

## Support for Mentors

### Why not take your inner parent to work?

**Michael Fryer is a seasoned coach, mentor and a ‘work in progress’ parent. Taking work home with him has become a philosophical practice for Michael. Check this out.**

When we tell a manager ‘You’re parenting people’ it’s often a damning accusation, a definite ‘no-no’, but I think that’s a hasty judgement. Good parenting behaviours are not infantilizing or patronising, bad parenting ones are. In fact, as a manager, aren’t healthy parenting principles precisely what you need to do a better job?

As an executive coach, mentor, and father of two, I’m struck by how good managers and good parents share similar goals and have a surprising number of behaviours in common. As parents, we strive to help our children be successful, happy, and fulfilled, to contribute and reach their true potential. Isn’t this equally so for managers who want high-performing people? Pick up any book about parenting and it emphasises the need for parents to:

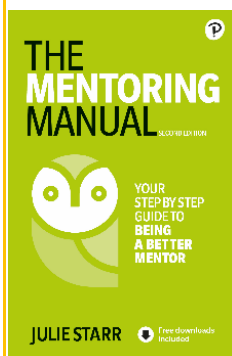
- Set boundaries and expectations.
- Offer helpful feedback.
- Offer encouragement to succeed.
- Give acknowledgement and praise.
- Foster independence & responsibility
- Be patient and kind.
- Explain ‘why’.
- Help to learn.
- Demonstrate respect.
- Empathise/relate

Hang on, isn’t this a list of critical principles for a manager too? Unhealthy parenting tendencies – mollycoddling, indulging, intimidating, ignoring, not holding to account, displays of temper or frustration – are equally ineffective in a manager.

So, if you want to be a manager who can build an engaged, capable, and committed team, get in touch with your inner parent at work. Check the principles you operate from – are you helping your colleagues make the most of who they are? Are compassion and empathy balanced equally with the need to have people feel and be accountable?

Most people assume that a key differentiator between parent and manager is the presence of love. But hold on, where our love is expressed in the quality of our intention and behaviour towards others, then in my opinion, this is just a question of degree. What do you think?

#### About The Mentoring Manual



Julie Starr’s *The Mentoring Manual* has clear principles, tips, and free supporting downloads to enable managers and leaders to build effective mentoring relationships.

Her other books, *The Coaching Manual* and *Brilliant Coaching* build coaching ability through simple principles and practical approaches. Julie is the founder of Starr Coaching, a leading provider of leadership and management development.

Find out more at [www.starrcoaching.co.uk](http://www.starrcoaching.co.uk) and [www.LearnStarr.com](http://www.LearnStarr.com)

