



How to be an Effective Mentor

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Before Entering A Mentorship Relationship:

First, ask yourself a few questions:

- What are your motivations to mentor this person?
- What skills do you currently have to facilitate the mentoring relationship, and do you need any additional skills to be an effective mentor?
- Are you ready to give candid advice and share your network, when appropriate, with your mentee?
- What are your prospective mentee's expectations of the relationship? Are they looking for a traditional mentor, sponsor, or coach?
- Do you have the bandwidth to give time to your mentee?

Know the difference between a mentor, coach, or sponsor:

- **Mentor:** Teaches, gives feedback and advice, shares experiences and their knowledge of the rules of the game.
- **Coach:** Unlocks a person's potential to maximize their own performance; solutions come from the client's reflection and creativity.
- **Sponsor:** Advocates for the mentee, provides exposure and visibility within the organization, connects mentee with people within the sponsor's network, helps open doors to allow the mentee to achieve goals. Video on what a sponsor does: https://www.ted.com/talks/carla_harris_how_to_find_the_person_who_can_help_you_get_ahead_at_work?language=en

As a mentor, remember that you are not limited to just the traditional mentor role. Discuss your mentee's needs and what you are willing to provide.

During Your First Meeting with Your Mentee:

- 1) Consider using a mentorship agreement form to guide and structure the initial meeting and ongoing relationship. [See Appendix 1.](#)
- 2) Decide who will be responsible for setting up the meetings and how often you will meet.
- 3) Discuss expectations from both of you regarding confidentiality.
- 4) Consider using a career development plan to keep both of you focused on the goals. [See Appendix 2.](#)

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- 1) The most important thing you can do for your mentee is helping them identify things that will or won't help them reach their goals and empower them to say no to other things.
- 2) Familiarize yourself with gender, cultural, and racial issues you may encounter as a mentor.¹⁻⁵
- 3) Prepare to communicate effectively. <https://womensleadership.stanford.edu/mentoring-creating-mutually-empowering-relationships>
- 4) Seek out training opportunities to be a better mentor⁶

Behaviors to Avoid as a Mentor

- Don't saddle your mentee with busy work.
- Don't steal your mentee's ideas.
- Box in your mentee. Know that most people need more than one mentor or sponsor.
- Don't overcommit. Know your bandwidth.
- Don't avoid difficult conversations.
- Don't try to create a miniature 'you'.

Further Reading:

- 1) Peggy McIntosh. White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf>
- 2) David Thomas. Race Matters. Harvard Business Review. April 2001. <https://hbr.org/2001/04/race-matters>
- 3) Shelley Correll. Creating a Level Playing Field. <https://womensleadership.stanford.edu/level>
- 4) W. Brad Johnson and David G. Smith. Mentoring Women is Not About 'Trying to Rescue Them.' Harvard Business Review. March 2018. <https://hbr.org/2018/03/mentoring-women-is-not-about-trying-to-rescue-them>
- 5) Myra Strober. Work and Family: Getting to 50/50. <https://womensleadership.stanford.edu/workfamily>
- 6) Kohn SE, O'Connell V. 9 Powerful Practices of Really Great Mentors. 2015 Career Press. Pompton Plains, NJ.