Weaving a Web: Effective Mentoring Relationships

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Roadmap

- Get to know one another!
- Brief lexicon
- Mentorship impact
- I’m not a weaver. Web?
- What do roles look like?
- Troubleshooting
Learning Objectives

1. Differentiate a mentor from an advisor, role-model, coach, preceptor, and sponsor
2. Briefly summarize the key benefits of mentoring
3. Describe what a mentor and a mentee can do to support a strong mentoring relationship
4. Identify common mentoring pitfalls and ways to overcome them
Disclosures

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Donna Windish, MD, MPH
person who compiles a dictionary

lexicon

Greek, Latin or Hebrew text

ley
Lexicon: “Mentorship”

“A reciprocal learning relationship in which mentor and mentee agree to a partnership where they work collaboratively toward achievement of mutually defined goals that will develop a mentee’s skills, abilities, knowledge and/or thinking.”

Sambunjak, *JAMA* 2006; 296:1103-1115.

“A more senior person within the medical training environment, with whom you have a sustained and ongoing relationship. A mentor promotes your professional development by discussing your goals, needs, weaknesses and accomplishments.”

Three key tenets of mentorship:

1. Relationship is primary
2. Mentee is the leader
3. Mentor is a facilitator with resources and support
Lexicon: “Role Model”
Lexicon: “Coach?” “Advisor?”

Mentor  Advisor  Coach

Sponsor  Preceptor
Lexicon: “Coach?” “Advisor?”

Mentor
- Talks with you
- Longitudinal
- Broad, reciprocal

Advisor

Coach

Sponsor

Preceptor
Lexicon: “Coach?” “Advisor?”

Mentor
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**Sponsor**
- Talks **about** you
- Recommends you
- + Opportunities

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**Sponsor**
- Talks about you
- Recommends you
- + Opportunities

**Preceptor**
- Clinical Supervisor
- More directive
- Grades/assesses
Mentorship Impact
Mentors influence....

- Specialty choice
- Residency choice
- Fellowship choice
- Choice to enter academic medicine

Sambunjak, *JAMA* 2006; 296:1103-1115
Mentorship Impact

For academic faculty having a mentor improves...

- Confidence in academic skills
  - Personal leadership: 52% increase
  - Teaching: 33% increase
  - Administration: 76% increase
  

- Likelihood of promotion: 2.33 (1.36-3.99)
  
Mentorship Impact

Fellows and faculty with mentors have.....

- Increased support and resources
- Increased time for scholarship
- More publications
- More grants
- More likely to complete a thesis

Sambunjak, JAMA 2006; 296:1103-1115
Traditional Mentoring Viewpoint
Can and should one mentor do it all?
Web of Support

- No one person can fill all roles that are needed to support you in your career development
  - Formal vs. informal mentors
  - Assigned mentors
  - Peer mentors
- Mentoring needs and people who fill those roles change over time
Think of your career as a business, with you (the mentee) as the CEO and largest stakeholder. You need a Personal Board of Directors (mentors/advisors) to help develop and implement high-level strategies for career success.

**Chairperson** of the Board:
- Should be your Primary mentor [Navigator?]
- Other Board Members should fill specific mentoring/advising roles.
Identify Goals
**Initial Steps: Know Yourself**

**Clarify Values**
- Know what energizes you!
- What values do you respect?
- Interpersonal preferences
- Work style: Hands on vs. gentle guidance

**Clarify Your Needs**
- Knowledge / skills
- Work/life balance
- Professional
  - Networking
  - Academic guidance
- Confidence level
- What do you need a mentor for?

**Set A Clear Vision**
- Write down goals
  - Three months
  - One year
  - Three years
  - Be specific
  - Even if you don’t know – try!
### SIMPLE steps to being a mentee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SELECT</td>
<td>SELECT the right mentor(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INITIATE</td>
<td>INITIATE the relationship, set clear expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANAGE</td>
<td>MANAGE by communicating your needs; setting the meetings &amp; agendas; asking &amp; listening; following up &amp; following through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT</td>
<td>PROJECT WORK - engaging in project work with your mentor makes the relationship more valuable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEARN</td>
<td>LEARN thru deliberate reflection in action and on action; ask for feedback from your mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXCEED</td>
<td>EXCEED EXPECTATIONS</td>
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</table>
Ready to Fill a Seat?
Are You My Mentor?
A truly great mentor is hard to find, difficult to part with, and impossible to forget.

We want to die. Choose.
Effective Mentors...

**Competence**
- Professional knowledge and experience
- Respect
- Interpersonal skills and good judgment

**Confidence**
- Share network of contacts and resources
- Allows mentee to develop his/her own skills
- Demonstrate initiative
- Share credit

**Commitment**
- Altruistic
- Generous with time and opportunities
- Know limits
GREAT Mentors...

- **Listen** well – identify mentee strengths
- **Share** their stories (good AND bad)
- Guide their mentees through **self-exploration** – growth mindset
- Help set and **prioritize** goals
- **Inspire** others; create accountability
- Address mentees fears & anxieties
The Mentee Need Continuum

- Not always clear what role you are in
- Listen, be flexible
- Acknowledge where they are, and where they want to be
Early On

- Define key elements
  - Meeting frequency, duration, content
  - What is the best way to contact you?
- Establish timeline for short and long term goals
- Be specific about expectations, projects, authorship
Along the Way

- Their success = your success
- Motivate
- Supportive
- Available, responsive
- Honest
- Promote independence
- Know when to move on
STOP
PROCEED WITH CAUTION
Conflict and Challenges in Mentorship

- Differing goals
- Communication mismatch
Mentorship Malpractice

The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.

Steven Spielberg

Active Mentorship Malpractice

The Hijacker

The Exploiter

The Possessor

Quick and complete exit. There is no way to protect yourself in this relationship.

Trial of firm boundary setting and use of additional mentors to evaluate requests. If or when mistrust ensues, exit the relationship.

Insist on a mentorship committee; confront mentor with concerns regarding siloed approach.
Mentorship Malpractice

The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.

Steven Spielberg

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Passive Mentorship Malpractice</th>
<th>The Bottleneck</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Country Clubber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The World Traveler</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Set firm deadlines and be clear about what happens on those deadlines; follow through with action and articulate frustration with mentor inability to prioritize.

Develop a mentorship team so other mentors may engage in conflict on your behalf. Approach conflict/debate with focus on impact if not addressed.

Establish a regular cadence of communication. Reserve time well in advance for in-person meetings. Use alternative methods for communication.

Chopra, JAMA 2016; 315:1453-1454
## Mentee Missteps

**Tales From the Academic Trenches**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict Averse</th>
<th>Mentee</th>
<th>Mentor</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Overcommitter</strong></td>
<td>Learn to use your mentor or allocated effort as a reason for saying no. Before saying yes to a project, determine which project is now getting a no.</td>
<td>Add new items to this mentee’s list only after old ones are completed. Have mentee identify his or her career goals, then stick to projects that align.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Ghost</strong></td>
<td>When uninterested, suggest an alternative person who may be interested. Address issues early. To reduce anxiety, be prepared with a planned solution.</td>
<td>Mentees should gauge their true interest in new projects and be allowed to decline. Set goals to address problems forthrightly, and praise mentees for their candor when issues raised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Doormat</strong></td>
<td>Ask directly how new projects align with goals. Trial of setting goals and boundaries. Seek new mentors. Establish a mentoring committee.</td>
<td>Before assigning a project to a mentee, evaluate if it is in their best interest. Allow mentees to use you as an excuse not to participate in another’s projects.</td>
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Vaughn, *JAMA* 2017; 317:475-476
# Mentee Missteps

## Tales From the Academic Trenches

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<th>Confidence Lacking</th>
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<td><strong>The Vampire</strong></td>
<td>Recognize and embrace feelings of insecurity; talk with other junior faculty likely struggling with similar decisions. Before taking questions to a mentor, vet a solution with a colleague.</td>
<td>Set clear goals and boundaries, including what questions require approval and what do not. Have mentees “put their nickel down” when asking for help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Lone Wolf</strong></td>
<td>Realize that asking for help is critical for learning, not a sign of weakness. Appreciate that working with a team is a key skill for success.</td>
<td>Be specific in things that can be done with and without mentor consultation. Define the mentee’s role, as well as the role of other team members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Backstabber</strong></td>
<td>Reframe mistakes as a learning opportunity. Make giving credit and accepting responsibility a daily goal.</td>
<td>Emphasize that honesty, not perfection, is critical in a mentee. If mentee cannot accept this responsibility, seek a new mentee.</td>
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*Vaughn, *JAMA* 2017; 317:475-476*
Let's put it all together
Robbie McIntosh
Your Goals
Learning Objectives

1. Differentiate a mentor from an advisor, role-model, coach, preceptor, and sponsor
2. Briefly summarize the key benefits of mentoring
3. Describe what a mentor and a mentee can do to support a strong mentoring relationship
4. Identify common mentoring pitfalls and ways to overcome them
“The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches, but to reveal to him his own.”

Benjamin Disraeli
Thank you!

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Making the Most of Mentors: A Guide for Mentees

Judy T. Zerzan, MD, MPH, Rachel Hess, MD, Ellen Schur, MD, Russell S. Phillips, MD, and Nancy Rigotti, MD

Initiation
Preparing self
Before a mentor seeks a mentor, five introspective steps are necessary. First, a mentor must clarify his or her own values. What motivates him? What values and attributes does he or she bring to the relationship? Are there personal preferences such as gender or race congruence, personality, emotional needs, or work habits important to the mentor? Next, a mentor should consider his or her personal style and how it fits with mentoring approaches. Remembering their work styles in past academic environments, mentors might ask the following questions: “How do I learn best—by reading or listening?” “Do I need structured, directive guidance, or do I prefer gentle supervision?” Finally, mentors must clarify their needs. What are their knowledge and skill gaps? Specifically, what domains do they want to gain or cultivate from the relationship—personal (creating work-life balance, building confidence), professional development (networking, establishing goals, choosing networking, establishing goals), and development (mentoring, managing time, increasing clinical skills, academic publications, learning administrative skills, understanding department values, developing collegial relationships), or research (collaborating, developing methodologies, refining manuscripts, and writing grants)?

Once a mentor has thought about his or her values, work style, and needs, the mentor should develop a clear vision of career goals using these values and needs. Creating specific, written goals for the next year, five years, and 10 years is helpful. If a mentor does not know what he or she wants to be doing in 10 years, establishing a possible direction provides a starting point. Goals should relate to the knowledge and skill gaps identified, but otherwise they can be specific (e.g., publish a paper or book), broad (e.g., improve clinical exam skills), radically valued, weak related, or personal.” Setting goals helps a mentor present his or her needs to potential mentors. A mentor who clearly assesses skill and knowledge deficits and sets goals can effectively seek mentoring and become more knowledgeable.

List 1: Checklist for Mentees to “Manage Up” to Create Successful Mentoring Relationships

Getting ready
- Clarify your values
- Identify your work style and habits
- Identify skills and knowledge gaps
- Personal
- Professional development
- Self-development
- Academic guidance
- Research
- List specific opportunities sought—e.g., grant writing, presentation
- Write down goals: 3 months, 1 year, 5 year

Finding a mentor or two
- Meet with people you know
- Get recommendations
- Ask people you meet with who else they recommend
- Be persistent
- Find multiple mentors, both junior and senior people

Things to look for in a mentor
- Available and accessible
- Offers opportunities and encourages mentee to take risks
- Helps mentee develop own agenda
- Has prior mentoring experience

The first meeting
- Tell your mentor how he or she has already helped you
- Share your background, values, and needs
- Send a thank you note after the meeting

 Cultivating the mentor-mentee relationship
- Agree on structure and objectives of relationship
- Run and set the meeting agendas
- Ask questions
- Actively listen
- Follow through on assigned tasks
- Ask for feedback
- Manage or
- Set goals and expectations
- Be responsive and flexible
- Ensure the flow of information
- Follow a regular meeting schedule with agenda

Imparison
- Tell about when the relationship should end
- Talk with your mentor about next steps
- Talk about future mentorship
- Responsible for his or her own growth: “It is important to refine and repeat goals periodically.”

Finding a mentor or two
- Find a mentor through a colleague
- Finding a mentor may be the most difficult step in establishing a mentoring relationship.

Acad Med. 2009; 84:140–144.