of dealing with difficult people?
a. Use humor to point out a problem.
b. Avoid any negotiations with the person.
c. Report them to the boss immediately.
d. Retaliate by being tactless and non-diplomatic.

**True/False**

(T) 1. A recognized form of training is for coworkers to instruct each other on work procedures and techniques.

(F) 2. A nourishing person attempts to take as much from other from people as feasible.
3. Energy vampires are known for their ability to give some of their high energy to others.

4. A recommended way of being a nurturing person is to recognize the growth needs of others.

5. Under the workplace buddy system, two people constructively criticize each other’s job performance.

6. A coworker can be a mentor as long as he or she is more experienced and wiser than another group member in some important aspect of the job.

7. A mentor usually expects some support and encouragement back from the protégé.

8. An important mentoring role is for the mentor to solve tough problems for the protégé.

9. A mentor is likely to discourage the protégé from continuous learning because such activity detracts from getting the job done.

10. A survey of successful minority executives indicated that their role model/mentors were primarily a different ethnic, racial or cultural origin.

11. A recommended way of giving feedback in coaching is to deal in generalities rather than specifics.

12. An effective coach asks open-ended questions of the person being coached.

13. The purpose of a powerful question in coaching is to help the other person see through the strengths and weaknesses of what he or she is doing or thinking.

14. An effective way of giving advice is often to ask a question, such as "Have you explored enough alternative solutions to your problem?"

15. An effective coaching technique is to emphasize what the person being coached should do, so to make him or her feel guilty.

16. An effective coach is generally has feelings of competitiveness with team members.

17. A misperception about coaching is that it is mostly about providing new knowledge and skills.
(T) 18. An effective technique for creating motivated interest for the learner is to show how the material to be learned is related to the trainee’s career goals.

(T) 19. Thinking through the meaning of what you have learned tends to increase retention of the information.

(F) 20. Consciously intending to remember usually decrease retention because thinking about remembering interferes with learning being spontaneous.

(T) 21. Training is sometimes held back because the person being trained resists information that clashes with his or her beliefs or practices.

(F) 22. A difficult person is a worker who lacks the physical and mental ability to perform a task as required.

(F) 23. An outstanding quality of the yes people is that they are highly reliable with respect to delivering work as promised.

(T) 24. A major strategy for dealing with difficult people is to give them feedback about what their behavior is doing to you.

(F) 25. An important technique for changing the behavior of a difficult person is to lower the person’s self-confidence so he or she becomes less arrogant.