

Mentor and Mentee Tips

For starting and building a meaningful relationship

Mentorship is about building connection and trust as well as being in a place of vulnerability that allows for growth. Getting to a place where deep growth can happen takes time and intentionality from mentor and mentee—it's a two-way street! Read on to learn what mentorship is, how and where to start the relationship, and how to make it a valuable experience for both mentor and mentee. *Note: sources are cited on the second page.*

Defining Mentorship

A definition

“An intentional, developmental relationship in which a more experienced and more knowledgeable person nurtures the professional and personal life of a less experienced, less knowledgeable person”.

(Source: 1)

Another definition

“Mentoring is typically a 1:1 relationship where mentors share how they've handled past experiences and provide suggestions for how to become more effective in a specific skill or competency”. It provides a learning and growth opportunity for both the mentor and mentee. (Source: 2)

Both mentors AND mentees learn and grow through mentorship! Each person is valuable and has something to contribute.

Structuring the Mentoring Relationship: Start to Finish

1

Design the structure

Think about:

- **Contact and response times:** Who contacts whom? How?
- **Meetings:** When/where/how often?
- **Confidentiality:** What is/isn't shareable?
- **Focus:** What are the parameters of the relationship?
- **Feedback:** What are the expectations for giving/receiving feedback?
- **Goals and accountability:** What do you each want from the experience? How do you hold each other accountable?

2

Get to know each other & build trust

Resist the temptation to dive head-first into career problem solving and advising. Build trust by learning about each other!

3

Set the agenda

Be clear about the purpose and focus of mentoring. Make sure mentee goals, needs and wants are clear. Create SMART goals that contribute to mentee development.

4

Reflect & evaluate

Ask “how's it going” every few meetings. Check in on what has or has not been helpful.

5

Closeout

Mentor and mentee, take time to reflect. What was most rewarding or valuable? What are you most grateful for? Be specific about what you learned and gained from the experience.

Source: 3

Mentor Tips

Start by getting to know your mentee.
Nothing of substance will happen until you establish a trusting relationship.

Ask questions rather than give answers.
Take time to draw out a mentee's thinking and get them to reflect on their own experiences. Check your assumptions.

Engage in meaningful and authentic relationships.
Strive to go beyond surface level. Listen to their ideas, don't just share yours.

Support and challenge your mentee.
First, work on creating a comfortable relationship. Then move into a space where deep learning can happen.

Set the expectation for two-way feedback.
Offer candid, yet compassionate feedback. Model asking for and receiving feedback.

Check in regularly to stay on track.
Keep connected and develop a pattern of engagement. Both mentor and mentee need to be accountable for follow through.

Source: 4

Mentee Tips

Expect to drive the mentoring relationship.
Although this relationship is two-way, you have to ask for what you need.

Prepare for all mentor meetings.
To make the best use of your time together, think about what you want to discuss in advance.

Focus on the future.
Articulate your vision for yourself so you can create strategies for future success; don't get bogged down in the day-to-day.

Be willing to stretch and step out of your comfort zone.
Expect your mentor to challenge you with questions and learning opportunities.

Ask for specific feedback.
Practice asking for it and receiving it without being defensive. Act on it.

Stay connected and in communication with your mentor.
Use multiple ways to stay connected (face-to-face, email, IM, etc).

Source: 5

Our Sources

1. "Mentoring at Work: How (and Why) to Implement It in Your Organization." *Center for Creative Leadership*, 20 July 2021, <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/mentoring-at-work-how-and-why-to-make-it-work-for-your-organization/>.
2. Hammett, Pete. "The Difference between Mentoring & Coaching." *Purdue University Center for Food and Agricultural Business*, 9 Dec. 2020, <https://agribusiness.purdue.edu/the-difference-between-mentoring-and-coaching/>.
3. Abbajay, Mary. "Mentoring Matters: Three Essential Elements of Success." *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 24 Jan. 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/maryabbajay/2019/01/20/mentoring-matters-three-essential-element-of-success/?sh=704ae6d545a9>.
4. "Top 10 Best Practices for Mentors." *Center for Mentoring Excellence*, 28 Apr. 2015, <https://www.centerformentoring.com/top-10-best-practices-for-mentors>.
5. "Top 10 Best Practices for Mentees." *Center for Mentoring Excellence*, 15 May 2015, <https://www.centerformentoring.com/top-10-best-practices-for-mentees>.

Pro Tips from Our Mentors

- ❖ **Space matters!**
Find a place that's comfortable for both of you to meet.
- ❖ **It takes time built personal connection and vulnerability.**
Make time for the relationship and invest in it.
- ❖ **Hold each others' confidence.**
This will help you to build trust and reach a place of vulnerability where significant growth can happen.
- ❖ **Mentees, take initiative.**
Think about what you want to achieve through the relationship and come to meetings ready to make the most of your time together.
- ❖ **Show your humanity.**
Everyone has made mistakes and learned from them. We all can learn from each other.