

Starting Strong Being Mentored

A Successful Mentoring Experience

is largely dependent on relationship skills – how well the mentor and mentee “click”. When you first registered, you took a Visual Personality Survey to help find compatible personalities to help facilitate this process. As a mentee, however, you still have a responsibility to own your own development and manage the mentoring relationship. If you already know your mentor and have worked with him or her in the past, this may not be an issue. However, there will be times when you will be meeting someone new or someone you do not know well.

While your mentor will be giving you direction and advice, *maintaining the relationship is your responsibility.*

The questions on the right can be used in your initial meetings to help foster a connection with your mentor, and can help set a foundation to show active participation in the mentoring relationship. Some of these questions might naturally arise as a result of filling out your Partnership Agreement together.

Make Listening Your #1 Priority

Mentors have been known to test you by gauging how you respond to feedback; and the better you are at receiving it, the more of it you will get.

A good way to show you’re listening is to restate the advice in your own words and to ask questions.

- How do you spend most of your time? (This may give you a picture of your mentor’s work, family, and interests - follow up with appropriate questions)
- Is this where you thought you’d end up in your career?
- What path did you take to get to where you are now?
- In what ways have you seen your profession change over the years? Or, What have been the most significant changes?
- What used to be your biggest weakness?
- What professional organizations are you associated with and in what ways?
- What would you do differently if given the opportunity?
- What do you do when you feel stuck on an issue or problem?
- What is something that surprised you about working at ... ?
- What were some difficult considerations or trade-offs have you had to make in order to move forward in your career? (E.g. Travel vs. time with family; Moving to a different location in order to gain experience)



As Your Relationship Progresses,

you will naturally start to focus more on the progress you are making. Part of your mentor's responsibility will be to ask the hard questions - not necessarily giving you an answer, but allowing you to arrive at the right answer for yourself. In turn, you will gain the most by learning to ask good questions yourself and being open to hearing the answers your mentor has for you.

- What would you do in this situation?
- Who would you recommend I reach out to?
- What do you see as my best strengths and how can I utilize them better than I am now?
- What weakness do you see that I seem to be unaware of?
- How can I develop self-awareness? (E.g. About my weaknesses? How others perceive my work? How others perceive me?)
- What am I missing that I didn't consider?
- How do you keep emotions from getting in the way of your judgment?
- What are the unknowns in this situation and how would you recommend that I approach them?
- How would you prioritize these tasks and why?
- How can I 'manage up' in this situation? Or conversely, How could I manage others in this situation?
- What would keep you up at night about this situation?
- Is this project/goal/task affecting someone else that I'm not aware of?
- What skill would you recommend I gain next?
- What soft skill would help me in meeting my goal?
- What soft skill would you recommend I work on?
- What could potentially hold me back from reaching my career goals that I'm not aware of?
- That suggestion doesn't feel quite right, but I'm not sure why - can we talk through it more?
- I had on my calendar/in my notes ... did I get confused or miss something?

Be a Great Mentee: 10 Tips

- 1. Be an active listener** with questions and body language that shows openness to what your mentor is saying.
- 2. Trustworthiness**
- 3. The ability to speak (with humility) when there are differences**
- 4. Respect for the time given** by being prepared for your meetings.
- 5. Humility goes a long way** - even if you already know what your mentor is saying, listen politely and follow up by asking about their personal experiences relating to that advice. You might get a perspective you hadn't considered before.
- 6. Be ready to work!** Be a mentee that follows through with tasks and assignments.
- 7. Be willing to take risks** Your mentor may ask you to do something outside your comfort zone. Be open to it!
- 8. Be a great introduction** Treat any introduction into your mentor's network with the utmost respect - remember that you have been given access into a network you didn't earn on your own accord.
- 9. Feedback loop** Let your mentor know the status of the situations you've discussed; especially in situations they have given advice on or introduced you into.
- 10. Reciprocate!** Giving thanks is a wonderful way to reciprocate, but also look for ways to give back in terms of a timely article, an introduction that would benefit them, or an offer to help where you can.