

Be the Captain of Your Mentorship! How to Enhance the Mentee Part of the Relationship

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The mentor-mentee relationship should be win-win...rewarding for both parties.

We spend considerable time working on our roles as mentors, less is done to promote the mentee part of the relationship.

Main takeaway points:

- Concept of "Managing up" = the Mentee takes ownership of the relationship
- Let students/mentees know your expectations and provide a framework
- Make the relationship work for you utilizing student driven agendas and scheduling
- Tell the students to be the "captain of their mentor-ship"

Managing Up

This is a corporate concept that can be applied to academic medicine. The main concept is that the mentee takes ownership of and directs the relationship, letting the mentor know what he/she needs and communicating the way the mentor prefers

Good Mentors

Good mentors take an interest in the mentee, provide professional and personal support, prompt a mentee to take risks, and help open doors to opportunities. Mentors benefits include professional stimulation, personal enrichment, satisfaction, and a sense of giving back to the profession.

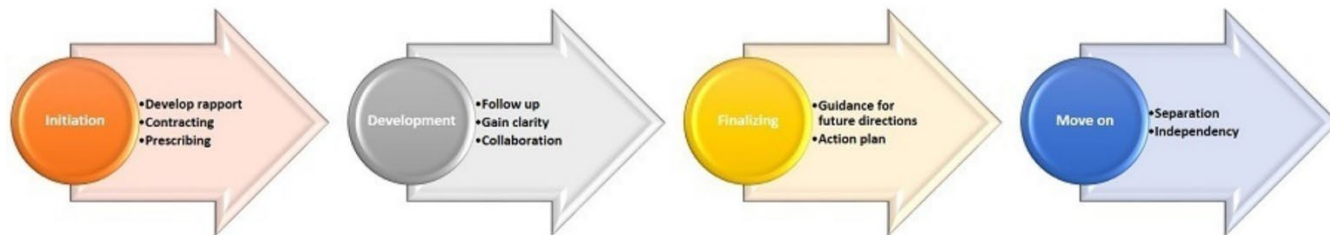
Good Mentees

In a "managing up" relationship the mentee manages the work by planning and setting the meeting agendas, asking questions, listening, completing assigned tasks, and requesting feedback. Managing up makes it easier for mentors to help mentees, and makes the relationship more satisfying and successful for both.

Scheduling Apps

- Acuityscheduling.com
- Calendly.com
- Google Calendar (for business)
- many others

Life Cycle of Mentor-Mentee Relationship



- Source Toklu 2017

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 knowledge and skill gaps
 - Personal
 - Professional development
 - Skill 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

- Is available and accessible
- Provides 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
- Plan and set the meeting agendas
- Ask questions
- Actively listen
- Follow through on assigned tasks
- Ask for feedback
- Manage up
 - Set goals and expectations
 - Be responsive and flexible
 - Direct the flow of information
 - Follow a regular meeting schedule with agenda

Separation

- Talk about when the relationship should end
- Talk with your mentor about next steps
- Talk about future mentors

- Source Zerzan 2009

Table. Diagnosis and Treatment of Mentee Missteps

Phenotype	Description	Diagnostic Signs	Potential Solutions	
			Mentee	Mentor
Conflict Averse				
The Overcommitter	Lacks the ability to say no. Ends up overcommitted and underproducing.	Résumé is filled with a host of committees, volunteer roles, etc, yet few have resulted in academic products such as publications.	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.	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.
The Ghost	Appears extremely enthusiastic and energetic, but then disappears without a trace and without notice—especially when problems arise.	Mentee may agree to assignments but fail to follow up. When questions regarding project deadlines arise, the mentee avoids discussion.	When uninterested, suggest an alternative person who may be interested. Address issues early. To reduce anxiety, be prepared with a planned solution.	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.
The Doormat	Mentee is on the receiving end of a manipulative mentor. The mentee's energy is used for things that do not further their career, or for which they do not receive credit.	Mentee spends time on work unrelated to their own career. Review of mentee's progress shows few first-authored papers in mentee's field of interest.	Ask directly how new projects align with goals. Trial of setting goals and boundaries. Seek new mentors. Establish a mentoring committee.	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.
Confidence Lacking				
The Vampire	Mentee requires constant attention and supervision, leaving mentors drained and empty.	Mentee requests approval or clarification for every step of a project, regardless of prior or similar discussions. Lacks conviction; pivots to mirror mentor.	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.	Set clear goals and boundaries, including what questions require approval and what do not. Have mentees "put their nickel down" when asking for help.
The Lone Wolf	Assertive, self-motivated, and determined; prefers working alone; believes mentorship is a luxury, not a necessity.	Does not trust others or is afraid to ask for help. Does not work well as part of a team.	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.	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.
The Backstabber	This mentee rarely fails, but when this does occur, makes excuses or assigns blame to others rather than to personal missteps.	People who work with this mentee once often don't want to do so again. Has difficulty accepting responsibility for any mistake; avoids negative feedback.	Reframe mistakes as a learning opportunity. Make giving credit and accepting responsibility a daily goal.	Emphasize that honesty, not perfection, is critical in a mentee. If mentee cannot accept this responsibility, seek a new mentee.

- Source Vaughn 2017

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