Wanting a Change in Assignment

Situation
(Read aloud.)

“Jason came to me at the point where he wanted to be moved to another department or he was going to quit. He was in that all-or-nothing mode. He wanted to just basically go tell the manager, ‘You have to move me out of this department.’”

What Do You Think?
(Discuss for 10 minutes.)

◆ What would you advise Jason to do if you were his mentor?
◆ Why do you think Jason got “in that all-or-nothing mode”? He wanted to just basically go tell the manager, ‘You have to move me out of this department.’”
◆ What would you tell Jason about the likely consequences of his plan?
◆ What alternatives would you suggest?
◆ Think of at least two reflective questions that might be appropriate in this situation.
The Mentor's Response

(Read aloud.)

1 “I calmly explained to him that if he went about it in a more diplomatic manner, if he just explained, without yelling at his manager, that he was not in the position that he desired, that he would have a better chance of being moved out. I helped him to understand that you just can’t give a manager an ultimatum unless you are ready to walk out the door yourself, because that’s what happens in a corporate world. If you give a manager an ultimatum that says move me or I quit, ‘Hey, clean your desk out.’”

2 “He explained that he did not want to do just this side of the business. And he was also disappointed because he wanted to get back into other facets of the business.”

3 “He said, ‘I know I don’t want to do this. Why are they making me do it?’”

4 “I said, ‘Well, explain it to them. Don’t be upset. Explain it to them that you want to learn these other fields, but don’t come off that I’m not going to do that any more or I’m going to quit. If you go up and start demanding something from somebody or crying out unnecessarily, you might find yourself in a position that you’ll need this person’s services later. If you go about it in a professional manner and you ask them in a courteous way to get something done or explain your troubles in a professional manner, not only are you not going to create resentment, you’re more likely to get what you want.’”

5 “So he evidently conveyed that to them in a civil manner. He is no longer working in that department. They moved him. So he’s much happier there because he’s learning something new. So he had a positive outcome.”

6 “There’s a right and a there’s a wrong and just like laws in the community there’s law in the corporate world. You’ve got to get that basic principle down or you’ll fail in any career you go into.”

What Do You Think?

(Discuss for 10 minutes.)

- How was the mentor’s response different from those in your discussion?
- Were there similarities?
- Is there anything you would do differently after reading the mentor’s response?
- The mentor’s approach seemed to work. Why?
- Would the same approach work for all mentors, all situations, all youth?
- What response do you think would work best for you in a situation like this one?