



WINC PRESENTS

An Introduction to Mentorship

TIPS TO FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

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What is Mentorship?

Do you want to move your career forward? Would you like to develop your leadership skills as well as help others learn, grow, and improve their skills? Or would you like to find someone who can help you do these things? You can—through a mentorship.

Mentorship is a relationship between two people with the goal of professional and personal development. The “mentor” is usually an experienced individual who shares knowledge, experience, and advice with a less experienced person, or “mentee.”

Mentors become trusted advisers and role models – people who have “been there” and “done that.” They support and encourage their mentees by offering suggestions and knowledge, both general and specific. The goal is to help mentees improve their skills and, hopefully, advance their careers.

A mentoring partnership may be between two people within the same company, same industry, or same networking organization. However, the partners come together, the relationship should be based on mutual trust and respect, and it typically offers personal and professional advantages for both parties.

Benefits of Mentorship

MENTEE BENEFITS

- Gain practical advice, encouragement, and support
- Learn from the experiences of others
- Increase your social and professional confidence
- Become more empowered to make decisions
- Develop your communication and personal skills
- Develop strategies for dealing with both personal and professional issues
- Identify goals and establish a sense of direction
- Gain valuable insight into the next stage of your career
- Build your network

MENTOR BENEFITS

- Improve communication and personal skills
- Develop leadership and management qualities
- Learn new perspectives
- Increase your confidence and motivation
- Engage in a volunteer opportunity that's valued by employers
- Enhance your resume
- Increase your circle of friends
- Gain recognition for your skills and experience
- Benefit from a sense of fulfillment and personal growth

Tips on Finding a Mentor

KNOW YOUR OWN GOALS.

What do you want to accomplish professionally in the next 3 months? 6 months? 1 year? The more specific you are with your goals, the easier it will be to find the right mentor.

FIND A PERSON YOU WANT TO BE LIKE - NOT JUST SOMEONE WITH THE JOB YOU COVET.

Who do you look up to? Find someone with whose strengths you admire and skills you want to emulate & get to know them. Read their blog, follow their social media. Do your research and learn how they got where they are.

TIMING IS KEY.

When asking someone to be your mentor, identifying the right time is crucial. Don't pop the question right off the bat. After all, it's a big commitment. Instead, request an initial meeting—something informal. Aim to keep it to less than an hour.

BE SPECIFIC WITH THE "ASK."

Tell them specifically what you've gotten out of past conversations with them (might be from that informal meeting). Be clear about how often you want to meet for and how long. Does it work for them? Mention that you will put together agendas prior to each meeting that will align with goals discussed.

REMEMBER MENTORSHIP IS AN OPTION AND NOT AN OBLIGATION.

We're all busy, so approach the ask fully aware he or she might say no. And that's okay! If the answer is no, mention you respect his or her choice and give your thanks for the consideration. That leaves the door open for a future relationship.

Tips on Being a Good Mentee

REMEMBER YOUR MENTOR IS A VOLUNTEER!

Your mentor is taking time out of their busy schedule to help you grow. Don't waste their time—be prepared to meet with an agenda. Show gratitude for their time and advice. Give plenty of notice if you need to cancel or reschedule.

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR OWN LEARNING.

A mentor is for guidance. You are still in charge of your own growth and learning—a mentor is just a resource.

DEVELOP TRUST.

This takes time especially when getting to know each other. Be open and honest in your communication. This should be a safe place for both sides; anything said at the table, stays at the table.

SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.

Set goals and expectations together at the beginning based on what you'd like help with.

BE OPEN ABOUT YOUR NEEDS.

Like any relationship, a mentorship must fit your needs, but it also takes communication. Telling your mentor what your need from them will allow you to flourish as a good mentee. Be honest if you need something to change.

RECOGNIZE YOUR MENTOR'S LIMITATIONS.

Mentors might be phenomenal, but they are still people. They aren't perfect. They have limited knowledge and abilities. Don't get frustrated if they don't have all the answers.

TAKE RISKS

Be open to your mentor pushing you and be open to feedback. We grow the most when we are pushed out of our comfort zones. Don't fight it. Take suggestions and do things that may scare you. Be flexible and learn.

Tips on Being a Good Mentor

ESTABLISH GROUND RULES THAT WORK BEST FOR YOU.

How much time can you give for an in- person meeting? 30 minutes? 1 hour? Is calling you between in person meetings okay? Certain times of day better than others?

SET GOALS MUTUALLY.

What are your mentee's priorities in meeting with you? What are they hoping to improve on?

SET A CONTACT SCHEDULE.

In-person? Phone call? Texting? Only during the day? After hours?

LISTEN CAREFULLY FIRST, THEN ASK AND ADVISE.

You have all kinds of accumulated wisdom, but the mentee isn't an empty vessel to pour all your knowledge into. Hear what they have to say before giving your opinion and challenging their point of view. Bring insights and perspectives they may not see. Help them find their own way and perspectives versus telling them what they should be.

BE ACCOUNTABLE TO EACH OTHER.

Trust and accountability are the foundations of an effective mentorship relationship. Create a safe place for the mentee to share with you. Anything they say to you should stay with you.

OPEN DOORS.

Have connections that could be beneficial to your mentee? Make the intro!

CHECK YOUR BIASES AND IMPULSES.

Avoid letting stereotypes distort your impressions. Keep an open mind!

BE FLEXIBLE AND LEARN.

Just because you are the mentor doesn't mean you won't learn from your mentee! They can offer perspectives that challenge your own and push you as a result.

Mentorship is Not ...

MENTORSHIP IS NOT COACHING OR TRAINING.

Coaches or trainers are paid for their services; a mentor's reward is altruistic.

MENTORSHIP IS NOT A PASSIVE ENDEAVOR.

It takes conscious effort and commitment on the part of all parties involved.

MENTORSHIP IS NOT THERAPY.

While a great mentor can help advise on tough professional—and potentially personal—situations, it's important not to treat a mentor as your shrink. Focus on positivity and making progress, not dwelling in past troubles.

MENTORSHIP IS NOT A ONE-WAY STREET.

Both the mentor and mentee need to come to the table to share and connect. Both sides have valuable information to share.

MENTORSHIP IS NOT A CURE-ALL.

Success in both personal and professional life is a product of many ingredients, not solely mentorship.

Examples of Discussion Topics

MEETING #1 – INTRODUCTIONS

- Discuss both of your career and educational backgrounds.
- Discuss your goals and objectives for the year in the mentorship program.
- Decide on the best form of communication for scheduling future meetings (e.g. phone, email, etc.).

MEETING #2 – CAREER PLANNING

- Continue your discussion about your mentor's history.
- Discuss 5–10-year planning and how you both plan to achieve your goals.
- Discuss skills necessary to achieve these goals.

MEETING #3 – WORK / LIFE BALANCE

- Discuss the challenges in achieving work/life balance.
- Create a plan or tips to ensure that you are able to achieve professional success without sacrificing your personal/family life.

MEETING#4 – LEADERSHIP / TEAMWORK

- Discuss the importance of leadership and teamwork as it relates to success.
- What challenges do you each face in being part of a team?
- What traits make a good leader?
- How can you improve your leadership skills?

MEETING#5 – UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES

- Discuss issues faced over the course of this year.
- Discuss lessons that you have each learned.
- Discuss other topics that you have not previously covered but wish to share with each other.

MEETING #6 – END OF YEAR EVALUATION

- Evaluate your year.
- Discuss what worked and didn't work in your mentorship year.
- Create a list of suggestions for next year's program.

Other Topic Ideas

MENTEE TO MENTOR

- What was your first industry job?
- How did you reach the position you are currently in?
- Do you have any regrets about your career choices?
- Did you ever make a mistake in a job and how did you come back from it?
- How should I handle this hard topic within my department?
- I am having trouble getting a member of my team to submit assignments on time. How do I address this in a proactive way?
- How can I inspire my department to meet its quarterly targets?
- How do I ask my boss for a raise?

MENTOR TO MENTEE

- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- What made you apply for your current role? How does it fit with your long-term plan?
- What do you like about your current role?
- What are your biggest challenges in your current role?
- What is your dream job? Did you already achieve it?
- What goals do you want to achieve within the next month? 6 months?
- How are you measuring your goals?
- What other roles are you interested in within your current company?
- Do you have any reservations about your current responsibilities?
- What methods do you use to communicate effectively with you team?
- What three words would you use to describe your leadership style?
- How's the company culture where you are? Does it resonate with you?
- How do you see your role benefiting the company?
- What areas do you think you could help improve at the company?

Next Steps

While we'd love to start matching up anyone interested in being mentors and mentees, mentorship is a very person-dependent endeavor and requires time and consideration to find the right fit.

However, we encourage anyone who is interested in mentorship to take the next step! Refer back to page 5 for tips on finding a mentor. If you have interest in *being* a mentor, consider young professionals in your life who might welcome additional professional guidance.

For questions regarding mentorship and taking the next step, please reach out to Kristin Reinitz via the information below. The WINC Board wishes you all the best on your mentorship journey!

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