



# MENTORING



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***Mentoring*** is a partnership between two individuals where one, the ***Mentor***, is the more skilled/experienced and the other the ***Mentee*** is the less skilled/experienced.

The aim of this partnership is to assist the ***Mentee*** to adapt to personal, social and workplace changes and enhance lifelong learning.

# WHO'S WHO?

Mentee?

Protégé?

Associate?

Mentoree?

They all mean the same thing  
'Mentee' is used - purely a term of  
convenience.

# MENTORING VS COACHING

- Mentoring
  - Mentor 'Walks beside' the Mentee
  - A 'Pull' process from the Mentees perspective
  - a professional development relationship
  - accelerating the rate of learning and development
- Coaching
  - 'Leading' in a particular direction
  - A 'Push' process from the Mentors perspective
- A staged program to make the best use of both concepts.

# WHAT A MENTOR IS

- Coach
- Guide
- Sounding board
- A voice of experience
- Listener
- Supporter
- ??
- .....have a think about what you want to be?.



# WHAT A MENTOR IS NOT

- What a Mentor should NOT be is more important than what a Mentor IS
- NOT an advocate
  - A Mentor should not be individually championing the cause of their Mentee e.g. trying to get them 'that task' or an 'upgrade' etc
  - At the end of the day it is up to the Mentee to make their own running using the Mentor as one more resource in their own 'bag of tricks'
- Walk beside, sometimes behind, rarely in front
- The Mentee will be all the better for having done it themselves.



**Test ideas**

**Increase Knowledge**

**Inspire**

**Persuade**

## **WHY MENTORING?**

**Leadership**

**Encourage**

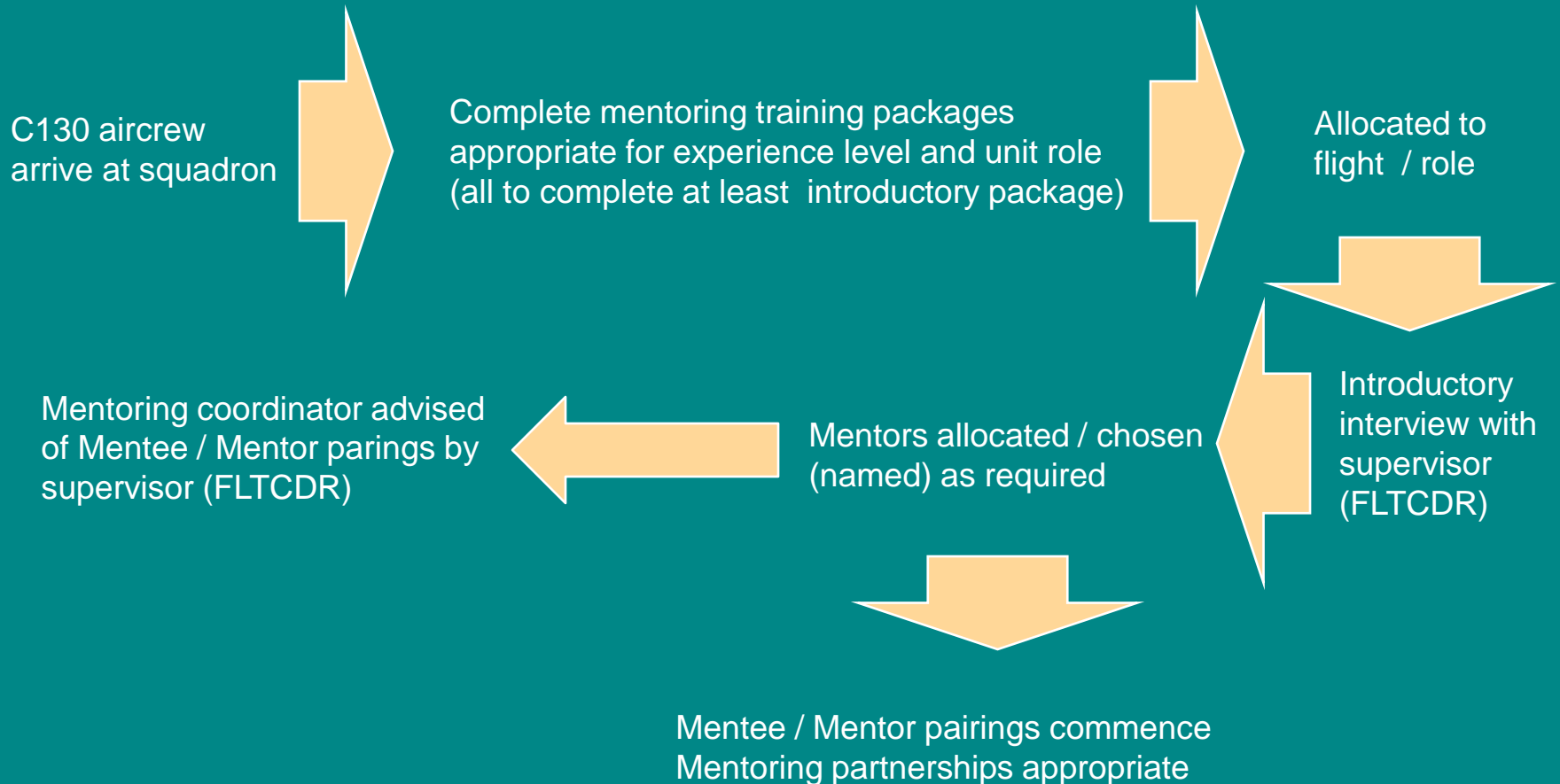
**Share experience**

**Personal Satisfaction**

# C130 AIRCREW PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Stage	Status		Mentor Sources		Choice of Mentor	Notes
	Mentees	Mentors	Junior Mentor	Senior Mentor		
1	C	C	WF	Either	FLTCDR	- First aircrew posting – year 1
2	C	V	Either	Preferably OF/U	Mentee / FLTCDR	- First aircrew posting year 2 (Mentee chooses Mentors) - First C130 Aircrew posting year 1 FLTCDR allocates Mentors
3	V	V	Single Mentor only		Mentee	- First aircrew posting , year 3 and beyond - Second or subsequent aircrew posting(s) year 2 and beyond - C130 'Retread' posting

# IMPLEMENTATION FLOW



# TRAINING

- Program potentially involves all aircrew from all categories so all aircrew complete at least some training (at least for awareness of what the program involves)
- 'Mentoring Introduction [Orientation]' (this package):
  - Completed by all aircrew
- 'Mentoring For Mentors [Conduct]:'
  - completed by those who will be Mentors
- 'Mentoring For Executives [Leadership]:'
  - completed by Unit Executives (FLTCDR & Deputies and Unit Executive)



# MENTORING COORDINATOR

- A Mentoring Program Coordinator (Mentoring Coordinator) - with an appropriate number of assistants - will be appointed as a Secondary Duty
- Roles of the Mentoring Coordinator:
  - Maintain a central register of Mentee / Mentor pairings
  - Maintain a register of volunteer Mentors
  - Coordinate all aspects of the program, specifically:
    - Liaise with FLTCDR's to ensure newly arrived personnel are appropriately paired with a Mentor in a timely fashion.
    - Ensure aircrew undertake training appropriate to their level of involvement in the program.



"Make a fool of yourself....."

".....otherwise you won't survive."





# Trust

# TRUST - THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT

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‘the real value in a Mentoring relationship comes from the trust and respect that two parties develop over time’.

Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal  
Angus Houston, AO AFC



# TRUST - CHAIN OF COMMAND

- Mentoring sits outside of the Chain of Command
- You won't get the necessary clear and open communication if the Mentee thinks that things they tell you will end up finding their way (without the Mentee's knowledge) into discussions with the Chain of Command.



# The Container

Thanks to Dr George Burkitt for this concept

# MENTORING & 'THE CONTAINER'

- 'The Container' is the space where both Mentee and Mentor:

- Feel safe to be authentic
- Freely express thoughts and feelings
- Confidentiality exists
- Don't make judgements

- You may like to formally set up 'The Container' with your Mentee by formally agreeing on it's boundaries

- This will help in establishing trust.

# MENTORING & 'THE CONTAINER' (CONT)

- For an effective container:
  - Avoid judgement of the Mentee
    - Make evaluations, not judgements
    - Mentees must feel comfortable that they can discuss things without being judged
  - Maintain absolute confidentiality
    - Mentees must feel that they can discuss things without it going anywhere (without their knowledge)
  - Establish and maintain appropriate professional boundaries / distance
    - A Mentoring partnership that goes beyond the 'professional' will very quickly violate 'The Container'.



# TRUST, MENTORING & 'THE CONTAINER'

- Trust is a crucial element of 'The Container' in which Mentoring takes place
- If the container (like say a plastic bottle) springs a leak then the partnership that was within that 'Container' slowly (or perhaps very quickly, depending on the size of the breach in the container) drains away.

# BREAKDOWN OF 'THE CONTAINER'

- 'The Container' can collapse inwards:
  - Making judgements
  - Providing 'your' solution i.e. 'fixing'
  - Interrupting during a conversation
  - Invalidating what the Mentee is thinking / feeling
  - Reacting in a negative way
- 'The Container' can collapse outwards:
  - Breaking confidentiality
  - Lack of attention
  - Abandoning the Mentee
  - Making it about you (the Mentor) rather than them (the Mentee)

# WHEN YOU MAY HAVE TO BUST OPEN 'THE CONTAINER'

- Trust is paramount.....but only to a point, and only you can be the judge at the end of the day (and it's a big call!) of when you may need to 'break' that trust
- This is not about 'dobbing'
- Consider it a safety call, and it will be one that you will have to likely agonise over (and you should).....but that's why you get paid the big bucks!
- Consider any breakdown of trust in the context of the 'Just Culture' in which we operate
  - Intentional violations that compromise safety are not tolerated in a Just Culture
- This should be very much the exception rather than the rule.

‘Mentor’ is a callsign used by our  
own RAAF’s number 285 C130  
Training Squadron



# SOME TIPS ON MENTORING...

- Establish open lines of communication – it'll be harder than it sounds!
- Be a good listener – maintain the ears to mouth ratio (listen twice as much as you talk)!
- Avoid making Judgements when discussing issues with your Mentee
- Maintain appropriate boundaries – let the Mentee drive where these boundaries lie.



# SOME TIPS ON MENTORING (cont)...

- Avoid Trying to 'be' the solution and provide the 'answer' - often we can't help but be problem solvers as Aircrew (it's in our nature), we get recruited based on this very element of our character
- Point the Mentee in the direction of the solution
- Often just being a sounding board is enough
- Use your potentially greater experience to offer up options
- Your Mentee will be all the better for having 'solved' the situation themselves.

# LISTENING

- THE most valuable technique
- AGAIN - maintain the ears to mouth ratio (listen [at least] twice as much as you talk)!
- It's far too easy to jump in early in the conversation, provide the solution, and miss the Mentee having the chance to actually get to the crux of the issue
  - You'll miss the 'best' bit if you do too much talking
- Remember aircrew are problem solvers by nature – you'll find it hard to resist jumping in and solving the problem.

# LISTENING STYLES

- Much of the time we appear to be listening, but what we are really doing is analysing what has been said- which makes it impossible to listen to what IS being said
- Several listening styles
  - Passive
    - Hearing, but NOT listening
    - You can perhaps recount the words, but NOT the meaning
  - The following styles are MUCH preferred
    - Committed
    - Active

# COMMITTED LISTENING

- Absolute focus on what is being said
- Deep attention
- Awareness of the desire to judge or respond – but not doing so! Active conscious decision to just listen
- Being aware of not just the words but the body language and emotional content of what is being said (or perhaps what is not being said!)
- Remaining silent, subtle responses to make the speaker feel ‘safer’ and validated to share their thoughts, encouraging them to continue and go deeper with their thoughts
- An incredibly difficult thing for aircrew to do (almost impossible in the beginning!).

# ACTIVE LISTENING

- Committed listening followed by a recount to the speaker of what the speaker thought they heard
  - No interpretation
  - No judgement
  - No additions from own experiences (at this stage)
  - No agenda
  - No imagination
- Checks what the speaker thought they heard
  - You may hear it but NOT always listen to it right the first time

# VALIDATING

- An extension of Active Listening
- A powerful technique to be an effective 'Container'
- Actively acknowledges what the other person is experiencing
  - Does not require you to understand or agree with the experience
  - Important **NOT** to take responsibility for the experience of the speaker
- Relate back to the speaker your understanding of what has been said, REMEMBER:
  - No judgement
  - Avoid interpretation





# A LOT OF IT'S ABOUT COMMUNICATION

‘Communication is a vital part of a successful Mentoring relationship, and as Mentors or Mentees I encourage each of you to be open and forthright, and to respect the professional confidence of your Mentoring partner’.

Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal  
Angus Houston, AO AFC

# WAYS TO COMMUNICATE

- Options

- Face to face

- The best way** (if it's possible)

- Yeah right!, in transport flying (with us all over the place all the time) like that's possible!

- You will have to work at it – your efforts will be rewarded in establishing a more useful / meaningful Mentoring partnership

- Telephone

- Email

- Instant / Text messaging

- ‘Skype’ (or similar), (Use the video capability if you can – it's much more natural to talk ‘face to face’)

- Others??

# COMMUNICATION (CONT)...

- As little as simple email once every so often will let your Mentee know that you are there for them (when required)
- Try to acknowledge milestones – even small ones (without being patronising [end of an upgrade / a significant sortie / deployment etc])
- In the early days you may need to be more proactive
- The trick is in achieving the balance of ‘there’, but not ‘in their face’.

# OPEN & CLEAR COMMUNICATION- CONSIDERATIONS

- We must be clear in what we want to communicate
- Don't attempt to disguise it by pretending it is something else
- Disguise only leads to confused communication and long term distrust
  - e.g. You may attempt to disguise a criticism with a compliment, having done this this your compliments may never be trusted in the future

# OPEN & CLEAR COMMUNICATION- CONSIDERATIONS (CONT)

- Compliment
  - Often not given
  - We think it may be misconstrued e.g. Someone of the opposite gender may think we are 'hitting' on them
- Criticism
  - Fear that it may be taken as personal attack
- Constructive Feedback
  - Want to offer suggestion for improvement
  - Fear that it may be taken as a criticism to a persons overall competence or self worth





# OPEN & CLEAR COMMUNICATION- CONSIDERATIONS (CONT)

- Withholding
  - Information is held back for fear of the response
  - Subtly withdraw from the person you fear to tell
- Judgement
  - Prevents the 'Judge' from fully connecting 'Judged'
  - A 'mind trick' to avoid dealing with an emotional feeling you do not know how to deal with
- Paranoia
  - Fear of being judged
  - Prevents the 'Judged' from fully connecting with the 'Judge'

Bill Gates mentored by the board games 'Risk' and 'Monopoly'

# IS MENTORING ALWAYS A FORCE FOR GOOD?



# MENTOR- RESPONSIBLE FOR?

- A Mentor should not feel they 'own' the behaviour of the Mentee
- The Mentor is there is a guide / resource / confidant etc
  - The Mentor should not feel responsible for the actions, particularly in the negative sense, of the Mentee
  - Ultimately it is the Mentee who is responsible and accountable for their own decisions / actions / behaviour.



Herb Kelleher (Founder and chairman of Southwest Airlines) was mentored by his mother, Ruth

"Respect people for who they are, not for what their titles are."









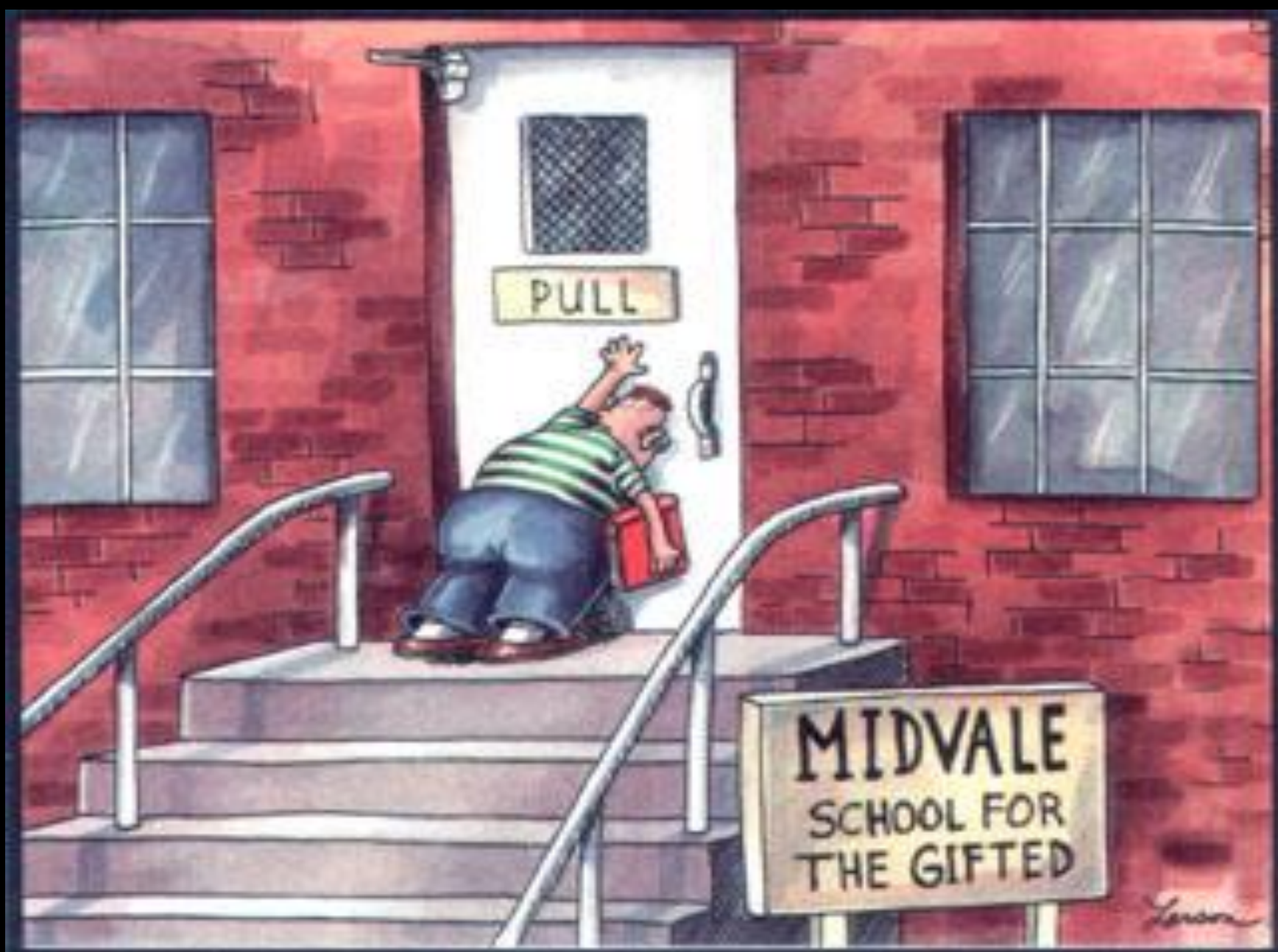






You can take your own walk down  
Mentor Street in Western Australia,  
or, more proactively.....





# THE OPPORTUNITY AND CHALLENGE AHEAD

- There will be ups and downs
- Celebrate the successes with your Mentee
- Reflect with them on those things that may not go so well
- Are you ready for it?



# WHAT'S NEXT?

- Make some genuine time for your Mentee
  - Have your time open so that you don't 'have to go'
  - Sit down over a coffee / beer
- Start on some common ground
  - You're both aircrew – plenty of common ground there
  - Some 'coaching' on tech stuff might be a good beginning
  - Walk in the Mentee's shoes
    - What would you have wanted to know at their stage
  - Let the Mentee make the running on the more personal stuff
    - Consider appropriately sharing some of your own experiences

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# Questions / Further Discussion?



