READY TO USE MENTORING

# Roundabout or wrong turn

Over the summer I went to visit family who live roughly five miles east of the middle of absolutely nowhere. Drives like these give me plenty of time to think and as I navigated my 4,000th roundabout, a thought occurred to me about how we handle rejection. Often we see rejection as failure – a dead end – an indication we have made a terminal mistake of judgement; we’ve gone the wrong way and should turn around and not continue that route. Often when we experience rejection we respond emotionally. We have a knee-jerk reaction either to get angry or sad, give up or to try again with hurt and bitterness biting at our heels.

But rejection is not a dead end, it’s a roundabout.

You do have to pause – go round a little mental cycle to see what options and responses are now open to you before you choose your exit and continue on. Yes, you could go round the roundabout and just return the way you came. Give up. Get bitter. You could choose a new alternative destination. Or you could come to terms with the inconvenience and hurt and continue straight over on your journey. But the key is to process properly and stay in control.

## What to do

Before this metaphor becomes too convoluted, here’s how to use it with your young mentee.

Ask them to think of a recent time when they suffered rejection – a job or college / university application, asking someone out or trying to get permission to do something you have your heart set on.

What immediate emotions did they have? Out of ten, how well did they handle the rejection? Did they make any rash decisions based on those feelings? Looking at the big picture of what they were trying to achieve, do they still want to reach that original destination? In which case, how do they get back on the road and pass this rejection without their motivation and purpose fading?

Every time an event like this happens, rather than seeing it as a roadblock (or a car crash!), encourage your mentee to be mindful to go round a quick process to learn and grow from it and then assess their options:

**1. Recognise**

You are at a ‘junction’. Understand you have a choice about how you react to this rejection. How do you feel? Do you trust the source of this rejection? Feel the feels, come to terms with the emotions it is causing you.

**2. Evaluate**

Is this rejection good for me or bad for you? Objectively, is it fair? What could you actually learn from it? Does it change the way you feel about your goal?

3. Options

Change your goal and go another way. How would you feel if you gave up at this point – would you regret that decision? Is there any wisdom or positives you can take from this rejection? Is there a different goal that is better suited to you?

Encourage your mentee not to wallow in self-pity! They can extract something positive from every roundabout moment. There will be many more roundabouts in the future but they can learn to navigate them like a pro!

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