

Mentoring programme relaunch

Wednesday 16 November 2016, tp bennett, One America Street, London SE1

Hosts: Mary-Louise Gray & Pranvera Vula

Course Leader: Tracie Carr-Middleton

In April we launched the project of a mentoring programme that would be tailored specifically for our membership.

After a lot of hard work behind the scenes over a pilot programme carried out by **Mary-Louise Gray**, aided first by **Krystyna Burnett** and subsequently by **Pranvera Vula**, the initial idea has now been modified, so that it is more suited to our members' needs. Hence the re-launch on Wednesday 16 November 2016.



A select group met in tp bennett's splendid Southwark offices and were introduced to **Tracie Carr-Middleton** who is now to direct our programme for us. With a degree in behavioural psychology, Tracie has worked for a number of major corporates and used this evening to provide an introduction to how she sees the newly revised programme developing.

First of all she explained how she sees mentoring - not as cloning but 'as a hand, a book and a boot'. That is: to maximise the potential of the mentee (but also of the mentor) with a programme that involves help, learning and a strong push. At this point we did an exercise: talking to a participant we didn't already know, in order to give and gain a first impression. This because, she said, first impressions are as important in your professional as in your private life. An important element of the mentoring programme is the evaluation of how we are seen by others and learning how to make the best of our opportunities. Later she explained the key stages of mentoring as she sees them. First there is building a relationship; this is followed by exchanging information and setting goals (a 'contract'); which in turn is followed by deepening the relationship and working towards those goals; and finally there is the ending of the formal relationship and planning for the future.



A key question from both sides is 'How much time is involved?' The answer is not as much as you might fear. Initially perhaps two or three meetings close together, then, once the contract has been ironed out, probably every two months over a year or so. Under our new programme there will be a fully supportive selection of activities and guidance notes to encourage engagement, and a quarterly review meeting with the programme manager.

The plan now is to gather a formal list of potential mentors and mentees so that we can begin the process of match-making. Further meetings will be held in the new year where those who attended this first meeting can progress and others can begin the learning process. Among hot tips we learnt is the importance of truly listening (avoid story-telling or sermonising), and the value of body-language. I, for one, cannot now help observing the synchronicity of body language of those around me. It's fascinating!

This is a programme for CoreNet members only - I would say it's well worth joining simply in order to benefit from what promises to be a top class in mentoring.