

Speaker 1: So, do you feel that coaching or mentoring are effective professional development tools? If so, why? If not, why not?

Rachel: Yes, to both actually. Although, it's possible for them not to be effective and to take the kind of the why not first. In my experience the least effective relationships are those that blow the line between coaching and mentoring. And then maybe there are those as coaching and actually someone kind of [00:00:30] tries to interpose themselves as a mentor really. And that can just be unbalanced. It's not necessarily what either party is expecting and those things can go wrong.

But for me, I think coaching works. At any time in someone's career or life generally. When they need some [00:01:00] kind of scuffle thing I guess, for something that they are facing or finding difficult to resolve sort of on their own. And it's helpful to have someone else ask questions that makes you think differently, makes you explore things differently. It's confidence building actually to have that sort of dynamic.

Because you feel [00:01:30] as those questions are asked and you formulate your answers, you can feel the fact that it's your own resources you're drawing on. That's something very satisfying actually about having it kind of reflect back to what your skills and competencies are, and that you can do this.

So coaching I think is really helpful. Both as a formal sort of you know this is a coaching session but also as a style of management. So when you're working with your team, [Inaudible 00:01:54] kind of take a coaching approach to resolving things in the team, I think is helpful. Mentoring is [00:02:00] slightly different. I think it is most helpful when somebody is taking a promotion or moving into a different kind of professional sphere. And therefore, can really benefit from the kind of sharp and focused wisdom of someone who's been on that path before.

Speaker 1: Yes.

Rachel: And it's probably worth having coaching as well at that time but there's a real value in kind of [00:02:30] picking the brains of someone more experienced. For example, when I became a director I had two director mentors. One who is a DCS mentor and one who was a DRS mentor. Because I was really specifically needing input at a director level on both those domains.

Speaker 1: So, do you think that coaching and mentoring is imbedded in this organization?

Rachel: No. Not at all. [00:03:00] [Unintelligible 00:03:03] I could say a little bit more. So, when I was appointed as a director here, I was in the process of completing my coaching qualification, and for that I needed to build coaching hours. So I offered people coaching so I could...

Speaker 1: Yes I remember.

Rachel: ...build my coaching hours. And people took it up and I think found it helpful and I certainly valued getting the coaching hours, getting to know some of my team [00:03:30] in that way. But it was very clear that those people haven't generally been offered anything like it.

And once I had completed my coaching hours, from time to time people contacted me and asked, "Do you still coach Rachel? Would you be willing to mentor?" And I have coached and mentored people inside the organization since that time. But it goes back to what I was saying

about opportunities not being evenly available. Which is that those people sort me out, asked questions. If you don't ask you don't get.

Speaker 1: [00:04:00] Yes.

Rachel: Because I'm interested in people's career progression I was willing to do it. Well, I got no sense that there are any other senior managers doing that. Got no sense that you can seek that elsewhere. And from time to time I've been asked if I can support or resource coaching for the people.

When a particular line manager is interested in securing that for one of their members of staff. And of course I don't have a budget for that and they don't have a budget for that. [00:04:30] If I'm not able to coach you, no one else is for free. And it doesn't get done.

Speaker 1: Okay. Last question. Would you like to see coaching or mentoring become a formal process within this organization?

Rachel: My knee jerk answer to that would be yes. But my more considered answer to that would be, we should be careful what we wish for. And I say that because [00:05:00] of the way that we formalize processes in this organization. So my worry would be if we made a formal process in this organization, it would be mandated and measured and if you didn't achieve certain things after your coaching or mentoring.

Then somehow, either you mowed down or your coach or mentor would be mowed down. There is something about how we find a way. I think it should be an embedded part of professional development in every organization that exists. And I think it should be made [00:05:30] available to people at whatever stage of their career development they are on an equal basis.

But I do think there should be a certain amount of pull. So you can't [Unintelligible 00:05:43] everyone, and coaching won't be right for everyone at a particular point in mentoring, unless they are making the kind of move I've described.