Saimaa University of Applied Sciences
Faculty of Business Administration, Lappeenranta
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The Influence of Mentoring on a Young Manager

Thesis 2014

Abstract

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The purpose of the study was to examine the effects of mentoring on a young manager. In addition the intention was to write about the theory of mentoring because it is still quite an unfamiliar subject and the aim was to increase its awareness.

In the theory part of the study the main issue was to gather information about the theory of mentoring. Also matters of effective mentoring and outcomes of mentoring were discussed in the theory part of the study. The empirical part was done by interviewing six people from different fields of business. Some of the interviewees have been mentors, some mentees and some have not participated in mentoring at all. The empirical part relied on the interviewees' own experience together with the author's since she has participated in the mentoring program as part of the Management and Leadership Program in the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences.

Based on the findings it was possible to identify several positive and negative effects that mentoring has on a young manager, and also the other research questions of the study were covered. The most important effect that was mentioned in the literature and the interviews was the increased self-confidence and self-esteem of the mentee. This result also supported the author's own experience about mentoring. The differences between theoretical and empirical findings concerned the internal and external effects. Literature emphasized the external effects such as salary and promotion and interviewees emphasized the internal effects such as self-confidence and personal development. Anyone who considers taking part in a mentorship program can utilize the results of this study and think whether this is the right tool for him/her or not.

Keywords: mentor, mentoring, mentee, manager, management, mentorship

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The topic of the thesis is "*The influence of mentoring on a young manager".* The author is very interested in leadership and management and hopes that she will be working in a managerial position in the future. The author wanted to investigate this subject because she believes it can be helpful later on in the working life.

Mentoring is quite unfamiliar and there are not many theses written about this subject. The author became familiar with it since she is a participant in a management programme in the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences and one part of that programme is mentoring. The author had a really successful mentoring process and she wants to utilize all that information in this project. Even though the author was not in a managerial position during the mentoring period she believes she can use all the knowledge that she acquired in this study. The author's own experience was definitely a key factor when deciding the theme for the thesis. Without having such a good experience from the management programme and mentoring, she would not be writing a thesis about this subject.

Companies do not use much mentoring as a part of the learning process. It is often considered too expensive or people may be afraid of it. Fear and stress were the author's first reactions too. How could talking to a stranger end up well? The author's expectations turned out to be totally wrong and that is another reason why she wants to write about this theme. She wants people to know more about mentoring as a learning method and with the interviews it is analyzed how it affects the young managers.

The reason why this study is about young managers is because it is a very current matter for the author and the young are the future for the business life. It is very interesting to find out whether mentoring could reveal more of the young managers' potential or not.

1.2 Objectives

The main goal of this research is to find out how mentoring affects young managers and their performance in the job or whether there is any impact at all. The author interviews both persons who have participated in mentoring and who have not. She wants to hear experiences of mentor-mentee processes, compare them and interpret the results with the help of the literature and research findings. From the ones who have not participated in mentoring the author wants to hear whether mentoring would have been needed or not and how they see this whole mentor-mentee process since it is quite rare in the work environment.

The goal is to acquire different kind of perspectives about mentoring and to get that information people from various sectors of business are interviewed. There are interviewees from heavy industry, IT and financial management, communications, and customs. A couple of the interviewees are also entrepreneurs. Even though there are only few interviewees, the objective is to find a certain pattern which helps the author to analyze the results. The plan is not to do this research in a scientific way. Since the whole theme is quite personal and the answers are based on the interviewees' own experiences, the objective is to make this study humane and approachable.

The author wants this study to be useful for the readers and hopefully everyone will find something new in it. One of the objectives is that people who are not familiar with the subject would read the thesis and the prejudice towards mentoring would decrease.

1.3 Delimitations of the study

The thesis includes theory about mentoring but the core of the study is the interpretation of the interviews and comparing the answers with other sources. Theory is explained since the author wants people who are not familiar with this subject to understand the results of the study. The author also tells about her own observations and knowledge about the theme.

The main focus is on young managers and their job and development so for example, employees and elder managers that move to another position are left out from the research. The author also leaves out the effects that mentoring has on the actual business and company operations. No financial aspects or charts are shown in this study either.

In this research the main idea is not the company where the interviewee works but the interviewees' experience about mentoring. Therefore there are no company presentations in the study. Names or work places of the interviewees are not published and therefore the author talks about them with letters (A, B, C…). A short description of their fields of business and age is provided to be able to put the answers in the right context. The study is made as simple as possible so that it focuses strongly on the subject, and the answers gotten from the interviews are in the main role.

1.4 Research questions and definitions

The main research question in this thesis is: "*What effects does mentoring have on a young manager?*" The subject is examined from several aspects and the aim is to find the best possible answers to that question. It covers both benefits and disadvantages. Some of the interviewees are not young managers but they have once been ones or have experience of mentoring during their working life. Answers to this question are also found in the literature and from the author's own experience.

Sub-questions in the study are *"When is mentoring effective?"* and "*In which situations would mentoring be the most helpful method?".* These themes are covered during the study along with the main question. The question "When is mentoring effective?" is mainly covered in the theory part and the question "*In which situations would mentoring be the most helpful method?"* is covered in the analysis of the interviews. They support well the main research question and together they create a comprehensive entirety. In addition, the theory part describes the definitions of mentoring, mentor and mentee with the help of literature and the author's own experience.

1.5   Research method

The qualitative research method is applied in this thesis. The study includes both theoretical and empirical research. Several interviews are done with people from diverse companies and then the results are compared with the literature and the author's own experience. Also the answers from the interviews are compared with each other. The interviews are confidential to be able to get as honest and sincere answers as possible.

The reason to choose the qualitative research method is that the subject of the study is something that is very difficult to measure quantitatively. The analysis made is based on interviewees' personal experiences, and that is why the qualitative research is the only option in this case.

1.6   Structure of the thesis

This thesis follows the traditional thesis guidelines. After this introduction chapter there are the theory part, description of the preparations for the empirical part, and the empirical part. The empirical part analyzes the answers gotten from the interviews. The study ends with a summary and conclusion.

2   Theoretical aspects of mentoring

This theory part of the study explains what the terms *mentoring, mentor* and *mentee* mean. It is also described when mentoring is effective and what the outcomes of mentoring are. All the information in this theory part is based on the literature and the author's own experience about mentoring. It is strongly related to her feelings and to the way she experiences the subject, so this is not the only theory about mentoring and someone else may see it in a different way. The author gathered the most significant factors about the subject from the literature and created an entirety that is made from her point of view and reflects her thought about the theme.

2.1   Who is a mentor?

The word *mentor* comes originally from Homer's Odyssey. Odyssey, when leaving to the Trojan War, entrusted the care and teaching of his son to Mentor. After a number of years the son is reunited with his father with the help of Mentor and from there on mentor is associated with words such as trustworthiness, advisor, teacher, friend and clever person. (Shea, Woodbury & Pittsley 2001.) A mentor is a helper who provides his knowledge and life experience for a less experienced person called a mentee. Mentors do not have to be older than the mentee but they need to have some experience or knowledge that is useful for the mentees and that is worth sharing.

The main task of the mentors is to help the mentees to develop themselves and to figure out the potential they have inside. It may happen, for example, by encouraging, by identifying the mentee's unique skills and utilizing them, and by giving useful feedback. (Stone 2004.) Mentors have to be willing to invest their time and knowledge in helping another person and believe in the value of the process without worrying what they benefit from it (Shea et al. 2001). The most important thing for the mentors to remember is that they should not give ready answers and that in many cases it is enough just to listen to the mentees. It might be that when the mentees talk about the problems and say them aloud, they suddenly see the problems in a totally different way and figure out a solution by themselves. Good mentors offer challenging ideas, inspire to excellence, teach by example and help to build the mentee's self-confidence. (Shea et al. 2001.) In the opposite, poor mentors tend to be too close-minded, judgmental, disloyal or bad communicators (Stone 2004).

Mentors are helpers but they are not therapists since the main goal of the mentorship is not to focus on issues in personal life. Mentoring is related to work and a successful mentorship may lead to career developments when mentees discover new potential within themselves or develop physically so that they are ready for more demanding tasks. Personal aspects are part of the process since they often reflect in the working life but the main context of the mentoring is work. (Connor & Pokora 2007.)

2.2 Who is a mentee?

A mentee is normally a less experienced person than a mentor and may be a rookie in the working life. Mentees are not necessarily young but they can be in a situation where they are not developing anymore and require encouragement and help to develop and to proceed in their career. Mentees should have life and work experience so that they can actually create a successful and interactive mentoring relationship with the mentors. (Connor & Pokora 2007.) Even though the mentees are the ones who seek for a helping hand, it is good that they already have some answers ready. In that way the relationship works in both ways and the mentors can get something out of it too.

The mentees, as well as the mentors, have to be willing to invest time in the mentoring relationship and they have to have a sincere will to develop. It might be scary to talk to a stranger about sensitive matters but when mentees realize that there is a chance to change and actively seek a way to develop, they are on a right track with mentoring. The mentees are the focus of attention in the relationship and it is their task to discover the goals of the mentoring process with the help from the mentors. (Connor & Pokora 2007.) The mentees have to understand that the mentors are not there to advise them or to acquire them a new job. Everything starts from the mentees and their eagerness to learn.

2.3 What is mentoring?

In the mentoring process there are normally two people: the mentor and the mentee. Group mentoring is also possible and in that case there are several mentees. This thesis concentrates on mentoring relationships between two parties.

2.3.1 Differences between mentoring and coaching

People often confuse the terms mentoring and coaching. It is understandable since they are quite similar processes. Both of them aim to the improvement in the individual's skills and can give a push to the individual's career development (Connor & Pokora 2007).

However, there are some differences between coaching and mentoring and the main points are listed below in Table 1.

Coaching	Mentoring
Relationship generally has a set of duration	Ongoing relationship that can last for a long period of time
Generally more structured in nature; meetings are scheduled on a regular basis	More informal; meetings can take place as and when the client needs some advice, guidance and support
Short term (sometimes time-bounded) and focused on specific development areas/issues	More long term and takes a broader view of the person
Coaching is generally not performed on the basis that the coach needs to have direct experience of their client's formal occupational role, unless the coaching is specific and skills-focused	Mentor is usually more experienced and qualified than the client, often a senior person in the organization who can pass on knowledge, experience and open doors to otherwise out-of-reach opportunities
Focus is generally on development/issues at work	Focus is on career and personal development
The agenda is focused on achieving specific, immediate goals	Agenda is set by the client, with the mentor providing support and guidance to prepare them for future roles
Coaching revolves more around specific development areas/issues	Mentoring revolves more around developing the client professionally

Table 1. The differences between coaching and mentoring (Connor & Pokora 2007).

As seen in Table 1, the main differences are in the length of the relationship and in the idea that coaching is focused on a certain development related to the mentee's work and that mentoring takes a broader look at the mentee's personality and potential. These are purely general assumptions and there is no rule that says what the minimum length for a mentorship is or that there cannot be a meeting schedule in a mentorship. What is important to remember is that each mentor and mentee is an individual and each mentoring relationship is different. There are guidelines for successful mentoring but everyone does it in a way that feels good for them.

2.3.2 Mentoring

Mentoring is a learning relationship which helps the mentees to develop themselves and identify and release the potential they have. The relationship is always based on free will and mentors and mentees are doing it voluntarily. The mentoring relationship is confidential and it is one of the main features that makes the relationship successful. Desirable results can be achieved when a mentor and a mentee meet regularly, share knowledge and perspectives and engage with each other and in the process. (Connor & Pokora 2007.) The best case scenario is that two persons in totally different life situations connect and they both learn during the mentorship and find new perspectives to life, work and themselves. Relationships vary; some mentorships are based on friendship while the other have more professional elements (Shea et al. 2001). Figure 1 shows four types of mentoring relationships:

Highly Structured

1. Highly structured, short-term. The relationship is formally established for an introductory or short period, often to meet specific organization objectives. For example, a new employee may be paired with a senior person for company orientation.

2. Highly structured, long-term. Often used for succession planning, this relationship involves grooming someone to take over a departing person's job or function or to master a craft.

Formality of Relationship

Short-term Spontaneous

Length of Intervention

Long-term Even for Life Time

3. Informal, short-term. This type of off-the-cuff mentoring ranges from one-shot or spontaneous help to occasional or as-needed counseling. There may be no ongoing relationship. This type of intervention is often thought through and heavily change-oriented.

4. Informal, long-term. "Friendship mentoring" consists of being available as needed to discuss problems, to listen, or to share special knowledge.
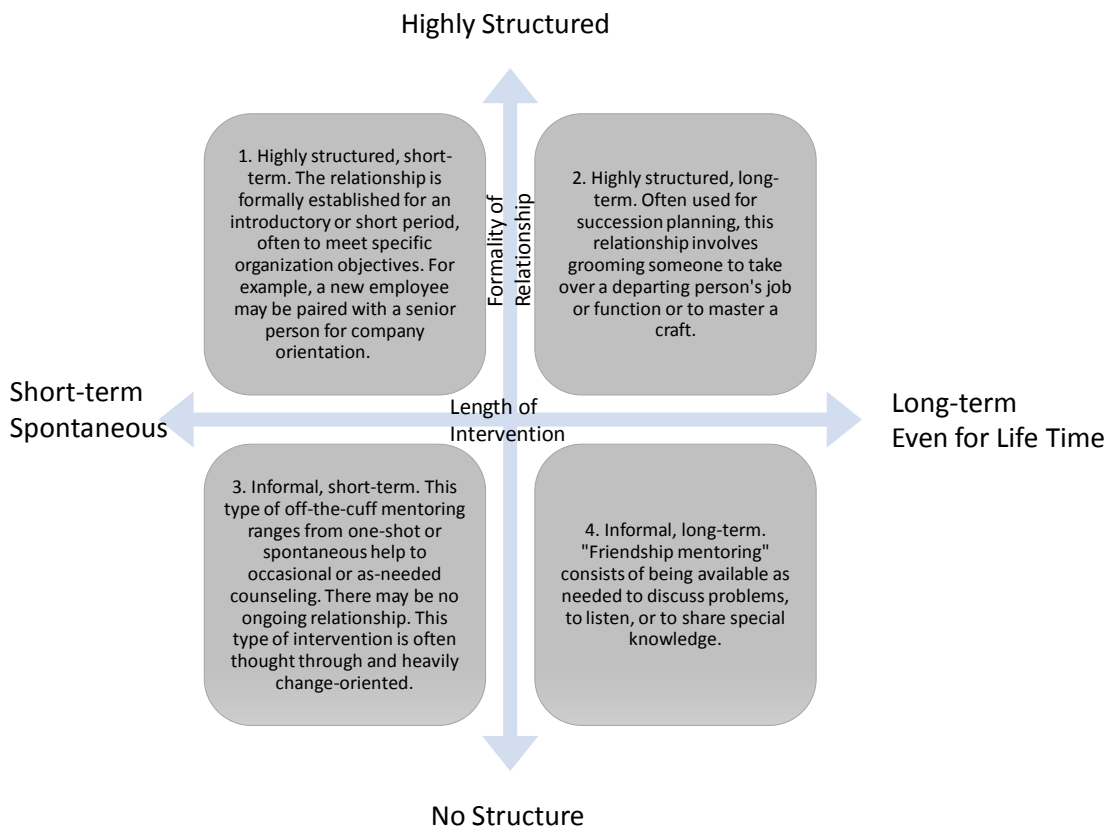
No Structure

Figure 1. Four types of mentoring relationships (Shea et al. 2001).

In her book *Mentoring Advantage: Creating the Next Generation of Leaders (2004),* Florence Stone describes the three stages of mentoring. The first stage

is about creating a trustful relationship between a mentee and a mentor and since this involves much more than just clarifying the goals and agreeing on the development goals, it may take a lot of time. Hurrying this process might lead to an unsuccessful mentorship. Inspired by Stone's text, in this study this first stage is called "the honey moon" of mentorship. The mentor is highly respected by the mentee and the mentor sees the mentee as a person who is a pleasure to work with and who is easy to coach. Positive feelings meet the positive expectations. Sometimes a mentoring relationship is not so fortunate but that is why this first stage is there to test expectations against reality.

During the second stage the mentor and the mentee start to discover the benefits and results from the mentorship. That is why Stone calls this stage "the cultivation period". The change in the mentee's behavior can be seen and the whole relationship is more relaxed. The scheduled meetings may change into spontaneous meetings with a cup of coffee. Both sides get internal satisfaction from a successful mentorship. However in this stage doubts may arise. The mentees may get promotions or new jobs and they can start thinking whether the mentoring relationship is worthy anymore. Whatever the reasons are, usually it is in this second stage when one of the persons or both of them start thinking if their needs are fully satisfied. Not all mentoring relationships go to this direction but when they do, it is important to be able to talk about the status of the mentorship and both participants' expectations.

In the third stage the mentor and the mentee may find themselves moving apart. Both of them start having their own agendas and even though the meetings continue, the themes of the discussions are far from the original issues why they started the mentoring in the first place. In many cases neither of the participants knows how it would be appropriate to end the mentorship. To be able to separate with positive feelings, it is important to agree on the end of the mentorship already in the beginning, as strange as it sounds. With common rules established it is easy to appeal to them when the time comes to end the relationship. Also an open atmosphere and sincere discussions during the mentoring is the key for a positive ending. (Stone 2004.)

2.4 Effective mentoring

Shea, Woodbury and Pittsley write in their book *Mentoring: How to Develop Successful Mentor Behaviors (2001)* about seven types of items that make mentoring effective and that significantly encourage the mentee's growth. The items are: Shifting context, Listening, Identifying feelings, Productive confrontation, Providing appropriate information, Delegating authority and giving permission, and Encouraging exploration of options.

Shifting context is one sort of a mind game in which the mentors help the mentees to imagine a certain situation or feeling that they hope to achieve in the future. For example, if the mentees imagine themselves receiving dream job offers, it can motivate them to work harder for success. This is a common way for successful people to achieve the place or position where they want to be in the future. (Shea et al. 2001.)

Listening, and especially *respectful listening,* is one of the most important actions that a mentor can do in a mentorship. *"Respectful listening is the ability to become absorbed in what another person is saying about a problem, treating that person's words as confidential communication, and not injecting your own subjective views, opinions, or suggestions."* Therefore the mentees are able to speak freely about the problem and in most of the cases they may see the problem in a different way after articulating it. In respectful listening the mentors do not interrupt the mentees or give their own opinions on the subject; the most important thing is to be mentally present in the situation. (ibid.)

When the mentors are listening to the mentees, they should not solely concentrate on the words but also on the external signs and feelings. *Identifying feelings* is an important part of the discussion because words only tell one portion of the story. Feelings reveal what the speaker actually thinks about the subject or the problem and if the mentors do not detect the mentees' feelings, they might miss the most important part of the message. (ibid.)

In a mentorship it is quite normal that the mentor and the mentee disagree on something. A developing discussion requires different opinions from both sides. Sometimes the mentors may need to confront the mentees if they think the

mentees' attitude or behavior is destructive or negative. However criticizing, threatening and pressuring are things that should not be done since they may negatively affect the mentees' self-esteem. The key is *Productive confrontation* in which the mentors should form the sentences in "I" form instead of "You" form. This means that the mentors should suggest an improvement from their point of view so that the message comes directly from them: for example, "I am a bit worried that they might not understand what you are planning to achieve with this". This sentence is constructive and does not accuse the mentees directly for doing something wrong. Unfortunately a "You" sentence might do that: for example, "You are doing it wrong, you should not say XXX…". With the "I" message the mentors have stated their opinion constructively and the mentees do not feel like they are being controlled, and the mentees still have the power to make their own decisions. For the mentors it is important to learn this kind of a way to express themselves because it directly affects the quality of the discussions and the mentees' motivation to continue the mentorship. (ibid.)

As described above, the mentors' task is to listen to the mentees and confront them properly when necessary. The mentors should not give direct answers or advice to the mentees because the idea of mentoring is that the mentees find the answers by themselves. However, there may be situations when the mentors find it useful to give information that helps the mentees to make the decisions. The best information is neutral and factual; opinions should be avoided so that the possible decisions are made based on facts and not on the mentors' opinions. *Providing appropriate information* means relevant information that helps the mentees to resolve problems but does not resolve these for them. Also a good method is to give the mentees a right direction to where they can find the information, so the research will be done by the mentees. (ibid.)

Another valuable aspect of mentoring is Delegating authority and giving permission. When a mentor gives authority to a mentee, this shows a high level of trust and that the mentor has confidence in the mentee's abilities. It is a good way to increase the mentee's self-confidence and it may have positive, long-lasting consequences concerning the mentee's career. Giving responsibility to

the mentee is a strong sign that the mentor relies on the mentee's ability to get the work done and that the mentee has the required knowledge and motivation to fulfill the expectations. Giving permission is related to the mentee's childhood and other previous life experience. The mentee may have certain fears about the working environment, working life behavior, or getting public recognition, for instance. As experienced and respected persons, the mentors should encourage the mentees to work towards their dreams. Mentees may be afraid that they irritate other people if they enjoy their work too much. In a situation like this the mentor should encourage the mentee that it is acceptable to enjoy the work and not to concentrate on other people's thoughts. Many of the fears may be related to the mentee's self-esteem so this is one method for the mentor to try to bolster it. (Shea et al. 2001.)

Finally, the mentor should *Encourage exploration of options.* Many times people rely on the methods they have found functional and therefore tend to forget to step outside the comfort zone. In effective mentoring the mentors should suggest different actions for resolving a problem, but to do it so that the mentees still have the power to decide on the right path. It is also the mentees' responsibility to execute the action and make it work, but the mentors should have ideas with which they can challenge the mentees and encourage them to do the thinking. (ibid.)

2.5 Outcomes of mentoring

This chapter tells about the results of mentoring based on the literature. The Conclusion of this study compares the interviewees' answers to these findings. Even though the main objective of this study is to find out the impacts of mentoring on a young manager, the discussion includes the mentor's side of the effects in this theory part since it is important, too. It can be also compared how the outcomes differ between the mentor and the mentee. Organizations' point of view is left out since they are not discussed in this study.

2.5.1 Mentor's point of view

Mentoring is a learning relationship in which the mentee is not the only learner but the mentor learns too. Knowledge is transferred between the mentor and

the mentee and therefore the mentor will also learn new ideas from the mentee. For example, if the mentees are decades younger than the mentors, they probably have more knowledge about information technology than the mentors. They may also have other job-specific skills that can help the mentors in their own work. (Stone 2004.)

Mentoring can be good for the mentor's professional growth. In many cases the mentor and the mentee have differences in age, sex, occupation, personality and background. Mentoring persons with different personalities and backgrounds will improve the mentor's coaching and leadership skills and when these abilities are used in the job environment, the job performance will develop. (ibid.)

In mentorships the mentees will most likely ask a lot of questions and doubt some of the information that the mentors tell. This way the mentors have to think more deeply about their ideas and ways of acting. The mentors may get a fresh perspective to their own performance since there is someone who questions what the mentors say and do. A mentor used to say that people often act like race horses with blinders, only able to see straight but not to the side nor behind. People often believe that their own principles and procedures are the best and are not willing to expand the view. A good mentor is forced to do this in the mentorship. Being critical about one's own performance will make the mentor to understand different opinions and to find areas that could be developed (ibid.).

Developing other people, sharing one's own experience with them and helping them to discover the potential will be recognized by the mentor's peers and superiors. Success in mentoring will be especially beneficial when the mentor is considered for a position with more authority. The mentor may also get additional tasks done with the help of the mentee. The best case scenario is when the mentee can actually learn from the work the mentor gives to the mentee and at the same time the mentor's workload decreases. Often the mentees are eager to do the work the mentors provide for them since they want to compensate for the mentors' time and help. (ibid.)

If the mentors are working in a certain company, they represent and share that company's values in the mentorship. However, the mentors are also able to share their own values and when they see the impact of their own beliefs in the mentees, it is a significant, mental reward for the mentors. When the mentorships have continued for a while and the mentors and the mentees share a mutual trust, the mentees may provide information about the mentors' leadership, communication or supervising skills that can help the mentors to develop themselves as mentors. As mentioned already, mentoring indeed is a two-way path in which both of the participants benefit and learn. (Stone 2004.)

2.5.2 Mentee's point of view

The most significant benefits that the mentee gains from the mentoring relationship are the job and career advice from the mentor as well as the increased self-confidence (Stone 2004). These advantages together are the key for several positive effects in the job environment. Mentees are likely to be promoted and they may get higher salaries due to their better knowledge of handling situations concerning promotion and salary. Better self-confidence supports such advancement since before the mentoring process the mentees may have been too shy to discuss these subjects with their superiors. With the higher self-esteem and discovered potential the mentees will have improved professional identities and better professional competences. When the mentees recognize these abilities in themselves, it will be easier to convince the management and ask for a promotion or a pay raise. (Johnson & Ridley 2004.)

Persons who have been mentees are likely to be more satisfied with their careers since they have gotten valuable information about working life and they have courage to make changes if necessary. Satisfaction with the work often reflects to job performance and therefore the mentees will get greater acceptance in the organization. Also they have less work stress and that has a positive influence in the mentees' personal life. (Johnson & Ridley 2004.)

Another benefit that the mentees will get from mentoring is that the mentors will give them constructive feedback about their thoughts and actions. If the mentees accept the feedback and are willing to develop themselves, this will

definitely help them later on both in their working life and in their personal life. The mentees may also benefit from the contacts that the mentors have helping them to advance in their career. (Stone 2004.)

Also if the mentoring happens inside an organization, the mentee will get detailed information about how the organization works and learning the required tasks will be faster than without a mentorship. This kind of in-house mentoring creates a win-win situation for all the participants; also the organization will benefit from it enormously. (Stone 2004.)

People who have acted as mentees will most likely mentor others in the future (Johnson & Ridley 2004). It may have a great impact on the mentees' careers if they show a willingness to start and develop a mentoring program within an organization based on their previous experiences in mentoring. It also shows a certain level of maturity if people say they have participated in a mentorship program.

3   Process of the empirical research

3.1   Interviewees

Six people from different fields of business were interviewed for this study. The aim was to find interviewees who have different backgrounds in mentoring but so that all of them are in a managerial position. Three of the interviewees were found with the help of the supervisor of the thesis, Mr. Samuli Nikkanen, and three of them were found through the author's own contacts. From the beginning it was clear that any names of people or organizations will not be published in this study so a table was created in which the profiles of the respondents are described. Based on the profiles it is easier to put the answers in the right context. Table 2 describes the profiles as follows:

Code	Gender	Age	Occupation	Field of Business
A	Female	28	Project Coordinator	Communications
B	Male	30-40	Development Manager	Manufacturing industry
C	Male	60	Entrepreneur	-
D	Female	44	Development Manager	Public sector
E	Female	50	HR Manager	Financial management
F	Male	60	Entrepreneur (at the time of the interview Vice President & Senior Advisor)	Manufacturing industry

Table 2. The interviewee profiles in the empirical part of the research.

The author managed to find one person who had not participated in mentoring, one person who had been a mentee and four persons who had been mentors. The levels of experience can be seen in Table 3 below:

Code	Level of experience in mentoring
A	Has not participated in mentoring, but she has united mentors and mentees in her previous job.
B	Has been a mentee once.
C	Has been a mentor three times.
D	Has been a mentor two times.
E	Has been a mentor three times.
F	Has been a mentor three times.

Table 3. Level of experience in mentoring.

The number of interviewees and the variation in their age, occupation and experience concerning mentoring are quite satisfactory for this study. Since this is a qualitative study and each interviewee was interviewed personally, the number of respondents can be considered quite suitable for this purpose.

3.2 Interview methods

One interview was carried out face to face and the rest of them were done via e-mail. The answers could have been discussed by phone with a couple of respondents but it was not necessary since the answers gotten by e-mail were totally complete.

3.3   Interview questions

As can be seen in Table 3, the respondents have a different amount of knowledge and experience about mentoring. That is why not all of them could be asked the same questions but it became necessary to vary them a little. However, the basic questions in the beginning were the same for everyone. Each interviewee was asked eight to ten questions.

At first all the respondents were asked about their age and position in the company. They were also asked in which company they are working at to define the field of business. The interviewees who had been either mentees or mentors were asked how many times they had participated in mentoring. Obviously that is a question that could not be asked the respondents who had never been engaged in a mentoring process. The mentors were also asked in which position their mentees had been during the mentorship. The answers to that question are not relevant when finding answers to the research questions but they help to create the context around the respondents' answers. All the mentors had had mentees with a higher education background and respondent G had also had a mentee from inside the organization.

The rest of the questions were almost the same for everyone, but the tense varied depending on the respondent. It was asked why the respondents would/did participate in mentoring process and what they think of mentoring as a tool of mental coaching. Answers to these questions reveal the general opinions that the respondents have about mentoring. To get some perspective of how common mentoring is in today's organizations, it was asked how many companies the interviewees know where mentoring is done.

At the end of the interview they were asked three questions that are directly related to young managers and one question that is indirectly related. Answers to these questions will help to answer the main research questions of this thesis. It was asked what the main problems and weaknesses of young managers are and what positive and negative impacts can mentoring have on a young manager. In the last question the respondents were asked to describe a

situation in their working career in which they would have needed a mentor, if there had been a situation like that.

The answers to the interview questions will be analyzed in the chapter 4 and all the questions can be seen in Appendix 1 at the end of this study.

3.4   The management program the author participated in

The basis for the author's knowledge about this subject comes from the Management and Leadership Program that is organized in the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences since 2010. A new group starts the program every autumn and the author was part of the group which started in autumn 2012. In one group there are approximately 25 students from different faculties and it is one of the best parts of the program that participants have the opportunity to discuss with people with different backgrounds. There were many good discussions and even arguments during the program.

The program introduces and prepares the students to managerial work. Even though managerial work is not something that can be learnt from books, the program provides a possibility to acquire information about leadership and management and to get insight into managerial work. (Saimaa University of Applied Sciences a.)

The beginning of the program puts emphasis on self-knowledge and self-examination. It is important for a manager to know himself thoroughly and to know how to manage himself before managing other people. The second part of the program is about strategy and managing organizations. The last part of the program deals with the know-how and human resources management. (Saimaa University of Applied Sciences b.) Throughout the program every student prepares a portfolio that reflects their experiences during the studies. This gives also a chance for more self-examination since everyone who participates in the program will grow mentally, will get new perspectives and most likely will have a different picture of managerial work than before the program.

Mentoring is one major element in the program. It does not come under any of the themes mentioned earlier but it runs parallel to them during a certain period

of time that depends on the mentor and the mentee. The recommended number of meetings is five but each pair can plan their mentorship to suit their purposes. The mentor-mentee pairs are formed so that the program manager Samuli Nikkanen contacts managers from several fields of business and asks them to participate in the mentoring process. All the students that participate in the program write a letter to the mentors and describe their motivation and future plans. Mentors can choose the mentees based on the letters and the program manager can also connect suitable persons with each other. Some students want mentors that share the same area of expertise at work and some of them want totally new perspectives with mentors that come from a different field of business.

There is a shared opening meeting where all the students and mentors meet and start the process. All the pairs sign a mentoring agreement in which the goals are set and both participants engage in the mentorship. The first meeting is about getting to know the other person and describing one's feelings and expectations about the mentorship. Also a preliminary schedule may be agreed on and some of the themes for the meetings are thought through. After the first meeting everything depends on the participants and their motivation towards a successful mentorship. The style and pace of the process is free. Unfortunately some of the participants do not find a mutual understanding or the motivation is low, and after a few meetings the relationship dies. However most of the pairs get along very well and their relationships are productive and inspiring.

As mentioned earlier, a mentoring relationship is always confidential between the participants. Therefore the mentoring processes are handled very carefully and superficially during the lessons. Mostly the students discuss general feelings about mentoring and how each of them is proceeding. All the details are left out due to the respect towards the mentorship and the mentor.

The mentor and the mentee end the relationship when they consider it appropriate. In this program the ending of the mentorship is made quite easy because from the beginning everyone knows that the process is due to last for only a certain period of time. Obviously the mentorship may last longer but the most common assumption is that in this management program the mentoring

processes last for approximately a year. Therefore when the participants feel that the time is right, they end the relationship. A good way to finish it is to have a relaxed meeting in which they gather the most important information from the mentorship and summarize it one more time.

Mentoring in this program creates a valuable connection between a student and working life. The student gets insight into the work environment and behavior from a professional. This management program does not make the students managers but prepares them very well for the upcoming challenges in the working life. All the participants have definitely better managerial skills after the program than they would have without participating in it.

4 Empirical part

In the empirical part of the research each question and the answers gotten from the respondents are discussed. With the answers a big picture is created and the research questions presented in the Introduction chapter are answered. First the answers are categorized and at the end of each chapter a conclusion is drawn from them. In this chapter also the author's own experience about mentoring is described and entrepreneurial mentoring is introduced.

4.1 General opinions about mentoring

In this chapter the answers related to the respondents' opinions and visions about mentoring are analyzed. There were two questions that were associated with the respondents' opinions and the answers revealed more variance than any other question in the interview.

4.1.1 Reasons for participating in a mentoring process

When asked about the reasons why the respondents would participate or had participated in mentoring, there were certain themes that repeated in the answers. Respondents A, D and F had arguments based on the good impression that they had about mentoring. They found it either reasonable or interesting and also believed in the method. Good feedback that was heard from other people was one reason that had created this good image.

Another common reason was the communication and interaction between the mentor and the mentee, and the fact that the mentors have a great opportunity to share their knowledge with the mentees. One respondent wanted to share his knowledge so that the mentee would not need to learn everything by mistakes. Answers that supported these reasons came from respondents C, D and E, who had all been acting as mentors. Also the fourth mentor, respondent F, had an answer related to interaction. His point of view was that he "owes" it to the younger and inexperienced people since he has gotten so much good advice and support during his working life from other people and therefore it is now his turn to give something back.

Only one respondent (F) wanted to participate in the mentoring process due to his experience in mentoring related matters in his previous jobs. He also said that he has the nature of a coach, so he sees himself suited for a process like mentoring. Another reason that only the respondents who had been mentors (C and E) stated was that they were personally asked to participate in a mentoring program.

Respondents A and B gave quite similar answers; they were looking for self-development and guidance in mentoring. The answers were strongly related to the respondents themselves and their motive for starting a mentoring relationship could have been quite selfish. In this case it is a very positive factor. As stated in the theory part, the mentee is the main focus of mentoring, and therefore it is healthy to recognize the need for guidance and that there are matters that could be developed with the help of mentoring. Respondent B also mentioned that one reason for participating in a mentorship was that he needed conversation.

It was significant that in most of the answers there appeared words about communication and interaction. Among the respondents, they seemed to be the main reason to participate in mentoring. The interaction between the participants in a mentoring process is the key element for success. Figure 2 gathers the main reasons to participate in mentoring in a simple, visual form.

Positive image	Willingness to self-development	Interaction & communication

Need for guidance & advice	Sharing experience & knowledge

Figure 2. Main reasons to participate in a mentorship.

4.1.2 Thoughts about mentoring as a tool of mental coaching

All the respondents praised the method and words like *useful method, excellent tool* and *very good* were used to describe mentoring. The main message that could be read from the answers was that everyone considered mentoring as an excellent method but their arguments about *why* it is so excellent varied. In fact there were three main themes that appeared in the answers: silent knowledge, invention of new ideas and the chemistry between the mentor and the mentee.

Respondents A and E said that mentoring is a great tool for sharing silent knowledge. Everything cannot be learnt by reading books and therefore mentoring, in which a more experienced person teaches an inexperienced person, is considered a valuable tool for that purpose. Interviewee E also added that with mentoring it is possible to share good policies and even teach body language.

Two of the answers suggested the matter of creating new ideas and seeing things from another perspective. It is notable that these answers came from respondents A and B and not from the respondents who had been mentors. It was said that mentoring is an excellent tool since new ideas can come up when the experience and knowledge of the mentor and the mentee are united and an experienced mentor can help to see things in a new, different way.

The third major theme that came up in the answers was the chemistry between the participants in mentoring. Respondents C and E said that mentoring is a great tool if the chemistry between the participants works and both of them understand the benefits that can result from the mentorship. The participants should also be open, willing to discuss and share mutual respect and trust. Enough time should also be reserved for the meetings to be able to create a mentoring relationship that works well.

Other opinions about mentoring as a tool of mental coaching were that it is a useful method to grow and develop in one's own work and that it can increase motivation and enthusiasm towards the work. A couple of the respondents stated terms which allow the mentorship to succeed. Interviewee D said that the mentor should not be all-knowing and the mentee should be eager to do the thinking. Respondent E stated that a good mentoring body, a framework for the mentorship that serves the mentee as well as possible, should be created at the beginning of the relationship. Respondent F said that mentoring is a method that is used too little but in the future it will have a greater value. Today there is still hesitation in both sides.

It was interesting to see the distribution of the answers concerning the three major themes mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. The distribution can be seen in a visual format in Figure 3.
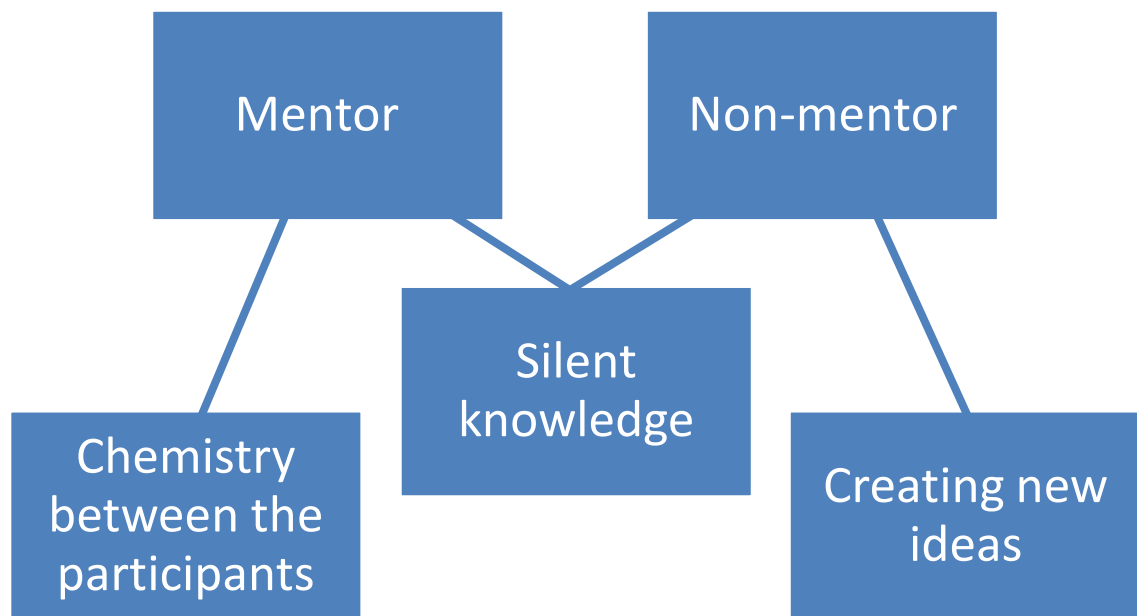
Figure 3. The distribution of the reasons why mentoring is an excellent coaching method.

Silent knowledge appeared both in the mentors' answers and in the non-mentors' answers. It is a theme that is often associated with mentoring and when the author got to know this kind of a learning method, it was one of the first things that came to her mind too. Silent knowledge is clearly appreciated and it is considered as a valuable part of the knowledge capital. For a young manager it can also provide a significant competitive advantage in the job market.

The fact that only the mentors brought up the chemistry issue shows that they have personal experience of how it affects the success of the mentorship and that it is an essential part of it. The mentors' focus is more on the process of the mentorship. The non-mentor respondents answered that mentoring is a great tool for creating new ideas, so their focus is clearly on the results of mentoring. It was interesting to see that only with a few respondents the three main approaches could be found out clearly.

4.2 Commonness of mentoring among the organizations

When asking the respondents how many companies they know that use mentoring, very different answers were gotten. Afterwards it was realized that

the question should have been formulated a bit differently, for example like this: "How many companies do you know that use systematical mentoring?" However now very broad answers were acquired and they introduced interesting points of view.

Respondents A and B both answered that they know four companies that use mentoring. The persons are both young and they have a lot of relationships in the business world, so it was somewhat surprising that the number was so low. Respondent D said that she does not know any companies where mentoring would be systematically organized while respondent F said that large corporations use mentoring to some extent and in smaller companies it is done in a different format. The answers of these four interviewees can be interpreted so that mentoring is not used very much in today's companies.

The answers of respondents C and E differed considerably. Interviewee C said that he does not have exact information about the number of companies that use mentoring but in Finland there are thousands of them. He stated that there is an organization called Suomen Yrityskummit ry that is the biggest mentoring network in Finland, having more than a thousand companies to mentor per year. The operation of this organization is very professional and systematical. (Yrityskummit.)

Respondent E had a little different perspective to the matter. What was similar was that she also said that mentoring is used extensively but not systematically and officially. She stated that mentoring is used in almost all companies in one way or another. The most typical situation is the introduction of a new employee when a more experienced person can be assigned to support and teach the recruit. She also said that not only the beginners need mentors but also the experienced ones want to get new perspectives and knowledge to strengthen their know-how.

Answers to this question brought up interesting perspectives to mentoring and revealed that it can be experienced in many different ways depending on the person and the company. Company culture is a major factor that affects how the mentoring is organized in a certain organization, and as it can be seen in

the answers, there are several ways to implement it. As mentioned at the beginning of this study, there is no right or wrong theory about mentoring and this thesis is only one point of view about the subject. The answers to this question reflect this way of thinking very well. Companies should include mentoring in their operations but each company should find their own way to implement it since the same model does not work with everyone. A good guideline could be Figure 1 on page 9 of this study.

4.3 The problems and development areas of young managers

The main problem of young managers that almost all the respondents stated was the lack of managerial experience. In the answers there were several issues that were associated with this matter and they are represented in Figure 4 below.

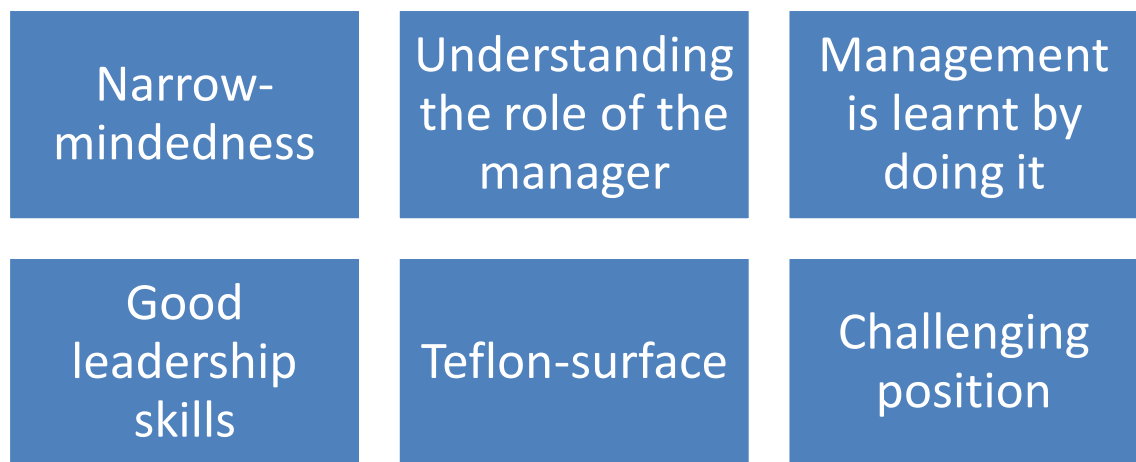| Narrow-mindedness	Understanding the role of the manager	Management is learnt by doing it
Good leadership skills	Teflon-surface	Challenging position

Figure 4. Key features associated with the young managers' lack of managerial experience.

The most dominant issue when talking about the lack of experience was that young managers do not often understand what the managers' actual role is and what their tasks in the organization are. Respondent E described it very well when she said that the most important task of the manager is to lead and control the entirety and one can learn it only by doing. Good leadership skills come with experience. According to respondent E, young managers often miss the *teflon-surface,* which means that they learn to keep an appropriate distance to the employees, due to the lack of experience in the managerial tasks.

Respondent A stated that a challenging position may create a problem for young managers if they do not have enough experience of handling that type of situations. Other issues that came up in the answers were that due to the lack of experience young managers tend to be rather narrow-minded and they do not know how to predict situations more broadly.

Along with the lack of experience there were two other main themes that can be seen as young managers' areas of development: lack of self-knowledge and self-confidence, and lack of an ability to acquire the respect of other people in the organization. Respondents D and F brought up that young managers lack self-confidence and they may not see their own gifts and potential easily. Also the development of self-knowledge is critical; the managers have to know themselves, their motives and capabilities, and imperfection and uncertainty must be tolerated in oneself and in others.

Respondents A and C stated that for a young manager it is a challenge to acquire the respect of the others in the organization. In the beginning there are many expectations and prejudice targeted at the young manager and those issues can be difficult to shake off. Respondent A also said that young managers may often be selfish and put their own interests and career development first. It may not be clever if there already is pressure and prejudice towards the manager's actions. Respondent C mentioned that many times the young manager may have new ideas about how to develop the organization but improvements should be made so that they do not contradict the organization's principles and previous methods. According to respondent C, the young manager's energy and enthusiasm against the organization's slow pace for innovations may create problems.

The answers revealed three main problems that the young managers have: lack of managerial experience, lack of self-confidence and lack of ability to acquire the respect of other people. However, it can be claimed that everything starts from experience. When young people get more experience in managerial tasks, their self-confidence and –knowledge will increase at the same time. Also it is understandable that an inexperienced manager will need more time to acquire the respect of the employees and colleagues but with time and experience it will

become easier. All these aspects support each other but getting managerial experience is the key factor.

4.4 Effects of mentoring on a young manager

This chapter discusses the positive and negative effects that mentoring has on a young manager, and gives the answer to the main research question of this study. The answers to the interview question about the effects of mentoring on a young manager revealed that there was more variance in the positive effects than in the negative ones. When analyzing the previous questions, the answers could be categorized easily and the distribution between mentors and non-mentors was quite clear, but in this particular question about the effects on a young manager that kind of a classification cannot be made due to the variance in answers.

4.4.1 Positive effects

The impact that was mentioned most often, in respondents A, D, E and F's answers, was the increase in the young manager's self-confidence. It was said that the mentees learn to know themselves and dare to take responsibility for their own development. Mentoring can also strengthen the managerial identity of the mentee.

Three of the answers suggested that mentoring gives good direction and good advice but in the end the mentees will learn to think by themselves. Mentoring will also provide support and encouragement to develop as a manager. It can be said that mentoring helps the young managers to find their own path and style as a manager. It requires good self-knowledge because one should not fake his personality and copy other people's actions.

Increase in knowledge and skills was one positive effect that came up in the answers of three respondents. Respondents A, E and F stated four types of knowledge and skill: silent knowledge, communication skills, experience-based knowledge and concrete knowledge about a certain company. It depends on the type of mentoring relationship which kind of knowledge and skill will develop, but in in-house mentoring, for example, it is expectable that the mentee will get

more information about the company's operation. On the other hand, a mentorship that is not related to any company but concentrates strongly on the personal development of the mentee may put more emphasis on communication skills.

The rest of the effects were all mentioned twice. Discussion between the mentor and the mentee was considered very beneficial because then the mentee can share concrete problems confidentially with the mentor. The mentor is not a therapist but problems related to work and personal development may be a heavy burden for the mentee and it helps a lot when there is a trustworthy person listening. Respondent C said that discussion makes it also possible to prevent problems in working life since different kind of situations can be talked about with the mentor, which will prepare the mentee for the challenges in managerial work. Also the ideas of the mentee can be tested safely and when it is time to apply the ideas in practice, they have already been thought through with the support of the mentor. Many possible problems can be avoided with the help of discussion and the mentee should remember to use this great opportunity and benefit from all the experience that the mentor has to offer.

Respondents D and F stated that through mentoring the young manager may get new perspectives to life and also to being a person and a manager. As it was proposed in the previous chapter, young managers tend to be narrow-minded and some important issues might get excluded when the speed is fast. It is good to notice that mentoring may have a positive effect on that, because the more the head turns around, the better.

Another positive effect is the opportunity to talk confidentially about the mentee's strengths and weaknesses. According to respondent B, a good mentor understands the mentee's weaknesses, and respondent E stated that also the mentees need to recognize their *Achilles' heels* so that they would be able to understand the reasons to their feelings. Recognizing the weaknesses is important for the mentees so that they understand the difference between failing and unsuitable tasks. Respondent E said that sometimes the young managers have to work in their discomfort zone and then it is important to remember that they are not failing but the tasks might not be suitable for them. Therefore the

mentees should be aware of their strengths and weaknesses and always try to work through their strengths. Only then they can enjoy success at work and events run their own course. For many people it is difficult to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses and mentoring is an excellent tool for that. Most people do not have the courage or possibility to ask an expert about these matters and often the best response comes from a person who does not know the mentee from inside out but knows how to look at the issue from a professional perspective. Also the mentee has to adopt a professional attitude and displeasing matters should not be taken personally. Figure 5 summarizes the positive effects of mentoring covered in this chapter.

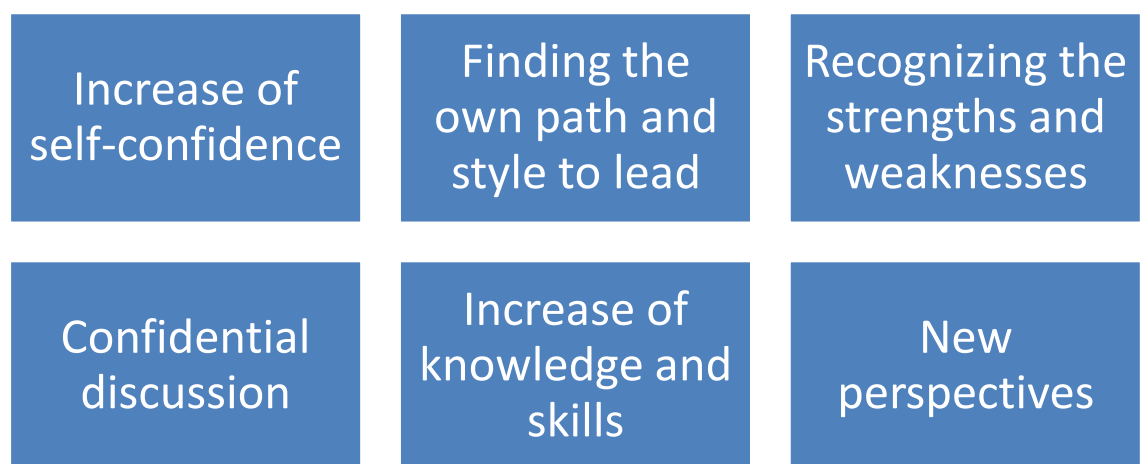|		
Increase of self-confidence	Finding the own path and style to lead	Recognizing the strengths and weaknesses
Confidential discussion	Increase of knowledge and skills	New perspectives

Figure 5. The positive effects of mentoring.

The findings of this study support the author's own experience of mentoring. She got a lot of self-confidence and new perspectives to working life during the mentorship. The author is also more confident about the future, partly because of the increased self-confidence, and she believes she will find an interesting and challenging job even though the economic situation is quite difficult. The author became interested in mental coaching and this Bachelor's thesis is one proof of that. Hopefully she can utilize this motivation and interest in the future working life too. However what the author found most important was the knowledge about the overall control over life: how to combine personal life and work so that the quality of life stays good and mental exhaustion will be avoided. The author's experience about mentoring was so positive that she will definitely participate in it again in the future if she gets a chance.

4.4.2 Negative effects

Based on the answers, there were clearly three different negative impacts that can come out of mentoring, and the reasons for those effects can be seen in Figure 6.

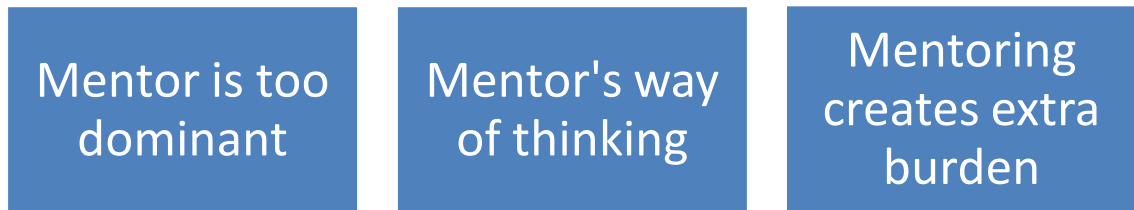| Mentor is too dominant	Mentor's way of thinking	Mentoring creates extra burden

Figure 6. The reasons that cause negative effects in mentoring.

Three answers suggested the problem that the mentor may be too dominant. According to respondents C, D and F, if the mentors have too strong a will or they force their advice, this can decrease the mentees' own thinking and the interaction will get worse. The mentors' strong opinions may also cause that the mentees start to copy their thoughts and the whole managerial identity of the mentee may change. It is extremely important for young managers to hold on to their own personalities and not to copy anyone else's management style or thoughts.

Respondent C stated that people respect genuineness in the managers and they easily recognize if the managers are pretending to be something they actually are not. Sooner or later the managers will get in trouble if they act on other people's thoughts and ideas, because often the reasons and ideology behind them is not clear for the ones who copy them. If inexperienced managers step to "the dark side" and try to change their personality, the package can easily fall to pieces. It is rare that someone who is in a challenging position could keep the act on for a long time. When the real personalities come out and people find out the truth, the young managers will have a lot of work to maintain their credibility among the employees and their own superiors. Unfortunately it can often be seen that young, inexperienced managers put up a role in their positions and this creates a confusing atmosphere at the work place. For example, if managers have adopted various roles, this may be frustrating for the staff because they never know how they would act in a certain

moment. Being truly yourself is very important and it is emphasized in managerial work.

The second effect is related to the first one but since it has somewhat different perspective, it is mentioned separately. Respondents B and E answered that the way the mentor thinks may have a negative effect on a young manager. An in-house mentor can be subjective in certain matters and therefore an external mentor may be the best choice. The approach depends on the purpose of the mentorship but if the goal is the mentee's development and the company's operations are excluded, an objective view is preferable. According to respondent E, the young managers may also get the wrong kind of an image of management and managerial work if the mentors have a very old-fashioned way of thinking, they are negative or they object to change. She recommends that young managers should discuss with various experts so that they would not get a one-sided picture of managerial work. Combining knowledge gotten from different people would help the young managers to create their own path. This is a common problem because often in a mentorship the age difference between the mentor and the mentee may be dozens of years, so they may represent totally different generations. Here it must be pointed out that the mentee has a big responsibility for the benefits gotten from the mentorship. If the mentor is telling ideas that would have worked in the 20th century but do not work in today's working life and the mentee does not question such ideas, the mentee will not benefit from that kind of a discussion at all. The mentees have the responsibility to be awake and doubt anything that they find weird by creating a constructive discussion. Since mentorship is a two-way path, the mentors will most likely be delighted about the challenging interaction and the new ideas they learn during the sessions. Therefore this negative impact can be transformed into a positive one but this requires effort and thinking from the mentee.

The third negative impact is the possible stress and mental burden that can come out of mentoring. According to respondents A and F, the chemistry between the participants is critical and if it does not work, additional burden for them can be created and the relationship will not work properly. It is not good if

the mentoring relationship has to be forced to keep it going and a relationship that does not work may lead to wrong kind of conclusions drawn by both participants. The key factor in mentoring is confidentiality and the participants cannot afford any doubts in the relationship. Chemistry between two people is something that can be evaluated from the very beginning of the relationship. If the participants do not have a working chemistry, they have to be brave and discuss it. This should not be taken personally because some personalities do not get along as well as others. A professional attitude towards this helps a lot, and when the decision is made early, more serious harms can be avoided. When people decide to participate in the mentoring program they need to keep in mind that chemistry is a big part of it and it cannot be forced.

As can be seen in the answers, there are significantly more positive effects that mentoring has on a young manager than negative ones. The negative issues mentioned in this chapter can be transformed into positive resources and the participants should always remember to discuss the issues that bother them to avoid further consequences. In mentoring it is important to remember a professional attitude which helps when handling difficult matters. The mentees have a great responsibility for their own development and therefore they need to be observant since the beginning of the relationship. After all, if neither of the participants sees any benefits coming out of the mentorship, there is no point of continuing it.

4.5   Situations in which mentoring would be needed

The last question prompted the respondents to describe a situation in their working life in which they would have needed a mentor. In two answers the need of a mentor was related to a new situation in working life. For example, when respondent D started working as a superior and the previous position was as a specialist, mentoring could have helped to understand the managerial role and to identify the strengths and weaknesses. The respondent also gave another example in which mentoring could have helped with problems concerning human resources management in a project. Projects may be started on a busy schedule and often the people participating in it do not know each other beforehand. In addition, the tasks and operations may be new for many of

them, so the project manager has a challenging task to make everything work. Support from the mentor in situations like these can be truly valuable. Respondent C described a situation when he was merging two competing companies and he had to adapt to several new settings at the same time. In this challenging situation a discussion with a more experienced person could have brought more confidence to decision-making.

Other issues that were mentioned in the answers were the situations in which an employee gets more responsibility in his job or more employees to manage. Mentoring would be a great tool to develop matters related to managerial work. One respondent stated that there has been no specific situation when the mentor would have been needed, but the respondent constantly discusses with several experts from different fields of business to get new visions and perspectives.

Two clear perspectives came up in the answers: mentoring is needed in new situations or during challenging periods at work but it can also be used beside the normal routine work even though there is no special situation. The need of mentorship determines the nature of it.

4.6   The author's own experience of mentoring

The author started in the management program in autumn 2012 and the mentoring process started in November in the same year. When writing the letter for the mentors, a wish to get a new perspective to managerial work was expressed. The author also mentioned that she wanted to learn about difficult situations and how to give constructive feedback. She also wanted to hear concrete examples from the mentor about these situations. There was a wish that she would be able to find her own path and that the mentorship would be useful for both of them. These are straight quotes from the letter the author wrote to the mentors before the mentorship and as it can be seen, she had quite a clear and accurate image of mentoring before it was actually started.

Even though the author had a clear image of mentoring, she was extremely nervous before starting the process and meeting with the mentor. There were dozens of questions in her head, for example "Who will be my mentor?", "What

if we do not get along?", "What if I do not have anything clever to say?" and "What if we do not have anything to talk about?". The fact that the author would have a totally different life situation than the mentor was exciting. Above all they were strangers to each other and it only increased the stress.

No one had to be alone with their fears, as the other students in the group were nervous too. However from the first minute with her mentor the author discovered that the stress was pointless. The mentor had previous experience in mentoring so he had the situation under control and the conversation progressed fluently. It was a great start for the process and the author truly understood the importance of a good start in a mentorship.

There were regular meetings approximately once a month and each meeting had a specific theme. There were discussions about the subjects that the author wrote in the letter, but still the most important ideas she considers gaining from the mentoring are not the ideas related directly to work. What the author found the most valuable is the increased belief in herself and the increased self-confidence. Earlier the future seemed insecure because of today's bad job situation but the mentoring process helped to develop a strong belief in future success and finding the perfect job. The author has more courage to pursue her dreams and she is ready to apply for more challenging positions than before mentoring. Mentoring process gave also insight into economy and the author got tips for performing in front of an audience.

Mentoring helped to see the whole picture and therefore the author is more open-minded now. With the mentoring and the work experience it has been possible to figure out the way of management that suits the author. Before mentoring there were quite straightforward opinions about managerial tasks and how to handle certain situations but now those matters are seen in a new perspective and they can be handled differently. The author does not expect that this management program and mentoring will automatically open new doors but they certainly give a good basis to start building a career. Even though the mentoring process has now ended, it is easy to contact the mentor when facing a difficult situation and need advice from a more experienced person.

4.7 Interview about entrepreneurial mentoring

A mentoring professional about entrepreneurial mentoring was also interviewed and in this chapter the findings from that interview are presented. The interviewee has experience both in organizational- and entrepreneurial mentoring and therefore both cases are discussed in this chapter. Not all the questions were the same as with the other interviewees since the theme was somewhat different but, nevertheless, similarities can be seen in the answers.

4.7.1 The background of the interviewee

The interviewee is a retiring study and career counselor who has a strong expertise and experience in mentoring. She is a Master of Arts (Education) and has studied specific courses in mentoring. In her job she has organized and managed mentoring programs for students studying in a vocational school and in a university of applied sciences. She has managed at least eight mentoring programs, which involved approximately 300 students and almost the same number of mentors. There were fewer mentors than mentees because many of the mentors wanted to participate in the process more than once. Today she is also a member in the European Mentoring & Coaching Council Finland (EMCC Finland).

The interviewee got acquainted with mentoring at the end of the 20th century when a professor of law introduced a mentoring program for graduating judges. For new judges it was quite difficult to enter the working life because the law circles were quite small and therefore it became necessary to facilitate the process with a mentoring program. She was impressed by the good results and started to investigate mentoring. After that she guided nursing students in clinical practice, and since not all students were happy with the methods, she started to think about a lighter way to get acquainted with working life. The answer was mentoring. She became very pleased with this type of contacts to working life and it was also a good way to improve the connections between the school and the work places.

The interviewee has acted as a mentee twice. Both mentorships lasted for one year and they had quite different purposes. First, the interviewee was

experiencing a minor crisis when she was getting new tasks and she needed help with the big change. What is interesting in this mentorship is that the mentor was remarkably younger than the mentee. The interviewee emphasized that the age is not important in a mentoring relationship because a younger person can have the exact experience and skills that the older person needs. This is a great example of the fact that the mentor does not have to be older than the mentee. The interviewee praised the mentorship and said that she even got working in flow mode because the mentorship was so rewarding. The mentorship gave her new enthusiasm and new thoughts and she found it very important that when one changes occupation or gets new tasks, mentoring would be used to support the change.

The other time when the interviewee participated in a mentoring process as a mentee was when she wanted to get new perspectives to entrepreneurship. She acquired herself a mentor who was an entrepreneur and the results were that the mentorship truly opened her mind and inspired her to consider entrepreneurship. She said that after some of the meetings she would have liked to establish her own company right away, as the meetings were so inspiring.

The interviewee has never acted as an official mentor but she said that actually in her work she acts constantly as a spontaneous mentor. Many of the elements of mentoring are related to her work when she supports people in their decisions, tells about her own experience or educates people in different institutions. She would definitely participate in a mentorship as a mentor if anyone asked her to do it. She sees mentoring as an equal relationship no matter the age or status. However, the mentee still has a certain kind of respect towards the mentor even though the relationship is considered equal.

4.7.2 Organizational mentoring

As an example of organizational mentoring the interviewee told about a mentoring program for students at a university of applied sciences, where the mentors were engaged based on the students' wishes. Most of the students were BBA students, so this example concerns mostly them.

The students wished that the mentors would work in the financial sector, especially in banks. It would give them good insight into the work in banks and what it takes to work there. In the beginning it was not easy to engage mentors because the whole concept was quite new and strange and there was no concrete evidence about the positive effects. The interviewee was surprised and pleased that the people who decided to act as mentors were in managerial positions in banks, and that provided a great opportunity for the students since the managers often have the best view of the operations and many of them have followed quite different paths leading to their current position.

Before the mentoring process, the university expected that the students would benefit from the mentoring by getting skills for working life but at the end of the process the results were quite different. The students said that the most important benefit for them was the increased self-knowledge and self-confidence. Also recognizing the strengths and further strengthening them was found to be an important impact beside the fact that, as the students told, they had found their own path through mentoring. Mentoring gave many of them a personal contact and perspective, and they had to ponder whether they have what it takes to succeed or not. After those effects came the issues related to work. The mentees also benefitted in a concrete way since many of them got a job at the bank after the mentorship. There was mutual familiarization and therefore some of the students found their area of interest and the banks wanted to hire them but also some of the students understood that banks are not the places where they want to work. The interviewee said that it was only positive that the students recognized that banks are not for them after all. It is exactly the matter of finding one's own path.

4.7.3 Entrepreneurial mentoring

Mentoring programs that focused on entrepreneurship were also organized for students and teachers at a vocational school and a university of applied sciences. The basic mentoring elements are the same in organizational mentoring and entrepreneurial mentoring, but the difference is that in the latter everything is focused on entrepreneurship. A mentee who participated in entrepreneurial mentoring had a specific area of interest and the entrepreneur-

mentor was searched in that field. Even though the goal was quite precise and the process could be interpreted as coaching, the interviewee assured that clearly this was mentoring. She said that in coaching there are tools and metrics that are used and the process is structured. In mentoring there are no tools, and in entrepreneurial mentoring only the context is slightly different.

The goals of entrepreneurial mentoring included supporting students to become entrepreneurs, developing a positive entrepreneurial culture and attitude, increasing and diversifying entrepreneurship and increasing collaboration between schools and entrepreneurs.

Pair and group mentoring were also used, mainly in the vocational school, where the students are younger than in the university of applied sciences. In this type of situations the mentoring activities often happened during school hours so there were no absences. For some of the youngest students it was an important event to meet with the mentor and therefore it was considered better way to organize the meetings during school hours. In this group mentorship the mentoring was mainly aimed to support the theory studies and often students in small groups prepared questions that were discussed in the meetings.

There were training sessions that supported the mentoring program and also the mentors participated in them. There were different themes and in each training event one theoretical theme was implemented into practice with the help from the mentors. This helped the mentees to understand practical issues and it was more interesting than just learning the theory.

The interviewee mentioned some good policies that were followed in the mentoring program. A starting seminar is important in the beginning; it motivates, encourages and engages the participants in the process. Also a meeting in the middle of the process is good so that the participants can discuss their experiences and fresh motivation and ideas can be acquired from other people's doings. Training events that support mentorship were also considered important as well as constant communication between the leaders of the program and the mentoring participants. A final seminar is an essential part of

the process. In that seminar experiences are shared and learned from, and the program can be developed further.

All the participants in entrepreneurial mentoring gave positive feedback about the program and especially students found it very meaningful. Students said that they would establish a company more easily and they knew where to look for information and who to contact when they want to do that. The substance of entrepreneurship was also clarified and the students pondered about their own entrepreneurial identity. Several potential entrepreneurs emerged and some of them actually established their own companies. It must be noted that the impact of this program can also be seen after several years because the serious enthusiasm towards entrepreneurship can appear later on. The school also benefited from the program since entrepreneur contacts increased significantly and the entrepreneurial studies got new methods. What was interesting is that the entrepreneur-mentors formed their own network too.

4.7.4 Mentors' opinions and reasons of denial

Mentors said that it was great to get to know to the young and their future plans. They were also surprised at how much they enjoyed talking about themselves and bringing out their expertise. "Praising" oneself to other people is something that mentors do not usually do in their everyday life. Talking about their own work helped them to analyze their work and they even found new procedures. The mentors grew and developed as well as the mentees.

The reasons why some people refused to participate in a mentoring program as mentors were that they wanted to be paid a salary or they did not have enough time. Some small entrepreneurs did not participate because they were afraid of the possible competition that could come out of the mentorship. As it was mentioned earlier, the students had mentors from the field that interested them the most and therefore some entrepreneurs did not want to reveal their secrets or sacrifice their time for mentoring. However, the mentors who doubted whether they could find time for mentoring said afterwards that it was very easy to find time for it.

4.7.5 General observations

In neither of the mentoring programs mentoring was experienced as a burden because the participants realized that it benefitted them and their development. Mentoring brought extra content to the study plan and when someone did not find suitable options in the school curriculum, mentoring opened more doors and special skills could be acquired that way. Mentoring also brought a new perspective to career planning.

The people who started on the mentorship program were motivated and only a small percentage quit. The reasons for early termination were mostly personal: family or studies. Since mentoring is totally voluntary, the interviewee, as a program leader, preferred the answer "no" to people participating in the program with partial effort. It was important to engage in the process and be aware of what the mentorship is like. She said that no negative effects came out of mentoring. Some participants noticed that it might not suit them or expressed another counter-reaction, but the interviewee said that those reactions were also positive because it is good when people recognize and acknowledge them. According to the interviewee, disappointment would be a negative impact but luckily nobody felt that.

5 Summary and conclusions

The concept and the purpose of mentoring were explained in the theory part. Mentoring was defined as a confidential learning relationship that aims at releasing the mentees' potential and developing them with the help of experienced people called mentors. The differences between coaching and mentoring were clarified, one of the main differences being formality: coaching is a more structured and mentoring is a more informal relationship. Four types of mentoring relationships were also introduced in the theory part, based on the formality and the length of the relationship.

Shea, Woodbury and Pittsley have listed in their book *Mentoring: How to Develop Successful Mentor Behaviors (2001)* seven issues which make mentoring effective. The items are: Shifting context, Listening, Identifying

feelings, Productive confrontation, Providing appropriate information, Delegating authority and giving permission, and Encouraging exploration of options. In *Shifting context* the mentors help the mentees to imagine a feeling or a situation which they want to achieve in the future. Mentors need to know how to *listen* because in most cases the mentees see their problems differently when they say them out loud. Mentors have to know how to *identify feelings* because the non-verbal messages are often more important than the verbal ones. Mentees should not be criticized or threatened but the mentors should *confront them productively* and use the "I" form instead of "You" form. *Providing appropriate information* for the mentees is also important, because the mentors should not give them ready answers but to lead them to the right direction. Mentors can show their confidence towards the mentees' abilities by *delegating authority and giving permission.* It is a good way to increase the mentees' self-confidence. The last issue is to *encourage exploration of options,* which means that the mentors should suggest different actions to resolve the problems. The old and comfortable way is not always the best one. However, the mentees still have the power to decide on their path.

The main research question in the thesis was: "*What effects does mentoring have on a young manager?".* In the theory part the outcomes of mentoring based on the literature were described and in the empirical part the respondents' answers to the questions were revealed. Theory and the results of the study seem to be quite well in line. Impacts that appeared in both the theoretical and empirical findings include increased self-confidence, good advice, constructive discussion about the mentee's strengths and weaknesses, and for example, concrete knowledge or skills relating to a certain company's operations. Effects that appeared only in the theoretical findings included increase in salary, promotion, career satisfaction, contacts gotten from the mentor, and less work stress. It is important to remember that when people participate in mentoring processes it does not automatically mean that in one month they will get promotions. Mentoring may prepare the mentees for the future challenges that may offer a better salary and more responsibility but it does not guarantee any of that. That is why the motive for starting a mentorship should not be the money but the eagerness to develop oneself and learn from

the more experienced person insights that books cannot teach. That is an issue that could be read in the interviewees' answers.

Effects that appeared only in the respondents' answers included the opportunity of confidential discussion, finding one's own path, and getting new perspectives. Therefore the biggest difference between the theoretical and empirical findings was the amount of external and internal results. The interviewees put emphasis on the mentee's development and internal effects, whereas the literature often mentioned the external benefits such as salary, promotion and good contacts from the mentor.

The author had a successful mentorship in the management program and the most important benefit that she got from it was the increased self-confidence and belief in herself. Even though each mentorship is unique, it was interesting to notice that both empirical and theoretical findings supported the author's own experience of mentoring. In both findings the increased self-confidence is considered an important result. The author also learned concrete, work-related matters but mental development was found the most valuable impact. Also the interview with the mentoring professional revealed that the students who participated in the mentorship valued increased self-knowledge and confidence as the most important effects that came out of mentoring.

The most critical negative effect that mentoring can cause was that the mentees start to copy the thoughts and ideology of the mentors and forget to develop their own managerial identities. This may happen if the mentors are too dominant and force their ideas on the mentees. Also the mentee may get the wrong idea of managerial work if the mentor's way of thinking is old-fashioned or negative. These situations require extra vigilance from the mentee because ideas that sound strange should be questioned no matter how experienced the person on the opposite side is. Depending on the situation, some of the negative matters can be transformed to positive ones by creating constructive questions and discussion. A professional attitude must be maintained because one can never know the real reasons behind someone's ideology. A theme that sounds crazy to one person might be a very sensitive topic for another person.

The last research question in the thesis was *"In which situations would mentoring be the most helpful method?"*. The data from the interviews revealed that a major change in the work is the most ideal situation when to participate in mentoring. Support from the experienced mentors can be extremely valuable and they can give good advice for challenging tasks. Many times the self-confidence of the managers is tested when they start in a new task or get more responsibility; then the mentor is an irreplaceable support on the other side. Also the mentoring professional stated that she acquired a mentor when she was going to be assigned new tasks at work and she felt that she needed support. The interviewees also said that mentoring is useful in a normal work situation, too, since it is a great tool to assist communication and to get new visions and perspective. However, as regards the research question, *…the most helpful method?,* it is the challenging situations when mentoring is needed the most.

This study strongly reflects the author's own opinions about mentoring and especially the theory part is a description of how she sees the subject. Also the findings from the empirical study represent opinions of six different people beside the author's ideas and the mentoring professional's experience, and if other people were asked the same questions the results could be different. However this study can be considered quite reliable since many of the empirical findings were supported by the theoretical findings and the author's experiences during her own mentoring process. All the research questions were answered satisfactorily and the study is also considered interesting. Hopefully the readers of this study will find it useful and become more interested in mentoring.

Figures

Tables

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The body of the questionnaire

Depending on the respondent's background, the tense and style of the question was modified or the question was left out.

1. How old are you, where do you work and what is your position?

2. How many times have you been a mentor?

3. What was the status of your mentees during the mentorship?

4. What made you participate in a mentorship?

5. What do you think about mentoring as a tool of mental coaching?

6. How many companies do you know that use mentoring?

7. What do you think is the young managers' main problem or area of development?

8. What positive effects can mentoring have on a young manager?

9. What negative effects can mentoring have on a young manager?

10. During your career, has there been a situation in which you would have needed a mentor? If yes, could you describe it more precisely?