



Mentoring: Inspire by Example

“To the world you might just be one person, but to one person you might just be the world.”

In the footsteps of greatness.

Mentoring has a long and distinguished history. Both mentors and mentees come from all walks of life that are neither defined nor confined by age, gender, or socio-economic standing.

Mentors are counselors, guides, role models, educators, coaches, and the cheering squad all rolled into one. Drawing on their own experience, wisdom, and a genuine desire to enlighten, mentors share knowledge and beliefs that can shape and advance a mentee's attitude, work ethics, and personal development.

Famous mentees, including Alexander the Great, Galileo, Mozart, Henry Ford, Winston Churchill, Helen Keller, George Lucas, and Oprah Winfrey, can attribute their success in varying degrees to their mentors: Aristotle, Archimedes, John Christian Bach, Sidney Weinberg, Bourke Cockran, Annie Sullivan, Francis Ford Coppola, and Maya Angelou.

Famous or not, all mentors share a common trait: An unselfish desire to help others grow.

Been there. Done it. Now share it.

If you enjoy ongoing learning, as well as sharing your insight and expertise to help others succeed and reach their potential, consider becoming a mentor. Perhaps you're a successful executive who can empathize with the marketing newbie, or a healthcare professional interested in providing career guidance and support in nursing. Maybe you're a recently hired graduate who wants to help job seekers better prepare for the real world.

You might be an alumnus/a, professor, community leader, family member, or friend. By volunteering your time, know-how, and resources formally or informally, at a classroom or corporate level, you communicate hope and optimism, help others learn the ropes, do their jobs better, improve their teamwork skills, expand their knowledge base, and better define their direction and purpose in life.

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

Give back: Pay it forward.

Encourage self-confidence and foster strategic thinking, and you enable a job seeker to better transition into and contribute to the workforce. As an effective mentor, consider the following:

- establish clear goals and objectives, but be flexible; focus on the mentee's needs;
- identify strengths and weaknesses; offer constructive criticism; discuss and communicate clearly to achieve clarity;
- empathize and encourage; be positive, enthusiastic, and objective;
- guide and present possibilities, rather than dole out trade-specific tasks;
- challenge both sexes equally; offer gender-specific guidance as needed;
- avoid simply providing answers; motivate the mentee to process and discover solutions; mentees are not merely apprentices or mirrors;
- share experiences of successes and failures; provide networking and job shadowing opportunities;
- keep an open mind to gain new perspectives and insight for your own development; know your limitations;
- Be committed and patient; with time, good mentors establish personal one-on-one relationships built on trust and open dialogue.

So be a mentor because you want to give something back, because you want to contribute to the future, because you enjoy educating others while also broadening your own mind. Contact the career or employment center for mentorship opportunities and see how you can make a difference.

Be like Isaac Newton: Enable others to see further by allowing them to stand on your shoulders.



i n a nutshell:

Mentors inspire others to aspire:

- **Listen, ask questions; keep an open mind; don't jump to conclusions**
- **Offer constructive criticism; share your successes and failures**
- **Be genuinely interested in another's well-being; foster honesty and trust**
- **Guide, don't impose; clearly define what you both expect**
- **Share resources, provide opportunities**
- **Demand excellence in yourself; make it a goal for others**
- **Understand that mentorships either end or evolve**

Lead by example, and help others find the potential within themselves.