

**Definition of a mentor** - A mentor facilitates personal and vocational growth in an individual by sharing the knowledge and insights that they learned through the years. A mentor's purpose is to be a role model, a coach, and an advocate.

**Role Model** : A role model is a person so effective in a vocational and personal way that he or she is a model for others. Since a mentor's behavior will influence their mentee's behavior, they should consider how they would appear if their actions were videotaped over a day. Would they be proud of themselves and of their mentee if they emulated the mentor's behavior?

**Coach** : Mentoring includes being supportive of the mentee's ideas; but it also requires acknowledging the strengths and helping the mentee to see the weaknesses in their ideas and overcome any shortcomings.

**Advocate** : Mentors serve as cheerleaders for their mentees, offering positive feedback to the mentee and to others about their work. Mentors need to acquire a reputation for being genuine and sincere with their praise by citing specific instances in which their mentee demonstrated his or her potential.

## Defining Effective and Ineffective Characteristics of a Mentor

### Effective Characteristics

#### **Spot the Potential & Believe in Others**

Effective mentors have a positive view of others that greatly increases how much learning can be transferred.

#### **A Networked & Resourceful Guide**

Effective mentors enjoy a positive reputation and are held in high regard. They act as a repository of information and provide just-in-time learning.

#### **Display Patience and Tolerance**

Effective mentors allow mentees to make mistakes and use the mistakes as opportunities to teach/learn.

#### **Give Encouragement**

Effective mentors possess the ability to build up mentees' self-esteem and encourage them.

#### **See the Big Picture**

Effective mentors have a larger perspective that helps them generate useful suggestions and bring up points that the mentee would otherwise not consider.

**If you are forgetful, fail to return phone calls, miss scheduled meetings, or are not accessible in an hour of need, then you are too busy to be a mentor.**

### Ineffective Characteristics

#### **Too Busy to Mentor**

Being busy does not have to kill a mentoring relationship; however, being too busy will.

#### **Use the Mentee as Help**

Instead of having the mentee's best interests at heart, you pass on responsibilities, assignments and loads of extra work that you do not want to do.

#### **Overly Critical**

If you are a criticizing mentor, you always point out why something is wrong. You feel that your position gives you a right to point out mistakes—all of them.

#### **Not with the Times**

You do not keep pace with the times and do not know the current trends of your field. In today's fast-paced information world, mentees need mentors who are keeping pace with the times.

#### **Ego Striving**

If you feel it might endanger your spotlight if your mentee becomes more successful than you do, then mentoring is not for you. Always having to be a notch up on the mentee will interfere with the free sharing of learning.

## Definition of a Mentee

A mentee also known as a protege, refers to the less experienced person who is receiving and benefiting from the acquired wisdom and years of practice of the more experienced individual.

## Defining Effective and Ineffective Characteristics of a Mentee

### Effective Characteristics

#### **Goal-Oriented**

Effective mentees place a high value on setting and accomplishing goals.

#### **Seek Challenges**

Effective mentees are not satisfied with status quo and are vocal about wanting and accepting new challenges.

#### **Take Initiative**

Effective mentees do not wait for others to notice them or their abilities and are willing to initiate a positive learning activity.

#### **Show Eagerness to Learn**

Effective mentees are curious about what they do not know and are able to ask for assistance or resources when faced with uncertain circumstances.

#### **Accept Personal Responsibility**

Effective mentees do not shift blame, procrastinate or become easily distracted, but readily admit and own failures and shortcomings.

### Ineffective Characteristics

#### **Too Self-Promoting**

Ineffective mentees are constantly positioning themselves or engaging in name-dropping.

#### **Too Busy**

Ineffective mentees have too much activity going on in their lives and will not give the mentoring relationship the proper time and attention required to be successful.

#### **Lack Passion for Others' (Mentor's) Area of Expertise**

Ineffective mentees do not show a personal drive to excel in other people's (mentor's) area(s) of mastery.

#### **Lack Focus**

Ineffective mentees hop from one thing to the next without fully committing to anything.

#### **Overly Dependent**

Ineffective mentees are overly needy for approval or require constant supervision, which is the job of the supervisor, not the mentor.

## Eight Mentoring Myths Shattered



Many of us think about mentoring and imagine the stereotype of the older mentor advising a younger professional with only the mentee receiving benefit from the relationship. Not true! Let us examine some of these myths.

### **Myth 1: Mentoring is a one-way street .**

Both people can learn from each other's strengths and experiences. A mentor can learn something new, because their mentee's perspective may make them think about things differently. A good mentoring partnership is always a two-way relationship.

### **Myth 2: A mentoring relationship can only be face-to-face.**

Many partnerships want to meet in person. However, face-to-face meetings may not always be possible, so it is important for the two parties to establish ground rules for communicating. That includes discussing whether they will connect via e-mail or phone and, if possible, meet in person. Meeting times as well as the topics to be discussed should be confirmed in advance.

### **Myth 3: Mentoring is a time-consuming process.**

Because each mentoring relationship depends on the mentor and mentee agreeing on the purpose and focus of their relationship, it is unique...and so is the time and energy that goes into it. The more each party puts into the partnership, the more they get back.

### **Myth 4: Expectations are the same for everyone.**

While many mentoring partners share similar reasons for being in a mentoring relationship—their individual expectations vary. Some mentors want to give back to their profession by sharing their knowledge and experiences. Others want to learn about industry trends and cutting-edge applications from their mentee.

### **Myth 5: Mentors must be older.**

Age is not a qualification or a disqualification from being a mentor. Mentors should be chosen for their understanding, skill, and capacity to share what they know based on the mentee's own professional development needs.

### **Myth 6: Developing a mentoring relationship is complicated.**

A mentoring partnership is only as complicated as one makes it. This training provides a variety of resources to guide the mentoring process

### **Myth 7: You need only one mentor at a time.**

Each mentor brings unique knowledge to the mentee, so having more than one can offer greater learning experiences. However, it is important for mentees to openly share their objectives with their mentors so that each mentor can be chosen for a specific area of development.

**Myth 8: Mentoring relationships happen on their own.** It is up to the mentees to have specific, measurable objectives and to find a mentor they will respect and trust to help them reach their goals. Once the partnership is under way and working, it is up to the partners to make the relationship blossom.



## Evolution of the Mentoring Relationship

How do the parties make a mentoring relationship with so many different components come together and work? They focus on their interpersonal relationship first by respecting their similarities as well as their differences. They develop a structure for their mentoring partnership that encourages appropriate timing, contains sufficient challenges, and achieves mutual outcomes. They allow the relationship to evolve in a structured, yet flexible manner that capitalizes on the strengths of both the mentor and mentee.

### Phase 1: Building rapport

The mentor and the mentee are exploring if they can work together. They are determining the alignment of values, establishing a mutual respect, agreeing on the purpose of their relationship, and establishing the roles, behaviors and expectations. This can only occur through open and honest dialogue.

**Rapport building competencies needed** include the skills of active listening, empathizing, and giving respect; of offering openness and trust to elicit reciprocal behavior; and of identifying and valuing both common ground and differences.

### Phase 2: Setting direction

This phase is all about goal setting. In the building rapport phase, the partners were establishing a sense of purpose; here they are determining what each of them should achieve through this relationship. They begin linking long-term goals with what is happening day-to-day.

**Direction setting competencies needed** include goal identification, clarification, and management; personal project planning; and testing the mentee's level of commitment to specific goals as well as the reality of achieving them.

### Phase 3: Progression

This phase is core of the relationship and the longest of the four. Here the both the mentor and mentee become more comfortable about challenging each other's perceptions. They explore issues more deeply and experience mutual learning. In addition, the mentee takes an increasing lead in managing the relationship and the mentoring process itself.

**Progress sustaining competencies needed** include the ability to sustain commitment, ensure sufficient challenge in the mentoring dialogue, help the mentee take increasing responsibility for managing the mentoring relationship by providing constructive feedback, and being available and understanding in helping the mentee cope with setbacks.

### Phase 4: Winding up and transition to a professional relationship

This phase occurs when the mentee has achieved a large amount of his or her goals or feels that they have the confidence to begin to plan how to continue the journey on their own. It is not always obvious to the mentee that they have reached this point; the mentor needs to be sensitive to this and can lead the mentee to this conclusion by comparing their goals to their achievements. This process helps avoid unhealthy dependency on either individual's part. Winding up by celebrating your accomplishments and begin to redefine the relationship, often into a friendship where both parties can utilize each other as an ad hoc sounding board and a source of networking contacts

**Transitional competencies needed** include sensitivity to the position of others and the ability to foster a positive end to the partnership.

## Mentor's Strategies for an Effective Mentoring Conversation

### Agenda Items

Take time getting to know each other.

Talk about mentoring

Determine the mentee's goals

Determine the mentee's relationship needs and expectations.

Define the deliverables and a time table.

Share your assumptions, needs, expectations and limitations with candor and confidentiality.

Discuss options and opportunities for learning.

### Strategies for Conversation

Obtain a copy of the mentee's bio in advance. If one is not available, create one through conversation.

Ask: Have you ever been engaged in a mentoring relationship? If so, what did you learn from that experience?

Ask: What do you want to learn from this experience?  
Give the mentee an opportunity to articulate broad goals.

Ask: What do you want out of this relationship?

Ask: What would success look like for you? What is your timetable for achieving it?

Ask for feedback.  
Discuss: Implications for the relationship.

Ask: How would you like to go about achieving your learning goals?

Discuss: Learning and communication styles

Ask: What is the most useful kind of assistance I can provide?

### Possible Mentor Approaches

Establish rapport.  
Exchange information.  
Identify points of connection.

Talk about your own mentoring experiences.

Determine if the mentee is clear about his or her goals and objectives.

Be sure you are clear about what your mentee wants from the mentoring relationship.

Do you have an area of expertise that is relevant to the mentee's learning goals?

What are you willing and capable of contributing to the relationship?

## What Can I Expect To Gain From A Mentoring Relationship?

One of key tasks a mentee needs to perform to ensure a productive relationship with a mentor is to be very clear about what you expect and need. No mentor will be able to meet all of your needs, but by explicitly articulating your expectations it will afford the mentor an opportunity to clarify which ones they can successfully meet.

## Are You Ready to be Mentored?

If you can answer yes to the following questions, you are ready to begin learning more about being a successful mentee.

- I accept full responsibility for my goals and would benefit from guidance in creating a plan for my development.
- I am prepared to listen, but I understand that I am also expected to contribute to the relationship by sharing my ideas.
- I will accept constructive feedback and take the risk of exploring new ideas and approaches suggested by my mentor.
- My expectations for my mentoring relationships are well-thought out and realistic.
- I am busy, but I am ready to make a commitment to my future by communicating effectively with my mentor.
- **I will remember that in order to succeed I must fail so that I will know what not to do next time**

## Qualities of a Successful Mentee

**Quality: Personal commitment to be involved with another person for an extended time.** The mentee has to want to be a full partner in the mentoring connection and be invested, over the long haul, to be there long enough to realize a difference. To that end, they prepare and do the appropriate "homework" for meetings with their mentor. They work to gain the skills, knowledge, and abilities to grow.

**Quality: Flexibility.** Successful mentees recognize that relationships take time to develop and that communication is a two-way street. They're flexible, listen to their mentor, and consider new options. They take initiative, seeking the mentor's advice when needed. And they focus on the goal, not getting lost in the process.

**Quality: Ability to recognize that mentoring is only ONE development tool.** Mentors can save you time plus inspire, teach, and encourage you. They can be excellent role models for what you want to do and become. At the same time, you can also learn from many other sources. By recognizing that you can benefit from a variety of sources, perspectives and styles – even those quite different from your own – you will open yourself up to new ideas, valuable information, and a wide range of viewpoints. Consider one or more mentors as part of your overall personal development strategy.

**Quality: Openness.** The mentee has to know and be able to discuss their needs and objectives with their mentor. This means that he or she has to look inside themselves to identify areas that may need work and share them with the mentor.

**Quality: Ability to listen and to accept different points of view.** The mentee needs to be able to receive feedback and look at the situation from the mentor's perspective to gain a more objective viewpoint. One of the biggest values of the mentoring connection is the ability to have a more experienced person's viewpoint. The mentee has to be willing to try new things, to consider different ways of "getting there from here."

## Mentee's Strategies for an Effective Mentoring Conversation

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Mentor's Job</u>	<u>Mentee's Job</u>
<b>Come prepared</b>	Learn whatever you can about your mentee before your initial meeting.	Learn whatever you can about your mentor before your initial meeting.
<b>Talk about the big picture</b>	Recount your own mentoring experiences to your mentee. Explain what worked and what didn't.	Listen and ask questions.
<b>Discuss the mentee's needs</b>	Ask questions and listen.	Explain where you are and where you would like to be...and how mentoring might help.
<b>Seek mutual agreement on goals and expectations</b>	Explain what you can and what you cannot do.	"This is what I hope to achieve through this mentoring relationship."
<b>Seek agreement on responsibilities</b>	<i>"I will do_____."</i>	<i>"And I agree to do_____."</i>
<b>Set a timetable</b>	"Let's work together for three months. Then we'll review progress and determine if we should continue ."	"Let's work together for three months. Then we'll review progress and determine if we should continue."
<b>Agree on meeting times and who will set them</b>	Provide days and times that work for the mentee.	"I will take responsibility for finding dates and times that also fit into your schedule."
<b>Insist on confidentiality</b>	"Nothing we discuss will go outside this room unless we both agree otherwise."	"Nothing we discuss will go outside this room unless we both agree otherwise."
<b>Agree to be candid</b>	"If this relationship isn't producing the results you expect, or if you disagree with my advice, say so. Neither of us has time to waste ."	"I will tell you if this relationship isn't working for me. I won't waste your time."

Source: (Harvard Business Essentials, Mentoring, 2004)

## A Periodic Mentoring Partnership Check-up

Over time the nature of the mentoring relationship may alter and support needs could change. Therefore it is valuable for a mentor and mentee, **together**, to review the process of the relationship at appropriate points and make any adjustments as necessary to the way they work together and the type of support provided. It will also be important both for all those experiencing the Mentoring process and those with responsibility for implementing the process to receive this type of feedback regarding the effectiveness of its implementation.

Below is a list of some questions that might be useful in this process:

- How is the mentoring partnership working?
- What is working well?
- What, if anything, is working not as well as you had hoped?
- What are you both gaining from your experience of the process?
- What does your mentee appreciate about the support the mentor is providing?
- What additional support might the mentee welcome?
- What external constraints or difficulties are affecting the partnership? How might these be resolved?
- What changes might be helpful to make in the way the program or either party operates within its expectations ?

# Template Mentoring Partnership Agreement

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**We have agreed on the following goals and objectives as the focus of this mentoring relationship:**

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We have discussed the protocols by which we will work together in partnership and collaborate on the development of a work plan. In order to ensure that our relationship is a mutually rewarding and satisfying experience for both of us, we agree to:

**1. Meet regularly.**

We agree that our specific schedule of contact and meeting, including additional meetings, is as follows: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Look for multiple opportunities** and experiences to enhance the mentee's learning.

We agree to the following specific opportunities and venues for learning:

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**3. Maintain confidentiality of our relationship.**

We agree that confidentiality encompasses:

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**4. Honour the ground rules we have developed for the relationship.**

We agree the ground rules as:

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**5. Provide regular feedback to each other and evaluate progress.**

We agree to accomplish this by:

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We agree to meet regularly until we accomplish our predefined goals or for a maximum of [specify timeframe]. \_\_\_\_\_ At the end of this time, we will review this Agreement, evaluate our progress and reach a learning conclusion. Once we have agreed on this, the relationship will be considered complete.

However, if we choose to continue the mentoring partnership, we may negotiate a basis for continuation, as long as we have stipulated mutually agreed terms and goals.

In the event that one of us believes the relationship is no longer productive or the learning situation is compromised, we may decide to seek outside intervention or conclude the relationship. In this event, we agree to use closure as a learning opportunity.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentee's Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Mentoring Action Plan Worksheet

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**GOAL :** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Knowledge to Gain/Skills to Build/Attitudes to Develop to Accomplish my Goal</b> <i>(What must I acquire/improve?)</i>	<b>Projected Outcome</b> <i>(How will I know I did it?)</i>	<b>Action Steps</b> <i>(How will I actually gain/build/develop these?)</i>	<b>Resources Needed</b> <i>(Besides the help of my mentor, I will need what?)</i>	<b>Target Completion Date</b> <i>(When will I be there?)</i>