

Five types of mentor you need in your life

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Categories : [Freelance business management](#)

Date : April 4, 2013



Types of mentor. As much as we are freelance strategy consultants we are also entrepreneurs. Despite being high on entrepreneurial spirit, we cannot do it alone, here are the five types of mentor you need in your freelance life.

No one can know everything from day one, as much as we may believe we do and pretend we do (winging it, anyone?), we need to have someone or some people to ask questions, to bounce ideas off of, get business tips and new career advice that comes from years of experience and to vent to.

Here are the five types of mentor in my life, the often unsung heroes that keep me going and keep me alive both mentally and creatively by helping me to make very smart decisions that drive my business and my ideas forward.

1. The long-time industry expert

Long term friend, design industry legend and founder of strategic design consultancy 20.20, Bernard Dooling is my go-to industry expert, we meet up for dinner & ideas sessions every six

weeks or so to thrash out business problems or to catch up on what's new in design, retail and our lives.

2. The long-term freelancer

A fellow freelancer (albeit of around 30 years longer than I) Anthony is my go-to guy for all things freelance despite him being an IT contractor and not in the design industry. His knowledge of the business realities of freelancing and financing life, preparing for contract-less times and tax issues has been invaluable.

3. The other freelancers, my peers

Freelancing can be a lonely life sometimes as not all agency folk are interested in integrating you into their company too much so making friends and staying in touch with all kinds of freelancers you work with is one of the smartest networking moves you can make. Get into the habit of bouncing ideas off each other and also referring jobs over to relevant people to help them out as well as generating reciprocal referrals from them.

4. The best friends who are as excited as I am about how things are going

My best friend (and best man at my wedding), Martin and I don't talk every day like we used to (proper bromance) but when we do catch up we chat for ages about how each other is doing and to share excitement in what new ventures I'm working on. These times and chats are also really useful for reigniting the excitement that sometimes gets subdued as I'm often not looking past the next contract / pitch.

5. The most important person in my life

My fiancé [Kirsty](#). I bounce all ideas off of her first, she proofs all blog posts before they get formatted onto the site. She tells me when an idea is rubbish. We celebrate the highs such as new contracts, pitch wins and great presentations. She consoles me and talks me through the tough times such as when a project does not come in when they should or when a client meeting goes badly. She has no idea how important she is in my life and my business (until she proofs this post!).

What types of mentor are important in your freelance life?

Who could you not live without?

How do you handle the highs and lows? Who do you turn to?

Are there other types of mentor I've missed?

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