

How To Be A Great Mentor

Jacquelyn Smith, FORBES STAFF *If it has to do with leadership, jobs, or careers, I'm on it. The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.* - William Arthur Ward

Have you employed a mentor to help you navigate the professional world? Maybe you found her during your first job search; perhaps it was when you transitioned careers. Either way—your mentor most likely provided guidance and helped you overcome challenges. And if you're really lucky, she inspired you along the way.

According to **David Parnell**, a legal consultant, communication coach and author, when it comes to mentorship, it is an unwritten rule that "one should give back at least what they've received."

So, if you've ever had a mentor, you might want to think about paying it forward.

"Mentoring—or at minimum connecting with a variety of people in all industries and age groups—has never been more important," says **Pamela Ryckman**, author of *Stiletto Network: Inside the Women's Power Circles That Are Changing the Face of Business*.

But it's a big responsibility.

A mentor must believe in her mentee, both personally and professionally, Ryckman explains. "Mentors help fill your knowledge gaps and seek opportunities to help you grow and excel. A mentor is someone with whom you can let down your guard, share your insecurities, and ask the 'stupid' questions we all have sometimes."

A great mentor also sees her mentee as a person, not just an employee. She knows enough about their personal life to understand the external factors that impact their work, and cares about their happiness. "A [great] mentor is honest and unafraid to tell you hard truths about yourself and your work," Ryckman adds. "She helps you navigate the politics of your organization or profession, and avoid the land mines. She pushes you to take risks and aim higher, and advocates for you when you're not there."

There's a lot of personal satisfaction that comes from watching someone you care about reach his full potential. But as it turns out, mentoring goes far beyond that.

"Helping someone else succeed can be immensely gratifying," Ryckman says. "But what I've heard time and again from executive 'elders' is how much they gain in return when they mentor young people. They're often surprised at how much they learn from their mentees. Mentoring really goes both ways; when different generations come together, their blend of skills can be highly complementary."

Ryan Kahn, a career coach, founder of **The Hired Group**, star of *MTV's Hired*, and author of *Hired! The Guide for the Recent Grad*, adds: "By investing in others you're also investing in yourself. For example, as you move forward in your career, you'll need to be able to identify and recruit fresh talent. Having a strong network of mentees can help you find and grow these rising stars."

Want to become a great mentor? Here are 9 things you'll need to do:

Always play both roles. Ideally, one would never have to make the transition from mentee to mentor, Ryckman says. "We should all be learning from others (playing the mentee role) and teaching others (being the mentor) throughout our careers."

Be committed. Being a mentor is a commitment, Kahn says. “If you’re offering to help someone you need to follow through with that promise by being there for them when needed.”

Know that your mentee can be anyone, anywhere. “Mentoring needn’t follow the traditional ‘elder-upstart’ prescription anymore. It can be peer-to-peer across functions or industries,” Rychman says. “It’s about supplementing skill gaps and helping each person learn and grow.” As a mentor, you’re someone who knows something your mentee doesn’t, and you care enough to help them learn and succeed.

Listen. One of your jobs a mentor is to provide advice and encouragement, but in order to do so, you need to make the time to listen and understand the situation, Kahn says. “Intently listening to a mentee as they vent and, ideally, sort their way through confusion, is often more than enough to get them through the day,” Parnell says. “If you ask any therapist about the power of listening, they will tell you the same thing: It is massive. Any mentor that is worth their weight spends considerably more time listening than they do speaking.”

Have your own mentor(s) and network. Today, the most successful people build relationships and gather intelligence from a wide variety of experts in all industries and age brackets, Rychman says. “People who are insular—who always return to the same small circle for advice and support—become closed off from opportunities.” In order to be the very best mentor, you need to continue building your network and taking advice from those you trust.

Be open-minded and compassionate. “If you’ve ever argued with someone, you know that they will never see your side until they’re convinced that you’ve seen theirs,” Parnell says. “And to provide valuable guidance and advice that is well received, it is necessary to first understand the mentee’s needs, wants, feelings, et cetera. This can only come in the form of deep and implicit empathy.”

Have patience. Much like parenting, mentoring can be a satisfying, but also long-term and trying, endeavor, Parnell says. “While the mentee needs and wants direction, often times this requires a bit of constructive criticism, which can be hard to take. It is vital that a mentor be a patient soul, because tempers may flare, and quick fixes are few and far between.”

Be a role model. As a mentor, your actions are being evaluated, so you must set the bar for yourself just as high, or higher, than you’d expect from your mentee, Kahn says. “Your goal is to not only provide direction and advice, but to get your mentee to act upon them,” Parnell adds. “And while conversations can be motivating, few things are more impactful than to lead by example. A mentor’s mantra must be: ‘Do as I do, not just as I say.’”

Care about the relationship. “Invest yourself in your mentee and you’ll get so much more out of the experience,” Kahn says. “Mentees are usually eager, invested, and can be a bit vulnerable, leaving them to hang on your words and to pay close attention to, well, everything you do,” Parnell says. “Few things are more demotivating than ‘phoning in’ your time and efforts; it takes a sincere interest in the

betterment of your mentee to avoid this. So, if you can't muster a sincere desire right from the beginning, you'll do better to find a more suitable fit, because you may do more harm than good," he concludes.

12 Keys to Being a SuperMentee (the Kind of Mentee Every Mentor Loves)

So you've landed a mentor. Here's how to use your superpowers to keep both sides of the relationship revved and rewarding.

By **Scott Mautz** Author, *'Find the Fire: Ignite Your Inspiration and Make Work Exciting Again'* [@scott_mautz](#)

In my [last article](#), I shared how to choose--and even trickier, approach--the right mentor. Because you obviously plan your life around [my column](#) and follow its wisdom to a T, you've done that successfully.

Now what?

It's time to make the absolute most out of this potentially powerful [relationship](#). You enter this energized, and you plan to stay that way. How do you keep your mentor fully [energized](#) as well?

Here are the 12 keys to being a SuperMentee:

- 1. Be worth the time and energy.** The bottom line is to be committed to the relationship. The top complaint of mentors is flaky mentees--ones who don't seem all-in on the partnership. Don't be that guy or girl.
- 2. Understand that you own the relationship.** It's not your mentor's job to set the next appointment or to do the little organizing/structural things to keep the partnership going. That's on you.
- 3. Know what you want, and ask for what you need.** They want to provide more, not less, help. They don't want to deal with the helpless. Research is clear that the more specific an ask, the more potent the assistance offered.
- 4. Be prepared, personable and packed.** News flash, your mentor is a busy person. The more productive the meeting, the more they'll feel like it's time well spent. So be fully prepared and don't be afraid to have a full agenda. And while you're at it, don't just be in advice extraction mode--be personable, be you. You can call these the three Ps.
- 5. Take action on the advice, run through doors opened for you.** This is the meat of the relationship, so take the advice (if you agree with it) and act on it. Then, let the mentor know you're doing so. If they open a door of opportunity for you, visibly sprint through it.
- 6. Be hungry, but not a head-nodder.** Show up as hungry to learn, take advice, and grow. But don't just be a "yes" person. It's okay to respectfully push back if the mentor doesn't have full context or if you simply don't agree. This is meant to be a conversation, not a dictation. Such skills are required for success in business and will signal to the mentor that they've bet on a thoroughbred.

7. Ask thoughtful questions. Great questions are more likely to yield great answers, and the mentor will be encouraged to up their own game on the question-asking front.

8. Check your ego at the door. Now is not the time for pride or defensiveness. Be open to feedback and just be ready to be eminently coachable.

9. Set short and long term goals, and share progress. Mentors love to see specific [goals](#) set, and the better ones will hold you accountable to those goals. They'll also find progress reports rewarding. Wouldn't you?

10. Have realistic expectations of the mentor. Not everyone will actually land Warren Buffet--someone who invests a surprising amount of time and energy into the relationship--as a mentor, so manage your expectations. If your mentor is under-delivering, that's different. There's nothing wrong with a graceful dissolution.

11. Show gratitude, honesty, and respect (especially for the mentor's time). Sorry, I don't mean to sound like your parents here--and I know you know this point. But research indicates a surprising number of mentees forget to show [gratitude](#) and aren't always forthright and/or courteous.

12. Add value. Look for ways to add value to the mentor's life, besides just the inherent value they get from mentoring.

Mentoring Agreement Form

We are both voluntarily entering into this partnership. We wish this to be a rewarding experience, spending most of our time discussing developmental activities. We agree that...

1. The mentoring relationship will last for _____ months. This period will be evaluated every three to six months and will end by amicable agreement once we have achieved as much as possible.
2. We will meet at least once every _____ weeks. Meeting times, once agreed, should not be cancelled unless this is unavoidable. At the end of each meeting we will agree a date for the next meeting.
3. Each meeting will last a minimum of _____ minutes and a maximum of - _____ minutes.
4. In between meetings we will contact each other by telephone/email no more than once every _____ weeks/days.
5. The aim of the partnership is to discuss and resolve the following issues:
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
6. We agree that the role of the mentor is to:

7. We agree that the role of the mentee is to:

8. We agree to keep the content of these meetings confidential.
9. The mentor agrees to be honest and provide constructive feedback to the mentee. The mentee agrees to be open to the feedback.

Date: _____

Mentor's signature: _____

Mentee's signature: _____

Date for Review: _____

Individual Development Plan Template

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a listing of goals, SMART objectives, and strategies to achieve your objectives and goals. An IDP also allows you to describe your own strengths and challenges as well as external resources and potential barriers. It is a tool to help you design your career path. We recommend including your Mission as part of your IDP.

Mission: To provide outstanding clinical care and improve treatment for patients with advance liver disease			
Goal: <u>Example</u> 1. Promotion to Assoc Professor	Objectives (SMART- specific, measureable, achievable, relevant, time-bound): 1a. Publish 2 manuscripts per year 1b. Submit a research grant 1c. Speak at national meetings	Strategies (action items): 1a. Join a writing accountability group 1b. Submit an abstract 1c. Take a grant writing class 1d. Learn more about study design and biostats 1e. Seek opportunities to speak at other hospitals and CMEs	Metric of success and timeline: 1a. WAG formed and meeting weekly- 2mos 1b. AHA abstract deadline- 3 months 1c. OFD GRIGs- 6 mos 1d. Complete JHSPH summer epi/biostats course- 7 mos 1e. Seek sponsorship from mentor for national talk- 3-6 mos
Internal			
Strengths (values, character traits, skill sets present) Hard-working; value knowledge and innovation; integrity; excellent clinician		Challenges (values, character traits, skill sets to develop) Limited research experience; need help with study design and analysis; hard to find time to write; introvert; develop public speaking/presentation skills	
External			
Resources Mentor is excellent; dept chair is supportive; JHSPH epi and biostats courses; ICTR biostats support; OFD WAGs and GRIGs; faculty tuition remission benefit		Barriers Access to clinical data; time for academic work is limited	

Individual Development Plan Template

Goals/Objectives (SMART- specific, measureable, achievable, relevant, time-bound):	What strengths and resources currently exist that you can leverage to support your goals?	What skills and/or resources do you need to move forward to achieve your goals?	Outcomes: What metrics/ will you use to determine if you are on the right path and timeline?



Individual Development Plan

http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/files/caps/caps_idp.pdf

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is essentially a planning document that identifies what your goals and objectives are for the upcoming year. Although there are many different ways to create an IDP, overall it can be broken into 3 main steps:

1

Identify your goals

- Make a list of goals that you would like to accomplish in the upcoming year. Examples:
 - To present your work at a conference
 - To expand your skills in communicating your research to diverse audiences.
 - To broaden your job search to careers in industry

2

Break down your goals into SMART objectives and Actions

- Create specific objectives that will help you to achieve your goals.
- Sometimes it will take multiple actions to achieve your objective
- Be deliberate about your choices in order to avoid getting sidetracked by projects that may not be in line with your goals.

3

Evaluate your progress at regular intervals

- Create timelines for review, to ensure that you are on track with your goals.
- Consider scheduling a regular meeting with a career counsellor, a mentor, your supervisor, or another researcher in your field to discuss your progress and goals.

Below is some additional information about each of these steps

1 Identify your goals

Goals are general statements about what you need to accomplish in order to achieve your broader aspirations. These goals can pertain to your research, professional development needs, and career plans. Some categories to consider relative to professional development and career planning include:

- Identify your interests, values, and skills: Self-knowledge will make it easier for you to identify subsequent goals that will help you to be successful in your research and your chosen career.
- Research career options, select possible career options, and identify the skills you will need.
- Develop the skills necessary to pursue these career possibilities: take courses and gain experience.
- Connect with people in you desired field and identify organizations to work for.
- Prepare for the job search: application material, interviewing, negotiation.

2 Break it down

It is important that to break down your goals into individual objectives and actions, so that you can get a sense of all the activities you will need to complete in order to achieve your goals. To enhance your chances of success, start by creating objectives, and then breaking them down into individual actions that you can accomplish. SMART objectives and actions are:

Specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Use action verbs to write a clear definition of what you want to accomplish. •Think about who, what, and where.
Measurable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •How will you evaluate whether the goal has been met? •Set criteria that are measurable so you can chart your progress.
Achievable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Verify whether you have the resources and time to do this. Be selective. •Don't pursue too many objectives –this can lead to failure.
Relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Make sure that your objective is clearly linked to a specific goal. •Ask yourself, how will this action help you to get closer to your goal?
Time-bound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Set a date and time limit. •Although it is not always possible to predict how long something will take, it is important to decide when you will re-evaluate whether this objective is worth pursuing.

3 Create a timeline

For each action, create a due date. Although you may need to revise these as you pursue your goals, having a timeline will help you to assess your progress and get a realistic sense of how far along you are. In fact, they can be very motivating, as we often only evaluate progress based on our overall goals and fail to notice how much we have actually accomplished!



Strategic planning sample

VISION	Written description of who/where you want to be in the future	I want to be an academic working in a small liberal arts college, on the west coast of North America, living in a home in the country
GOALS	General statements about what you need to accomplish to reach your vision	1) Have enough publications to be competitive 2) Augment my teaching experience
OBJECTIVES	Your strategy for accomplishing your goals	2 a) Teach two classes per year
ACTIONS	What you will actually do to achieve your objective (SMART)	2 a i) Contact 5 colleagues in various departments and institutions to explore opportunities by July 2a ii) Check online postings and apply to teach at least 4 courses per semester
MONITOR	Review your plan at regular intervals	Every 6 months



Worksheet Examples

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOAL: AUGMENT MY TEACHING EXPERIENCE			
Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes
Teach two classes per semester	Contact 5 colleagues in various departments and institutions to explore opportunities	July 1	
	Check online postings and apply to teach at least 4 courses per semester	August 1	

CAREER PLANNING GOAL: RESEARCH CAREER OPTIONS			
Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes
Use resources	Read book: "Alternative Careers in Science"	Dec 31	
	Spend 2 hours per week browsing career databases: careercruising.ca and myplan.com	From Sept 1 to Dec 31	
	Create a shortlist of top 5 career interests	Dec 31	
Attend career related activities	Go to 2 events in the CaPS Grad Career Series	May 31	
	Go to 2 company information sessions	May 31	
Talk to people	Use the McGill Mentorship database to look mentors in my area(s) of interest	Feb 28	
	Identify people in my area(s) of interest on LinkedIn	Feb 28	
	Ask friends and family for help	Feb 28	
	Reach out to at least 1 person per week	From March 1 to Aug 31	
	Schedule at least one information interview per month	From March 1 to Aug 31	



RESEARCH GOALS: IDP WORKSHEET

Vision: Broad description of your research goal for the next 6 to 12 monthss

RESEARCH GOAL 1:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes

RESEARCH GOAL 2:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes

RESEARCH GOAL 3:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS: IDP WORKSHEET

Vision: Broad description of your professional development goals (skills you need for research and career) for the next 6 to 12 months

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOAL 1:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOAL 2:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOAL 3:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes



CAREER PLANNING GOALS: IDP WORKSHEET

Vision: Broad description of your career planning goals for the next 6 to 12 months

CAREER PLANNING GOAL 1:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes

CAREER PLANNING GOAL 2:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes

CAREER PLANNING GOAL 3:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes

Mentorship Effectiveness Scale Developed by the Ad Hoc Faculty Mentoring Committee, Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing

Your name: _____

Directions: The purpose of this scale is to evaluate the mentoring characteristics of _____, who has identified you as an individual with whom he/she has had a professional, mentor/mentee relationship. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement listed below. Circle the number that corresponds to your response. Your responses will be kept confidential.

- 0 – Strongly Disagree (SD)
- 1 – Disagree (D)
- 2 – Slightly Disagree (SID)
- 3 – Slightly Agree (SIA)
- 4 – Agree (A)
- 5 – Strongly Agree (SA)
- 6 – Not Applicable (NA)

SAMPLE: My mentor was hilarious.	0	1	2	3	4	5	⑥
	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SID</u>	<u>SIA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>NA</u>
1. My mentor was accessible.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. My mentor demonstrated professional integrity.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. My mentor demonstrated content expertise in my area of need.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. My mentor was approachable.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. My mentor was supportive and encouraging.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. My mentor provided constructive and useful critiques of my work.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. My mentor motivated me to improve my work product.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. My mentor was helpful in providing direction and guidance on professional issues (e.g., networking).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. My mentor answered my questions satisfactorily (e.g., timely response, clear, comprehensive).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. My mentor acknowledged my contributions appropriately (e.g., committee contributions, awards).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. My mentor suggested appropriate resources (e.g., experts, electronic contacts, source materials).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. My mentor challenged me to extend my abilities (e.g., risk taking, try a new professional activity, draft a section of an article).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Please make additional comments on the back of this sheet.

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**Master Mentor Program 2014
Guidelines for “Best Practices”
For Handling Conflict of interest**

Conflicts of interest (COI) are common in mentoring relationships and do not necessarily create antagonism. Conflicts of interest for a mentor can occur on a continuum from as minimal as the natural personal investment in the mentee’s success to as substantial as those occurring from common interests in intellectual property monetization. Some common examples of situations that can develop into COI include: when the mentor is also a supervisor (e.g., is responsible for assigning work to the mentee or performs the mentee’s annual review); when the mentor is the PI on a grant for which the mentee derives support or other resources; when the mentor and mentee are co-authors on a paper; when there is a significant power imbalance between the mentor and mentee (e.g., faculty mentoring students or other trainees); or when the work of the mentoring relationship includes significant intellectual property concerns such as those arising from intellectual property ownership and rights, commercialization, technology transfer, copyrights or patents. It should also be noted that COI are expected to vary across time as the relationship grows and new topics for mentoring develop.

These guidelines are recommended for use in all mentoring relationships and may be especially helpful when the degree of conflict is more than minimal:

1. The mentor should acknowledge any COI, articulate them to the mentee and discuss ways of managing them. This dialogue should include a discussion that involves both parties speaking openly and respectfully about the conflict and both parties’ expectations for managing it. As part of this process, the mentor and mentee should consider documenting the discussion and explicitly stating that both parties agree with the plan. When indicated, University guidance and guidelines (see [Hopkins SOM Faculty Policy on Financial COI](#)) should be used to make decisions about the magnitude of any COI and the method for managing them.
2. Depending on the complexity and magnitude of the COI, the following strategies should be considered for dealing with COI:
 - a. Both parties should consider the need to involve a neutral party, preferably one who has training in mediation, in order to facilitate a mutually agreed upon plan for future work together in the area of COI. Some circumstances that suggest the need for a neutral party include: 1) when emotional responses are influencing the discussion or decision making; 2) when there is a significant power differential between the mentor and the mentee; 3) when one party becomes distrustful; 4) if the pair cannot reach a mutually agreed upon plan and require mediation or a neutral outside advice or vote; 5) when meaningful resource decisions or allocations are involved.
 - b. Both parties may consider removing the topic from mentoring discussions and relegating the topic to a different mentoring relationship.
 - c. Both parties may consider isolating the topic of conflict of interest to specific meetings that only address the topic. This may be particularly useful when the mentor is the person who performs the faculty’s annual review.
 - d. Both parties may consider terminating the mentor-mentee relationship if the COI cannot be navigated to the satisfaction of both parties .