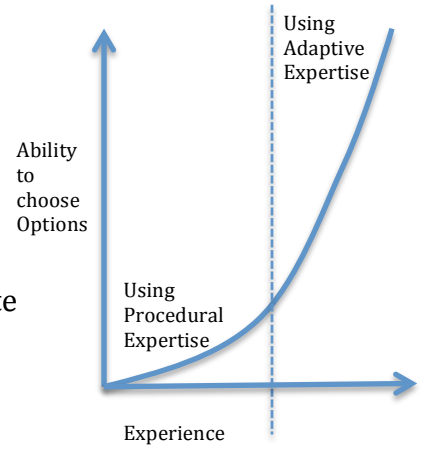
Beyond Imparting Knowledge: Mentorship That Builds Self-Awareness and Empowerment – Summary of Key Concepts

~ Rumi Kodama 2026

Self-Awareness and ***Empowerment*** as skills moves us towards a culture where leaders are capable of asking for what they need to do their jobs. The idea is if you know your own capabilities, you know what you need to do it better: this is building expertise.

Self-Awareness and Empowerment looks like confidence.

From Procedural Towards Adaptive Expertise



Procedural Expertise

- Someone who knows how to perform the skills for specific situations: they can do the things well

Adaptive Expertise

- Someone who can read novel or evolving situations and create appropriate solutions

Teaching vs Mentoring

If to ***teach*** is to give knowledge (the how to) to ***mentor*** then involves advising/guiding them towards adaptive expertise: to help a novice find their voice, not to give them yours.

Power of Diversity

- Goes beyond knowledge and the Skills: ***it's about the relationship and relating***
- Mentors of non-dominant groups could give mentor/mentee relationship new dimensions of support, connection, understanding, and perspective. Challenge ideas about how we learn, observe, push growth, show compassion, and teach.
- Invitation for those of the dominant culture towards curiosity, openness to learn other ways of viewing the world: Me before We vs. We before Me.

Two ways my Japanese heritage comes into my Mentorship style:

- **Deep Observation:** look towards the intention behind the action – where we believe that everyone has good intention s as baseline
- **"Omoiyari":** being ever sensitive to the presence of others around you and conducting the self proactively based on how your actions might affect others.

~ There is more than the dominant way of teaching and mentoring that is effective ~

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Three Foundations of a Mentoring Relationship

1. **Establish the Relationship**: See them as a competent and capable human. Honour their skills. Create interpersonal comfort.
2. **Clarify Intentions**: Yours and theirs. What can they expect, your plan and how you will deliver it (goals, outcomes etc).
3. **Facilitate Agency**: Empower them to take ownership of the relationship, ask questions and give you feedback.

Specific Techniques for Building Self-Awareness as a Skill

Cornerstone: **Intentional Observation:** observe with the intent to understand what is driving their actions. "*Why did it make sense for them to ….*" (curiosity mindset)

1. Speak in Questions: Encourage self-investigation. Use "Why" as a learning opportunity

2. Cognitive Apprenticeship:

a. Mentors: have mentees "sit" on your shoulders
b. Mentors then "sit" on mentees shoulders ~ *from Joan Vickers Decision Training*

3. Mirroring to reflect back your observations: tendencies, patterns, and habits. Help them explore what drives these tendencies.

4. Review Success to Repeat Success: ask, "What went well?" what *they* did to have a successful outcome (good or lucky).

5. Feedback: Focus on the Principles: vs. the "Me-isms". Ask yourself, why is this an issue? Were objectives achieved differently or dangerously?

6. Flexibility Focused Queries: Teach mentees to ask themselves these questions to continue growth without you. Encourage playing the "What if" game all the time (Meta-cognition).

Recall:	1) **What did you do?** [agree with mentor on what they did] *Depth of detail shows level of understanding of the situation*
Cognition:	2) **How many other ways could you have done this? Number & Describe** *# of options/details can show depth of understanding of the situation* *Order of options = real clue: comfortable options come first*
	3) **What factors would have made you choose one of these options?** *Capacity for critical appraisal of situation, detail thinking, situational awareness etc*
Meta-Cognition	4) **What would you do if…?** (i.e. different time of day/environment/skills etc) *Future potential prediction; ability to reapply options to new situations (adaptive expertise)*

~ Loel Collins *"Developing Good Judgement & Decision Making"* presentation from 2018 WRMC

Specific Techniques for Building Empowerment as a Skill

Goal: Building mentee's capacity to think critically and act independently

1. Lending Confidence Doesn't Build Confidence: Gradually shift from answering questions to replying with questions: so they can own their decisions and the consequences.

2. "Hard First" Conceptualization: Cognitively/conceptually work through complex whole picture concepts early: exercise the mind before the body. *~ from Joan Vickers Decision Training*

3. Lengthen The Leash – To Allow for Safe Failures: Let them fumble; give them time to find the answers. RESCUE IS ROBBERY. Ask permission before giving support – guide through questioning.

4. Bandwidth Feedback: Gradually reduce and delay feedback to increase self-reliance/ critical self-feedback. Create performance parameters; give feedback only if they fall outside "bandwidth". *~ from Joan Vickers Decision Training*

5. Join the "I Don't Knows": Model humility: admit what you don't know - be open to criticism/encourage questions. Best guesses/plausible answers are easy traps: instinct to protect ego.

Three Action Steps:

1) **Create a role description for mentors:** Demonstrates that mentorship is supported by the organization. Include ideas of: going beyond imparting knowledge, difference between teaching/mentoring, Self-Awareness/ Empowerment as skills not just skill transfer
2) **Create resources or training for mentors:** create handbook/training, outsource expertise/bring in workshops/mentorship learning series
3) **Assign a permanent staff to spearhead the endeavour**: to be a resource, check in with mentor/mentee, feedback - mentee to mentor, ensure DEI needs/gaps are addressed, create meet ups to share best practices

This is how institutional knowledge gets passed down and creates knowledge/expertise redundancies in organizations that make them more resilient.

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