

# Mentoring Expectations

Individuals typically enter mentoring relationships with assumed expectations of each other, and yet these expectations are rarely discussed. When expectations haven't been discussed or established, many become irritated and/or disappointed with their mentoring relationships at some point. To prevent frustration in your mentoring relationship, plan on establishing some realistic expectations right away. Mentors and mentees will often discover that their expectations are similar or the same and they can always refer back to them if necessary.

At the end of the day, it is important to understand that mentoring relationships are a partnership and mutual support and respect are necessary for healthy partnerships.

Below are some common expectations identified at the beginning of a relationship that are specific to mentors and mentees:

| For Mentors  | For Mentees  |
|--|--|
| Provide help, offer suggestions, and be a sounding board for issues relating to the mentee's career goals and development. | Take initiative to drive the relationship and be responsible for your own career development and planning.   |
| Provide and be open to feedback. When providing feedback, be honest, yet tactful. Always remember using the proper tone.   | Provide feedback about the mentoring relationship and be open to receiving feedback. When providing feedback, be honest, yet tactful. Always remember using the proper tone.   |
| Provide suggestions, thoughts, ideas, and advice on goals, activities, and progress.                                       | Ask for suggestions and advice early in the relationship. When advice is given, listen to the mentor, apply at least some of their ideas, and let him or her know the results. |

Here are a few common expectations mentor and mentee typically agree on and could be established the beginning of a relationship:

- Always maintain confidentiality between one another.
- Keep any commitments that are made.
- Evaluate the relationship at various points within an agreed-upon time frame.
- Meet regularly with your mentee. Determine a regularly scheduled meeting time and make other arrangements if plans need to change.
- Accept and value one another's differences.
- When you meet, give each other your full and undivided attention (turn the cell phone to silent or mention your reasoning for leaving it on if necessary).
- Be responsible for your own learning and actions.
- Plan to be open to trying new things.
- Build trust with one another by being open and honest.

## Unreasonable Expectations Regarding Mentors

As a general guideline, the mentor should not be expected to:

- Provide the mentee with personal introductions to other people, unless they're comfortable doing so.
- Spend more time on the relationship than he or she is willing or able to provide.
- Take the lead in the relationship, setting up all the meetings and driving the development of the mentee.
- Continue the relationship beyond the agreed-upon time frame.

## Specific tips for Mentees

These practical strategies can help mentees build a relationship with the mentors:

- Remember: you own your development. It's up to you to identify objectives and keep the relationship moving forward.
- Use active listening skills at all times.
- Be prepared to ask for specific advice on your skill sets, ideas, plans, and goals. The more specific you are, the better.
- Be complete, yet succinct in your comments and explanations.
- If you get some constructive feedback, don't defend yourself or get upset. Thank your mentor for being honest with you and practice follow-up on the feedback given to you.

# Our Mentoring Expectations

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Now that you have some understanding of what mentors and mentees typically expect of one another, use this template to develop your own list of mentoring expectations. You can use any of the expectations you have read about and/or come up with your own set of expectations. Some great questions to ask yourself when considering expectations are:

- “What does mentoring look like to me?”
- “What do I want out of this mentoring relationship?”
- “Are there any boundaries that need to be established?”
- “When and how often are we going to meet?”
- “How will we hold ourselves accountable to this relationship?”

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

Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_ Mentee: \_\_\_\_\_

We have discussed the following expectations and will strive to meet the following in our mentoring relationship:

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Should one of us feel our expectations are not being met, we will:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date