



Maximizing Mentorship

as a Mentor:

- **Recognize why you want to be a mentor.** Defining the reasons behind your decision to mentor is crucial in understanding your expectations and preferences in a mentoring relationship. Keep in mind that a good mentor not only guides their mentees but also learns from them. [1] [2] [4]
- **Communicate expectations and create guidelines with your mentee regarding your mentoring relationship.** Ask your mentee what they expect to get from this experience. In turn, tell them what you expect. Collaborate on short-term goals and long-term objectives. Create guidelines on the length of your mentorship, frequency of interaction, modes of interaction (email, video chat, in-person), and each of your responsibilities in the process. Revisit and revise these guidelines throughout your relationship. [2] [4]
- **Practice active listening and lead with empathy.** Be attentive when your mentee speaks with you. Ask questions and engage them. Try to understand their challenges and experiences, and provide encouragement and support as they seek out their goals. [3] [4]
Provide constructive feedback. One of the primary roles of a mentor is that of a counselor—understanding your mentee’s situation and offering feedback or advice to achieve success. Feedback should always be honest but never humiliating or mean. It should demonstrate key avenues for improvement without shaming the mentee. [3] [4]
- **Give your mentee the space to grow.** A mentor is not meant to make decisions for their mentee. Rather, they are meant to guide them and help them develop skills that they will, one day, use in their own professional career. Let them know you have faith in them, and give them the chance to advance on their own. [4]
- **Determine your mentorship and career goals.** Where do you want your career to be in a few years? How can your ideal mentor help you get there? Answering these questions allows you to set specific mentorship goals and choose the best mentor to achieve them. [5] [6] [7] [8]

as a Mentee:

- **Choose a mentor carefully.** Do your research. Your mentor should be someone that has a connection to your career goals, is respected in your field, and has a strong network. Pick a mentor that has the skills and experience to guide you on your career journey. [3] [5] [7] [8]
- **Take initiative.** Take ownership over your mentorship relationship. Communicate your goals with your mentor and craft a plan. Understand their boundaries and expectations, and let them know yours. Take on the responsibility for scheduling and setting agendas for your meetings. Take notes throughout, and follow up if you have additional questions. [7] [8]
- **Accept feedback and communicate your progress.** Much of mentoring is feedback. Be open to the feedback of your mentor; try to take the advice they offer. Provide them updates throughout your mentoring relationship, both on your progress toward your goal and on any outcomes regarding their advice. Consider setting smaller goals in between meetings to ensure you are making progress, and let your mentor know how you are improving. [6] [7] [8]
- **Thank your mentor and stay in touch.** Express gratitude throughout your mentorship sessions and especially once your mentoring relationship concludes. Every mentoring relationship has an end-date, either at a time that was previously agreed upon or once you reach your mentoring goal. Once the mentoring relationship ends, stay in touch. Send periodic updates to your former mentor to continue the relationship and let them know how you have grown. [6] [7] [8]