

Case Study

Kwang & Nicolas

Kwang was very much looking forward to his first assignment on the WBS Mentoring Programme and meeting his new mentee. Kwang, a Korean national and a friendly, quiet man in his early forties, had been living in the Netherlands for the past 6 years. He indicated when joining the mentoring programme that he would prefer a face to face relationship with his new mentee, so he was allocated a Dutch DLMBA student, Nicolas, who was based only a 10 minute tram ride away.

Nicolas worked as a senior technical director in a multinational aerospace company and was hoping to progress to a Board level role within the next 6 months. The first few meetings with Kwang & Nicolas went very well with both achieving a good degree of trust and respect for each other over a relatively short period of time. At the beginning of their 3rd meeting, Nicolas asked Kwang to give him some feedback on a presentation that he was planning to give to the Board the next day.

After running through the presentation, Nicolas was surprised to find Kwang highly critical, aggressive and almost angry when giving his feedback. Nicolas was very offended and became defensive, his emotions therefore stopping him from really hearing the feedback. The presentation was not well received by the Board and Nicolas started to feel resentful of his mentor to the extent that he is now avoiding Kwang's calls and repeated attempts to set up another meeting.

1. What do you think is going on here?
2. What advice would you give to Nicolas?
3. What advice would you give to Kwang?