Start with Curiosity: A Coaching Approach to Mentorship

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Both require listening
What is….?

Coaching

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.

Coaching is focused on the client finding their own answers through a process of asking “powerful questions.”

Mentorship

A protected relationship in which a more knowledgeable or experienced person guides and nurtures the professional development of another, can be outside the normal manager/subordinate line.

Goes beyond learning specific competencies or tasks and builds a climate of trust so the mentee can feel secure to seek advice on issues impacting their professional success.

(Berkeley Labs website)
Examples of how I...

**Coach**
Faculty asks “how do I integrate public-facing work into my scholarship?”

**Coaching calls for curiosity not expertise:**
Powerful questions that explore individual’s scholarly values, identity, goals, and purpose – and how to manifest those in public-facing scholarship and scholarly communications

**Mentor/Advise**
Faculty asks “how do I get resources for my public-facing scholarly work?”

**Advising calls for expertise and guidance:**
Recommend potential funding sources and other resources
Advise and assist in writing funding proposals
Connect with others who can support in obtaining resources

**Mentor/Refer**
Faculty asks “how do I demonstrate the value of public-facing scholarly work in my T&P file?"

**Referral when I don’t have the expertise:**
Connect with Associate Dean for Academic Personnel, Equity Advisor, faculty with experience including public-facing work in their T&P files
Powerful Questions

• Core of coaching
• Short
• Start with “what” or “how”
• Open-ended
• Non-judgmental
• Come from a place of curiosity
• Go where the client takes the conversation
A Coaching Approach to Mentorship

Why ask powerful questions when mentoring?

• Sometimes the issue isn’t the issue.
• Mentoring works best when it meets the person where they are.
• Starting with curiosity about the person we are mentoring establishes a practice of listening and a basis for trust.
Examples of Power Questions

- What patterns are you noticing?
- What areas of your work feel misaligned right now? (values, responsibilities, expectations)
- What is the distinction between those two things *(mentioned by the person)*? What is their relationship to each other?
- What are your main takeaways from this experience?
- What else?
Coach the person not the problem