

# Mentee Role

## General Guidelines for an Effective Mentoring Relationship

### **Commitment to mentoring and being mentored.**

Enter a mentoring relationship only if you are prepared to make the time available to meet your responsibilities with the other person. Don't overextend yourself beyond what you are capable of achieving.

### **Observe business etiquette.**

You are in a professional mentoring relationship and should use the same rules and etiquette you would with a work colleague.

- Always be punctual for your meetings (or phone calls).
- Give plenty of notice if you need to postpone a meeting or phone call.
- Stick to business. Small talk is a nice way to break the ice, but don't let this consume the time you spend together. Try setting an agenda if you find you digress too often.
- Speak respectfully of others. Always talk about your workplace, colleagues or personal acquaintances respectfully, during the course of your mentoring. Speaking critically of others reflects badly on you. There's always a way to rephrase what you say to get your meaning across.

### **Give the relationship some time.**

Mentors and mentees don't always "click" straight away; however, sometimes your differences can lead to the greatest opportunities for both mentor and mentee.

*(Make Your Mentoring Successful, Catherine Seton, [www.womensmentoring.com](http://www.womensmentoring.com))*

## **Tips for both mentors and mentees to help with establishing a relationship that works for both parties:**

1. Ensure a two-way dialogue. Mentorships are about listening and learning, but mentees need to be able to find their own voice, as well. Mentors must be willing to let their mentees speak freely while addressing any of their concerns or questions. Mentors who simply talk at individuals will offer little value. As a mentee, do not hesitate to pipe up and ask questions.
2. Mentorship is about sharing. If you are not willing to share, then neither party will experience the full benefits of having a mentor. Mentors should be willing to share their career experiences, and mentees need to be open and honest in return.
3. Clarity is essential. Before approaching or establishing a mentorship, it is the responsibility of the mentee to outline what they want out of the relationship, and a general structure for meetings, conversations and take-away tasks. The mentee must lead the course and ensure the relationship stays on track.

4. It is about working smarter, not necessarily harder. Mentorships require time from both parties involved. Time should be used wisely, focusing on concrete tips and tricks for becoming more efficient, flexible and resourceful at work.

5. Be open. Mentees have a lot more than just career advice to gain in a mentorship relationship. Mentors can also speak about education, motivation and work-life balance. Find out from your mentor what she sees as the key points to long-term success and happiness.

### What is the mentee expected to deliver to the relationship?

The Mentee's primary role is to show up prepared to engage the mentor. Early in a mentoring relationship, the mentor may offer some agenda items for consideration and may even have some desired outcomes in mind. However, the mentee should quickly assume the responsibility for bringing the topics of conversation and for driving to some beneficial outcome.

Mentees are the primary beneficiary of this mentoring relationship. If they don't drive the issues being addressed, the relationship may dissolve. The mentor is willing to spend time with the mentee only if they genuinely want to learn and grow. If their behaviors don't demonstrate that interest, the mentor can easily find better things to do.

The agenda items are likely going to be opportunities where the mentee can initiate significant improvement. Mentees are the source of inquiry, posing the questions initially. The mentor offers deeper, more far-reaching perspectives. They both seek possible answers. There are usually many options before any one answer emerges victorious.

Mentees may take the lead in generating a plan of who will do what by when. Usually, mentees are expected to report significant progress against the plan by the next meeting.

As in any relationship, mutual respect is necessary. Further, mentees should express gratitude often. The mentor's time, experience and energy is a gift. If mentees are not appreciative, the mentor may focus elsewhere!

*"Mentoring- A Powerful Development Method", by Dennis Hooper ([dhooper2@juno.com](mailto:dhooper2@juno.com)).*

### Mentees should:

**Ask good questions.** Would-be mentors are most receptive to people who ask good questions. What makes a good question? It should reveal that you are both directed and driven. But the question should also demonstrate that you understand the mentor's expertise and you can use it well. So, a question like, "What should I do with my life?" would be out.

**Don't expect miracles.** A mentor is not going to rescue your whole career, even if they can. People want to mentor a rising star, so look like you're on track when you ask for help.

**Be a good listener.** This person is not your therapist. You ask a question, and then listen. If the mentor needs to know more, they'll ask. Do not tell your life story.

**Prove you're serious.** You can demonstrate that you're hungry for counsel by implementing the advice your mentor gave, showing the result, and then going back for more. So, if your mentor suggests you get on project X, get yourself there, and do a good job, and report back to your mentor that you are grateful for the advice because you were able to learn a lot and shine. Your mentor will be much more willing to give you their time and energy after you've proven yourself to be a quick and eager study.

*"7 Keys to Mentoring Success". [www.lifehealthpro.com/2008/08/01/spotlight-on-mentoring](http://www.lifehealthpro.com/2008/08/01/spotlight-on-mentoring)*

### **Mentee Responsibilities:**

1. Commitment to learning and personal development by acting on useful advice or solutions provided by the mentor. Being willing to learn new skills and making the most of what your mentor may create for you.
2. Open communication. Listen carefully to your mentor and communicate freely with ideas and solutions. If your mentor suggests something you know won't work for you, explain why. Don't say you'll do it when you have no intention of doing so. Brainstorm until an effective solution arises, then act on it.
3. Provide feedback. Provide your mentor with honest feedback on how you are going with their suggestions, and ask for their opinion on some of your ideas.
4. Value your mentor. Your mentor is sharing valuable time and knowledge with you for free. Always be on time for your meetings, and make the most of it once you're together. Make sure you come away from each meeting with things to do that you can report back on next time you meet. If you are the first person your mentor has mentored, be patient and let your mentor know the best ways in which they can be of assistance to you. Mentoring is a two-way learning process.  
*"Make your mentoring successful" by Catherine Seton*