

# A Guidebook for the Mentoring Journey: A Practical Guide for Mentors

The best mentoring relationships are those that develop naturally, and acquire their own energy. How you choose to play the role of mentor will be determined by your own personal style and the dynamics of the relationship.

## Prior to your first meeting:

- Obtain and review each other's information statement or bio.
- Make sure that your calendar is free and you will not be interrupted.
- Draft mentoring goals.

## During the first meeting:

- Introduce yourself (as official mentor) and your background
- Let the mentee guide the discussion's flow, and articulate their goals and objectives. Goals should be expressed as SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely
- Ask about the mentee's background and interests (type of work).
- Explain the mentor role and your own expectations.
- Agree on the ground rules for your relationship
  - How often you will meet
  - Types of meetings (face-to-face, telephone, email, etc.)
- Boundaries – what is appropriate and what is not (i.e. Is it OK to call the mentor at home? Evenings? Weekends?)
- Open the table for any general questions or thoughts

## End of each meeting:

- Ask the mentee to summarize what was discussed: What did they think was most important?
- What surprised them? What are they looking forward to in the relationship?
- Decide on the mentees action items and timetable.
- Remind them to send you an email summarizing the meeting within a week, including the agreed upon action steps for both mentee and mentor.
- Set a time for next meeting.

*"Being a part of this mentorship pilot provided so many meaningful lessons learned. In the future, it's not only the sharing of ideas I am excited with, but also the continued improvement in myself that I am excited to discover!"*

CWITA Mentor

*"I felt very special being at the CWITA event. The best part was how all of the CEOs, leaders, and bosses made all of the students feel equal as leaders. You can't put a word on the feeling that gave me! I truly had an amazing time."*

CWITA Mentee

## Conversation Intent:

The meeting time with your mentee is to review and discuss the mentee’s agenda what has changed and why, what has the mentee not been able to accomplish and what intervened, etc. Active listening is very important as your mentee is getting advice from a variety of sources and looks to you as a confidant who has their best interest at heart.

## Strategies and Considerations for Initial Conversations<sup>1</sup>

To Do List	Strategies for Conversation	Mentor Considerations
Get to know each other	Review a copy of the mentee’s bio in advance of the conversation.	Establish rapport.  Identify points of connection.  Exchange additional contact information, if needed.
Talk about mentoring and what you may have learned from that experience.	ASK: Have you ever been engaged in a mentoring relationship or program before?	Talk about your own mentoring experiences (formal or informal).
Determine the mentee’s goals.  Give the mentee an opportunity to articulate broad goals.	ASK: What do you want to learn from this experience?	Determine if the mentee is clear about their goals and objectives?
Determine the mentee’s relationship needs and expectations.	ASK: What do you want out of the mentoring relationship?	Be sure you clearly understand what your mentee needs or wants from the mentorship relationship.
Define the deliverables	ASK: What would success at the end of our relationship look like for you?	Do you have an area of experience or expertise that is relevant to this person’s learning goals or do you know someone who does?
Share your assumptions, needs, expectations, and limitations candidly.	Ask for feedback. Discuss: Implications for relationship.	What are you willing and capable of contributing to the relationship?
Discuss options and opportunities for learning.	ASK: How would you like to go about achieving your learning goals?  Discuss ways: learning and communication styles.  ASK: What is the most useful kind of assistance I can provide?	Discuss implications of each other’s styles and how that might affect the relationship.  Discuss learning options that may be available (i.e. job shadowing, etc.)

<sup>1</sup>Source: *The Mentor’s Guide* by Lois Zachery, 2000 by Jossey-Bass Publishers

## Tools for the Mentor and Mentee

Both mentors and mentees will have expectations for the mentoring relationship itself. Interpersonal behaviors and communication skills play a major role in how the relationship develops and progresses.

### Giving and Receiving Feedback

Feedback is valuable and important development tool. It raises awareness of specific behaviors and their impact on others, and provides for the opportunity to modify those behaviors if necessary. Giving and receiving feedback for both mentors and mentees is central to the mentoring relationship.

### Potential Pitfalls and Suggested Remedies

Even good mentor-mentee relationship will have occasional roadblocks or pitfalls. The following table lists some typical examples and suggests some remedies for addressing them.

Pitfalls	Suggested Remedies
Unrealistic Expectations	Discuss expectations and reach agreement on expected outcomes
Differences of style, age seem to get in the way	Take time to understand your mentor/mentee. Learning to work with those differences is valuable development. Consider differences as a meeting topic for discussion.
Relationship gets off track	Use good feedback skills to raise the issues in a non-threatening way. Build open communication. Refocus and reiterate mentoring goals.
Relationship not a fit	Please reach out to the CWITA coordinator at <a href="mailto:info@cwita.org">info@cwita.org</a> for support and advice; in some cases it may make sense to assign a new mentee.

## Closure Meeting

Coming to closure may present the greatest challenge for mentoring partners, for many reasons. It is difficult to plan for closure, because although the understanding is that the relationship will last the academic year, relationships can end earlier or last longer than anticipated. Closure involves evaluating, acknowledging, and celebrating achievement of learning outcomes. When closure is seen as an opportunity to evaluate personal learning and apply that learning to other relationships and situations, mentors leverage their learning and growth and reap the full harvest of the relationship. This is a time to celebrate the journey you and your mentee have been on this past year.

### Face-to-Face Conversations

Sometimes the right words uttered at just the right moment are the best and most remembered gifts in the long term. In expressing appreciation, be specific and focus on behaviors. It reminds the person of their value.

- “I admire your...”
- “You have a knack for ...”
- “I especially appreciated it when you ...”



## **Mentor's Script: The Final Conversation**

The intent is to have the mentee establish what was successful and to have them feel validated in the decisions that were made during the relationship.

The following are examples of questions that may be appropriate:

- What were some of the conversations you remember?
- What were some of the decisions made?
- What excited you about our time together?
- What was the high point?
- What was the biggest surprise?
- What was frustrating?
- What have you learned that you can apply to your future?
- As you reflect on all of this, how would you talk about what you accomplished this year?
- How has this past years' experience prepared you to identify and nurture future mentors?