

# A MENTOR'S GUIDE:

Reflections on the Professional  
Practice of Mentoring in Film



**Durban FilmMart**  
Institute



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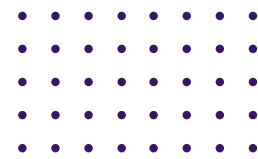
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# Introduction and how to use this guide



*Mentorship is sharing the tools to someone to find their own way to approach a practice.*



**Who or what makes a 'mentor' in the film industry?** This was one of the central questions that prompted the Durban FilmMart Institute and the DW Akademie in cooperation with Berlinale Talents to bring together a group of

film professionals to co-create this guide through a process of deliberate questioning and collective thinking around the practice and concept of 'mentorship'. This was done as the first step in a larger project that seeks to increase the number

of mentors active within the African film industry. Although the guide is curated with a focus on the African film industry, it could also be relevant and applied beyond that geographic focus.

A core belief underpinning this guide is that ongoing professional development and mentorship is essential (and normal) in any functional professional community and should not be overlooked in the film and television industry. This guide is praxis-oriented and can be read and used in sections or in its entirety. It is meant to

be used as a 'pick up and go' guide – **pick it up, go try out certain things that you have read in it, and decide for yourself if it works for you or not.**

It is not a prescriptive manual but rather a selection of approaches, tips and recommendations from the group's diverse industry experiences designed to lay a foundation for a productive mentoring relationship. Increasing clarity and professionalism around a common place practice ('mentorship') is the primary goal of this guide.

**This reflective guide may be particularly helpful for:**

- New and established mentors
- Organisations that provide mentorship / training programmes and/or co-production and financing opportunities for African film projects and filmmakers
- Anyone wishing to think deeper about the practice of mentorship within the film and television industry
- Mentees who want to enrich their mentorship experience

This guide takes the moment when an individual is approached by a platform to mentor as its starting point with recommendations of how one can engage with the platform prior to meeting with a mentee. It then moves on with practical suggestions of how to structure a successful first meeting with a mentee with the rest of the guide dedicated to highlighting the work that is required throughout the mentorship process. The guide ends with further reading that could be useful for film and television

mentorships and an annex detailing the co-creation process of this guide.

It is useful to note that although the guide was developed with an orientation towards directors and director/producers, we hope that it can also be transferable and adapted to the mentorship of other practitioners within the industry - such as cinematographers, editors, and producers, alongside other spaces within the industry - such as programming, distribution, and audience development.



# Thinking like a mentor

Mentorship is a process where a mentor holds space for a mentee to find their own way to realise their vision through an exchange of skills, resources, knowledge, and networks. It is typically an intentionally designed process, although

it can occur organically. It is a safe and collaborative space to create and make mistakes and creates an environment for growth and the birth of new ideas. It is a support system with clear expectations and boundaries.



## Mentoring vs Teaching

It is important to note that sometimes the lines between mentoring and teaching can blur. Therefore, it is key to examine what this guide means by mentoring (Vs teaching).

The key differences between the two concepts stems from the role participants play in those specific spaces. In broad terms, teaching usually takes place in a formal setting and is designed to impart knowledge on a certain subject in order to attain some sort of qualification or grade. Mentoring is similar in that knowledge is also shared, but the setting might be more informal and mentors take on more of an advisory, guiding role.

By being a guide and facilitator the mentor also allows the mentee to maintain their voice, character and direction of the

project, whereas a teacher may act more as an instructor, teaching the skills needed to create a project.

With regards to film platforms and labs, these two approaches can sometimes merge, particularly for programmes aimed at entry-level or emerging talent, or when working towards specific goals required at the end of the programme. What a mentor needs to be aware of in those instances is that this sharing of knowledge should never be top-down or prescriptive.

In this guide we define a 'mentee' as **anyone** who is curious and open to a learning process where they will engage their practical experience with more or different skills. Mentees are not only entry-level professionals but anyone who is open to the process of mentorship at any stage of their career.

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## Within the framework of a Platform

In this guide we look at mentoring within the framework of a film platform approaching an individual to mentor in one or more aspects of its programming. We use platform as a generic term to refer to stakeholders in the film industry that engage mentors. Examples of platforms include training programmes, film festivals, markets, labs and institutions.

In this section you will find a menu of questions and recommendations on how to engage with the platform **before** the mentorship begins so that meaningful relationships and processes can be created for all parties involved.

We suggest you use whichever combination of questions that you feel is relevant to you and the type of programme/platform structure that you will be mentoring in. Whilst the platform will most likely have a well-established and predetermined mentoring structure in place, it is important that you examine this structure critically. This will provide clarity and accountability for all parties about the **basic conditions** that govern your engagement as a mentor.

*The key idea here is that it is essential to have an active engagement with the organising platform from the start.*

## SUMMARY OF GROUP RESPONSES TO 'WHAT IS MENTORSHIP'?

**A process** Holding a container for growth | Support and reflection | A journey of guidance | Exchange of knowledge | Formal & informal Sharing of resources | A how-to | Sharing networks | A support system of learning

**Care** Holding space for another person | A process of sharing experience and expertise | Transfer of knowledge both ways | Providing tools so they can find their own way | Companionship, advice, openness

**Skills sharing** A process of sharing networks of access | Mentorship is an exchange of knowledge, skills, and networks that occurs in the context of life and work | It's a safe space to create where sharing occurs and support is given for the vision of the mentee | Advising |

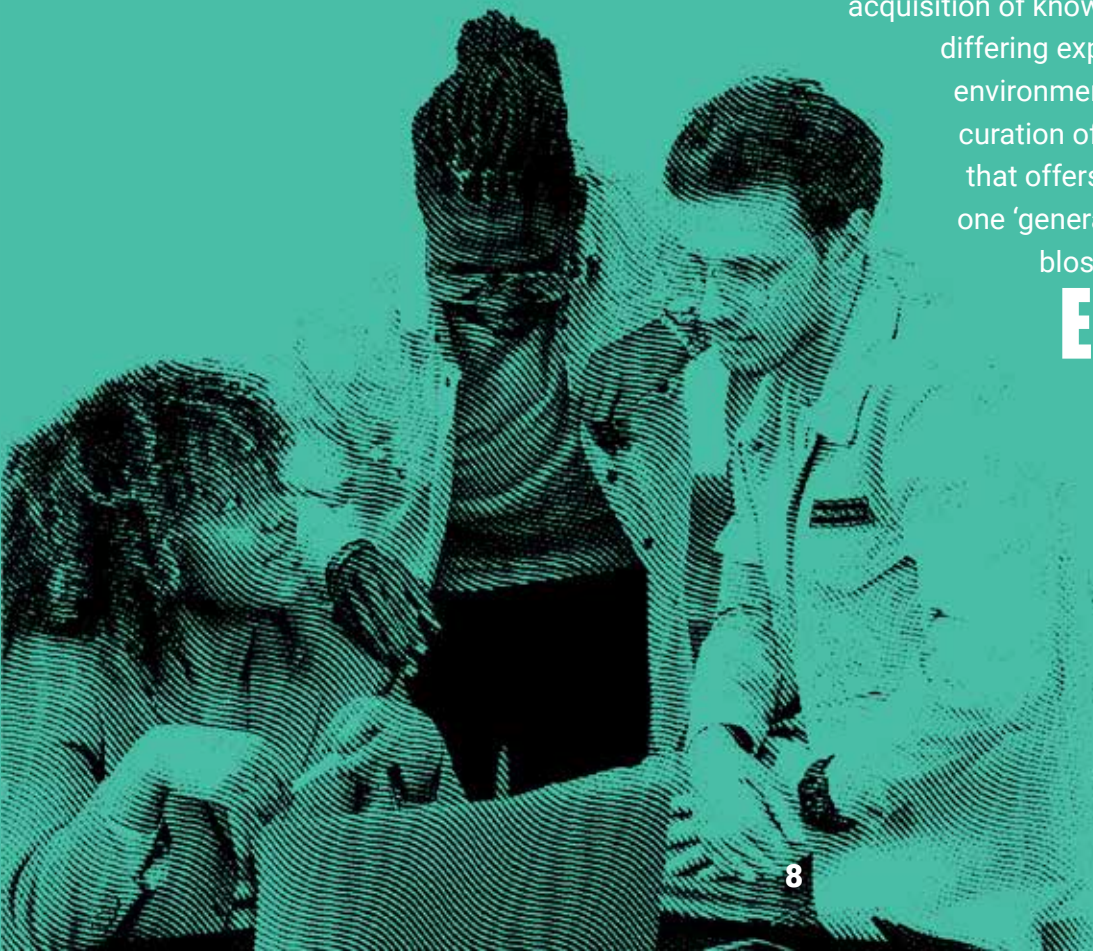
**Attitude** Encouragement | It's collaborative | **Support** A transfer of knowledge | Mentorship is setting expectations and boundaries | A relationship and a process of introspection and sharing | Both mentee and mentor need to be open to the process | A willingness to teach and learn

**Connection** Mentorship is a skill | Support system of learning | **Boundaries** Trust the process | Knowledge and encouragement that is shared in a safe space set up by the mentor | A support system, guidance and sharing |

**Guidance** The image of a doula, a birthing journey | A two way street of learning and growing | Safe space to create and make mistakes via an intentional process | Guiding and advising dynamic | Help them find their own way to approach a practice | A relationship between one seeking knowledge and experience, and one with the appropriate skill and background to build a supporting experience | A process facilitating the

**Knowledge transfer** acquisition of knowledge, skill, resources and differing experiences in a professional environment | Matchmaking and the curation of people | An environment that offers access and support from one 'generation' of professionals to a blossoming one | Openness |

**Experience** A researcher who pushes the 'mentee' to deepen her/his work | A collaborative and practical skills transfer process that builds and guides the direction of a project





## PLATFORM PRE-ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONS:

- What are the platform's **goals** in connecting mentees with mentors?
- **Who** is it you will be mentoring and **what** specific area of their project/career will you be mentoring?
  - What form are the projects? (fiction / documentary / VR / animation / etc.)
  - At what stage are the projects? (Initiation phase/ development/ production/ post-production, etc.)
  - How many filmmakers/projects does the platform intend to assign to each mentor?
- What **material** have you been supplied with about their project and/or the platform connecting you to the mentee?
  - **NB:** Determine if the information is enough/complete for you. If not, ask for more
- What are the platform's **expectations** (in terms of **outcomes**) for the mentorship relationships it initiates?
  - **NB:** Platforms often go through a process of match-making mentors to projects, so it may be useful to understand their rationale behind your particular pairing, alongside their expected outcomes.
- What are the fees / honorariums?
- What is the duration of the mentoring process?
- What structures of **support** are in place for both mentee and mentor?
  - **E.g.** Is there a code of conduct or a confidentiality agreement and how will the platform share this with both mentor and mentee?
- Do the intentions of the platform align with your **values** or not? If not, get clarity on why you may be interested in the opportunity and what risks you will be taking when participating in it.
- Are there more engagements **expected** after the mentorship period **ends**?
- Is there a **feedback process** in place for the mentor and the mentee?
  - **NB:** Get practical information on this (e.g. who specifically to contact, progress report deadlines and formats, availability of platform staff during the mentorship, how this process will be communicated, and what to do if there is a problem with the pairing of mentor and mentee, etc.)

Understanding the philosophy and curation behind an invitation to mentor is as important as the skills and experiences you will bring to the mentoring relationship. Asking some/all of these questions at the beginning of your engagement with the platform allows you to take **responsibility** for your contribution towards creating a healthy, accountable, care-centred and equitable relationship between mentee, mentor and platform.

## PLATFORM INTRODUCTION OF MENTEE TO MENTOR

Once you have accepted an invitation to mentor, you will need **clarity** from the platform on how you and your mentee(s) will be introduced to each other (e.g. email, zoom meeting, in-person). **In this introductory meeting the following practical aspects should be covered:**

- **Expectations, outputs, boundaries and responsibilities** of all parties involved
  - **NB:** If there are differences in the information you received to what is being shared commonly, you should query this.
- Clarity on **when and how the first meeting** (mentor-mentee) will happen
  - E.g. Who is expected to arrange it and what mentees should expect from their mentors before then (if this is not addressed directly)
- **Resources** that the platform has to support the mentorship practically
  - E.g. Support staff, online meeting spaces (e.g platform's Zoom account), code of conduct, databases, contract and budget templates, legal advice kits, treatments, pitch, trailer and teaser examples, etc.
  - **NB:** It is important to know that you do not need to 'recreate the wheel' and that there are great resources and communities out there to support you in your mentoring journey. Section 7.2 in the Annex contains a selection of these.

There should also be opportunity for the mentee to raise any clarifying questions ahead of the first meeting on anything shared in the introductory meeting/email. It may also be beneficial to gain clarity in the introductory meeting on what to do if extenuating circumstances arise (personally) for either yourself or the mentee so that there is common knowledge on how to still honour the process, time and energy of all stakeholders involved.

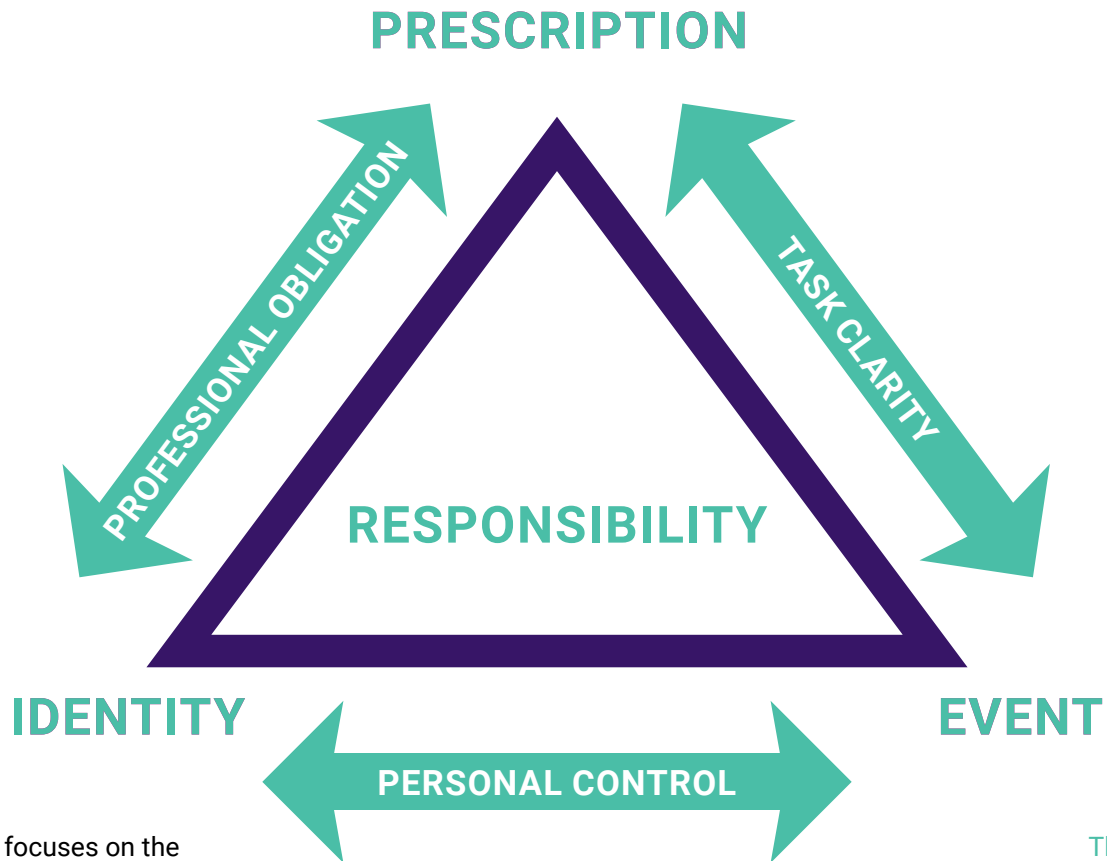
If done well, the platform's introduction should create security and clarity about the context within which your mentorship will take place and set the tone for the first one-on-one meeting. Again, we emphasise that covering these bases at the **beginning** of your engagement with the platform allows all parties to take **responsibility** for their contribution towards creating a healthy, accountable, care-centred and equitable relationship between mentee, mentor and platform. Our thinking on responsibility in mentorship is influenced by the 'Triangle Model of Responsibility', as illustrated in [Image 2<sup>1</sup>](#).

<sup>1</sup> Derived from Schlenker, B., Britt, T., Pennington, J., Murphy, R., & Doherty, K.(1994). The triangle model of responsibility. *Psychological Review*, 101, 632–652 and Schlenker, B. (1997). Personal responsibility: Applications of the triangle model. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 19,241–301.

# IMAGE 2

## THE TRIANGLE MODEL OF RESPONSIBILITY

**Prescriptions** are the formal and informal rules of conduct that apply to the specific event and provide guidance for behaviour. Such guidance also includes moral and ethical principles.



**Identity** focuses on the individual's roles, qualities, commitments, aspirations, and pretensions as they relate to the event and the prescriptions.

**The event** is any time-bound situation (For example: a 6 month script writing mentorship which has been organised by a platform).

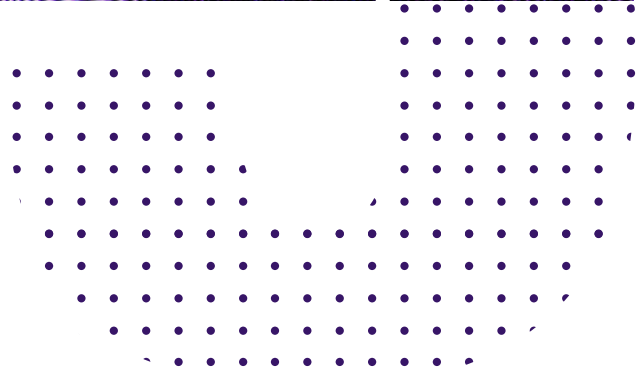
The Triangle Model provides that **perceived individual responsibility** is a direct positive function of the strength of the links between the event, identity and prescription. That is to say that stress will be minimised (and engagement maximised) when a clear set of guidelines (prescriptions) apply to the event, the guidelines apply to the individual, the individual has personal control over their

performance on the event and the event is viewed as important by the individual.

After reading this section, we hope you are encouraged to **ask questions** of the platform (task clarity and personal control) so that feedback and accountability mechanisms (professional obligation) are **normalised** from the very beginning of the mentorship journey.



# Preparing to meet your mentee



Depending on how the introduction between you and your mentee was done, you may need to do further preparation before your first one-on-one session. This may include:

- More follow up questions to the platform to understand how the platform is taking into consideration the cultural and contextual needs of the mentees they work with
  - E.g. If the mentorship is in-person, does the platform provide any support and guidance for mentees and mentors obtaining visas to travel?
  - E.g. If the mentee is a carer or a parent is this accommodated for?
- Determining if there is any research into the socio-cultural and/or political context of the story and/or mentee that you need to do before the first meeting, including getting clarity on the appropriate language to use for the project (e.g. “illegal migration” vs “irregular migration”)
- Preparation and/or sharing of resources that may be needed for the first meeting (e.g. access codes to online viewing)

platforms, treatments, visual samples, etc.) related to the project or requirements of the platform

- Determine with your mentee the logistics of the first meeting well in advance (e.g.

online or in-person meeting, length of meeting, etc.) so that both parties can be well prepared and the necessary arrangements made (e.g. Zoom links sent, appropriate and accessible venue chosen, etc.)



## 3.1

### WHAT IS A GOOD MENTOR VS A BAD MENTOR?

A platform may have approached you to mentor because of your technical experience / accolades in the industry. These are important and can be beneficial to a mentee, but they are not defining characteristics of a good mentor. Overall, a good mentor is a curious, self-aware individual who can lend themselves to the mentorship process in a generous manner

(online or in-person meeting, length of meeting, etc.) so that both parties can be well prepared and the necessary arrangements made (e.g., Zoom links sent, appropriate and accessible venue chosen, etc.) in a non-judgemental and collaborative way. Furthermore, a good mentor is willing to learn (from their mentee and others) and has a healthy

## IMAGE 3

### SUMMARY OF GROUP RESPONSES TO 'WHAT MAKES A GOOD MENTOR'?

Active listener | Someone who is open to the process of exchanging with mentees |

**Connectivity**

Open to criticism | Knowledgeable in their area |

Film experience is a prerequisite | Able to share their own work and to share from cinematic worlds other than their own & emotionally intelligent | Sets boundaries

**Empathy**

Believes in pluridisciplinarity | Self-aware Ability to zoom out & see the bigger picture

**Kindness**

A willingness to learn from mentees of skills | Healthy sense of curiosity

**Humility**

Transmission of a provider of

**Curiosity**

constructive criticism & assistance in coming up with solutions | Avails themselves for their mentees | Encourages mentee's creativity

**Openness**

Is structured, has a plan to oversee the entire process

**Respect**

Understands the socio-cultural specificity of his/her mentee

A diagnostician who can adapt | One who is honest | Someone without ego or who can put it aside

**Generosity**

Interested in others & creates trust



# IMAGE 4

## SUMMARY OF GROUP RESPONSES TO 'WHAT MAKES A BAD MENTOR'?



**Egotistical** Unable to make space | One who cannot teach, listen, or prepare well | Wants to “solve” or overstep | Tainted, jaded | Narrow-minded  
Lack of interest in other people’s ideas | Inability to collaborate/inspire

**Closed-off** A know-it-all attitude  
Vertical transmission

**Controlling** Doesn’t avail themselves to mentee | Insecure  
One who is dismissive or flippant | Frustrated  
Fails to create a professional relationship with mentee | Imposing  
Inability to admit if they don’t know | Criticism is non constructive

**Prescriptive** Unaware of their position and power dynamics | Arrogant  
Rigid person who doesn’t allow mentee to be creative, but rather forces their own opinions, egocentric

**No empathy** More interested in themselves than others

**Unreliable** Unprofessional and dismissive

**Pretentious** Uncaring & has an overall lack of maturity, with no sense of the needs of the mentee, unable to share skills | A bad fit or bad use of transmission platform | A lack of self-awareness

sense of boundaries and can set clear expectations and goals with their mentee. They are respectful and understanding of the social and cultural specificity of the mentee and the environment in which they are in. They are non-judgemental and not egocentric and are able to create a trustful relationship with their mentee. By way of contrast, the following character traits and attitudes are undesirable for anyone wishing to mentor (**Image 4**).

Egocentricity is the key defining characteristic of a bad mentor and this is experienced as someone who is arrogant and imposes their own point of view on the process. A bad mentor is highly prescriptive (and thus dismissive of what may emerge from the mentorship process) and is not able to listen or create space for healthy collaboration. They are unaware of their positionality and power and do not perceive the mentorship to be a mutually beneficial process. They may

be a skilled professional but an inadequate mentor because they lack the desirable relational competencies of a good mentor (**Image 3**). It is our suggestion to use these definitions as a means for self-reflection, especially if you are new to mentoring. Being clear on what you bring to the mentorship journey (your personal background, motivation, and experience with mentorship, etc.) will be highly beneficial to your mentee as it will allow for exchange and connection beyond your formal/official bio that your mentee would have received from the platform. Our suggestion to do a self-reflective evaluation of what you are bringing to the mentorship *after* you have been invited to mentor may sound counter intuitive. This is not the case. We are intentionally highlighting self awareness (rather than skill, experience or industry recognition) as a core competency for anyone wanting to expand and improve their mentoring skills.

## 3.2

### THE FIRST ONE-ON-ONE SESSION WITH YOUR MENTEE

As previously defined, a 'mentee' is **anyone** who is curious and open to a learning process where they will engage their practical experience with more or different skills. Mentees are not only entry-level professionals but anyone who is open to the process of mentorship at any stage of their career. A platform may have approached you to mentor because of

your technical experience / accolades in the industry. These are important and can be beneficial to a mentee, but they are not defining characteristics of a good mentor.

Overall, a good mentor is a curious, self-aware individual who can lend themselves to the mentorship process in a generous, non-judgemental and collaborative way.

## 3.3

### HOW TO STRUCTURE THE FIRST ONE-ON-ONE SESSION

Considering the relational competencies shared in **Image 3** and the Responsibility Triangle (**Image 2**), your goal in your first one-on-one session with your mentee is to establish a connection (and guidelines for that connection) that will hopefully evolve into a trust relationship as the mentorship progresses. Below are some recommendations to achieve this:

- The first meeting should be relaxed and there should be a warm, friendly feel throughout
- Your focus should be on getting to understand how the mentee sees themselves and their project. You can do this by using ice-breaker type questions/activities that allow the mentee to freely share
  - How and/ or why they got into film? What attracted them to pursue filmmaking?
  - Why were they interested in this mentorship programme?
  - What do they hope to achieve with their project / career? (e.g. story development/ where to find funding/ co-productions/ industry markets/ pitch sessions etc.)
  - Why do THEY want to tell this story and why are THEY the right person to do this?
  - Ask them to tell you their logline

# IMAGE 5

## CHARACTERISTICS OF ACTIVE LISTENING



- Don't interrupt
- Withhold judgement
- Be attentive and present
- Ask probing, open-ended questions
- Request clarifications and show empathy
- Reflect and repeat back (paraphrase) what you've heard
- Resist the urge to 'fix' any problems or give advice too quickly
- Use body language and non-verbal cues to show you're focused on what's being shared

- Use open-ended questions to gain clarity and facilitate active listening (**Image 5**).  
**NB:** The first session should be mentee-led and you should be open to hearing new information (ie. don't expect a repeat of the information you have previously received about the project / mentee, if this does happen - ask better questions!)
- Take sufficient notes for your own benefit
- Use verbal prompts to encourage your mentee to open up or expand on an idea (e.g. expressions like 'I see' or 'Go on...' or sounds that communicate engagement like 'Uhhuh')

### OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS COULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- What is your story about?
- What drew you to this story?
- What form does it take? E.g. Is it a three-act structure? Or does it have a nonlinear or alternative structure? Or perhaps it is situational? Is it a traditional genre, or is it more experimental?
- What would you say the theme is?
- Do you have a particular audience in mind and why?
- What research have you done and why was it important for you to do so?
- Tell me about the protagonist(s) [if the project is character driven]
- Do you have a producer and/or team in place (actively listen to their response)
- Do you currently have any funding in place or partners on the film?
- What difficulties, if any, are you currently facing with your project?



Creating the right ambience to and asking your mentee questions that allow them to explain where they are in the process will update your knowledge gained in the pre-engagement with the platform and become your de facto starting point for the rest of the mentorship journey.



# 3.4

## HOW TO CONCLUDE THE FIRST ONE-ON-ONE SESSION

Most of the time in the first one-on-one session should be spent on listening to your mentee share in response to the open-ended questions you choose to ask. Towards the end of the session, it is worth asking questions that give focus to the remaining sessions.

### THESE CAN INCLUDE QUESTIONS LIKE:

- What would they like to focus on in your time together?
- What would be evidence that this mentorship relationship was successful?
- What should be the mode and frequency of communication between yourself and the mentee?
- Are there any boundaries or non-negotiables in terms of time / energy / confidentiality / working hours (for both mentee and mentor) that should be discussed upfront?
- If there are any obvious difficulties / conflicts of interests that would pose a challenge to meeting the expressed goals of the mentorship? These should be discussed and a plan made to either resolve them or stop the process after the first session.
- Ask yourself if you are equipped to provide them with the story / project / career support they and the project need?

Your mentee should be clear on what they are personally responsible for (**Image 2**) after your first session. We suggest you send an informal follow up email to your mentee re-capping the discussion of the first session, inviting them to add their thoughts to your summary of the session that allows both of you to confirm what was collectively agreed upon to work on in the subsequent sessions.



# The mentorship process

Depending on the duration of your mentorship, you may need to build rapport relatively quickly (e.g. in the case of a two month mentorship) in order to achieve the expected outcomes. Small actions can go a long way in building connection and rapport, for example showing up on time to a meeting or following up on a personal update a mentee may have previously shared.

You should also be able to discern from the first few sessions where the weak points of the project are from all of the information that the mentee has shared.

We suggest you address these by asking strategic questions that force the mentee to think in a deeper, more reflexive way about their project and ask your mentee to share their thoughts on these questions. These questions can be prepared and asked in advance of each session so that you can actively listen to what is shared ([Image 5](#)).

Each mentorship journey that you participate in will be uniquely different. Below are some tips, suggestions and cautions that may be helpful to you at different parts of the process:

## 4.1

### DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES YOU COULD DO WITH YOUR MENTEE

- Watch a film together and discuss it
- Creative inspiration sessions
- Go for a walk together
- Connect socially with others who are part of other creative collectives (local industry in particular)



## 4.2

### CHECK-INS

- Continuously clarify your understanding of the information you receive from the mentee to see if there is a common understanding of the basic elements of the project (logline, synopsis and treatment, etc.)
- Similarly, constantly clarify whether you and the mentee are using the same language (terminology) throughout the process to avoid confusion
- Ask your mentee to repeat the story/ logline as many times as possible to you and to others and work on it together so it becomes clearer, adapting where necessary, so it fits the intended vision and story succinctly
- If there is a teaser or previous short film they have created, watch it together and give feedback, raise ideas and ask questions but do not be prescriptive
- Cultivate an understanding that the mentorship process may require multiple drafts of the same documents and/or refining and that 'writing is rewriting'
- Take a more meaningful look (individually or together) at the story pack after the first sessions (including but not limited to logline/ synopsis/ treatment/ director's statement/ note of intent/ budget/ finance plan/ script/ teaser or previous work/ mood board) as a cue to structure future sessions
- Check-in if the logistics of each session could be improved (e.g. meeting time/ format/venue)

## ATTUNEMENT

- Be patient with yourself and the mentee and manage your own expectations of the process
- Clarity and awareness of the socio-political/economical/cultural climate of the mentee and how this is different to your own
- Think through unique ways that you can offer encouragement and instil confidence in your mentee from what you have learnt about them since beginning to work together
- The language used in the mentorship does not need to be the shooting language or the language of the project package
- The importance of being kind and gentle cannot be stressed enough. This can look like being humble (in instances where you feel you know more) and affirming and encouraging of your mentee without overriding your own boundaries (of time and energy).
- Encourage, motivate and be a cheerleader of your mentee and the project as much as possible
- Share your network and access, when and where relevant
- Ask your mentee if there is anything personal they would like to share with you that is outside of their project?
- Regularly asking the mentee how they are experiencing the process
- Think through practical ways (e.g. phrases to say/not to say) that will ensure that you do not speak with the voice of another stakeholder in the project (ie. the platform that connected you to the mentee, or a financier)
- Depending on how long you have committed to the mentorship process, be aware that different moments in a project's life cycle will require different outcomes and support - e.g. are they in development or production? Or is the mentee preparing a presentation or a pitch?

**Sections 4.1. - 4.3. are meant to assist you to uncover and unpack as much of the story as possible within your first sessions. They are also intended to highlight that, although a position of complete neutrality is not possible in your role as a mentor, your own prejudices or unconscious bias may cause you to interpret information shared in an unhelpful way. These three sections are also suggested to counter any social awkwardness as well as the unstated power dynamic (that the mentee is there to 'learn' from you).**

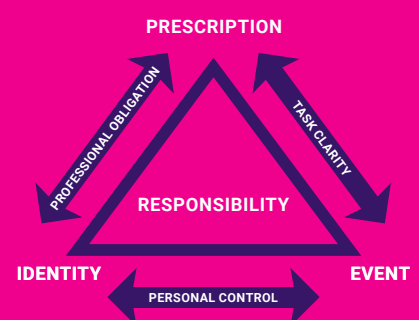
Section 4.4. below speaks to the potential need for problem-solving if vast and startling differences between what you are hearing in the first few meetings and the project information you were presented with prior arise.

## 4.4

### PROBLEM-SOLVING (DERIVED FROM IMAGE 2)

- You may realise that the project and / or mentee may not be suitable for the platform that initially connected you to them. In this case, it is best to consult the terms of engagement document you have with the platform to see what options are available to you in this instance before having an honest conversation with your mentee about the mismatch you perceive
- Unexpected personality clashes and/or life circumstances may arise that makes the mentorship process impossible to continue
- A lack of full disclosure of information related to the project may negatively impact / halt the mentorship process
- Clearly explaining to your mentee what you have to offer to their process (reflect on both your strengths and weaknesses and highlight any unique opportunities for support that you see)

In all problem-solving situations, avoid being reactionary as this may reinforce a power dynamic that you (as the 'mentor') hold the 'correct' knowledge of what the project should be. The goal is to problem-solve in a manner that you are personally responsible for (See [Image 2](#), also below). Mentorship is a **process** and your ability to maintain self-awareness and take responsibility is one of the biggest contributions you can make to the mentorship.





# Closing a mentorship process

Formally ending the mentorship journey can take multiple formats (e.g. a celebratory meal, reviewing a checklist with a reflective discussion, a presentation to others of what the mentorship achieved, etc.).

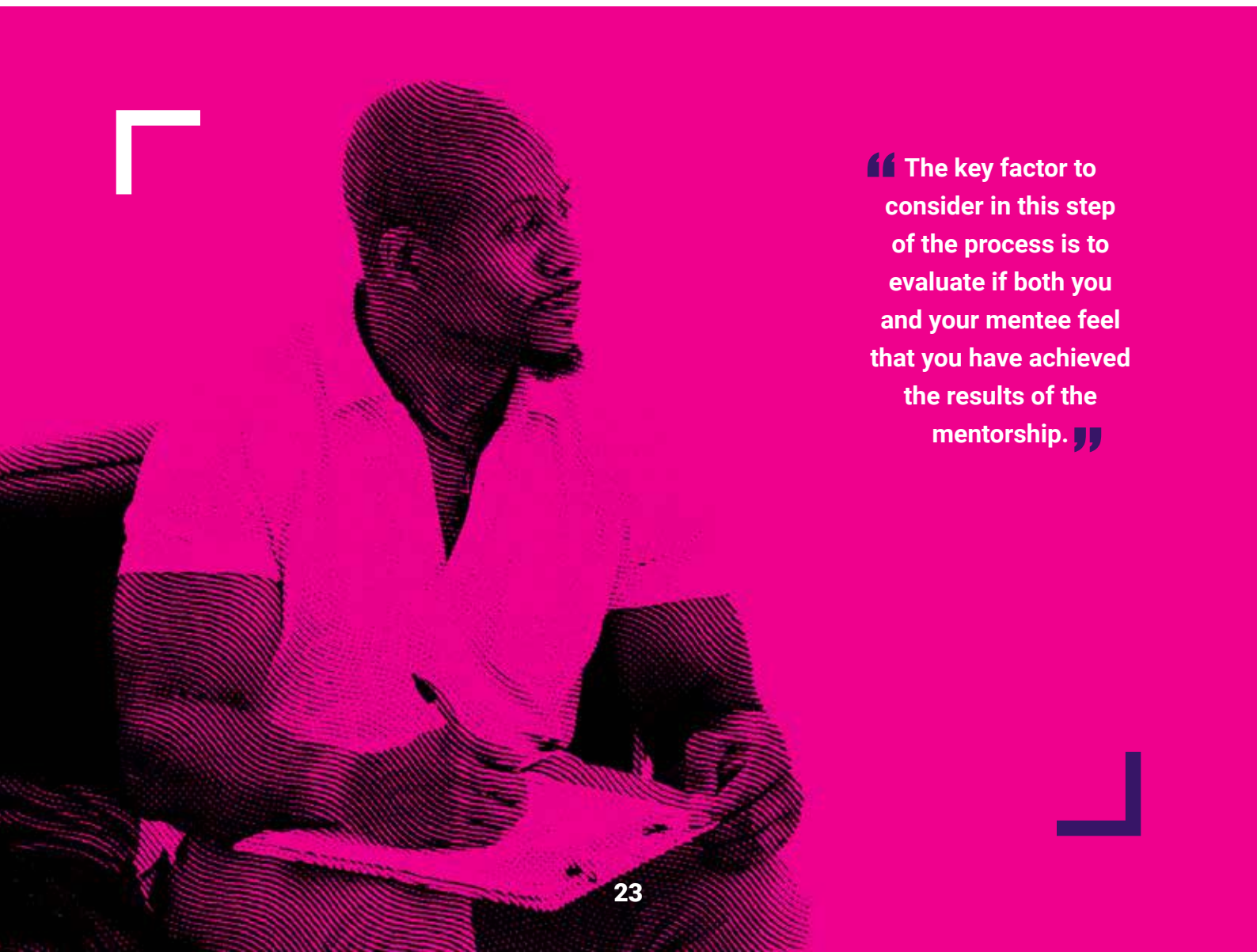
The key factor to consider in this step of the process is to evaluate if both you and your mentee feel that you have achieved the results of the mentorship.



## CLOSING OUT A MENTORSHIP PROCESS COULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING DEPENDING ON YOUR SITUATION:

- Submitting deliverables to the platform
- Getting feedback from the mentee through verbal or written feedback
- If there are processes set up by the platform to capture this feedback, you will want to make sure you have access to this feedback to improve your mentoring skills
- Giving feedback to your mentee of the work done during the mentorship and reflecting on the work that still needs to be done going forward (after the mentorship ends) and/or mention future goals for the project

Aim to end on a positive and encouraging note to show support and with common agreement about what (if any) future contact there will be.



**“ The key factor to consider in this step of the process is to evaluate if both you and your mentee feel that you have achieved the results of the mentorship. ”**



# Conclusion

“

***Mentorship is passing on experience and supporting the vision of the mentee***

”

It is our hope that this guide has provided a practical and empowering set of first steps for anyone wishing to deepen their mentoring skills. It also represents the beginning of a larger project that the DFMI hopes to undertake (funding dependent)

to create a formal training curriculum for mentors. The DFMI welcomes conversation with partners and platforms who wish to engage further around the topics and themes raised in this guide.







**Akademie**

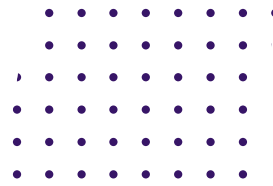


The Durban FilmMart Institute in cooperation with Berlinale Talents and DW Akademie, supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, created the Future Mentors Guide and Programme which aims to upskill the next generation of mentors.





# Glossary



KEY TERMS  
AND IDEAS  
TO HELP YOU  
ON YOUR WAY



## KEY TERMS

### PROJECT PACK

Combined document of all the elements needed for a film project (i.e. not just the script) that provides a complete picture of the project. Generally, a project pack describe three elements of a project – story, finance and project plan and can include:

- **Logline**
- **Synopsis**
- **Director statement**
- **Visual approach**
- **Treatment**, which includes background, context, protagonist, extended story outline
- **Project stage**
- **Directors' filmography**
- **Production company/creative team**
- **Budget and finance plan**
- **Visuals: stills, link to teaser**
- **Single page overview**
- **Step outline**
- **Script**
- **Storyboard**
- **Cast/ talent**
- **Casting intention/proposal**

### PITCH DECK

A visual description of the project to unlock opportunities. It is used when looking for funders, co-production financiers, and buyers.

### PITCH PRESENTATION

A presentation of a project that is still in development. It is an earlier stage of a pitch, and is used to find collaborators or for seeking creative feedback and input.

### LOGLINE

A logline is a one, two or three-sentence description of your story that encapsulates the dilemma and goal of the central character.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

A document, typically 1-2 pages long, that details why this topic is important, timely, or relevant. Why are you the best person to make a film about this? Explain the cultural or social relevance and context for the topic, and why this project is timely or urgent. Detail the topics, issues, themes, challenges, stakes, or questions that your project will cover.

### CODE OF CONDUCT

A code of conduct is a written down document outlining the platform/ programme's character culture and behaviour. It states a set of ethical principles and values that are enforceable (ie. there are consequences for non-adherence).

## KEY IDEAS

### ACTIVE LISTENING

The ability to listen and internalise what is being said in a discussion and using your whole self to convey this ability to the speaker. This includes using verbal and non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication generally has more impact than words alone in active listening and thus facial expression, eye contact, non-verbal prompts (e.g. head nodding) and body posture are extremely important.

### AFFIRMATION

Highlighting the mentees potential, strengths and talent and positive attributes and instilling confidence in the mentee through encouragement.

### CHAMPIONING AND/OR CELEBRATING

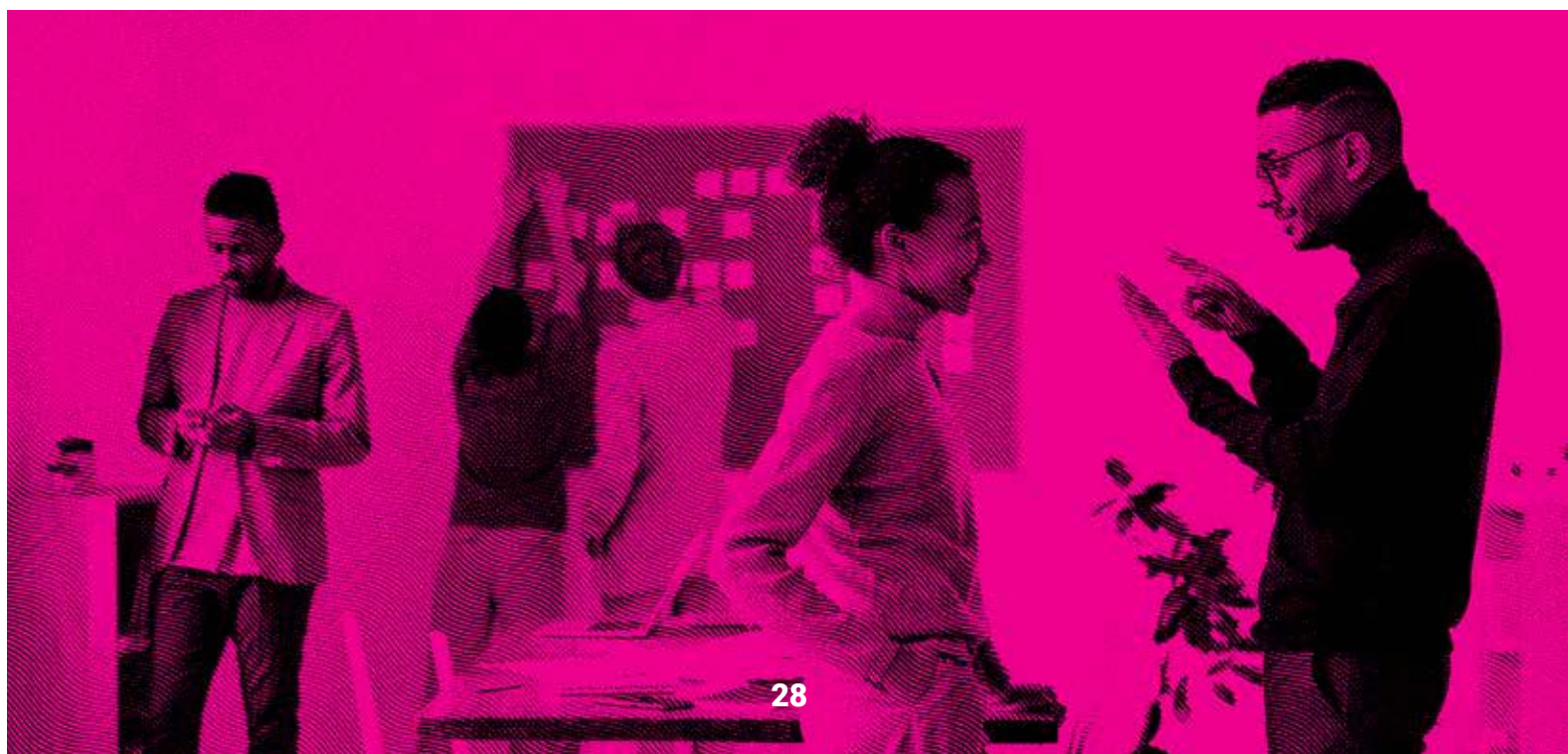
Being a cheerleader for the mentee and project by believing in and supporting both in various ways. This is different to simply talking about your role in mentoring the project (ie. centring yourself rather than the project/mentee).

### CONTEXT

The socio-economic, political, geographical, linguistic, cultural environment or situation of the mentee, mentor and the platform.

### DISCERNING

Highlighting areas of concern and pinpointing areas which need to be worked on.



## KEY IDEAS (CONTINUED)

### MATCHMAKING

Matchmaking is the skill and process of identifying and connecting mentors to mentees and/or mentees to industry networks. It requires persistence and patience as well as good interpersonal skills (including emotional intelligence). On the part of the mentor, it also includes being generous and focused with what you share with your mentee (e.g. simply emailing your mentee a list of broadcasters without explaining what each are interested in and without individually connecting is not an example of matchmaking).

### MENTORING STYLE

How a mentor conducts/approaches mentoring sessions to reach intended outcomes.

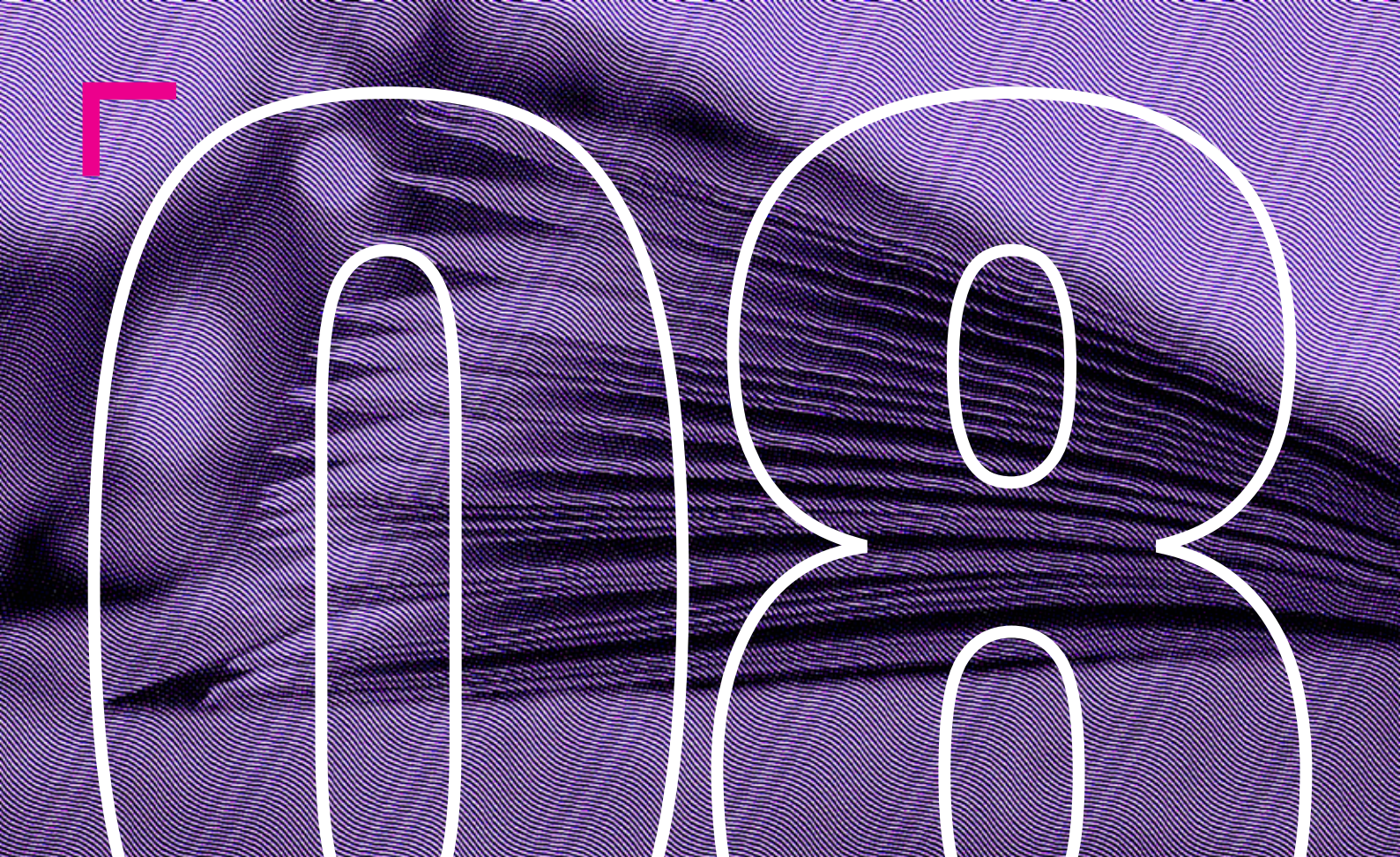
### SAFE SPACE

An environment in which a person can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, toxic criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm.

### SELF-AWARENESS

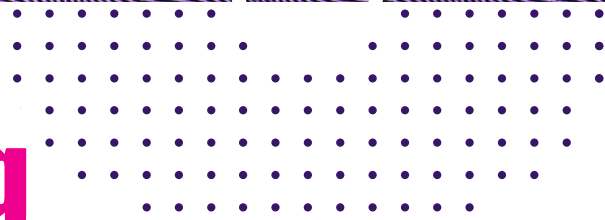
Being aware of and understanding the power dynamics between mentee and mentor. This includes, inter alia, being aware of your unconscious bias and position, the way in which you mentor/your preferred process of engagement, knowledge of your personal and professional limits and capacities.





# Further reading & resources

(non-exhaustive)



8.1

## LIST OF PLATFORMS THAT ENGAGE MENTORS

[Afrisos](#)

[Atlas Ateliers](#)

[Birds Eye View](#) (Filmenomics)

[Berlinale Talents](#)

[Brown Girls Doc Mafia](#)

[Cairo Film Connection](#)

[Carthage Film Festival](#)

[Doha Film Institute](#)

[DocA](#)

[DocHouse](#)

[Durban FilmMart Institute](#)

[ENCOUNTERS](#)

Hot Docs [Blue Ice](#)

Hot Docs [Cross Currents](#)

[IDFAcademy](#)

[OUAGA FILM LAB](#)

[Rough Cut Workshop SDI](#)

[Sundance](#)

## PLATFORMS WITH VARIOUS RESOURCES

These platforms contain online courses, masterclasses, case studies, toolkits and mental health resources:

<https://collab.sundance.org>

<https://docsociety.org/resources>

<https://www.studiobinder.com>

<https://taragroupe.com/le-yaounde-film-lab>

<https://www.beirutdc.org>

<https://film.britishcouncil.org/resources>

<https://filmtvcharity.org.uk/leading-change/the-whole-picture-toolkit>

<https://filmtvcharity.org.uk/your-support>

<https://filmtvcharity.org.uk/leading-change>

<https://documentality.org>

<https://filminmind.co.uk>

## FILM PLATFORMS

<https://afridocs.net>

<https://www.festivalscope.com>

<https://www.aflamuna.online/en/page/about>



## PROGRAMMES WITH AN AFRICAN FOCUS

<https://www.realness.institute>

<https://ouagafilmclub.net/fr/bienvenue-sur-ouaga-film-lab>

<https://taragroupe.com/le-yaounde-film-lab>

<https://www.jcctunisie.org/industryDaysPres.php>

<https://durbanfilmmart.co.za>

<http://www.sudecriture.com>

<https://atlasateliers.marrakech-festival.com>

<http://www.fidadoc.org/la-ruche>

<https://www.somefinedaypix.org>

<https://documentaryafrica.org>

<https://www.cineastesdelareunion.fr>

<https://ladima.africa>

<https://steps.co.za>

[MADA FILM LAB](https://www.madafilmclub.com)

<https://www.siff-sd.com/en/about-sff.php>

<https://www.lalig.org>

<https://multichoicetalentfactory.com>

[https://www.instagram.com/l\\_\\_espace](https://www.instagram.com/l__espace)

<https://afrinollycreativehub.com>

<http://mydocubox.org>

<https://www.institutimagine.com>

<https://www.labiennale.org/en/cinema/2022/final-cut-venice>

<https://taragroupe.com/le-yaounde-film-lab>

<https://redseafilmfest.com/en/red-sea-souk>

## DATABASE WEBSITES

<https://www.film-documentaire.fr>

<https://www.citwf.com>

<https://firstcenturyofcinema.com>

<https://www.imdb.com>

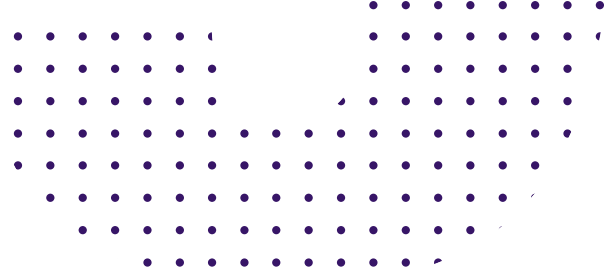


## USEFUL LINKS TO RESOURCES FOR MENTORS AND MENTEES

1. <https://steps.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/STFT-Guides.pdf>
2. <https://www.celtx.com>  
(Free Scriptwriting Software)
3. <https://www.blender.org>  
(Free 3D Modelling Software)
4. [Audacity](#) (Sound Software)
5. <https://www.blackmagicdesign.com/products/davinciresolve>  
(Free Video Editing Software)
6. <https://www.filmdaily.tv>
7. <https://rafikihub.com/videos>
8. <https://www.scriptslug.com>
9. <https://filmfreeway.com>
10. <https://www.imdb.com>
11. <https://www.behance.net/galleries/motion/film>
12. [Opportunity Desk](#)
13. <https://www.frontrowinsurance.com/articles/top-free-music-platforms-for-filmmakers>
14. [BBC Sound Library](#)
15. [Adobe Free Sounds](#)
16. [Youtube SFX Library](#)
17. [Facebook Sound Effects](#)
18. [Audio Blocks](#) (Requires Login/Sign Up)
19. [Sound Bible](#) (Requires Login/Sign Up)
20. [Elements](#) (Requires Login/Sign Up)
21. [Envato](#) (Requires Login/Sign Up)
22. [Moby's Free Music For Students](#)
23. [Free Music Archive](#)
24. [Videvo](#)
25. [SoundStripe](#)
26. [Premium Beat Transitions](#)
27. [Premium Beat Animated Icon Set](#)
28. [Pexels](#)
29. [Videezy](#)
30. [Lightworks](#)
31. [Blackmagic Fusion](#)
32. [Paint.net](#) (Image & Photo Editing Tool)
33. [Reaper](#) (Sound Editing Software)
34. [Shotcut](#) (Open Source NLE)
35. [Cakewalk by Bandlab](#)  
(Sound Software)
36. [Autodesk](#)
37. [Avid Media Composer First](#)  
(NLE | Requires Account)
38. [Pencil2D](#) (Animation Software)
39. [Krita](#) (Animation Software)
40. [SketchBook](#) (Animation Software)
41. [OpenToonz](#) (Animation Software)
42. [Synfiq](#) (Animation Software)
43. [FREE Guide to Horror Movies](#)
44. [VEED](#) (Free Online Video Editor)
45. [American University Free Archive](#)
46. [Freesound.org](#)
47. <https://tportmarket.com>
48. <https://nofilmschool.com>
49. <https://filmschoolrejects.com/section/columns>
50. <https://filmlifestyle.com/filmmaking-tools-resources>
51. <https://industrialscripts.com/filmmaking-resources>
52. <https://indietalk.com>
53. <https://gointothestory.blcklst.com>
54. <https://filmmakeriq.com>
55. [Cubase](#)
56. [Waves](#)
57. [Cinema 4D](#)
58. [Moho](#)
59. <https://myfliker.to>
60. <https://cinemaspacesnetwork.net>
61. <https://www.imagesfrancophones.org/default/boite-a-outils>
62. <https://kitscenarist.ru/en/index.html>
63. <https://starc.app>
64. [https://www.documentary.org/sites/default/files/images/core\\_app\\_proposal\\_checklist\\_english\\_v.2022.pdf](https://www.documentary.org/sites/default/files/images/core_app_proposal_checklist_english_v.2022.pdf)



# Annex



“ **Naming provides a hook, off which we start to hang an entire web of meaning. And without meaning, we can't work**

**~ Joe Dunn<sup>2</sup> ”**

## THE PROCESS FOLLOWED TO CREATE THIS GUIDE

The co-creation process followed to create this guide brought together seasoned and newer mentors (including individuals who have recently been mentees) into conversation with each

other with dedicated and focused time to talking, listening, and learning, and creating together around the concept and practice of mentorship. It was an in-person co-creation process that took

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2. <https://medium.com/coaching-notes/naming-is-an-act-of-creation-3510b3b16ef5>

## THE PROCESS FOLLOWED TO CREATE THIS GUIDE

place in Durban, South Africa, in October 2022. A key act of the co-creation process was to give meaning to certain words and concepts that are often used and referenced in industry platforms but not frequently defined or collectively reflected on. The process of naming started with four simple questions:

1. What is 'mentorship'?
2. What makes a 'good mentor'?
3. What makes a 'bad mentor'?
4. Who or what is a 'mentee'?

This process started in silence with the group individually reflecting in writing what these words and concepts meant for them. A stack of colourful sticky notes was provided for the group to write their meanings of these names and concepts on and, in silence, to stick these meanings on a shared surface for the rest of the group to see. Individuals were also free to cluster their meanings with those provided by others if they felt that there was alignment and agreement with the meaning expressed by someone else. Pre-engagement online with the group (ie. before meeting in-person in Durban)

suggested that the group felt that there is an abundance of professionals who *could* be mentors but are not recognised as such (by others or themselves). As a result, the following question became a focal point of enquiry for the in-person time: what is needed to create greater visibility so that the abundance of (potential) mentors can be made visible? Unpacking the co-creation process in detail here is thus important for the sake of transparency and to show how relatively simple, inexpensive techniques can be used to unearth new knowledge.

Embodied reflexivity was used in all activities to extract tacit knowledge from the group in a collaborative, safe and egalitarian way. <sup>3</sup>

Reflexivity draws attention to the **situated** and **partial** nature of claims to knowledge [in this case, knowledge on 'mentorship'] and how individuals and their experiences are implicated in the production of meaning and interpretation of a concept. In doing this, reflexivity also "highlights the tendency of truth claims to mask and serve particular interests". <sup>4</sup>

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3. The use of silent reflection and writing and the stipulation that all participants needed to contribute their meanings on a shared space for the group to see afterwards meant that all individuals, regardless of their experience/status in the industry, contributed to the conversation. The use of handwritten notes made the ideas anonymous (reducing power imbalances and potential hierarchies that may arise if verbal presentations were used). As it was very unlikely that someone's handwriting would be recognisable to another, the ideas and meanings were allowed to speak for themselves (unattached to the author's name/industry status) which is quite dissimilar to the experience, for example, of the same idea being shared as part of a panel discussion on the same topic at a festival or market. The ideas had a chance to speak for themselves without their authors name attached

4. Katzman, E.R. (2015), Embodied Reflexivity: Knowledge and the Body in Professional Practice. In Green, B and Hopwood, N (eds) The body in professional practice, learning and education, pp. 139 - 156

## THE PROCESS FOLLOWED TO CREATE THIS GUIDE

What emerged was less of a dictionary definition of the concepts and more of a set of individual and relational competencies (in response to Questions 1, 2 and 4) and a set of (undesirable) traits in response to Question 3. Interestingly, the process revealed a high degree of coherency of meaning within the group with several overlaps of meaning occurring despite there being no communication between the group during this naming process.<sup>5</sup>

After the group had named for themselves and listened to what each other defined as 'mentorship' from the collective ideas generated, the group was divided up randomly into pairs to think through the following scenario:

*You are approached by someone you know who tells you that they have an opportunity to be a mentor for the first time and they ask you for advice on how to approach this opportunity. How would you tell them how to start?*

At this point in the process the group had become relatively comfortable with each other and had an appreciation of the skills, experiences and perspectives that were in the room. Dividing the group up randomly was done with the intention of emphasising (again) that all knowledge in

the room had equal weighting and validity and entirely useful for the co-creation process.

The following day group presentations were made, and key topics were distilled and discussed. Ten core topics emerged as relevant starting points for someone embarking on a new mentorship journey and the group again took time to distil and discuss the way forward as there were synergies between the topics. The following three themes were formed as a way of recognising the synergies between the ten topics:

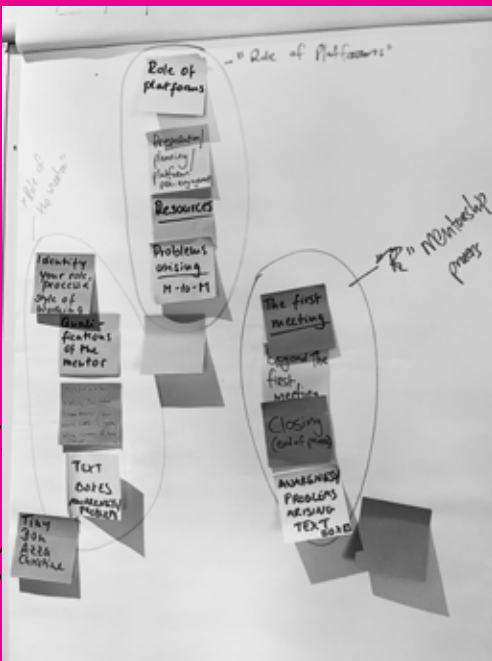
- The Role & Prerequisites of a Mentor
- The Mentorship Process
- The Role of Platforms (who employ/use mentors)

The group then split into three to generate content under these three themes. The following and final day, part of each group was changed, and more content was generated under each theme.

This process also revealed that there were certain key verbs and terms that constantly surfaced, these were laid out separately (on flashcards) for the group to view on their own and, after a discussion process, smaller groups were formed to define these key terms. These are reflected in the Glossary.

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5. Although this is taken as a positive outcome of the process, we acknowledge that this may also indicate that there was potentially a lack of diversity of experiences in the group.





# **Durban FilmMart** **Institute**

The Durban FilmMart Institute is a non-profit company that facilitates local and international trade and investment in African film content

[www.durbanfilmmart.co.za](http://www.durbanfilmmart.co.za)