



# Strength Based Mentoring

Research has shown that a strength-based mentoring approach fosters positive outcomes helping kids draw on their strengths to constructively navigate life challenges with resilience.

*Read the full article [HERE](#).*

---

## Characteristics of Strength-Based Mentoring:

- Primary focus on strengths, interests, gifts, abilities, preferences, and potential
  - Nurturing rather than just teaching
  - Conveys “I believe in you” while setting high but realistic expectations
  - Celebrates successes in any situation
  - Adapts approaches to engage
  - Encourages interactive learning & contributions
- 

## Essential Skills of a Strength-Based Mentor:

**1. The Art of Listening:** Engage in ways that allow you to really get to know your mentee. come to understand your mentees' distinct mix of internal strengths, important relationships, interests, resources and limitations, as well as dreams and aspirations.

**2. The Art of Building Trust:** These are key components to a mentee's level of trust are their perceptions of mentors.

- Ability ( terms of knowledge, skill, or competency so avoid promises beyond ability).
- Integrity (follow through with your promises & commitments and ensure your actions and words match) and...
- Benevolence

**3. The Art of Capturing the Journey (Through Narration and Storytelling):** Attend carefully to your mentee's small gains and important milestones throughout the mentoring relationship. Reflecting their process through narration and storytelling is a proven method to reinforce learning and inspire new insights and skills.

**4. The Art of Adapting (A Youth-Centred Approach):** Adapting your approach and plans based on the unique strengths, characteristics, needs and feedback presented is one of the best ways to establish trust and improve the quality and positive influence of your relationship. How will you convey high but realistic expectations to your mentee?

---

### Techniques to Implement these Skills:

#### 1. Activity:

- The next time you meet with your mentee, pay close attention to what they say and verbally summarize what you heard in a matter of fact, non-judgmental way.
- Take a resiliency/strengths assessment or survey at [www.authentic happiness.com](http://www.authentic happiness.com) (VIA Survey of Character Strengths and the VIA Strengths Survey for Children). Review the results and talk about your mentee's strengths, share some of your own and help your mentee better understand how their strengths can be used to achieve goals important to them.

#### 2. Reflection:

- When interacting and planning activities with your mentee, to what degree are you honest, considerate, inclusive in decision making, genuine in terms of how you convey your knowledge, skill and competency? Do you follow through on commitments and promises? What could you focus on to try and build more trust in your relationship?

#### 3. Skill/Knowledge Building Tasks:

- Make a list and take turns talking about and celebrating successes and achievements throughout your mentoring journey. Support your mentee to frame mistakes and failure as learning and growth opportunities.

#### 4. Affirm, Affirm, and then Affirm Some More:

- In the face of challenges, assist your mentee in realistically evaluating the strengths that they can call upon to help them cope and overcome. Affirm that their goals are something they can achieve by recognizing and emphasizing their strengths.
-

## Extra Tips:

### Stimulate Growth through Challenges:

- **Explore and plan new activities that your mentee is interested in** trying with your support and encouragement. The Search Institute's Mentoring for Meaningful Results manual is an excellent resource for strength-building activities ([www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org))
- When your mentee is struggling or talks about challenges they are having, find an opportunity to **discuss which strengths they could use to help them overcome their struggles and challenges**

### Nurture Creativity:

- **Explore a creative or artistic way that your mentee could express their gratitude and hopes for the future.** Give your mentee the opportunity to talk about what they created and how you can work together to build on their strengths to turn these hopes into reality

