

Distance Mentoring Discussion Guide

OPENING

Hello _____. Thank you for meeting with me today to try out the distance mentorship program. I wanted to do some basic introductions before we get started, I'll go first; my name is _____, I've been a Toastmaster since _____ [tell story how you joined and grew]. And yourself?

Thank you for sharing that with me, and welcome to Toastmasters! I wanted to share a perspective on mentoring from the May 2014 Toastmasters Magazine – it says that “mentoring really is the hallmark of success in the Toastmasters program” because both new and established members accomplish goals they might not otherwise reach on their own, and it’s an opportunity for an exchange of knowledge, ideas and experiences. I know that some clubs emphasize mentorship more than others which is why I really wanted to do the distance mentorship program, in our district specifically, because it would allow ideas to cross between clubs which can be difficult when they’re as far apart as they are for us.

With that in mind, it’s important in a mentoring engagement to establish expectations from both sides, so I just wanted to outline how I expect this will go – essentially what I’m hoping for today is a conversation with you about your Toastmasters journey, that will hopefully help you clarify your goals, and some action items you can take to your next club meeting to achieve them. What were you hoping to get out of this conversation today?

LEARN ABOUT YOU

Excellent. That is helpful to know. To get us started I think it would be useful to establish some basic details about you to help guide our conversation, so I’m going to ask you some simple questions about your Toastmasters journey:

1. How long have you been a Toastmaster?
2. What designations do you hold or are you working toward?
3. What originally brought you to Toastmasters?
4. What is keeping you here now?
5. What other activities/priorities do you have in your life? (time commitments)
6. How many clubs have you visited?
7. What do you like/dislike about your club?
8. What do you like/dislike about Toastmasters as a whole?
9. What is your perception of your District, Division, Area?

Wow, it sounds like you’ve already got some great skills when it comes to _____.

GOAL SETTING

You mentioned you’re wanting to work on _____. Can you tell me a bit more about what activities you’ve identified within the Toastmasters program that would help you achieve those goals?

Which of those have you been doing at your club meetings?

Alright, that’s great to hear. For the ones you haven’t been doing, what has been holding you back?

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SUGGESTIONS & ACTION PLAN

I'd like to re-introduce the concept of your club as a tool for you to try new things. I think many members, myself included, develop expectations of their performance – I understand that we definitely want to do the best we can, but people often lose sight of the fact that the club is really there for them to see what works before they take things out to their “actual” audience.

Floating around Facebook was the question “what would you do if you weren't afraid” – and I'd like to ask you that question now in the context of your club. Given the goals we've outlined, _____, _____ and _____ are some things you might do that will help you get closer to achieving them – which of those would you want to do most in your club if you didn't have some sort of barrier holding you back?

OK – I think (solution to barrier) _____ may be a potential solution for you to be able to (do this activity) _____. For your goal of _____ that you told me about earlier, I feel your greatest opportunities for growth are _____. And I also think from what we've discussed that that is definitely within your grasp since you've already got _____ from the sounds of it!

This is a great opportunity to bring up the comfort zone, which recently came up in my club as a topic of inspiration. We all know that pushing ourselves out of our comfort zones is something we've gotta do to grow, but it's easy to forget that your comfort zone will expand to match, and suddenly you aren't outside of it anymore! I had to remind myself of this in the last 6 months because I realized I was comfortable with my skill level and wasn't pushing myself forward. No matter how long you've been a member I can guarantee there are ways you can further your development as long as you're willing to pursue it. It can bring back that gritty feeling but I propose that feeling shows we're learning, which is usually what people come to Toastmasters for.

Based on what we've talked about so far, I'd love for you to pick one of the things we've talked about to be your personal goal for one of your upcoming club meetings, whether it's a speech or a certain role. It could even be choosing to get involved more with your club executive which I think would be totally amazing, but your own self-development really comes down to the path YOU choose, so what do you feel would be the right next step?

FEEDBACK

I've greatly enjoyed this discovery we've had, and just before we wrap up I'd love to get some feedback from you. I wonder, what it was that interested you about distance mentorship? Was there a reason distance mentorship specifically was of interest to you, as opposed to a mentor from your club?

What were the most and least useful aspects of this conversation for you? Was there anything you wish we'd gone over that we didn't?

WRAP UP

Thank you again for investing this time into yourself, and Toastmasters International by extension. This organization really comes down to the individual members. I just want to let you know that if you have any questions you can reach me by email or phone, I'll always get and respond to a text message, so I'll send you my details if you don't have them already.

I really enjoyed this discussion, and all that's left would be scheduling a follow-up chat to talk about how things are going a bit down the road. Do you know when you might be available in say a month or so to do that?