TE TAUAARANGI AIR FORCE

MENTORING

UNLOCKING SUCCESS – TUKUNA TE ANGITU

NEWSLETTER

WHIRIA TE TĀNGATA



WEAVE THE PEOPLE TOGETHER



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People continuing to invest in people

While the newsletter may have been quiet, the RNZAF Mentoring Programme certainly has not. Across a demanding year, one thing has remained constant: **our people continue to invest in people.**

What has stood out to me is the generosity behind the commitment our people continue to have. Mentors make time to listen and mentees continue to bring the courage to explore a different direction. Our facilitators and Mentoring Teams also continue to create opportunities for others to grow.

Much of this happens quietly, alongside busy working days and competing demands. I see it happen when someone checks in, follows up on an earlier conversation or makes room for a different perspective. These moments may seem small for someone on the outside, but they help build the trust that allows people to speak openly, try something new and recognise strengths they may not yet see in themselves.

We can sometimes feel we need to have the right answer before we can help someone. However, the most useful thing we offer is our attention and presence. Being willing to sit with a question, listen without rushing and let someone think aloud can open up possibilities neither person expected. There is learning in that for both people. Mentors bring experience, but they also gain fresh perspectives while mentees bring questions with other insights worth hearing.

This edition of the newsletter celebrates the people and the conversations that matter. There are stories of various experiences that show how a thoughtful question, encouragement or a small practical suggestion can make a lasting difference.

Perhaps you will read a story which will remind you of someone who made time for you, or prompt a conversation you have been meaning to have.

Our guiding whakataukī for 2026 has been: **Whiria te tāngata: Weave the people together.**

It captures the connection and belonging we seek across the RNZAF, the wider NZDF, our civilian workforce and our international mentoring community.

It is something we all contribute to each time we share honestly, listen with curiosity or welcome someone into the conversation. We strengthen the connections around us and leave room to learn from people whose experiences differ from our own.

As National Mentoring Day approaches on 27 October, we invite you to reconnect during the week. Thank someone who helped you, make space for a colleague, ask a question and give the answer time to emerge.

Wherever you are in your journey, know your experience has value.
Haere mai ki te pānui o Whiringa-ā-nuku.



Russell Bone
RNZAF Mentoring Programme Manager

Whiria te tāngata:
Weave the people together.



CONNECTION IN ACTION

National Mentoring Day | 27 October 2026



Give someone an hour

Think back to a conversation that helped you see a new possibility. Someone may have listened when you needed to be heard, asked a question that stayed with you, or believed in you before you believed in yourself.

This October, our invitation is simple: **One person. One hour.**
You do not need all the answers. Give someone your attention and room to think.

01 **INVITE**
Choose someone and agree a time and purpose. Reconnect with your mentor or mentee, thank someone who supported you, or reach out to a colleague navigating change.

02 **LISTEN**
Ask what matters to them. Allow pauses. Explore their ideas before offering your own. Begin with: "What would be useful for you to talk through today?"

03 **FOLLOW THROUGH**
Agree one useful next step and when you will reconnect. A small investment of time can create space for confidence, clarity and growth.

Across ranks, trades, Services, civilian workplaces and our global connections, meaningful conversations help people feel heard and valued.

One person.
One hour.
One conversation.

Campaign Information: National Mentoring Day

PROGRAMME UPDATE HE KŌRERO WHAKAHOU

People, Progress and Connections

Across all three Services and our civilian workforce, mentoring workshops, Lunch & Learns, network gatherings, group supervision and everyday conversations help people build confidence, share experience, reflect on practice and stay connected.

CONNECTING BEYOND NEW ZEALAND

Our international military partnerships and wider connections help us exchange ideas and learn from mentoring across cultures and settings, united by a shared commitment to helping people grow.

OUR PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

Behind these figures are people making time, building trust and creating opportunities for others to grow.



OUR PEOPLE'S STORIES
HE KŌRERO TANGATA

Who helped you become you?

Six people. Six journeys. Someone took the time to make a difference.

Dave Nicholson Finding your voice

An unsuccessful officer selection early in my career deeply affected my confidence, leaving me with a stammer that lasted for years. Rebuilding that confidence was difficult. Walking through those experiences with a mentor now fuels my passion for helping others develop their public speaking skills and self-belief. Having experienced those challenges, I understand the power of encouragement. Sometimes people need someone who can see beyond their struggles. Helping others find their voice and discover what they are capable of is incredibly rewarding.



"Watching people unlock their inner potential and seeing them blossom is a beautiful thing to watch."

Jade Forman One question changes everything

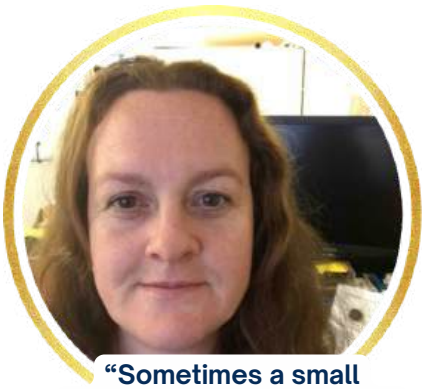
During our first session, my mentor helped me identify adventure as a core value. She challenged me to consider whether my life reflected it. That conversation gave me clarity and confidence to pursue opportunities aligned with who I am. Rather than telling me what to do, my mentor created space for me to discover what truly mattered. Sometimes we need someone to ask the right question. Today, I encourage other women to explore their values and pursue opportunities that reflect who they want to become.



"It's crazy how one conversation with the right person can change your path."

Louise Beattie The power of small changes

A mentor once suggested I turn off my email notifications. That simple suggestion transformed how I managed my workload, reducing stress and improving focus. His guidance also helped me shift from managing tasks to developing people. He took time to understand my challenges and encouraged me to see opportunities for growth. Good mentoring does not always involve big conversations or life-changing advice. I now try to offer others the same encouragement and support he gave me.



"Sometimes a small suggestion, offered at the right moment, can make a lasting difference."

Stories edited for length and clarity.

OUR PEOPLE'S STORIES
HE KŌRERO TANGATA

Who helped you become you?

Our mentoring community shares the experiences that inspire them to give back.

Dean Jolley A legacy of leadership

A coworker encouraged me into mentoring when I doubted what I could offer. I soon realised our life experiences, challenges and lessons have value, even when we do not recognise it ourselves. Another legend mentor shaped my leadership through his courage, kindness, honesty and fairness. His example still guides me: the way we treat people can leave an influence long after our time working together. Sometimes our greatest contribution is simply listening. I hope any conversation that I have helped others find confidence, courage and a different perspective.



"Sometimes our greatest contribution is simply listening."

Prateek Grover Seeing potential in others

As a young aviator, a leader recognised potential I had not yet seen, and encouraged me towards higher education and commissioning from the ranks. He demonstrated good leadership and mentoring through his actions. His example taught me that people do not always need answers. They need someone who listens, asks thoughtful questions and helps them find their own direction. Mentoring is my way of giving back to the people and organisation that invested in me, ensuring that investment continues through others.



"Some of the most influential people in my life have been leaders who saw potential in me before I saw it in myself."

Alisha Hausin More than I expected

When I joined the Mentoring Team, I wanted to better understand the programme. I attended the Advanced Practitioner Workshop with some apprehension. What I expected to be a formal, career-focused experience became something far more personal and engaging. I discovered that mentoring is about listening, challenging assumptions and creating space for mutual growth. The practical activities encouraged me to reconsider my goals and challenge self-imposed limits. I came away inspired to be more intentional about supporting people as they discover their potential.



"Mentoring isn't what I expected; it's better."

Stories edited for length and clarity.

INSIGHT
MÔHIOTANGA



Mentoring or Coaching:
Why can't we agree?

We use both words when we talk about helping people grow. Yet ask a mentor, a coach, a military leader or a community elder what they mean, and you may hear different answers.
Why is there no single definition?

Part of the answer is context. Development happens in workplaces, sport, education and communities. Each brings different traditions, purposes and expectations. Culture also shapes how people share experience, ask questions and understand a supportive relationship.

Professional identity plays a part too. Organizations develop definitions and standards to explain their approach and guide good practice. These are useful, but their boundaries do not always match those used elsewhere.

Then there is the relationship itself. People bring different needs, experiences and ambitions. A conversation may move between reflection, questions, encouragement and sharing experience. Human development rarely follows a neat dividing line.

A common distinction is that mentoring draws on relevant experience and a broader developmental relationship, while coaching often focuses on particular goals and helping someone develop their own responses. These are useful starting points, rather than rules for every situation. Both can involve challenge, support and learning.

A practical question is: **What have we agreed on that this relationship is for?**
Clarifying the person's goals, how you will work together, confidentiality and its limits, and when a different kind of support may be needed is key.

Whether you are a new mentee, an experienced practitioner or a leader supporting others, that shared understanding matters.



This is only the tip of the iceberg. There is much more to explore in mentoring and coaching research and professional guidance. Stay curious about the definitions, and about the person in front of you.

TECHNIQUE
NGÃ TÂERA

Ask more, Tell less

When your mentee brings a challenge, it can be tempting to offer a solution. Before you do, pause. What might they discover if you gave them space to explore?
Curiosity helps people consider their options, build confidence and choose their next step. Ask one question at a time, listen carefully and allow silence.



When your experience could help, ask: "Would it be useful if I shared something I have learned?" Then let them decide what fits their situation.

Acknowledgement: ADF JOC Senior Leadership Mentoring Program Newsletter, March 2026.

RESOURCE
WHAKAIPURANGI



Coaching for Leaders

One episode. One idea. One better conversation.

What conversation have you been putting off?
Perhaps it involves difficult feedback, someone's confidence or a challenge you cannot quite resolve. Dave Stachowiak's **Coaching for Leaders** podcast explores how we listen, lead and help others develop. For mentors, mentees and leaders, it offers fresh perspectives to bring into everyday conversations.

Listen with a purpose

Choose a topic linked to a real challenge, such as listening, feedback or developing others. Take one question into the episode.

Reflect, then try.

What stayed with you? What would you adapt for your people, culture or situation? Try one small change in your next conversation and notice what happens.

Share the learning

Discuss the idea with your mentor, mentee or colleague. What did each of you hear, and what might you try next?

Explore the podcast: **coachingforleaders.com**

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONNECTIONS
Tūtakitaki

Grow skills. Stay connected.

Build your skills, share experiences and connect with others.
Explore the opportunities below or contact the programme to find your next step.

WAYS TO CONNECT AND GROW

Build confidence in mentoring, strengthen your leadership and learn alongside others through:

- **Foundation Course**
- **Advanced Practitioner Workshop**
- **Lunch & Learns**
- **Network Gatherings**
- **Group Supervision**
- **Tailored professional development**
  - Conversations that matter
  - Understanding Feedback
  - Courageous Conversations
  - Deeper Listening Skills
  - Understanding Powerful Questions
  - Leading through change
  - Growing High Performing Teams
  - Dealing with Change
  - Public Speaking
  - Building a Coaching Culture

Mentoring participation is open to all NZDF military and civilian personnel.
International and external partners are welcome to enquire about collaboration.

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