

## **Mentoring Principles & Practices**

Over two decades ago, I was fortunate to have been forced to reach out (to a lifeline) to the first Chief Information Security Officer in any industry ever. I was in my first CISO role and first cyber role at the same time. A colleague gave me Steve's contact information and told me to call him when I got in over my head. On my first official day, I was going through my calendar for day 2 and realized there was a meeting with the OCC scheduled with the title: "American Express Information Security Strategy & Plan." It then occurred to me why my boss (CIO) wanted the CISO role filled so urgently. I immediately called Steve, who offered to come to my office within the hour and help me prepare for the OCC meeting. Steve showed up with two other CISOs (one from a major insurance company and one from a global bank) who dropped everything on their calendar to help me prepare for the OCC meeting.

They explained to me what an MOU was and how to avoid additive regulatory enforcement and prepared all of the presentation material for me. They then let me practice delivering the presentation to them and give me feedback (they shredded many of my statements). The next day I gave the presentation to the OCC and survived with a solid endorsement of the plan that Steve and my new colleagues prepared for me. I then set up a follow-up meeting with Steve for some one-on-one mentoring, and he had this to share with me:

### **Mentoring Principles:**

1. The mentee does all of the "heavy lifting" in the relationship
2. Mentors will make themselves available to meet the changing needs of the mentees  
Steve agreed to mentor me for as long or as short as I preferred, and that this would carry forward into the afterlife (yes, he was serious)
3. Mentee needs evolve and change, so the frequency of interaction should also evolve
5. The mentee must demonstrate a commitment to professional development and an openness to receiving feedback consistently
4. Every successful professional will use a mentor at some time in their career. Many mentees use time with mentors consistently throughout their careers

### **Mentoring Practices:**

1. Mentees always schedule the meetings and handle any logistics for the meetings
2. The mentee sets the agenda (topics for discussion) and provides any artifacts that are helpful to the topic
3. All dialog with a mentor is handled as confidential information, and the mentor will identify any instances where that information may be shared with specific stakeholders prior to doing so

4. Mentees determine the frequency of the mentoring sessions
5. Mentees commit to invest time in professional development activities recommended by the mentor