

# MENTORING GUIDE

## *A Guide for Mentors*



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## What is Mentoring?

In *The Odyssey* (written by Homer, a Greek poet), Odysseus (known as Ulysses in the Latin translation) was preparing to fight the Trojan War when he realized he would be leaving behind his only son and heir, Telemachus. Since the child was young and wars typically dragged on for years (the Trojan War lasted 10 years), Ulysses entrusted Telemachus' care and education to Mentor, his wise, trusted friend.

Today, mentoring is a process in which an experienced individual helps another person develop his or her goals and skills through a series of time-limited, confidential, one-on-one conversations and other learning activities. Mentors also draw benefits from the mentoring relationship. As a mentor, you will have the opportunity to share your wisdom and experiences, evolve your own thinking, develop a new relationship, and deepen your skills as a mentor.

## How Do I Become a Mentor?

There are many kinds of mentoring relationships, ranging from informal to formal. An *informal mentoring relationship* usually occurs in a spontaneous format. (Think of times you have been helped by someone more experienced than you without explicitly asking to be mentored.) Informal mentoring may also occur within the context of other relationships such as a supervisory relationship or even peer relationships. A *formal mentoring relationship* is characterized by its intentionality – the partners in the relationship ask for or offer the mentoring, establish goals for the relationship and make agreements about its nature. There are also mentoring programs that facilitate formal mentoring relationships. A *“facilitated” mentoring relationship* has been defined as “...a structure and series of processes designed to create effective mentoring relationships; guide the desired behavior change for those involved; and evaluate the results for the protégés, the mentors and the organization.”<sup>1</sup> These mentoring relationships occur within a structured and defined framework and involve a third party. Often these programs have a specific goal such as helping participants develop their careers.

Mentoring relationships can occur at all professional levels. The key feature of a mentoring relationship is that a more experienced individual helps another achieve his or her goals and develop as a person. The mentor may help the protégé (the person being mentored) develop specific job skills or leadership capacities. The mentor may work in the same organization, have experience in the protégé's organizational context, or have experience in the same field.

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<sup>1</sup> Murray, M. *Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring: How to Facilitate an Effective Mentoring Process*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 2001.

If you have been approached to be a mentor, or would like to offer to be someone's mentor, reflect on these questions prior to committing to the relationship:

- What experiences and learning can I bring to the mentoring relationship?
- What are my own expectations for the relationship?
- Are there any obstacles that could impede the relationship's development?

This guide will help you develop the skills you need to make the most of the mentoring relationship, whether formal or informal. Use it to plan your mentoring interactions. (A companion guide, *Mentoring Guide: A Guide for Protégés*, is also available. See Appendix III.) Although mentors can be sought for various spheres of one's life, this guide focuses on mentoring within a professional context. The guide's format is intentionally simple and brief to facilitate its use by busy people.

## Key Mentoring Skills

The mentoring literature shows that mentors and protégés tend to employ certain mentoring skills. Research also indicates that these skills can be developed, and that particular skills or competencies seem to result in the most successful mentoring relationships. Linda Phillips-Jones, Ph.D., mentoring expert and author of *The New Mentors & Protégés: How to Succeed with the New Mentoring Partnerships*, and numerous guides and tools for mentors and protégés (see Appendix III), studied hundreds of mentor-protégé relationships and developed a set of critical mentoring skills and competencies. The key mentoring skills discussed here are adapted from her work.

KEY MENTORING SKILLS
<i>Listening Actively</i>
<i>Building Trust</i>
<i>Determining Goals and Building Capacity</i>
<i>Encouraging &amp; Inspiring</i>

You will likely recognize the skills outlined here and may have experience employing them successfully in other relationships. As you progress through the mentoring relationship, try to employ these skills whenever possible.

### 1. Listening Actively

Listening actively is the most basic skill you will use throughout your relationship. Active listening not only establishes rapport but creates a positive, accepting environment that permits open communication. By listening actively, you will ascertain your protégé's interests and needs. Examples include the following:

- Show interest in what he or she is saying, and reflect back important aspects of what he or she has said to show that you've understood;
- Use body language (such as making eye contact) that shows you are paying attention to what he or she is saying; and
- If you are talking to him or her by phone, reduce background noise and limit interruptions. Your protégé will feel that he or she has your undivided attention. When utilizing e-mail, answer within 24 hours if possible, and be sure your message is responsive to his or her original message.

- Reserve discussing your own experiences or giving advice until after your protégé has had a chance to thoroughly explain his or her issue, question, or concern.

## **2. Building Trust**

Trust is built over time. You will increase trust by keeping your conversations and other communications with your protégé confidential, honoring your scheduled meetings and calls, consistently showing interest and support, and by being honest with your protégé.

## **3. Determining Goals and Building Capacity**

As a role model, you should have your own career and personal goals and share these, when appropriate, with your protégé. It is also likely that he or she will ask you how you set and achieved your own goals. In addition, you can help your protégé identify and achieve his or her career and personal goals.

You will develop your protégé's capacity for learning and achieving his or her goals by doing the following:

- Assisting him or her with finding resources such as people, books, articles, tools and web-based information;
- Imparting knowledge and skills by explaining, giving useful examples, demonstrating processes, and asking thought-provoking questions;
- Helping him or her gain broader perspectives of his or her responsibilities and organization; and
- Discussing actions, you've taken in your career and explaining your rationale.

## **4. Encouraging and Inspiring**

According to Dr. Phillips-Jones' research, giving encouragement is the mentoring skill most valued by protégés. There are many ways to encourage your protégé.

Try some of these:

- Comment favorably on his or her accomplishments;

- Communicate your belief in his or her capacity to grow personally and professionally and reach his or her goals; and
- Respond to his or her frustrations and challenges with words of support, understanding, encouragement and praise. (Just knowing that someone else has been there can be tremendously helpful.)

You can also inspire your protégé to excel. Examples include the following:

- Share your personal vision or those of other leaders;
- Describe experiences, mistakes, and successes you or others have encountered on the road to achieving your goals;
- Talk with him or her about people and events that have inspired and motivated you; and
- Introduce him or her to your colleagues who can be additional useful contacts or inspiring models.

Reflecting on your mentoring practice, noting use of the key mentoring skills, observing progress made in the relationship, and requesting feedback from your protégé are excellent ways to assess whether you are employing these skills.



## Stages of Formal Mentoring Relationships<sup>2</sup>

Like most relationships, mentoring relationships progress through stages. Your formal mentoring relationship will likely reflect four developmental stages with each stage forming an inherent part of the next:

- I. Building the Relationship
- II. Exchanging Information and Setting Goals
- III. Working Towards Goals/Deepening the Engagement
- IV. Ending the Formal Mentoring Relationship and Planning for the Future

There is no strict formula for determining the length of each stage. In a year-long relationship, for example, Stages I and II typically unfold during the first three to four months of the relationship. Typically, the relationship winds down in months 11 and 12. Options for continuing the relationship in a less formal way are addressed in Stage IV.

The sections that follow discuss practical activities for progressing successfully through each stage.

### Stage I: Building the Relationship

During this phase, you will get to know each other and begin to establish trust.

During your first meeting (ideally face-to-face), discuss your backgrounds, experiences, interests, and expectations. You will also make agreements about confidentiality and the frequency of contact.

During this first stage, it is important to establish a schedule for communicating regularly, whether in-person, by phone, or e-mail.

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<sup>2</sup> Phillips-Jones, L. (2001) Personal communication. Adapted from CCC/The Mentoring Group's Mentor and Mentee training materials.

There are a number of questions you may want to ask your protégé during your second meeting:

- Tell me a little more about yourself, your skills, your organization or community, the political environment, some key challenges you are facing, etc. (Begin by reflecting back a few of the key experiences and interests he or she expressed during your first meeting.)
- How have you benefited from other mentoring relationships?
- What are some of your preliminary goals for our mentoring relationship?

## Stage II: Exchanging Information and Setting Goals

During Stage II, you will exchange more information and set goals. Your relationship and trust will deepen. As the mentoring relationship unfolds, be attentive to practicing active listening and consistently expressing encouragement.

### Helping Your Protégé Set Goals:

By exchanging information, you will gain insight into the goals your protégé hopes to achieve through the mentoring relationship. Mentors have provided their protégés with input and support on a great variety of issues and challenges. For example, your protégé may want to improve his or her skills in a particular area. Alternatively, he or she may need your guidance on a major decision.

Goals are helpful because they help the protégé see beyond the day-to-day demands of his or her position and help him or her gain clarity on how to get the most out of the mentoring relationship. Encourage your protégé to discuss his or her goals with you. Suggest that he or she complete the Goal Form (Appendix II) and share it with you.

Coach your protégé to refer back to his or her goals periodically as a way of re-focusing on goals and measuring progress. Referring to the goals regularly is also a good way for you to know if you are helping him or her achieve them.

## Stage III: Working Towards Goals/Deepening the Engagement

During Stage III, which is typically the longest, you will help your protégé work towards achieving his or her goals through conversations, sharing written materials, trying various learning and development activities, and introducing him or her to other colleagues. This is a rich phase marked by openness and trust, meaningful discussion, and application of new insights and approaches. Your protégé needs your ongoing encouragement at this stage. You may also feel comfortable enough to challenge him or her to think in new ways or approach a problem differently.

This is a good point in the journey to reflect on progress toward goals and on the relationship itself. Consider discussing the following:

- What are the benefits of the relationship up to this point? How am I helping you (protégé) achieve your goals?
- What changes do you see in yourself and in the way, you approach your work as a result of the mentoring relationship?
- What kinds of adjustments or changes, if any, are needed in your goals or in our relationship?

This is also the stage during which energy in the relationship can wane! Sometimes, the protégé will feel concerned that he or she is burdening you. Other responsibilities will often compete with his or her commitment to the mentoring relationship. If you haven't heard from your protégé, check in with him or her. Take the lead if necessary. Also take stock of your own time and energy. Is the partnership working well for you? Do you need to make some adjustments?

This is a highly rewarding phase of the relationship, but challenges may arise. Here are some examples of challenges other mentors and protégés have faced and resolved.

- **Time and energy.** The most common challenge by far is finding sufficient time to do all you want to do in the partnership. Despite good intentions, other priorities interfere for both of you.

**Solution:** Think small rather than large, especially in the beginning. Avoid promising more time than you can deliver. Check with your protégé to be certain you are both comfortable with the time you are spending and with the learning that is occurring.

- **Building trust quickly.** With only a few hours of contact each month, it is not easy to build the kind of trust you both would like.

**Solution:** Other mentors have successfully used several strategies, such as the following: Listen very carefully, and remember what your protégé has said in the past. Demonstrate your credibility. Keep your promises and commitments -- if any need to be changed, let your protégé know immediately and reschedule or renegotiate them. Admit some errors made and lessons learned. Avoid talking negatively about others. Above all, keep the confidences your protégé shares with you.

- **Not being the “expert” on all your protégé’s needs.** Many mentors find it difficult when they do not have all the answers.

**Solution:** Explain your role as “learning facilitator” early in your relationship. Tell your protégé that you will not have all the answers, and you are looking forward to learning together as well as seeking help from others who are more expert on different topics.

- **Being sensitive to differences.** Particularly in the beginning, it is tempting to assume that both of you are the same. In fact, you will share experiences. Explore and learn from your differences as well.

**Solution:** In addition to discovering all your similarities, work carefully to identify the differences between you and your protégé. For example, how do the specifics of his or her position differ from the role(s) you’ve played? What is occurring now for him or her that you did not face? If you are of different generations/ages, genders, races, cultural groups, or professional backgrounds, what different experiences have you both had? Assume a learning mode and invite discussion about all of these topics. As Stephen Covey reminds us in **Seven Habits of Highly Effective People**, “Seek first to understand.”

## Stage IV: Ending the Formal Mentoring Relationship and Planning for the Future

During this stage, planning for the protégé's continued success is balanced with bringing the formal mentoring relationship to a close. Work with your protégé to define the types of support he or she may need in the future. You may want to connect him or her with additional colleagues who can provide benefits other than those provided by you. This is also a good time to explore your protégé's own interest in one day mentoring someone.

Adjournment brings closure to the journey. Your final discussion should be dedicated to the following:

- Reflecting on accomplishments, challenges, and progress towards goals;
  - What will your protégé remember most about the relationship?
  - What challenges lie ahead for him or her?
- Exploring other types of support, he or she may still need;
- Discussing whether the relationship will continue informally and how you will implement that; and
- Expressing thanks and best wishes!

## Appendix I

### Mentoring Best Practices

- Think of yourself as a “learning facilitator” rather than the person with all the answers. Help your protégé find people and other resources that go beyond your experience and wisdom on a topic.
- Emphasize questions over advice giving. Use probes that help your protégé think more broadly and deeply. If he or she talks only about facts, ask about feelings. If he or she focuses on feelings, ask him or her to review the facts. If he or she seems stuck in an immediate crisis, help him or her see the big picture.
- When requested, share your own experiences, lessons learned, and advice. Emphasize how your experiences could be different from his or her experiences and are merely examples. Limit your urge to solve the problem for him or her.
- Resist the temptation to control the relationship and steer its outcomes; your protégé is responsible for his or her own growth.
- Help your protégé see alternative interpretations and approaches.
- Build your protégé’s confidence through supportive feedback.
- Encourage, inspire, and challenge your protégé to achieve his or her goals.
- Help your protégé reflect on successful strategies he or she has used in the past that could apply to new challenges.
- Be spontaneous now and then. Beyond your planned conversations, call or e-mail “out of the blue” just to leave an encouraging word or piece of new information.
- Reflect on your mentoring practice. Request feedback.
- Enjoy the privilege of mentoring. Know that your efforts will likely have a significant impact on your protégé’s development as well as your own.

## Appendix II

### MENTORING GOAL FORM\*

(To be completed by the protégé.)

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

What do you want to achieve through engaging in the mentoring relationship? Complete this form and discuss your goals with your mentor. Examine your goals periodically, and discuss progress made.

Goal #1:

*Benefits to You:*

*Benefits to Your Program/Organization/Community:*

*Potential Barriers to Success:*

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\* Adapted from Leadership Enterprises ([www.leadershipenterprises.com](http://www.leadershipenterprises.com))

*Resources/Support Needed to Achieve Goal:*

*How Progress Will Be Measured:*

Goal #2:

*Benefits to You:*

*Benefits to Your Program/Organization/Community:*

*Potential Barriers to Success:*

*Resources/Support Needed to Achieve Goal:*

*How Progress Will Be Measured:*



Goal #3:

*Benefits to You:*

*Benefits to Your Program/Organization/Community:*

*Potential Barriers to Success:*

*Resources/Support Needed to Achieve Goal:*

*How Progress Will Be Measured:*

## Appendix III

### Selected Annotated Bibliography

#### Mentoring

Bell, C. R. (1998) ***Managers as Mentors***. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers. Chip Bell's approach to mentoring embodies development for the protégé and the mentor as well as important psychological principles of interpersonal development. Bell's approach is suitable for individuals at differing levels of both work and mentoring experience.

Center for Health Leadership & Practice (2002) ***Mentoring Guide: A Guide for Protégés***. Oakland, CA: Center for Health Leadership & Practice, Public Health Institute. This is the companion guide to *Mentoring Guide: A Guide for Mentors*. Available at [www.cfhl.org](http://www.cfhl.org).

Cohen, N. (1999) ***Effective Mentoring***. Amherst, Massachusetts: HRD Press. This practical small pocket guide provides quick access to basic mentoring concepts and techniques. It supports the developmental approach to mentoring relationships, i.e. the need to be aware of mentor behaviors, importance of maintaining/monitoring the relationship via written documentation, etc. Critical keys to successful mentoring are clarity of goals and making connections.

Murray, M. (2001) ***Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring: How to Facilitate an Effective Mentoring Process***. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Provides models and guidelines for designing, implementing and evaluating a facilitated mentoring process within organizations. Includes useful tools and case examples.

Peterson, D.B. & Hicks, M.D. (1996) ***Leader as Coach***. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Personnel Decisions International Corporation. The authors approach coaching as a critical dimension of leadership. Many of the strategies, techniques, and models presented can be applied to mentoring relationships.

Phillips-Jones, L. (2000) ***The Mentor's Guide***. Grass Valley, CA: Coalition of Counseling Centers (CCC)/The Mentoring Group. Practical workbook for mentors. Includes Mentor's View of Mentoring Process, Frequently Asked Questions, Critical Mentoring Skills, Mentoring Etiquette, detailed Mentor's Checklist of Tasks, Sample Activities, blank and sample Mentor Plans, etc. Appropriate for new and experienced mentors.

Phillips-Jones, L. (2000) ***The Mentee's Guide***. Grass Valley, CA: Coalition of Counseling Centers (CCC)/The Mentoring Group. Practical workbook for persons seeking or paired with mentors. Includes protégé's View of Mentoring

Process, Frequently Asked Questions, Critical Mentoring Skills, detailed protégé's Checklist, Mentoring Etiquette, blank and sample protégé plans, etc.

Phillips-Jones, L. (2001) ***The New Mentors and Protégés: How to Succeed with the New Mentoring Partnerships***. Grass Valley, CA: Coalition of Counseling Centers (CCC)/The Mentoring Group. Describes how to find the right mentors and become a mentor for others. Includes numerous cases, how mentoring changed in the nineties, the new mentoring etiquette, and design ideas for planned mentoring.

Phillips-Jones, L. (2000) **"Strategies for Getting the Mentoring You Need: A Look at Best Practices of Successful Mentees."** Grass Valley, CA: Coalition of Counseling Centers (CCC)/The Mentoring Group. 14-page booklet for individuals looking for specifics on finding mentors. Used as career development resource for individuals in all levels of organizations.

Phillips-Jones, L. (1998) **"75 Things to Do with Your Mentees: Practical and Effective Development Activities You can Try."** Grass Valley, CA: Coalition of Counseling Centers (CCC)/The Mentoring Group. 12-page booklet of protégé development activities successfully used by mentors.

Shea, G.F. (1999) ***Making the Most of Being Mentored: How to Grow from a Mentoring Partnership***. Menlo Park, CA: Crisp Publications, Inc. Offers information, exercises and self-study activities for protégés and people seeking a mentor.

Shea, G.F. (1996) ***Mentoring: A Practical Guide***. Menlo Park, CA: Crisp Publications, Inc. A simple middle manager level "how to" book on mentoring that effectively presents concrete, detailed activities and exercises. The author advances the notion that mentoring is the empowerment of the protégé by developing his or her abilities in a dynamic partnership.

Zachary, L. J. (2000) ***The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships***. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. A comprehensive guide to developing successful mentoring relationships and programs. Includes useful examples and exercises.

### **Learning/Creativity**

Dalton, M.A. (1998) ***Becoming a More Versatile Learner***. Greensboro, North Carolina: Center for Creative Leadership. Versatility in learning and helping a protégé understand the personal and even political power of that versatility can be critical to the success of a mentoring relationship. This 25-page book captures the expansion process of learning.

Gryskiewicz, S. (1999) ***Positive Turbulence: Developing Climates for Creativity, Innovation, and Renewal***. Greensboro, North Carolina: Center for Creative Leadership. Sometimes a mentoring relationship can stall because of contextual factors for the protégé. This book is about changing climates - from roles and relationships to economics and politics.

von Oech, R. (1990) ***A Whack on the Side of the Head: How You Can Be More Creative***. New York, New York: Warner Books. This classic book is one of the best quick hits on trying to move to a different way of looking at something. Both clever and humorous, this book will help a protégé or mentor become more creative.

### **Personal Purpose/Direction/Meaning**

Hakim, C. (1994) ***We Are All Self-Employed: The New Social Contract for Working in a Changed World***. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers. Hakim presents a convincing case that everyone, whether self-employed or part of a large organization, is responsible for their own career success. He provides numerous ideas for how to discover one's passion and how to find or create satisfying work.

Leider, R.J. (1997) ***The Power of Purpose: Creating Meaning in Your Life and Work***. New York, New York: MJF Books. Leider offers a compelling discussion of the call to work, a frequently identified topic between mentor and protégé. He provides a practical guide for creating meaning in your life and work. He focuses on living and working from the inside out, grounding soul work in the common practice of everyday life.

Leider, R. J. & Shapiro, D.A. (1996) ***Repacking Your Bags: How to Live with a New Sense of Purpose***. New York, New York: MJF Books. Often revealed in a mentoring relationship is the dynamic of "I have no balance in my life between work and family." The authors present a step-by-step approach to help a person set down the unnecessary burdens carried in life and live with a renewed sense of purpose.

### **Interpersonal Relationships/Managing Conflict/Dealing with Politics**

Scott, G. G. (2000) ***Work with Me: Resolving Everyday Conflict in Your Organization***. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing. Significant time may be spent in a mentoring relationship discussing ways to handle power struggles, politics of the work context, and friction with difficult people. Scott presents the model ERI (emotion, reason, and intuition) for managing these issues and dealing with politics.

Wall, B. (1999) ***Working Relationships: The Simple Truth About Getting Along with Friends and Foes at Work***. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing. No matter how good you are at what you do, the most important factor – and often the most frustrating challenge – in determining your success and satisfaction in the workplace is your ability to forge effective relationships with others. Often a topic of discussion in a mentoring relationship, this book offers excellent examples for handling the world of interpersonal relationships.