



The Force of Mentorship

How to Empower Youth Leaders for Success in a Digital Space?



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Impresum

Name of the publication: The Force of Mentorship: How to Empower Youth Leaders for Success in a Digital Space?

Authors: Sabina Belc, Katarína Klusová

Contributors: Petr Kantor in Zsuzsanna Farkas

Design and Graphics: Eva Gajšek

Images: Leonardo AI

Proofreading: Hanna Szentpeteri

Ljubljana, December 2023

Published by: Socialna akademija, representative: Matej Cepin

Disclaimer: Project Creative Digital Spaces and this handbook were co-funded by the European Union through the Erasmus+ program. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union, the European Commission, or the Slovenian National Agency for the Erasmus+ programme (MOVIT Institute for Development of Youth Mobility). Neither the European Union, the European Commission, or the Slovenian National Agency for the Erasmus+ programme (MOVIT Institute for Development of Youth Mobility) cannot be held responsible for the content of this publication.

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KATALOŽNI ZAPIS O PUBLIKACIJI (CIP) PRIPRAVILI V NARODNI IN UNIVERZITETNI KNJIŽNICI V LJUBLJANI

COBISS.SI-ID 185911043

ISBN 978-961-96522-5-1 (PDF)

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Introduction

The handbook in front of you is meant to serve as a roadmap for getting ready for the mentorship process in the digital space, emphasizing supporting young individuals in taking on the role of leaders of remote groups of young initiators. Throughout the handbook, we will build up an understanding of societal changes that influence how to lead, the challenges brought by leading a team remotely, and ideas on how to deal with them.

To avoid the need to switch between concepts of mentorship, coaching, mentor, coach, guide, mentee, and coachee, we've taken inspiration from Star Wars and introduced the idea of Yodaship, combining the coaching and mentorship experience. As roles, we propose the role of Yoda and Obi-Wan. Just like Yoda guided Obi-Wan in his youth, youth workers (Yodas) are here to mentor, coach, and guide the youth leaders (Obi-Wans).



YODAs are youth workers who educate and guide young individuals to become responsible and effective Obi-Wans in the digital space. Yodas focus on their approach to becoming the best mentors to their Obi-Wans and support navigating peer groups within a digital space.



OBi-WANs are youth or peer leaders of remote teams. They navigate and facilitate the collaboration in digital space towards a common goal, utilizing the digital space and its platforms. They organize and guide their peers, promoting effective communication and cooperation.

So, dear Yoda, we invite you to join us in exploring what is needed to guide Obi-Wans in the digital realm. We want you to feel confident in your relationship with them, so we'll provide you with an overview and suggest some extra reading material.

And if you're unsure about dedicating your time towards supporting remote teams and virtual communities, check out this [inspiring video](#) highlighting how digital spaces can open up access to (educational) resources that might otherwise be out of reach. It might inspire you to join us on a journey of bringing your work to the online world.



Reality Nowadays

Chapter 1

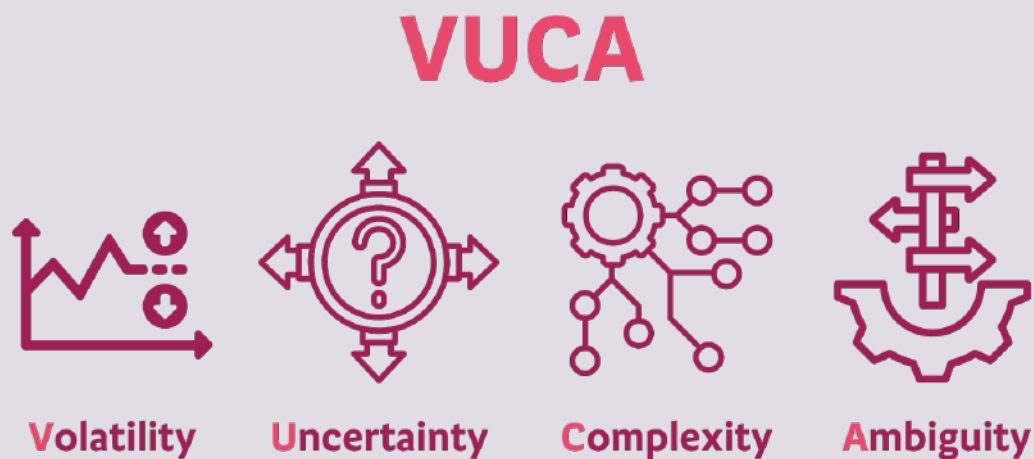
As we endeavor to dig deeper and kick off with the first chapter, which covers the challenges facing us in today's dynamic world, it's evident that we are navigating through a landscape marked by complexity and rapid change. From the pressing issues of climate change and geopolitical conflicts such as those in Ukraine and Palestine to the relentless pace of technological advancement and the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside the emergence of remote work culture, we find ourselves in a VUCA environment - one characterized by Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity.

To be able to support Obi-Wans in navigating this environment, which calls for adaptability and flexibility, it is pivotal to get a better understanding of today's reality, from the characteristics of VUCA times to the specifics and leadership challenges of remote teams.

VUCA Times

As we dig deeper into the VUCA¹ environment, we see how it affects (co)working spaces. Its influence is felt in various ways:²

- **As psychological impact:** The uncertainty of VUCA affects people's mental well-being, leading to anxiety and destabilization. Continuous change can undermine motivation, causing individuals to question their goals.
- **As the overwhelming effect and its cultural impact:** Both individuals and organizations can be overwhelmed by VUCA, affecting internal culture.
- **As decision-making challenges:** Uncertainty can lead to hasty decisions while jeopardizing good ones. On the other hand, it can also lead to decision-making paralysis.
- **As a threat to long-term goals:** Long-term projects and innovations are at risk due to the unpredictable nature of VUCA.



Considering these challenges, cultivating resilience within teams emerges as a crucial objective. It's about a team's ability to face challenges and emerge stronger – whether it's natural disasters, outbreaks, or other threats. Resilient teams endure difficulties while retaining their core functions, structure, and identity. But resilience isn't just about preserving the status quo; it's also about adapting to both short-term disturbances and long-term changes.

If leaders want to build up resilience they need to involve all team members who need to contribute actively, sharing a common identity and vision for the future. They need

¹Bob Johansen of the Institute for the Future adapted the concept VUCA, born out of the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attack, for the business world in his 2009 book *Leaders Make the Future*.

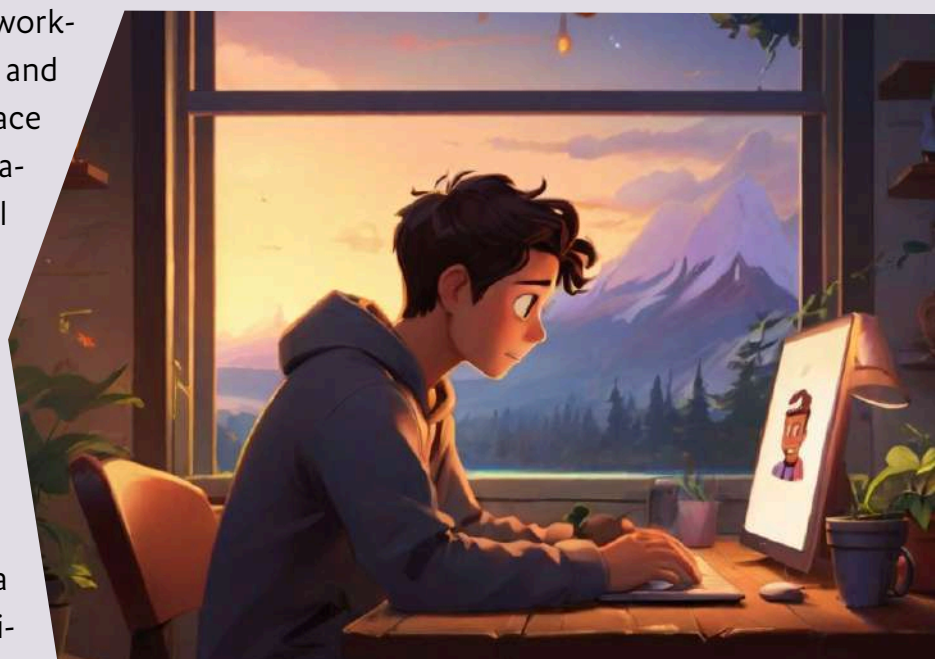
²Mind Tools Content Team (n.d.). [Managing in a VUCA World](#). Mind Tools.

to foster systems thinking where you explore diverse perspectives and the complexity of situations the team is facing and promote as a core value adaptability. They need to work on the understanding that letting go of certain things is necessary to preserve what truly matters, and they must courageously confront problems and take responsibility for the future.

In the midst of the VUCA storm, building resilience³ becomes a guiding light, reminding us of our capacity to endure, adapt, and thrive even in the face of uncertainty. It's a testament to the enduring strength of humanity's spirit.

Remote Teams

With the digitalization of (co)workplaces, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the globalization of teams, we face more remote (or hybrid) collaboration. During the pandemic, we all experienced collaborating online, and it showed us great time-saving potential, which significantly impacted how we meet and work together now.



Remote leadership is a reality nowadays and means leading a team spread over different physical locations. It's the process of managing teams remotely – both in the administrative sense and the inspirational sense. Leadership isn't constrained to a particular office or (work)space.⁴

With remote teams and digital advancements, the pressure on leaders to keep up with emerging technologies and innovations is enormous. They must be open to new ideas and willing to experiment with new approaches. They must also be comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty, as digital transformation can be unpredictable and complex.⁵

When working with remote teams, leaders must find new ways to keep their teams engaged and productive, which requires a stronger focus on team culture. They need

³ Lerch D. (2017). [Think Resilience - Preparing for the rest of the 21st century](#). Class Central.

⁴ Zavvy (n.d.) [How to Be a Great Remote Leader: Overcome Challenges and Inspire Your Team](#) [7. 9. 2023].

⁵ Meyerhoefer, F. L. (2023). [Leadership in the Digital Age: How Technology is Changing the Game](#). speexx [7. 9. 2023].

to be more empathetic and understanding, as their team members may be dealing with personal or family issues impacting their work and actively work to prevent team member's burnout as well as their own. To work on prevention, they must be aware of the characteristics of mental health in the digital era, such as information overload, social media use, cyberbullying, and digital addiction, and have access to mental health resources.⁶

Teams must rethink communication strategies and establish new tools like video conferencing, project management software, and collaboration platforms.⁷ This requires them to possess digital literacy skills and a deep understanding of the potential of digital tools and technologies. Leaders need to find the right balance between transparency and privacy in technology-mediated interactions.⁸

Interested in Reading More?

Virtual Team Collaboration: This article by SpringerLink discusses the challenges faced by virtual teams and explores the strategies and technologies that facilitate collaboration and communication within remote teams.

Managing in a VUCA World: This resource by Mind Tools provides a powerful approach to help young people cope well with the VUCA world. It includes applied learning, feedback, and honesty.

How to Embrace Constant Change in a VUCA World: This resource by Forbes offers tips for embracing constant change in a VUCA world. It includes advice on building self-confidence and resilience.

Empowering People to Cope with the VUCA through Three Elements: This resource by VUCA-WORLD highlights three elements that determine their success: breaking free from common sense, embracing novelty and mental challenge, and appreciating one's story so far.

⁶Srinivasan, P., Muniyammal, M.A., Maruthavanan, M., Natarajan, S., Thangavel, K., Kumar, S. (2023). Education 5.0 Revolutionizing Learning for the Future (Vol.1). Thiagarajar College of Preceptors.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Morrison-Smith, S., Ruiz, J. (2020). **Challenges and Barriers in Virtual Teams: a Literature Review.** SN Applied Sciences, (2020) 2:1096.



What Do We Need to Know About the Role of Yoda?

Chapter 2

Dear Yoda, in this chapter, we will delve into the key competencies you need. Your primary focus is to become an efficient mentor, guide, and coach to the Obi-Wans, equipping them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need in order to navigate the complexities of peer groups within the digital space in VUCA times.

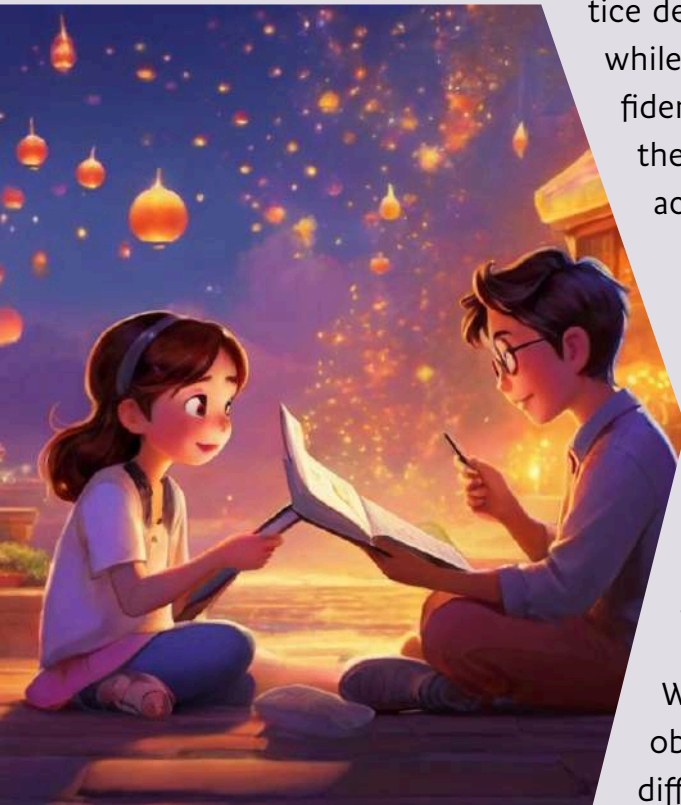
To effectively fulfill your role, you must possess diverse skills that can bring about the potential of digital tools and technologies to support collaboration, be knowledgeable about the challenges faced by remote teams, and know how to support the mental health and well-being of Obi-Wans.

We will explore the differences between coaching and mentoring and the competencies needed in order to fulfill your role. By leveraging technology and your expertise, you can navigate the complexities of working with young leaders in digital spaces and contribute to their personal and professional development.

Your Approach

Coaching or mentoring will be the two methods you will most likely use in order to support Obi-Wans. They are two dynamic approaches that are pivotal in guiding individuals toward their goals and unlocking their potential.

Coaching is nurturing growth through guided exploration. Coaching focuses on facilitating changes in an individual's behaviors, skills, abilities, and results. Coaches practice deep listening, asking self-exploratory questions, all while providing support, care, accountability, and confidentiality. They aim to help coaches understand themselves and their experiences, leading to further action and learning.¹¹



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Mentoring is guiding with wisdom and experience. Mentoring is a relationship-driven approach where a more experienced mentor guides a less experienced mentee to navigate their professional journey. Mentoring involves offering guidance, sharing knowledge, and providing advice based on the mentor's experiences and expertise.¹²

While coaching and mentoring share the common objective of guiding individuals toward success, they differ in their approaches.

The most important tool for a successful coach is questions, powerful questions that invite the coachee to explore possible solutions to their challenge. Usually, topics cover interpersonal relations, coachees' behavioral challenges, and goals. An assumption that is present is that the coachee is the expert in their life, so the coach doesn't provide answers and advice but supports the coachee in finding their own.

On the other hand, mentorship happens between more experienced people guiding less experienced ones on their professional journey. An assumption that is present is that the mentor has already taken this road and, as an expert, can share advice and experience. Mentors must be experienced in the field in which they support their mentees.

¹¹ Eriksen, M., Collins, S., Finocchio, B., Oakley, J. (2019) [Developing Students' Coaching Ability Through Peer Coaching](#). Journal of Management Education (2019) 44:1, 9-38.

¹² Ibid.

"As coaches, we both lead and are led in this dance, and we usually step onto the dance floor with a partner. We try to find the partner's rhythm, which we respect. It is also important that the person dancing with us wants to dance better or differently.



As a mentor, we guide our newly arrived partner who wants to dance as an experienced routine dancer. We already know the steps, the entire choreography, the music, the clothes, and all the other accessories for quality dancing. And our partner wants to join our dance team, so they entrust themselves to us and participate in the dance."¹³

When we work with young leaders, we usually don't just coach or mentor them but take the most appropriate role for the problem in front of us. The coaching approach is used only when tackling topics where expert knowledge is not needed, but the solution lies in reflection and finding answers for yourself.

In the digital space, coaching and mentoring can also take place through remote communication platforms. These digital approaches offer flexibility regarding time and location, allowing individuals to engage in coaching and mentoring relationships without being physically present in the same space. However, the fundamental principles and techniques of coaching and mentoring remain the same in both analog and digital spaces.¹⁴

¹³ Boldizsár S. (2019). [A tréner, a coach és a mentor területek közötti különbségek. Indigo Coaching](#). [3. 8. 2023].

¹⁴ Eriksen, M., Collins, S., Finocchio, B., Oakley, J. (2019) [Developing Students' Coaching Ability Through Peer Coaching](#). Journal of Management Education (2019) 44:1, 9-38.

Skills

Yodas who want to support Obi-Wans through these two approaches need to possess key skills which are:

What are the powerful questions we are talking about?¹⁵

Different types of questions can stimulate different ways of thinking and responding.

Analog space	Digital space
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Active Listening: Attentively understanding concerns and needs.• Communication: Conveying ideas and instructions clearly.• Empathy: Relating to emotions and experiences.• Problem-solving: Analyzing situations and identifying solutions.• Flexibility: Adapting approaches to individual needs.• Asking relevant questions: Posing (powerful) questions.	<p>In digital spaces, the skill-set expands to encompass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technological Proficiency: Confidence with online platforms and digital tools.• Digital Communication: Effective interaction through digital channels.• Digital Literacy: Proficiency in consuming (finding, evaluating, and processing) and creating information in a digital format.

What question stimulates our curiosity, activates our many capabilities, and invites us to explore? Questions that can do that are called powerful questions because they have the power to move something in those who hear or read them.

We can easily understand the importance of questions by reading this quote by Albert Einstein:

“If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask because once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes.”

¹⁵ Založnik P., Oblak A., Kovač J. (2018). Sodelovalni pristopi k učenju in poučevanju v šolskem prostoru. Gradivo za udeležence seminarja.

Some characteristics of powerful questions:

- They are clear and simple.
- They have no hidden agenda.
- They bring a new perspective and open the door to exploration.
- They surprise and silence us for a moment; they don't have an immediate answer.
- They stimulate curiosity, creativity, reflection, depth, and energy.
- They are provocative and invite us out of our comfort zone.
- They expose and question assumptions.
- They resonate with people; they awaken new questions.
- They use how, why, and what questions.



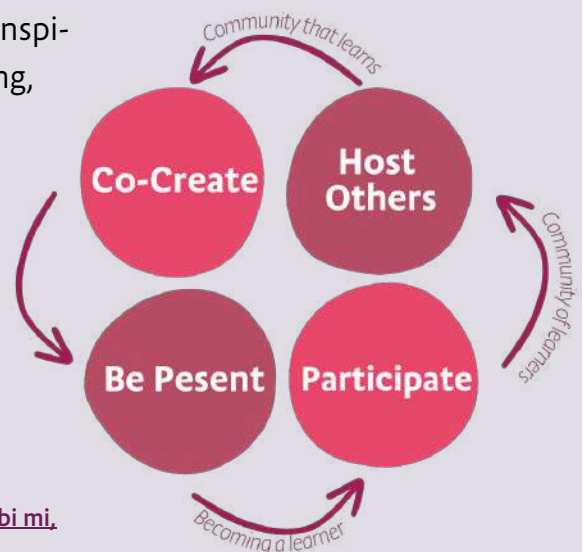
Exercise: Here are some question ideas you can ask Obi-Wans to explore their power:¹⁶

- *When did you feel your best? What happened then?*
- *What gives you the most satisfaction when working in teams?*
- *Why do fluctuations occur?*
- *How can I contribute to a better climate in the team?*
- *What haven't we thought of yet that would help us create exceptional group collaboration?*

Attitudes

When you step on Yoda master's path, you can find inspiration in the **Four Fold Practice** of the Art of Hosting, a highly effective way of harnessing the collective wisdom and self-organizing capacity of groups of any size.¹⁷

It is meant for working with groups, but when we are meeting with youth leaders, we especially shouldn't forget about these aspects:



¹⁶ Belc S., Oblak A. (2021). Prostori dialoga. V M. Cepin (ed.) *"Kaj pa, če bi mi, ...?"* (p. 201-224). Socialna akademija.

¹⁷ Art of Hosting community (n.d.). *Art of Hosting*. [2. 8. 2023].

- Hosting yourself (being present) and
- Hosting others (Obi-Wans).

Why do we need to pay attention to hosting ourselves? If we are truly present and aware of our internal dialogue, we can hold space for youth leaders to be vulnerable and be able to host conversations that matter and make a difference in their lives.

Exercise: How can we be more present, calm, and focused?

Here are a few ideas that can come in handy:

- *Work on your curiosity.*
- *Pay attention to your self-talk, be gentle with yourself, and dedicate time to reflection.*
- *Find practices that bring mindfulness to your life (walking, meditation, running, singing, etc.).*
- *You can also use embodiment exercises for exploring and sensing your body.*
- *Set a goal for yourself. What is one of the practices you will put in the schedule in order to be more present?*

For hosting youth leaders, it is essential to host them as a whole person rather than to set them just as a set of their abilities, problems, and limitations. We strive to hold a safe(r) space where they can be relaxed, honest, and free to express their opinion and initiatives as they can bring their best when they feel safe.¹⁸

Exercise: All our thoughts come from assumptions and beliefs rooted in our experiences.

Write down the questions from your last meeting with Obi-Wan. What assumptions are they based on? Try to change them and see if the questions also change.

When you think about your Obi-Wan, what questions do you have if you believe they need help? What questions arise if you believe they are an expert in their life? What are the differences between them?

¹⁸ Oblak, A. (2021) Onkraj ciljev. V M. Cepin (ed.) "Kaj pa, če bi mi, ... ?" (p. 35-56). Socialna akademija.

Interested in Reading More?

Art of Hosting: This page hosts content related to the Art of Hosting, approach and methodology for group facilitation, and systems change (open-source model). It leverages participatory leadership in order to facilitate group processes.

Designing powerful questions: A chapter of the online book Conversational Leadership by David Gurteen explains what powerful questions are and leads you through creating one.

Toolbox Mindful Coaching: A useful resource page where you can find helpful coaching questions and explanations of question types. It also provides an activity outline to challenge personal narratives rooted in thinking traps.

“Kaj pa, če bi mi, ...?”: A handbook for youth workers who want to encourage initiatives of groups of young people (and speak Slovenian). In it, you find ways to bring youth work beyond indicators and encourage a brave space where youth can enter as their authentic selves.





What Do We Need to Know About the Role of Obi-Wan?

Chapter 3

In the previous chapters, we explored various aspects of Yodaship and its significance in guiding young individuals in the rapidly evolving digital age.

In this chapter, we will delve deeper into the role of Obi-Wans, the youth leaders who take a leadership role in their initiatives in online or hybrid settings. Their role is crucial, and they greatly impact the overall development of initiatives and their peers. And you, dear Yodas, are here to support them on their journey.

You have the responsibility of shaping and nurturing their capabilities, equipping them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need in order to navigate the complexities of leading peer groups within the digital space in VUCA times. To do that, we will look at some concepts and practices that can serve Obi-Wans in their endeavors.

Working With a Remote Team

When we talk about remote teams of young people, we mainly talk about GenZ. Who are they?

In summary, a typical GenZer is a self-driven young adult who cares deeply for others, strives for a diverse community, is highly collaborative and social, values flexibility, relevance, authenticity, and non-hierarchical leadership, and, while dismayed about inherited issues like climate change, has a pragmatic attitude about the work that has to be done to address those issues.

They developed an early facility with powerful digital tools that allowed them to be self-reliant as well as collaborative. Similarly, because they could learn about people and cultures around the globe from an early age, they developed a greater appreciation for diversity and the importance of finding their own unique identities.¹⁹

While working with Obi-Wans, we need to keep in mind that most of leadership books were written with other generations in mind, so when we support youth leaders in finding their path and own leadership style, we cannot just copy-paste how we worked in the past or even before the COVID-19 pandemic. The new leadership style in the digital age is all about creating a sense of purpose and meaning for team members.

“Leaders need to be storytellers, inspiring their teams with a compelling vision and narrative that aligns with the organization’s goals and values.” - Steve Denning²⁰

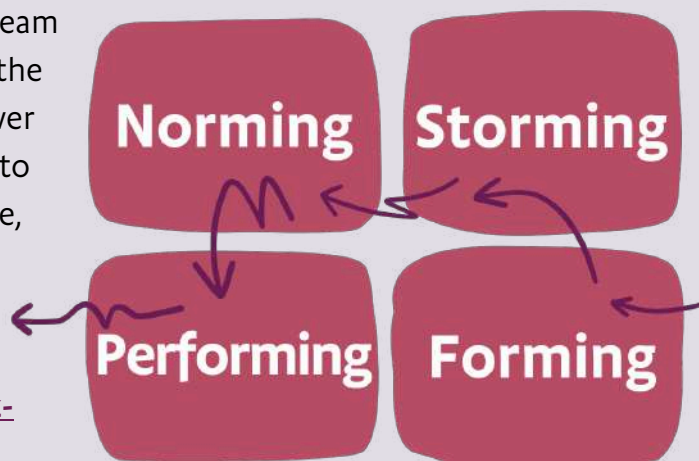
¹⁹ De Witte, M. (2022). [Gen Z are not ‘coddled.’ /.../ research. Stanford News](#) [7. 9. 2023].

²⁰ Meyerhoefer, F. L. (2023). [Leadership in the Digital Age: How Technology is Changing the Game](#). speexx [7. 9. 2023].



This is especially important for GenZ members, who value meaningful work and purpose-driven professional development. Probably, Obi-Wans will understand this more as representatives of their age group. They can connect with their peers in a way that older leaders usually can't. These connections allow Obi-Wans to communicate and share knowledge with their team members effectively. They can help build positive relationships, promote fair play, and resolve conflicts.

The second thing to keep in mind is the team formation dynamic. We can reflect on the stage of team development and empower Obi-Wans to adapt their leadership style to the needs of the group. In the initial stage, teams need more guidance, but leaders can take more mentor and coaching roles when they reach the performing stage. For inspiration, we can use [Tuckmann's model](#).



In VUCA times, leaders, while working with teams, need to:²¹

- **Counter Volatility With Vision:** Leaders need to accept and embrace change as a constant. So, they need to co-create a strong, compelling statement of objectives and values and co-develop a clear, shared vision of the future with their team members. Make sure that they set flexible goals that can be amended when necessary. This allows them to navigate unfamiliar situations and react quickly to changes.
- **Meet Uncertainty With Understanding:** To deal with uncertainty, leaders need to review and evaluate the team's performance. Consider what they did well, what came as a surprise, and what they could do differently next time. As a team, they need to simulate and experiment with situations to explore how they might play out and react to them in the future.
- **React to Complexity With Clarity:** Leaders need to communicate clearly with their team members. They need to develop positive team dynamics and promote collaboration to work effectively together in a fast-paced, unpredictable environment.
- **Fight Ambiguity With Agility:** Leaders need to promote flexibility, adaptability, and agility. They should plan ahead but build in contingency time and be prepared to alter their plans as events unfold. They need to encourage people to think outside of their usual functional areas to increase their knowledge and experience and embrace an "idea culture."

²¹ Mind Tools Content Team (n.d.). [Managing in a VUCA World](#). Mind Tools.



Some ideas on how to spark connection and team feeling can be found in a handbook called *Fantastic Digital Spaces and How to Create Them* and the supporting online course.

Challenges They Might Face

When we work remotely, we need to pay more attention to some things we take for granted, such as “water cooler” moments where we meet team members and share what is going on in our work or personal lives. Because we usually commute to work when we work in person, it is clearer when we are working, when we are at home, and when we are resting. Working with colleagues in person makes it easier to keep motivated as we feel a bit of peer pressure. We will walk through some of the most prevalent challenges Obi-Wans will probably encounter and how to tackle them.



Setting a Constructive Work Culture

What can we learn about setting work culture from entrepreneurs who were faced with going remote in COVID-19 times?²²

²² Expert Panel Forbes (2022). [15 Tips For Successfully Leading A Remote Team](#). Forbes AND Fast Company Executive Board (2021). [16 Effective Management Practices for Leading Remote Teams](#). Fast Company [7. 9. 2023].

It is even more crucial for Obi-Wans to lead with empathy and create psychological safety.²³ They can do so by creating a shared purpose, asking for team members' perspectives, showing empathy, and creating levity and bonding opportunities. For GenZ team members, it is also crucial to be led by example. They don't like being told what to do and won't simply obey the way previous generations did.

Obi-Wans need to apply regular check-ins and clear expectations as leaders, change their management style toward output, and not focus too much on the input. Shifting to clearer targets enables team members to produce results that suit their working style.

They shouldn't forget to celebrate successes. Beforehand, how they will measure success needs to be clarified, and they need to make sure the metrics focus not only on quality, time, and financial factors but also on personal well-being. When the team feels mentally, physically, and emotionally great, it will show in their overall performance. Then, they need to find ways to celebrate success. When people celebrate, their body produces oxytocin and endorphins, which reduce stress and boost their immune system.

For leaders leading remote teams, it is also important to use technology to their advantage and to set up proper processes and task platforms early on.



For inspiration, Obi-Wans can use Toolbox, which was developed for this purpose.

We can invite Obi-Wan to reflect on the following:

- What is my kryptonite when we talk about leading by example? What changes are needed?*
- How can I bring psychological safety to my team?*
- How do I make space for celebration culture in my team?*

²³ Psychological safety means feeling safe to take interpersonal risks, to speak up, to disagree openly, to surface concerns without fear of negative repercussions or pressure to sugarcoat bad news.

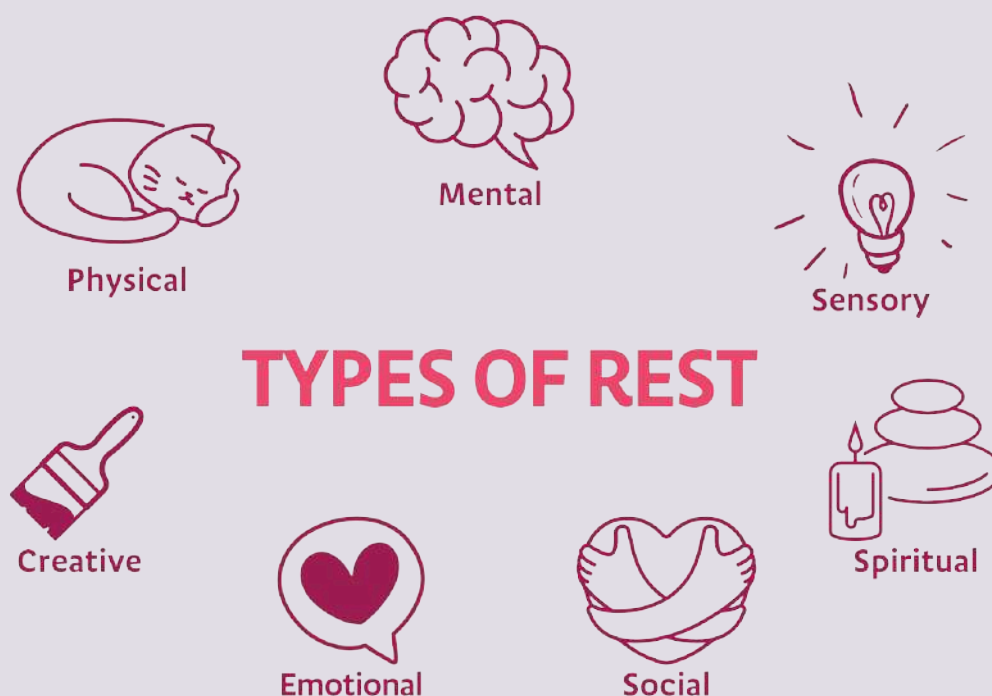
Taking Care of Your Team’s Well-Being as Well as Your Own

The State of the Global Workplace 2023 Report showed that forty-four percent of employees said they experienced a lot of stress in 2022, repeating the record from 2021 and continuing a trend of elevated stress that began almost a decade earlier.²⁴

Working from home, even in a volunteering capacity, could blur the line between work-life balance. It is crucial to make sure they get enough rest.

Rest is a state of physical, emotional, and mental relaxation that allows our bodies and minds to recover from the stress of daily life. But it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Our bodies and minds need different types of rest to function properly. Each type serves a unique purpose and helps us recharge and restore our energy levels. Understanding the seven types can help us create a more balanced and fulfilling life.

The seven rests, proposed by Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith, are physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, sensory, social, and creative rest. We will explain just a few of them but encourage you to dig deeper if you are interested.²⁵



²⁴ Gallup (2023). [State of the Global Workplace: 2023 Report](#).

²⁵ Dalton-Smith, S. (2019). Sacred Rest: Recover Your Life, Renew Your Energy, Restore Your Sanity (First edition) Faith Words AND Mindful Health Solutions (2023). [Embrace These 7 Types of Rest](#) [15. 9. 2023].

Mental rest means taking a break from the constant mental stimulation we face daily. It can include activities like turning off your phone, avoiding social media, and practicing meditation. When we rest mentally, we give our brains time to recharge and process information, which helps us stay focused, productive, and alert.

Emotional rest means taking a break from the emotional demands that we face every day. It can include activities like spending time alone, avoiding stressful situations, talking to a trusted friend, practicing self-care, journaling, and spending time in nature. When we rest emotionally, we give ourselves time to process our feelings, which helps us maintain our emotional balance and avoid burnout.

Sensory rest means taking a break from the constant sensory input we face daily. We are constantly bombarded with noise, light, and other stimuli, which can be overwhelming. Sensory rest can include activities like turning off the TV, closing your eyes, spending time in a quiet room, taking a bath, listening to calming music, and practicing deep breathing. When we rest our senses, we give our bodies time to recover from the overstimulation that we experience, which helps us avoid sensory overload and reduce stress.

We can invite Obi-Wans to reflect on moments where they got mental, emotional, or sensory rest and encourage them to identify practices they could incorporate into their routine to ensure they will get enough rest and take care of their well-being.

Keeping Your Team's Motivation in Tact Without Sacrificing Your Own

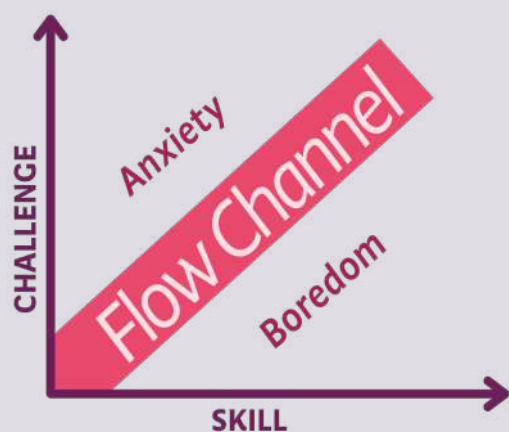
Motivation can decline, especially when you are home alone and lack social ties with the team. So even though Zoom fatigue is very real, we encourage Obi-Wans not to avoid video calls. Why not? Esther Kestenbaum Prozan explains they are worth it because looking people in the eye and being together visually drives peer accountability. It is much harder to let someone down if you know you will be looking them in the eye and if it is someone whose face you can see in your mind. We are visual creatures, so keep up the in-person(ish) camaraderie.²⁶

We've witnessed the rise of trends like Caveday and body doubling that help people focus while working. These

²⁶ Fast Company Executive Board (2021). [16 Effective Management Practices for Leading Remote Teams](#). Fast Company [7. 9. 2023].

practices involve people watching others work, sometimes even paying for the privilege. Individuals report that this form of virtual peer pressure enhances their focus and productivity as it is reminiscent of the dynamics we experience in a traditional office setting.

So, if individuals feel stuck or lack motivation, witnessing their peers making progress can reignite their focus. Imagine incorporating guided work sessions into your routine in order to share energy and motivation while leveraging the power of peer pressure to enhance productivity.²⁷



The other tool Obi-Wans can use while working with their team members to spark motivation is **the flow concept** by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.²⁸

How do they know they are experiencing it? What are the 10 components of the flow?

- Having a clear understanding of what they want to achieve.
- Being able to concentrate for a sustained period of time.
- Losing the feeling of self-consciousness.
- Finding that time passes quickly.
- Getting direct and immediate feedback.
- Experiencing a balance between their ability levels and the challenge.
- Having a sense of personal control over the situation.
- Feeling that the activity is intrinsically rewarding.
- Lacking awareness of bodily needs.
- Being completely absorbed in the activity itself.

They should remember that all these factors and experiences don't necessarily have to be in place for the flow to occur. But they're likely to experience many of them when the flow takes place.

²⁷ Mastronardi D. (2023). Peer pressure makes you more productive. Gamestorming newsletter [21. 7. 2023].

²⁸ Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience. New York, Harper & Row AND Mind Tools Content Team (n. d.). [The Flow Model](#). Mind Tools

How can Obi-Wans provide this environment for their peers?

Three conditions were identified that must be present if they want to enter a state of flow:

- **Setting the goal** adds motivation and structure to what they're doing.
- **Balance between their perceived skill and the perceived challenge of the task.** If one of these weighs more heavily than the other, flow probably won't occur.
- **Clear and immediate feedback** so that they can make changes and improve their performance. This can be feedback from others or the awareness that they're progressing with the task.

If Obi-Wans (or their peers) lack motivation or direction, we can invite them to try the Rocking Chair exercise, which can help them get clarity on what they want from life and what really matters to them.

If they are struggling with concentration, here are some tips and tricks on how to tackle this issue.

Dealing With Your Own Insecurities

When Obi-Wans take on leadership roles, they can face some tough times. We, as Yodas, need to pay attention if we notice the appearance of impostor syndrome to support Obi-Wans in overcoming it.

What is impostor syndrome?

It describes the belief shared by millions of people around the world that deep down, we really aren't as intelligent, capable, qualified, or talented as everyone seems to think we are — despite evidence of our accomplishments.

Impostor syndrome can often be confused with low self-esteem, self-worth, and lack of confidence.²⁹



²⁹Young, V. (n.d.). [Top 10 Ways to Know If You Suffer From Impostor Syndrome](#). Impostor Syndrome Institute [20. 8. 2023].

Here are some ways to tell if your Obi-Wan is suffering from impostor syndrome:

- **They live in constant fear of being “found out.”** They can appear confident and competent to the outside world, but they have a feeling they’ve somehow managed to slip through the system undetected, and it is just a matter of time before they are found out.
- **They’ve become quite adept at chalking their successes up to such external factors** as luck, timing, charm, computer error, and the supposed simplicity of the task.
- They see mistake-making and failure as synonymous. **They think that a truly competent person would never fail.**³⁰

Based on Dr. Valerie Young, the core source of impostor syndrome comes down to having:

- an unrealistic, unsustainable notion of what it means to be “competent,”
- an unhealthy response to failure, mistakes, setbacks, and constructive feedback, and
- the false belief that if we were “really” competent, intelligent, and qualified, we’d feel confident 24/7.³¹

How can we support them in overcoming the impostor syndrome?

We need to help them to break the silence. Knowing there’s a name for these feelings and that they are not alone can be tremendously freeing. Support them in separating feelings from facts. Work together towards developing a healthy response to failure and making mistakes.³²

“Failure is only the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.” - Henry Ford

In the era of uncertainty, it is even more important for leaders to work on their resilience skills, which can help them manage stressful situations and successfully face adversities.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Young, V. (n.d.). [Where Does Impostor Syndrome Come From — and Why It Matters](#). Impostor Syndrome Institute [20. 8. 2023].

³² Young, V. (n.d.). [10 Steps You Can Use to Overcome Impostor Syndrome](#). Impostor Syndrome Institute [20. 8. 2023].

What is resilience?

It is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands. A number of factors contribute to how well people adapt to adversities, predominant among them: the ways in which individuals view and engage with the world, the availability and quality of social resources, and specific coping strategies.³³

Mirna Šmidt describes the way how our resilience works and invites us to think of it as **a pool of resilience, similar to a big natural pool of water**. Like a pool, resilience is a **capacity** – something that, at each given moment, we only have full to a certain level, constantly refilling from many water sources but drained by many different streams. Seeing resilience that way, you will recognize that **our resilience is not constant**.

Building up resilience is not as much about building skill as it is about “managing” its level, similar to how you would manage your energy levels. To be able to do that, first, we must become clear about what is filling up our pool – and then be proactive about building up the positive inputs and managing the negative outputs.³⁴

³³ American Psychological Association (n.d). [Resilience](#). APA Dictionary of Psychology [20. 8. 2023].

³⁴ Šmidt, M. (2021). [This is how resilience works – and an exercise to strengthen it](#). Happiness Academy [20. 8. 2023].



Exercise: We encourage Obi-Wans to take a moment to reflect:

- What is filling up your resilience pool these days?
- You can find great insights if you reflect on past experiences in which you were resilient and what “waterfalls” helped you be resilient in those situations.
- What are a couple of ideas on how you could fill it up even more?

We encourage them to make a plan to put those ideas into practice the following week already.³⁵

Exercise: When feeling anxious or overwhelmed, we invite Obi-Wans to assess the situation.

We ask them to draw three concentric circles representing the Circle of Control (at the core), the Circle of Influence (in the middle), and the Circle of Concern (on the periphery). This concept, popularized by Stephen Covey in his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, helps analyze concerns based on controllability.³⁶

After drawing circles, they should reflect on their worries and position them according to their ability to influence them. The Circle of Control contains issues directly within their power to impact. Within the Circle of Influence lie concerns which they can influence.

Finally, the Circle of Concern surrounds worries beyond their control. We invite them to consider strategies to let go of concerns outside their control and identify actions to expand their sphere of influence.

³⁵ Šmidt, M. (2021). [This is how resilience works – and an exercise to strengthen it](#). Happiness Academy [20. 8. 2023].

³⁶ Covey, S. (1989). *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Free Press.

Are you Interested in Reading More?

[Forbes.com](#): The 15 Ways Leaders Can More Effectively Manage Gen-Z Workers article suggests leaders to encourage innovation, lead by example, understand their needs, and provide growth opportunities.

[Peer learning: 10 benefits of collaboration in the workplace](#): This blog post discusses the benefits of peer learning in the workplace. It highlights how peer learning encourages knowledge sharing so critical know-how is kept within organizations.

The blog, [What Psychological Safety Looks Like in a Hybrid Workplace](#), explores how leaders can provide psychological safety, which is a critical driver of high-quality decision-making, healthy group dynamics, greater innovation, and more effective task execution in organizations.

[ImpostorSyndrome.com](#): The article discusses the concept of impostor syndrome and describes 10 ways to tell if you are suffering from it.

The book [7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#) explores the difference between proactive people who focus on what they can influence (Circle of Influence) and reactive people who are losing their energy by worrying about things they cannot change (Circle of Concern).





What Should the Digital Yodaship Process Look like?

Chapter 4

In the previous three chapters, you've gained a deeper understanding of your role and Obi-Wan's needs and realities. Now, it's time to roll up our sleeves and put the knowledge we gained into practice.

This chapter delves into the framework for creating an effective digital Yodaship process, offering the crucial components necessary to craft a meaningful journey for your Obi-Wan. We'll explore setting up the digital space to accommodate your Obi-Wan, pinpointing the key elements of the process, and getting to know practical methods for your digital Yodaship adventure. Moreover, we'll discuss strategies for assessing the success of your Yodaship endeavors, ensuring ongoing enhancement and development.

Are you ready for your next step? Read on and check out what is waiting for you!

Setting up the Space

When setting up the space, it's crucial to consider various aspects. If possible, involve Obi-Wan in your planning process. But if you are working with multiple individuals with diverse needs, at least design the space to accommodate as many as possible.



When choosing a meeting platform, you can check if the leader's group already has designated spaces and try to adapt. Consider the required bandwidth for a smooth experience, and the devices participants may use.

Your platform should be compatible with mobile phones as it makes it more accessible, as not everyone has their own computer. You can choose avatar-based platforms like Gather, which gives users the feeling of an on-site visit, or video call platforms like Zoom and Discord. Many

messaging apps also allow calls, so you could opt for WhatsApp or Signal. The added value of them is that you can combine calls with messaging, whether for continuous monitoring or for Obi-Wan to reach out to when needed.

You'll also need to choose a location for storing your agreements, notes, outputs, and different follow-up activities. This can be as simple as Google Drive with private and shared folders or visual platforms like Mural, offering diverse templates for the planning process and reflecting on changes happening in it.



If you're unfamiliar with digital tools, Toolbox provides descriptions and tips on how to use them best.

Once the digital space is set up, fill it with meaningful conversations using diverse methods and approaches. You can translate traditional methods to digital versions using tools like Mural or Padlet or rely on physical materials like paper. Encouraging handwriting offers benefits like enhancing learning and memory (if you are interested in exploring more, you can [check this video out](#)).

Structure the Process³⁷

In **the initiation stage**, two individuals embark on a Yodaship process, which can either involve a matching process or allow relationships to emerge naturally. Regardless of the approach initially, assessing the suitability of the Yoda - Obi-Wan match is essential.

Following this, the next step involves getting to know each other and fostering connection. **Building rapport** and discovering common ground lay the foundation for a Yodaship. Rapport, the sense of connection and mutual understanding, is essential for meaningful interactions. It can develop organically or be intentionally nurtured over time.³⁸

Once rapport is established, it's crucial to clarify the goals of the relationship. Setting clear objectives provides direction and ensures both parties are aligned in their expectations. This stage also includes discussing communication preferences and expectations, drafting a mentoring agreement, meeting logistics, and values like honesty and confidentiality. We encourage you also to define the duration and conclusion of mentoring relationships.³⁹

Establishing a clear timeline and endpoint prevents energy depletion and ensures we reach the closure phase, which is also a necessary part of the shared journey. If both parties consider it beneficial, we can repeat the cycle.

Moving into **the cultivation stage**, Obi-Wan learns with Yoda's support, benefiting from their experience, expertise, and coaching powerful questions. This phase is mutually beneficial, as Yoda can also learn new technologies, methodologies, concepts, or emerging issues in the field from Obi-Wan.

Monitoring and support should be integrated throughout the mentoring journey. Yodas should track relationship milestones, offer ongoing advice, and provide access to resources. Feedback loops enable Yodas to tailor their approaches effectively in order to meet Obi-Wans' evolving needs and goals.⁴⁰

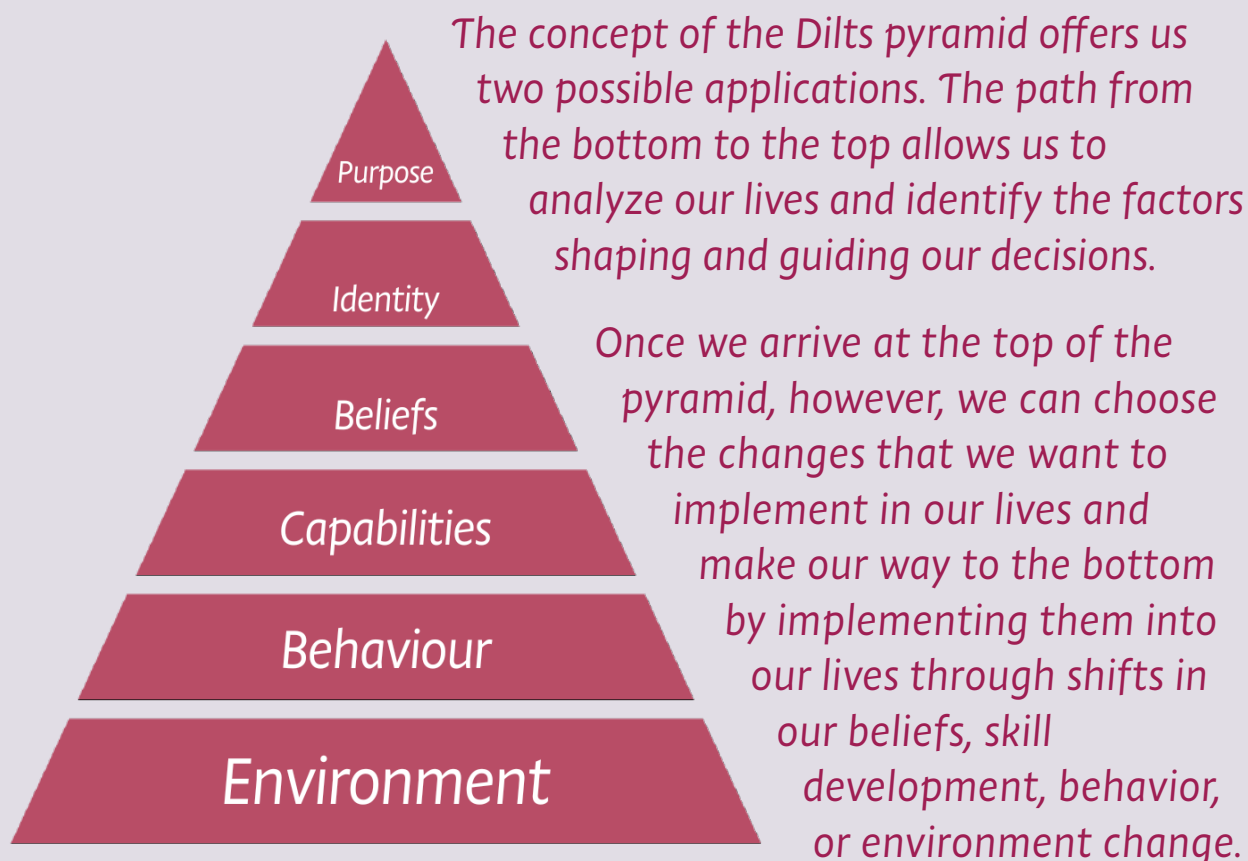
³⁷ American Psychological Association (2012). [Introduction to Mentoring: A Guide for Mentors and Mentees](#) [21. 8. 2023].

³⁸ Mind Tools Content Team (n.d.). [Building Rapport](#). Mind Tools [21. 8. 2023].

³⁹ Mind Tools Content Team (n.d.). [Mentoring Agreements and Coaching Plans](#). Mind Tools [21. 8. 2023].

⁴⁰ Garringer, M., Kupersmidt, J., Rhodes, J., Stelter, R., Tai, T. (2015). [Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring](#). Mentor.

Structuring the mentoring process using frameworks like the Dilts pyramid⁴¹ can guide discussions and facilitate trust-building. Starting with topics related to the environment (at the bottom) and gradually progressing to deeper, personal matters like personal identity and mission (at the top) fosters a supportive environment for growth and introspection.



The separation stage marks the end of the Yodaship, which may occur for various reasons. Closure is essential, providing an opportunity for reflection. Exit interviews and celebratory events acknowledge progress and transition, paving the way for redefining the relationship.

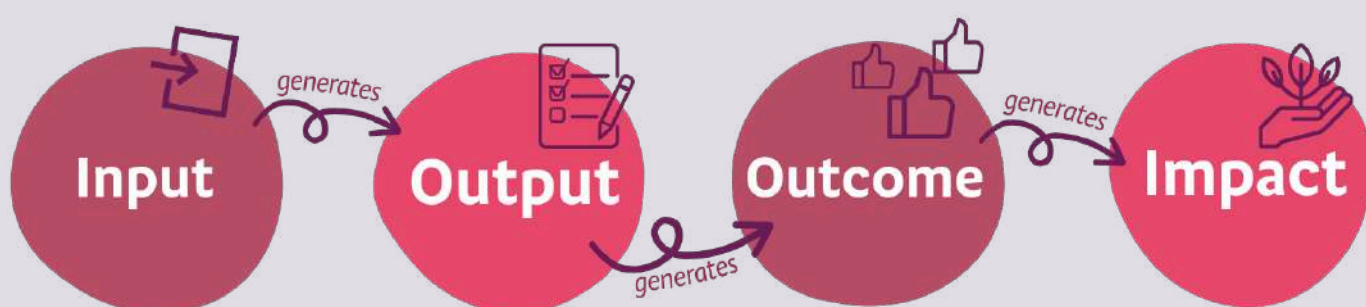
In **the redefinition stage**, both parties acknowledge that the relationship dynamic will change. Successfully navigating through separation can develop collegial or social friendships, sustaining the bond beyond formal Yodaship.

⁴¹ Dilts, R. (1990). Changing Belief Systems with NLP. Meta Publications.

Planning the Outcomes

Setting goals and defining the change we want to achieve using the theory of change⁴² will help us identify several measurable indicators of positive outcomes for program participants. While these outcomes are most likely to be focused on Obi-Wan, we are encouraged to think about outcomes for us, Yodas, Obi-Wan's team, and the community as a whole. There are several tools available that can assess the quality of mentoring relationships:⁴³

- **Input indicators:** These indicators measure the resources invested in the Yodaship process, such as the time and effort put in by the Yodas and Obi-Wans, as well as any materials or tools used.
- **Process indicators:** These indicators measure how well the process is being implemented, such as the quality of communication and the level of engagement and participation from both parties.
- **Output indicators:** These indicators measure the immediate results of the process, such as achieving specific goals or objectives or developing new skills or knowledge.
- **Outcome indicators:** These indicators measure the longer-term outcomes of the process, such as changes in behavior or performance, improvements in job satisfaction, or career progression.
- **Impact indicators:** These indicators measure the broader impact of the process, such as its effect on team culture or its contribution to achieving strategic goals.

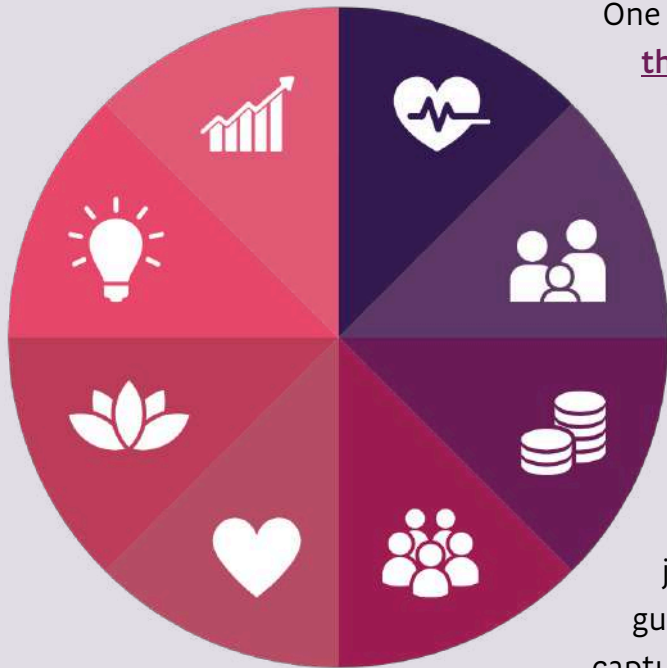


⁴²The Theory of Change is a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context.

⁴³Garringer, M., Kupersmidt, J., Rhodes, J., Stelter, R., Tai, T. (2015). [Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring](#). Mentor.

Methods

After we have prepared the structure of the process, we need to fill it up with methods and concepts that can benefit Obi-Wans. Some have already been covered in the previous chapters, but now we will share a few more to fill your "method box".



One method that can be included in the structure is [the Wheel of Life](#). This simple yet powerful tool visually represents all the essential areas of one's life at once. Often used by life coaches and career coaches, the wheel offers a "bird's eye" view of various life areas, enabling individuals to identify areas that are flourishing and those that require attention and improvements.

Another powerful method to include is [the River of Life](#). This metaphorical approach allows Obi-Wans to visualize their personal journey or history. The river becomes a compass, guiding individuals through their experiences by capturing milestones, failures, and successes over time.

This method encourages self-reflection and fosters a sense of direction and purpose, facilitating personal development and goal-setting.

Recognizing and addressing thinking traps is essential to personal growth, which can be incorporated into the Yodaship process. [The Thinking Traps](#) method helps individuals identify their own cognitive biases and apply the ABC model developed by Dr. Albert Ellis to support changing negative thoughts into more positive ones, ultimately leading to improved emotional well-being.

[The STAR coaching method](#), which stands for Situation, Task, Action, and Result, is a powerful tool for reflection and learning from past experiences. By revisiting a particular situation, Obi-Wan can gain insights, learn from them, and implement changes for their future growth and development. A worksheet for this method is [here](#).

[Future Pacing](#) can be valuable for helping young individuals envision their desired outcomes and effectively plan for their achievement. By mentally rehearsing and visualizing future situations, individuals can increase their chances of reaching their goals and ensuring the desired outcome.

The GROW coaching method is a widely recognized and practical approach to goal setting and problem-solving. It provides a structured framework that helps individuals reflect on their experiences, gain insights, make choices, and take concrete actions toward achieving their goals through understanding their current reality, exploring options, and defining their will or wrapping up effective solutions.

The Johari Window model is a valuable tool that can foster self-awareness and promote mutual understanding among individuals within a group. The Johari Window model is based on the concept of four quadrants representing different aspects of one's personality and behavior:

- The Open or Arena quadrant
- The Blind Spot quadrant
- The Hidden or Facade quadrant
- The Unknown quadrant

Gathering feedback from diverse people in their lives can shed light on blind spots where there can be hidden opportunities for growth or utilizing strengths we do not realize we have.



Are You Interested in Reading More?

More method ideas are gathered in [the Toolbox from Mindful Coaching in Youth Work](#) and [the Mentor's Toolbox](#) from Inkubator 4.0.

The book [Tools and Resources for Setting Up Collaborative Spaces](#) provides insights on fostering diversity in digital spaces by using tools and resources that support collaboration and communication.

The Center for Theory of Change (ToC), a non-profit organization, explains what ToC is and guides us through applying it in Yodaship processes to ensure positive outcomes. ToC uses backward mapping from the long-term goal to the intermediate and then early-term changes required to cause the desired change.

The publication [Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring](#) goes deep into standards, which are essential for every stage of the mentorship process. It proposes benchmarks, like minimum standards, and potential enhancements to bring the process to the next level.



Final Conclusion

Dear Yoda, As we wrap up our journey together, we hope you've found some helpful tips for your digital Yodaship endeavors. We tried to avoid going too deep into the roles and stages that are covered in many other mentorship or coaching books but to bring a fresh(er) perspective on topics that might arise from the reality of working in remote teams in VUCA times and propose some concepts and methods that can be valuable.

Throughout the handbook, we aimed to provide you with an understanding of the characteristics of the VUCA times and the emergence of remote teams, which add another layer to the challenges leaders must navigate. While younger individuals taking on leadership roles and learning on the job is natural, with our support, they can feel more comfortable in the process and less isolated. We encourage blending mentorship and coaching approaches and embracing the opportunity to learn from Obi-Wans in order to gain new perspectives.

Practicing what we preach is important, so we must prioritize our well-being and a healthy approach to work-life balance and relationships with the acceptance of mistakes and failures. This is a crucial factor in enabling growth and ensuring a high quality of life. We also shouldn't forget about strengthening digital competencies that are vital for navigating the digital landscape's complexities and helping us thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

We managed to scratch the surface but provided additional resources if you want to explore more. You are also invited to join our course, where we expand some topics and support you in applying the new knowledge to your realities.

Thank you for sharing this journey and reading so far!



Contact us! We value any feedback you may want to share with us.



Check out our work!



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