



Mentoring: Follow the Leader

“Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction.” – John Crosby

Get a mentor: Be inspired to aspire!

Few can advance your job search or career success like a mentor. Best defined as wise, trusted advisors and teachers, mentors inspire by example. Often professionals in their field, these role models help expand your knowledge base, nurture your growth, and are instrumental in defining your direction. Mentors can be alumni/ae, professors, community leaders, even friends and family. All actively volunteer their time and energy for one reason: To share information and insight for the purpose of helping others succeed and reach their potential.

Countless notables, including Charles Darwin, Winston Churchill, Carl Sagan, Michael Jordan, and Oprah Winfrey, have had mentors. Unlike masters with apprentices, mentors do not so much instruct you with trade-specific, how-to tasks. Rather, their qualities, wisdom, and resources influence and shape your entire being. Mentors provide guidance, expertise, and encouragement so *you* can find the answers to life and career challenges.

As a mentee, or protégé, you absorb and grow by watching and listening, discussing and applying. Want to aspire in your career search or study area? Interested in effectively managing a gallery? Perhaps you picture yourself in that role of CEO. Ask someone you admire in your field of interest to be your mentor; you'll better understand the ins and outs, choices and consequences from their shared stories of successes and failures. Mentors don't want you to reinvent the mousetrap; they want you to build a better one.

And since mentoring is not age-specific, Generation Xers and Y's can “reverse mentor” professionals older than themselves on the latest technology.

It's about you.

A mentorship focuses on meeting *your* needs, expectations, and growth potential. Having “been there, and done it,” mentors help identify your strengths and weaknesses. They do not do the work for you or stroke your ego. Instead, their guidance, constructive criticism, and objective feedback enable you to shape and develop

your own values, attitude, and outlook for career success. A mentorship can show you the ropes, build your self-confidence, help you think strategically, and enable you to better transition into a company.

The evolution of success.

Unlike internships, mentorships are based on one-on-one, often close personal relationships that develop over time. And whether formal or informal, compatibility and commitment are required by both parties. When seeking a mentor, read their bios, know their contributions, and grasp what makes them tick. Positive energy, good morals, and a natural ability to communicate and transfer knowledge are essential. As a mentee:

- be receptive, listen, and process; don't be argumentative; mentors demand your best, otherwise you're wasting everyone's time;
- establish a personal relationship built on trust and honest communication;
- expect to be challenged; mentors motivate and can even offer gender-specific as needed;
- commit your time and meet regularly;
- consider location and availability for face-to-face meetings; or video Skype;
- be positive and motivated; willingly apply what you learn;
- be grateful and respectful; mentors volunteer and invest their personal time and energy because they believe in *you*; be sure to express your thanks frequently or in writing.

To advance your career path and better your job search, contact your career or employment center for mentorship opportunities. Your willingness to learn and be better prepared will make you a more confident, knowledgeable, and marketable potential employee.



i n a nutshell:

A mentorship is an evolutionary process to success. Benefits include:

- **Non-judgemental constructive criticism and guidance**
- **Networking accessibility**
- **Facilitated opportunities to learn the ropes through exposure, dialogue, and tutelage**
- **Easier transition and integration into workforce**
- **Greater confidence and self-awareness**
- **Emulation and acquisition of positive qualities and behavior**

Consider becoming a mentor yourself. Share your wisdom: Give back by paying it forward!