

MENTORING 101

Finding and Becoming a Mentor

Jodi Tims

Baldwin Wallace University



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What is a Mentor?

An experienced and trusted person who gives another person advice and help, especially related to work or school, over a period of time

*Cambridge
Online Dictionary*

A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself. An mentor is someone who allows you to know that no matter how dark the night, in the morning joy will come. A mentor is someone who allows you to see the higher part of yourself when sometimes it becomes hidden to your own view.

Oprah Winfrey



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Fact: Mentoring Matters!

Benefits of being mentored

- Understanding the culture expectations of your institution and discipline
- Finding your voice – speak up and be heard
- Building self-confidence – fight the imposter syndrome
- Learning to accept feedback in areas like communication, technical ability and leadership skills
- Figuring out how to build your strengths and overcome your weaknesses
- Gaining access to a professional network



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Fact: Mentors Matters!

- **Benefits of Mentoring Others**

- Giving back to the organization, the discipline and the mentee
- Improving listening skills
- Increasing a sense of self-worth
- Re-energizing the mentor's career
- Increasing personal satisfaction



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Who Mentors Whom?

- Academic settings
 - All faculty mentor undergraduate and/or graduate students
 - Tenured faculty at the same institution mentor junior faculty
 - Senior colleagues in the discipline mentor junior colleagues
 - Graduate students mentor undergraduate students
- Lab settings
 - Senior staff mentor junior staff
 - Junior staff mentor student interns



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How Do I Find a Mentor?

- Sometimes mentors are formally assigned (academic advisors, assigned colleagues)
- Sometimes mentoring relationships develop “organically”
- Formal mentoring programs
- Stay on the lookout!
- Don't be afraid to ask a respected contact if she/he will be a mentor



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How Do I Become a Good Mentor?

- Make time for the mentee
 - Undergrads – meet at least once per semester; remain available
 - Grad students – weekly meetings, annual reviews
 - Junior faculty or junior staff – regularly scheduled chats (coffee once a month); collaborate on a grant proposal or research project
- Give good advice
 - Undergrads – course scheduling; resume building; campus involvement
 - Grad students – course scheduling; career options; time management;
 - Junior faculty or junior staff – professional development; work-life balance



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How Do I Become a Good Mentor?

- Provide encouragement
 - Praise success
 - Relate your own experiences
- Increase opportunities when possible
 - Increase mentee's network
 - Letters of reference, nominations for awards



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Avoid Mentoring Pitfalls

- Encourage without dictating
- Don't take advantage of mentees – e.g., to do your work
- Don't allow the mentee to take advantage of you – e.g., demanding too much time
- Don't “over mentor”
 - Professional mentor/mentee relationships are not friendships in spite of being trusting and close relationships
 - Don't try to make your mentee just like yourself



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My Mentoring Journey

- Many mentors throughout my career
 - Undergrad advisor introduced me to conference attendance and the rewards of service to the institution and discipline
 - Grad advisor provided invaluable encouragement to pursue the Ph.D., many networking opportunities, amazing modeling of good mentoring
 - Many “short term” mentors at home institutions and within the computing community – less formal relationships, but each has built into my professional journey
- My mentees
 - Many, many undergraduate students, some of whom continue to maintain contact
 - Junior colleagues, particularly once I became a chair



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My Mentoring Advice

- Don't be afraid to ask someone to be a mentor
- Don't expect your mentor to solve all of your problems
- Don't betray a mentee's trust
- Don't put all your eggs in one mentoring basket
- Don't overcommit to too many mentees
- Don't believe that you've outgrown the need for a mentor
- Thank your mentors and let them know how valuable they have been to you



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Mentoring Resources

- National Academy of Sciences resources
 - <https://www.nap.edu/read/5789/chapter/1>
 - http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/PGA_049594
- National Center for Women & Information Technology Resources
 - <https://www.ncwit.org/resources/mentoring-box-technical-women-work>
 - <https://www.ncwit.org/resources/mentoring-box-women-faculty-computing>
 - <https://www.ncwit.org/newsletters/mentoring-take-your-influence-next-level>



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Let's Hear Your Mentoring Advice!



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