A sample of a summary of selected articles on and around mentoring

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From: "Formal or informal mentoring: what drives employees to seek informal mentors?" Daniel T Holt et al. *Journal of Managerial Issues* Volume 28 Number 1-2 Spring/Summer 2016 Pages 67-82.

P 68   "While well-intentioned, as mentoring becomes more formal, research suggests that the level of interaction as well as the quality of information shared decreases resulting in fewer long term advantages for proteges, mentors, and organisations when compared to mentoring relationships that develop naturally and voluntarily based on perceived competence and interpersonal comfort".

           "In cases where formal mentoring is less than fully effective, proteges often seek an additional informal mentor to realise those benefits that are not being gained as part of the formal programme".

P 69   "Kram (1988) suggested that mentoring relationships evolve through stages as trust and confidence in one another are built: the more time a mentor and a protégé spend together the more quickly trust and confidence develop".

           "Johnson and Anderson (2009) indicate that the more formalised a mentoring programme becomes, the less motivation to fully invest their time and effort".

P 70   If the formal mentor spends too little time with a protégé, the employee would likely seek mentoring elsewhere".

           "…a quality relationship might not be created without a certain amount of similarity between assigned members. In formal relationships, mentors may not be assigned proteges with whom they have things in common, in which case, perceived differences between the mentor and protégé could negatively affect the potential outcomes of the relationship".

           "Chao et al (1992) suggest that it takes much longer to develop a meaningful relationship when it does not emerge out of mutual admiration".

           "Intuitively, a high performing individual would certainly command the attention of others who have a desire to mentor".

P 79   "The amount of contact time certainly plays an important role in establishing high quality exchanges and opportunity for effective mentoring".

           "Better understand the forces that drive proteges to seek informal mentoring while formal mentors are available will help organisations to improve their formal mentoring programmes and more successfully encourage informal mentoring".

From: "Proteges negative mentoring experiences: Construct development and nomological validation" Lillian Eby et al. *Personnel Psychology* Volume 57 2004 Pages 411-447.

P 411   "As predicted, the negative experiences of mentor distancing behaviour and lack of mentor expertise were more often reported in the separation phase, and among proteges in formally arranged mentoring relationships".

"Mentoring refers to an intense interpersonal relationship between a senior, more experienced individual (the mentor) and a junior, less experienced individual (the protege) whereby the mentor provides career and personal guidance to the protégé (Kram 1985)".

P 412   "A recent study by Ragins, Cotton and Miller (2000) proposes that mentoring relationships exist on a continuum, with highly satisfying relationships at one extreme and dysfunctional or harmful ones at the other extreme".

"Moreover, proteges with a history of negative experiences with mentors report higher stress and turnover intentions as well as lower job satisfaction (Eby and Allen 2002)".

"It is possible that a protégé may experience both positive and negative experiences with the same mentor".

P 413   "Possible reasons for a dysfunctional relationship are: values, workstyle and personality".

"Five metathemes for a dysfunctional mentoring relationship:

Mismatch within the dyad
Distancing behaviour
Manipulative behaviour
Lack of mentor expertise
General dysfunctionality".

P 416   "It seems quite possible that a mentor and protégé not 'click' interpersonally, (a mismatch) but that the mentor may still be able to provide positive mentoring in the form of career-related support".

From: The art of giving and receiving advice" David Garvin and Joshua Margolis. *Harvard Business Review* January /February 2015 Pages 60-71.

P 61   "Those who are truly open to guidance (and not just looking for validation), develop better solutions to problems than they would have on their own. They add nuance and texture to their thinking – and research shows they can overcome cognitive biases, self-serving rationales, and other flaws in their logic".

Those who give advice effectively wiled soft influence – they shape important decisions while empowering others to act. As engaged listeners, they can also learn a lot from the problems that people bring to them".

"But advice seekers and givers must clear significant hurdles, such as a deeply ingrained tendency to prefer their own opinions, irrespective of their merit, and the fact that careful listening is hard, time consuming work".

"The whole interaction is a subtle and intricate art".

"On both sides, it requires emotional intelligence, self-awareness, restraint, diplomacy and patience".

P 62   "Advice-seekers must identify their blind spots, recognise when and how to ask for guidance, draw useful insights from the right people, and overcome an inevitable defensiveness about their own views".

"When you are seeking advice, watch for these obstacles:

P 62-65   Thinking you already have the answers
                 Choosing the wrong advisers
                 Defining the problem poorly
                 Discounting advice
                 Misjudging the quality of advice

When giving advice, look out for these tendencies:

                 Overstepping boundaries
                 Misdiagnosing the problem
                 Offering self-centred guidance
                 Communicating advice poorly
                 Mishandling the aftermath"

P 62   "As people are deciding whether they need help, they often have difficulty assessing their own competence, and place too much faith in their own intuition. The result is overconfidence and a tendency to default to solo decision making on the basis of poor knowledge and assumptions".

"A related tendency is to ask for advice when one's real goal is to gain validation or praise".

"Sometimes knowingly, sometimes not, decision makers stack the deck by turning to like-minded advisers".

"Seekers also fail to think creatively enough about the expertise they need – which fields might bring valuable insight, who has solved a similar problem before, whose knowledge is most relevant, whose experience is the best fit – or cast a wide enough net to find it".

P 63   "By seeking advice from the right people – ad in the right ways – you can develop smarter solutions to problems, deepen your thinking, and sharpen your decision making".

"Many seekers take for granted background essentials (often about past incidents or organisational politics) that their advisers don't know".

"When communicating ineffectively, they may tell a lengthy, blow-by-blow story that causes listeners to tune out, lose focus, and perhaps misidentify the core of the problem that needs solving".

"…or they may omit details that reflect badly on the, but are central to seeing the big picture".

P 64 "Once seekers have advice in hand, their most common mistake is to undervalue or dismiss it".

"…even when people lack expertise, they put more stock in their own opinions than in other's views".

"Over time, discounting advice can damage important relationships. Advisers notice when they're repeatedly not being heard, and it generates mistrust and ill will".

"Most seekers who seek advice have trouble distinguishing the good from the bad".

"Though many people give unsolicited advice, it's usually considered intrusive, and seldom followed".

"Another way advisers overstep is to chime in when they aren't qualified to do so".

"People who liberally offer baseless advice quickly lose credibility and influence. Even a single instance of bad advice normally leads to a rapid decline in an adviser's standing".

"Advisers must gather intelligence to develop a clearer picture of the problem to be solved. Here they can slip in a couple of ways. First, they may define the problem prematurely because they *think* they see similarities with challenges they've faced. Second, they sometimes forget that seekers are self-interested parties who may – deliberately or not – present partial or biased accounts".

P 65 "All this is compounded by an irrational, but compelling fear of looking incompetent; advisers tend to avoid asking basic, probing questions because they don't want to jepordise their expert status".

"Advisers may share personal stories and experiences that fail the 'doability' test because they simply don't accord with the seeker's level of power, negotiating skill, organisational savvy, or situational constraints".

"Nothing causes paralysis like a laundry list of options with no explicit guidance on where to start or how to work through and winnow the list".

"Though the final decision is not theirs to take, many advisers take offence when their guidance isn't accepted wholesale, curtailing further discussion".

P 69   "Depending on what's needed, advisers might:

Serve as a sounding board
Test a tentative path
Expand the frame of reference
Provide process guidance
Generate substantive ideas".

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