

How The Mentoring Style Indicator can increase mentoring success

Over 300,000 individuals have answered the *Mentoring Style Indicator* [MSI] from the perspective of a protege who needs mentoring assistance or from the perspective of a mentor who can provide various types of assistance. Comparing **Preferred Mentoring Styles** and then learning to use all 4 Mentoring Styles in a flexible manner is a key to developing a successful mentoring relationship that produces desired results.

If a mentor or protege answers the MSI a second time, after consciously developing **Mentoring Style Flexibility**, less preferred Styles will now be more preferred while the most preferred Styles will be less preferred. This is a **good indicator of success**, because mentors will employ whichever Mentoring Style is appropriate in a given situation and proteges will be receptive to this, so that protege goals are achieved.

Six benefits if you answer and use the MSI:

1. You'll develop a better relationship with your mentoring partner.
2. You'll understand your own and your partner's Preferred Mentoring Style.
3. As a protege, you'll be more receptive to different types of mentor assistance.
4. You'll work together better as partners to achieve more desired goals.
5. As a mentor, you'll provide the right type of mentoring assistance a protege needs.
6. The sponsoring organization will benefit when you benefit. This increases Social Capital.



What makes for maximum success?

Use the MSI to foster a dynamic mentoring relationship, with mentors providing different types of assistance to match a protege's needs at any point in time, and with proteges seeking out and being receptive to this. When Dr. William A. Gray analyzed the mentoring behaviors associated with success and failure, he was able to categorize them as four main Mentoring Styles. A description of each of the Styles follows.

Dr. Gray realized that the Informational and Guiding Mentoring Styles equip proteges with what the mentor knows. These Styles represent the classical definition of the mentor as: advisor, trusted guide, provider of wise counsel. Further, in successful relationships, it became apparent that mentors also employed the Collaborative and Confirming Mentoring Styles to empower what proteges proposed to do and become when they had the capability.

The real key to maximum success, however, is the use of all four Mentoring Styles in a flexible manner - when appropriate at any point in time - so that proteges receive the type of assistance most needed. Once this success pattern became clear, Dr. Gray and his partner, Marilynne Miles Gray, began to train mentor-protege partners to develop Mentoring Style Flexibility as a competency – and as a good indicator of successful mentoring.

Why do mentoring relationships fail?

In the late 1970s, Dr. William A. Gray discovered through research that mentoring relationships eventually fail and terminate badly when someone “**gets stuck**” overly emphasizing equipping or empowering. Here are his four key discoveries:

Discovery # 1. Some mentors provide too much Equipping

Some mentors like to give advice, explain things, offer suggestions, and provide direction as a Mentoring Style even when proteges are or have become highly capable and clearly do not need this. In such situations, proteges perceive these mentors as being too domineering, not listening to them, and unsupportive. Research found that these behaviors stopped proteges from seeking out such mentors.

Discovery # 2. Some mentors provide too much Empowering

Some mentors wanted to empower protégés by expecting them to figure out what to do - even when they had tried and could not. These mentors did not provide needed advice and direction. So, these proteges floundered needlessly. Eventually, they stopped seeking mentoring from someone who would not provide the help they needed.

Discovery # 3. Some proteges want only to be empowered

Some proteges entered the mentoring relationship feeling overly capable and self-reliant, and wanting only encouragement to do what they proposed. Busy mentors welcomed this initially, until they realized that wise counsel and guidance were needed, but not appreciated and never heeded, even when what proteges proposed or tried wouldn't work. Eventually, these mentors stopped meeting with the proteges.

Discovery # 4. Some proteges want only to be equipped

Some proteges entered the mentoring relationship not wanting to make foolish mistakes, and so sought out mentor assistance for everything. Initially, the mentors felt pleased that the proteges valued their many years of experience enough to ask questions, and seek out advice. Eventually, the mentors realized that their brains were being picked, and thus made themselves unavailable to the proteges in hopes that they would show more initiative in figuring out what to do. When they didn't, mentoring ceased altogether.

Develop Mentoring Style Flexibility as a Competency

The following training process has been designed to develop your ability to employ four Mentoring Styles in a flexible manner (instead of getting stuck overly using strongly-preferred Mentoring Styles).

1. Understand Preferred Mentoring Style:

Mentors and proteges answer the six Situations of the *Mentoring Style Indicator*, calculate their scores, read their profiles, and then compare their Preferred Mentoring Styles.

2. Watch Mentoring for Results video for behavioral modeling:

Mentor-protége partners watch CMSI's Mentoring for Results training video to see how to employ all four Mentoring Styles and associated behaviors in a flexible manner to equip and empower proteges to be successful.

3. Practice Mentoring Style Flexibility:

Partners practice applying what they observed in the video. They use the Mentoring PocketCard™ to follow an efficient and effective 6-Step Mentoring Process that helps the protege deal with a challenging situation she or he cannot handle alone. Mentors practice using less-preferred Mentoring Styles and behaviors in order to develop them as well. Proteges practice requesting less-preferred Styles and behaviors to become more receptive to them. This Activity develops Mentoring Style Flexibility so neither partner gets stuck overly using a most Preferred Mentoring Style and favorite behavior. As mentioned previously, this is a good indicator of success that can be used for **evaluating successful mentoring**

The next page portrays and describes **Gray's Mentor-Protége Relationship Model**, along with the 4 Mentoring Styles and associated behaviors.

In Gray's Mentor-Protégé Relationship Model, two Mentoring Styles equip protégés.

The Informational Mentoring Style

is represented by a capital M to indicate that the mentor is the more active person.

This Style is one in which the Mentor uses 1-way communication to impart information.

A number of mentoring behaviors can be used to do this: Self-disclosure, Description, Teaching, Explanation, Arranging for Protégé help, legitimately Praising what the Protégé does, Advising, Prescribing.

A key factor: The Protégé is receptive to working with the mentor.

The Guiding Mentoring Style

is represented by a capital M and a small letter p to indicate the growing input of the Protégé.

This Style is one in which the Mentor guides 2-way communication during interaction with Protégé. As necessary, the Mentor Suggests, Persuades, Confronts, Asks Leading Questions, Probes and Coaches.

A key factor: The Protégé responds to the Mentor's guidance.

In Gray's Mentor-Protégé Relationship Model, two Mentoring Styles empower protégés.

The Collaborative Mentoring Style

is represented by a capital M and P to indicate the relatively equal input of the partners.

This Style is one in which Mentor and Protégé jointly contribute and interact with neither one dominating the action. This is done through 2-way Dialog, Joint decision-making and problem-solving, Agreeing on action steps

A key factor: The Protégé must have enough skill and experience to contribute in major ways.

The Confirming Mentoring Style

is represented by a capital P and a small letter m to indicate the growing input of the Protégé.

This Style is one in which the Mentor acknowledges and confirms the Protégé's ideas and feelings. As necessary, the Mentor acts as a Sounding Board, Clarifies, Paraphrases what the Protégé says, Summarizes, acts in a Non-threatening and Non-judgmental fashion, and legitimately Encourages.

A key factor: The Protégé is the main one to propose ideas and action steps.

The ultimate goal

is represented by a capital P to indicate the ultimate growth of the Protégé to become a Successful, Consciously Competent Protégé – aware of what to do and able to do it. It is at this point that the Mentor-Protégé relationship is redefined.

