



Business and Professional Women | Key Largo, Florida



What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a formalized relationship between two people (sometimes more, if group mentoring is chosen) that is structured to develop a mutually beneficial one-on-one professional relationship.

Mentors act as a teacher, friend, guide and encourager. Mentees commit to participate for a specified period with a learning goal in mind. They may have lunch, trainings, agreed upon times for phone contacts, face-to-face meetings, and other conversations intended reach those goals within a specified time frame.

What are the benefits of mentoring?

Mentoring benefits everyone involved.

- Mentees learn from someone who has traveled the path before them
- Mentors have an opportunity to invest themselves in someone who seeks what they can offer
- Organizations can share and spread their acquired learning and know-how

Mentoring also helps the community by encouraging an environment where people motivate each other and work together to improve skills and knowledge.

MENTEES

- Receive impartial feedback, advice and encouragement
- Participate in a supportive relationship
- Gain new skills or improve expertise in such areas as problem-solving, leadership, networking, etc.
- Build more self-confidence, including how they deal with challenges and issues
- Get the opportunity for professional development that addresses their specific needs
- Get access to independent and objective perspectives
- Enjoy networking opportunities

- Get assistance in setting and achieving goals
- Can clarify and enhance career direction and advancement
- Receive support during times of change and transition

MENTORS

- Have the chance to take a fresh look at their own practices, beliefs and behaviors
- Can improve their own job satisfaction
- Develop more professional relationships
- Receive added recognition from their peers
- Feel great about helping others
- Brush up on interpersonal skills
- May enhance their own performance
- Improve communication skills
- Understand that by teaching others, they gain greater clarity on their own knowledge
- Gain critical skills to improve as a leader, which can lead to greater professional opportunities
- Become a role model
- Become the best version of themselves
- Gain satisfaction in helping someone else to grow
- Attain fresh perspectives through interaction
- Learn from mentees – their take on current events, what's happening in the workplace, etc.
- Benefit from a sense of fulfilment and personal growth

Adapted from Durham University, United Kingdom



Mentor/Mentee Profile and Enrollment Form

Print Your Name: _____ BPW Member: Yes/No

I wish to be mentored

I want to be a mentor

Job title: _____

Organization or company: _____

Preferred phone: _____ Best time to be called: _____

Education/certifications completed: _____

Memberships: _____

1. What are your current job responsibilities?

2. Mentee: What would you like to learn more about?

3. Mentor: What skills or specialty areas do you feel you have to contribute as a mentor?

4. What are your expectations for participating in this program?

To participate, you must commit to meeting your match for a minimum of 30 minutes a week for at least six months; plus 1 hour a month for a feedback conference call with all mentor/mentee matches. I understand our mentoring is confidential. I agree to these conditions.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Mentorship agreement

The purpose of this agreement is to help you document mutually agreed upon goals and parameters that will serve as the foundation for your mentoring relationship.

1. Goals: What do you hope to achieve as a result of this relationship?

2. Meetings: Frequency, duration, and location of meetings

3. Confidentiality: Any sensitive issues that we discuss will be held in the strictest of confidence. Issues that are off limits for discussion include:

4. Plan for evaluating relationship effectiveness: How often will the outcomes and accomplishments be reviewed?

5. Relationship termination clause: If either party finds the mentoring relationship unproductive and requests that it be terminated, we agree to honor that individual's decision without question or blame.

6. Duration: This mentorship relationship will continue if both parties feel comfortable with its productivity or until _____ (fill in end date).

Mentee signature

Date

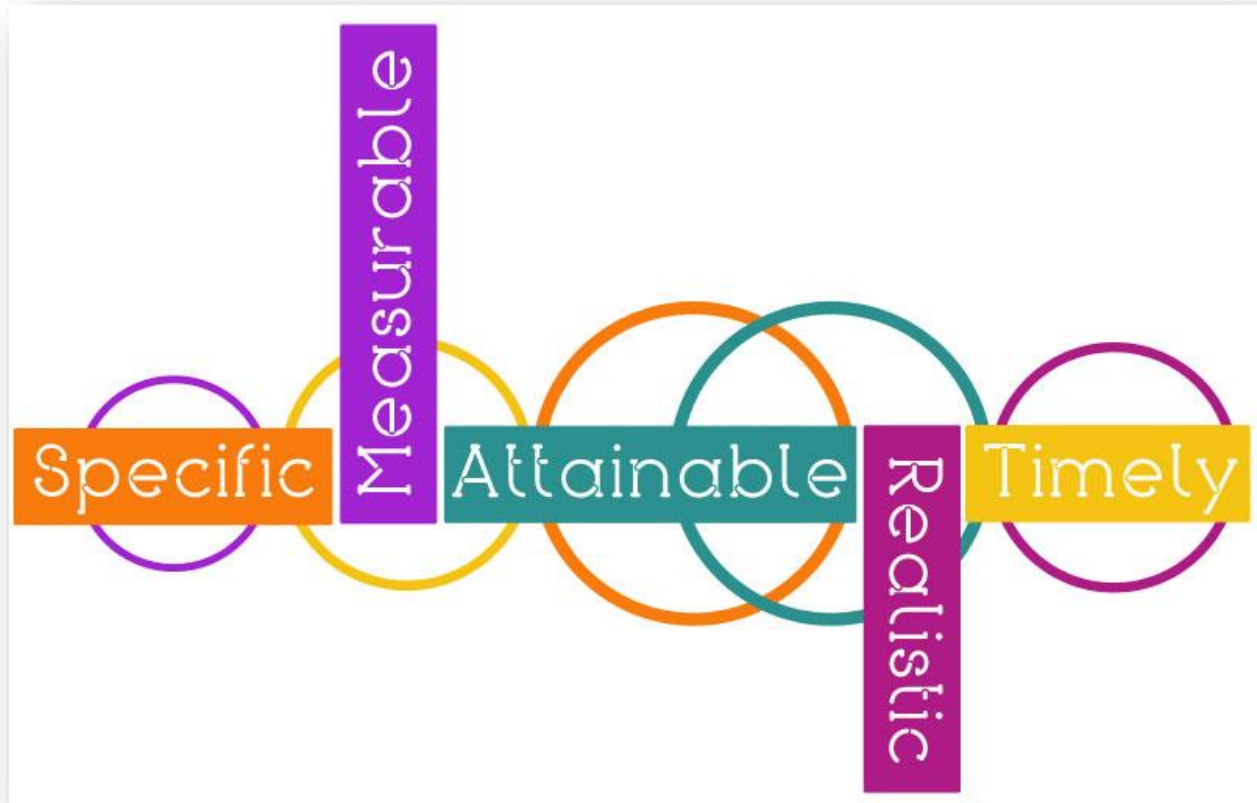
Mentor signature

Date

Adapted from University of Washington (state)

Setting SMART goals

How will you know if your mentoring has been successful? Because you will establish SMART goals up front. SMART stands for:



SPECIFIC: What exactly do you want to accomplish?

MEASURABLE: How will you quantify your progress?

ATTAINABLE: Is this something you can actually accomplish?

REALISTIC: Craft your goal to force you to stretch, but not so much that you give up because it's out of reach.

TIMELY: Set your end deadline, then intermediate benchmark goals along the way.

For mentors: Where do you even start?

Here are six questions designed to get your mentoring conversation started. When asked in this order, these questions provide a great framework for determining your mentee's challenges—which in turn, can help you deliver better guidance as a mentor.

1. Why do you do what you do?

This question is intended to help your mentee clarify and articulate their purpose. What drives them to do the work that they do? Why are they in the business that they are in?

Your mentee's answer should help reveal their passion for their profession. For example, a mentee who is launching their own food truck might say something like: "I want to share my love for authentic Cajun food with my community."

2. Where do you want to go from here?

What is your mentee's ultimate goal? This question is designed to unearth your mentee's aspirations and identify their business objectives.

Using the same example from the previous question, it could be something like "I want to launch my food cart successfully and become popular in my community, so that I can eventually raise enough money to open my own brick-and-mortar restaurant."

3. What are you doing well that's helping you get there?

This is a great way to pinpoint your mentee's core strengths. What are they naturally good at doing? Motivating a team? Sticking to a budget? Encourage your mentee to think of things that they can do better than the average person that will help lead them toward their goal. In some cases, they may not even be aware of what they do "better than the average person" because it comes so naturally to them, they think everyone can do it.

4. What is holding you back?

It's important for your mentees to recognize the challenges that are standing in the way of their success. They won't know what action to take until they know what's preventing them from reaching their goal.

5. What can you do differently to overcome those challenges?

This helps your mentee focus on prioritizing the actions they need to take in order to reach their goals. It's not enough to be busy – they need to be busy doing the right things. This may require them to change their behaviors.

6. Where do you need the most help?

Based on the answers you've heard, align the needs of your mentee with your specific skills, expertise or resources.

Adapted from MicroMentors.com

Dealing with mentoring issues

1. How do mentors avoid taking the lead and stop their mentee pushing responsibilities and tasks on to the mentor?

Your mentee has identified what they think needs to be done to reach the goal. The mentor cannot get the additional training the mentee may need. The mentor cannot do job interviews for them. The mentee needs to find their own answers and do their own work.

- You could say that you have noticed that they are expecting you to take on their tasks and responsibilities. Ask why.
- Point out that what the mentee is asking is not part of the mentoring relationship and suggest that they might require a different type of support.
- Using open questions, reflecting techniques, mirroring and empathy.
- Develop your “killer questions.” One example: “What would your answer be if you were advising a friend?”
- Allowing silence. Silence is only uncomfortable when you think it is.

2. Does the mentoring have to be in person?

We recommend that the first conversation take place in person, as it sets the tone and allows you to reach agreement on how the mentoring relationship will proceed. After that, telephone mentoring may not be the choice as you lose the face-to-face contact and body-language cues. But it can be done, with acute awareness and honest communicate. (“Am I hearing a little bit fear in your voice?”)

If you are uncomfortable telephone mentoring, tell your mentee and see how they feel. Remember, this is a two-way relationship. Admitting your discomfort help establish trust. You can use it to be honest with your mentee and get feedback.

Phone mentoring can be challenging, but it is better to have at least some contact by telephone rather than not doing anything at all. You may also consider mentoring by email. It allows for time to think about what’s being asked and to compose your reply.

Consider video mentoring (WhatsApp, Face Time, etc.) to take advantage of technology and still have a face-to-face conversation.

3. When it’s not working out

Be honest. Question whether you can give the mentee what they need. You do not want to waste your time or theirs. If you have reached the stage where you cannot help the mentee any further, then think about mutually ending the relationship. It will have been successful if you reach that stage.

4. How changes to a mentee’s situation might affect the mentoring relationship

Suggest that the mentee take time to settle into their new situation and then come back to mentoring later, to see if there are any issues arising which can be addressed through mentoring.

Mentoring is a developmental tool, so even if the original issue the mentee sought help with has been resolved, the mentoring relationship can go on to address new and different issues or to discuss for new career development opportunities. This would be a matter for the mentor and the mentee to decide together.

5. Mentees not being prepared and having expectations which have not been met by mentoring

There could be lots of reasons why these things happen.

- It may be that it’s not what they need
- They are testing the waters so that they can build the trust between them and their mentor
- Your mentee sees you as the expert that will tell them what to do

- They lack confidence or are afraid to take steps themselves
- They may feel guarded if you are in the same profession; assure them of confidentiality

6. Structuring meetings, the beginning and the ending

- Structure meetings to suit you both. Negotiate and settle on a start and end time for each conversation. Allow some wiggle room as needed, but not as a general practice.
- The first conversation is always longest, so allow time for that.
- Create action points to be accomplished before your next meeting. Make sure the mentee agrees with your ideas or comes up with their own.
- Have your mentee email you before each meeting, detailing what they've achieved since the last meeting and what they would like to do at the next meeting. This helps the mentee understand they are in charge of their own progress.

7. How do you deal with mentees who will not speak and contribute?

Be honest. Tell them that they are not contributing and ask why, what you can do that would help them. If they won't communicate, they cannot get anything out of the relationship. You should share your frustrations with the mentee, be honest and ask for their views. If no progress is being made, then considering ending the relationship.

8. How do you deal with a disingenuous mentee – one who is dissembling and displaying false modesty?

If it is the first meeting, they may be testing you. But if it goes on, then you can challenge your mentee on it. You can point out that it is clear they have the skills to deal with the issue; is there something else underlying this?

There may be a gap in the person's self-perception and others or your perceptions of them. You could reflect on that – is that their underlying issue? People also fear judgment. Ask your mentee for evidence, what makes them think this way?

9. Note taking

Keep notes and use them to prepare for next meeting. This allows you to reflect on the meeting. You could prepare the notes in front of the mentee as this shows to them how important the mentoring relationship is to you. However, it is not recommended that you let them read the notes. Have the mentee take notes, too, particularly if they agree to take a specific course of action before the next meeting.

Summarizing and checking your understanding is a good practice. Taking notes helps reinforce the process with the mentee and shows a desire to understand. Full note taking is not recommended – bullet points should be used to jog your memory, as it allows you to concentrate on interacting with the mentee. It is important to make sure the mentee knows you are taking notes and reassure them about the confidentiality of those notes and of the conversation itself.

12. How do you keep the relationship professional?

If it is straying into a personal relationship, then be honest and say you are not comfortable. Bring them back within the boundaries gently. Setting the boundaries and reminding the mentee that you have to keep to the "professional" time agreed.

If you and they want to maintain a friendly relationship outside of the mentor/mentee relationship, that's fine.

Adapted from the Law Society of Scotland

For mentees: Questions mentees commonly ask

1. Where should my mentor and I meet?

Work this out together. Often, mentoring sessions take place at the mentor's office. You may also choose to meet in a quiet, mutually convenient public spot, such as a coffee shop or library. Do not meet at one another's homes.

2. Who pays for coffee?

It would be nice if you did. If you can't afford it, don't meet at a restaurant or coffee shop.

3. Can it work to meet with my mentor by telephone?

Although most people prefer to get together in person, distance and scheduling may make that difficult. If phoning makes more sense, you can certainly have productive mentoring sessions that way. Just set them up to avoid interruptions or distractions.

You may want to check in after two or three sessions to confirm that telephone mentoring is working well for both of you. But with a clear commitment and direct and honest communication, telephone mentoring or video mentoring can work.

4. What if my mentor and I don't click?

Before concluding that the match isn't working, make sure you've given the relationship a fair chance—at least three meetings. Often, people make a stronger connection as they get to know one another, and that takes time. Consider the strengths and experiences of the mentor you've chosen. Then focus on areas where your interests overlap.

5. I tried that and it didn't work. How do I exit the mentor relationship?

Whether the problem is that you can't seem to make time to get together or you can't seem to communicate productively, there are ways to end the relationship on a cordial note:

Begin by stating clearly but diplomatically that you think it's the right time to bring the relationship to a close. It will be easier to do this if, at the beginning, you agreed to review how the relationship was working after two or three sessions. No matter what, don't just disappear without an explanation.

Speak of specific areas of progress you've experienced during the mentoring period. (There must be something.)

Thank your mentor for the time and effort and wish your mentor well. And carefully consider what could have gone better and what you should do next time to head off a similar problem.

40 Questions to Ask a Mentor

1. Stories (aka behavioral questions)

To break the ice, have your mentor tell a story from his or her own career. For example, you could inquire: “How did you get to where you are today?” or “How did you land your current role?” But you could also ask more specific questions that address your career objectives and concerns. Some questions to consider:

- Was there a time you messed up and felt like you’d failed? How did you bounce back?
- How did you learn to embrace risk-taking?
- Tell me about a recent business setback. How did you recover?
- Five years ago, did you envision your career as it is today?
- Was there ever a role you applied for and landed, but weren't 100% qualified to do? How did you proceed?
- What do you wish you had known before taking your first management role?
- Which leadership skills were the most difficult to develop?
- Can you tell me about a time when you had a difficult boss? How did you handle the situation?
- What’s the most important leadership lesson you’ve learned and how has it proven invaluable?
- How did you develop the skill of speaking so engagingly in front of groups?

2. Situations

Bring a specific situation to your mentor – one that you’d like help navigating. For example:

- I tried to delegate a task last week and it did not go well. Can we work through what to do differently next time?
- Who are the kinds of people I need to align with in my organization to achieve success?
- My boss said I need to be more strategic. What does that mean?
- How can I let my boss know that I don’t need to be micromanaged?
- How can I stay connected to key influencers who do not work in same office or geographical area?
- When trying to gain buy-in to implement a new program, what tactics have worked for you?
- My performance review is coming up. What type of preparation do you most appreciate seeing from your employees?
- I have two very different career path options available to me. Can you weigh in to help me make a final decision?
- I'm considering a career transition. What are some other areas of the business that might be a good fit for me?
- I’ve heard that taking an international assignment could help my career trajectory. What are the pros and cons?

3. Self-awareness

One of the greatest gifts you can give yourself is the gift of self-awareness, the ability to see yourself as others view you. If you like how you’re perceived, you can embrace it and take steps to strengthen that positive perception. If you don’t, you can take steps to shift that perception to a more positive one that supports, rather than undermines, your career and leadership goals.

If you and your mentor know each other personally or work in the same office/industry, you may want to ask your mentor how they think others perceive you. Then, get more specific: Ask:

- How am I viewed? In other words, what do you think my personal brand is?
- Where do you see my strengths?
- In what ways do you think I’m holding myself back?
- How can I improve my executive presence?
- How would you rate my communication skills, listening and speaking?

4. Skill-building

Is there a skill you're working to enhance, such as project management, long-term strategic planning, delegating, or public speaking? Use questions like these to ask your mentor for advice and resources to help you polish that skill:

- How can I become a more assertive negotiator?
- Can we role-play asking for a raise and a promotion?
- How can I become better at managing people who do not report to me?
- Do you have any quick tips for re-energizing an overworked team?
- Can you recommend a book or resource for dealing with difficult conversations?
- What practices can you recommend for dealing with nervousness when speaking to groups?
- I have been asked to facilitate a team-building activity at a staff retreat. What are some keys to success?
- What's a good methodology or tool for project management and tracking team commitments?
- Do you have a template that you use for long-range visioning and strategic planning?
- What new skills do I need to move ahead?

Adapted from Forbes.com