

How to Prepare for a Meeting with Your Mentor

Being a mentee offers personal and professional opportunities to learn about yourself and what areas you want to develop and strengthen.

Here are some tips to help you get started!

1. Be prepared.

Prepare yourself for your meetings in advance and with anything that was agreed on before, such as any challenges, goals, and or skills you want to talk about or work on. There is always something to discuss since events have occurred between the current meeting and the last one. Sometimes simple things can lead to great discussions and insights.

2. Think commitment.

Regular contact is one of the most important building blocks for a successful mentoring relationship. Agree with your mentor on how often you want to check in and the length of time of the meeting. If a meeting session needs to be canceled, be sure to let your mentor know as soon as possible so you both can reschedule.

3. Give back and get more.

Your mentor will give more without your having to ask, so take the time to share examples of what has helped you in your mentorship journey. A simple way to show gratitude is by saying thank you. Share with your mentor how their guidance and support have been helpful in the past, this can also give your mentor some insight on how to be helpful in the future.

4. Keep expectations realistic.

You and your mentor should both discuss the expectations you have for each other and hold each other accountable for them. For example, once you both decide how often you will meet, agree on how you both will communicate by email, text, phone call, etc. You can also share what topics and career areas you want to talk about and learn more about.

5. It is risky, but it is healthy.

Trying something completely outside your comfort zone is an important part of your mentorship journey. Here are some examples of taking healthy risks; talking to your mentor about working on building your self-confidence, sharing an issue you are experiencing and problem-solving, learning to communicate more effectively, and trying to learn a new skill.

Mentee Responsibilities

The ultimate goal is to learn and absorb as much information as you can from your mentor.

- **Planner:** Create an agenda (list of topics and ideas you want to talk about), and think about creating short and long-term goals. You can use the S.M.A.R.T goals template to help you think about some goals.

- **Communicator:** Help keep the communication going by asking open-ended questions (see examples below), following up when expected, and communicating updates to your mentor when necessary. Communication is key!
- **Student:** All and all, a mentee takes on the student role. A mentee acts as a sponge taking in the knowledge and expertise from their mentor, continues to learn outside of your mentee-mentor relationship, and finds opportunities to learn even in moments of challenges and growth.

Here is a list of questions to ask your Mentor:

Introduction: Getting to Know Each Other

1. Where are you from originally?
2. What is your family like?
3. What made you get into this type of work, career?
4. What do you do for fun?
5. What professional experiences did you have that led you to your current position?
6. What skills have been most beneficial for you?
7. What career accomplishments – whether it's working through challenges to earning promotions – are you most proud of?
8. What is one thing you wish someone had told you when you were at the career stage I am currently?
9. What is the most meaningful part of your job?
10. Why did you decide to be a mentor, and what are your goals for our relationship?