Adam Hersey MIH has participated in Mentor Me, the Institute’s unique scheme right from its start, first as a mentee and now as a mentor.

I have taken part in the Institute’s Mentor Me programme since the pilot scheme in 2014 and I was a mentee for two seasons. You could say I have a strong attachment to the scheme. The year, I wanted to sign up as a mentor to give back to someone what I experienced from the two amazing mentors I had.

My mentee and I have already started the process and are currently working through the material. What I find so rewarding about mentoring in general is the opportunity to connect and have constructive conversations with people who hold the same ambition for development and growth. I’m also excited to try and learn from my mentee. New, innovative thoughts and ideas could hold the key to pushing the boundaries of performance and guest experience.

Mentoring has an incredible way of challenging not only your mentee’s thought processes but also your own. Questions posed by mentees can often be answered through your own experiences, however some require more thought and consideration in order to give the best advice. My current role as a mentor has helped me to understand that people look up to their leaders and mentors and take on board what is being said. So as a mentor you need to be very considered in your responses and absolutely deliver. It’s very much like the relationship you want to build with your guests. They want to know and feel that you genuinely care about the experience they have with you and that you are going to deliver what they are expecting (and hopefully exceed it!).

Mentoring also helps me with the tools to almost self-coach my way through situations that require self-reflection. My career focus has always been on development and improving each day. I will not always make the right decisions, but having the tools to reduce this to a minimum and being able to overcome any wrong turns is crucial, not only on an individual basis but also for the whole hotel team.

A general piece of advice for mentees is that you only get out what you put in. You need to understand the purpose of mentoring to you and what you want to get out of it. Only then will you understand what questions to ask and what expectations you have from your mentor. Mentors are willing to give up their time to develop and benefit mentees so long as there is as much enthusiasm and gusto coming the other way. In a nutshell, be clear in the purpose of your need for mentoring, be proactive with your mentor and remain humble throughout!

The biggest challenge for the hospitality industry in 2018 is for us to get real and be serious about making the industry one that attracts the best talent for the right reasons. One of our biggest headaches in general is staffing and recruitment, but what are we actually doing about the root cause of this problem? It is not acceptable to expect people on a 40-hour contract to give up that time again in free labour. Other industries do not allow it, so why should we? We wonder why we lose talented people to other industries and yet I believe this is one of the biggest reasons why. As an industry we need to continue the recent trend of some high-profile establishments and reduce working hours for our teams. Only then can one of the root causes of our shortage of labour be tackled and dealt with.

To register your interest in the Institute’s Mentor Me programme, please email: mentorme@instituteofhospitality.org