



What to Look For in a Mentor

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Before deciding to seek out a mentor, you must first determine what you hope to gain from the relationship. That means you need to spend time thinking about both your short and long term goals. Once you're fully clear on where you want to be, the selection process becomes that much easier.

When people think about mentors, they often visualize a classic business setting, where everything is formal and methodical, but mentoring relationships aren't limited to business. The truth is, you may desire a mentor for any number of reasons.

Consider these types of mentors:

- **Life Guidance.** These life mentors are often referred to as "*life coaches*."
- **Spiritual Advisors.** You can look to a priest, pastor, or friend to mentor you spiritually.
- **Everyday Mentors.** Sometimes we even have unofficial mentors who are simply people we admire in our community or peer group.

Choosing a Mentor

When looking for a mentor, seek someone who possesses the qualities, skills, and experiences you hope to one day have yourself. ***A mentor should be someone who fits your idea of success, has a positive attitude, and openly shares his or her knowledge with you.***

You might want a mentor who's at the pinnacle of success within your field so you can learn from the best. Alternately, you might want to select someone as a mentor who's only slightly higher ranking than you, this way you can learn what you need to help take you to the next level.

Choosing the high ranking executive helps you with long term goals, while selecting the mentor who's closer to your own experience level makes it easier to focus on a specific area of expertise so you can achieve your shorter term goals.

An ideal situation may involve both types of mentors. This way you get a well-rounded experience that allows you to benefit both in the short and long term. Either way, you should find someone who isn't afraid to challenge you to reach your true potential.

Establishing a Beneficial Relationship

When you've selected your mentor candidate, ***draw up a plan to present to them detailing what you hope to give and receive from the relationship***. This will help the potential mentor decide if they can provide you with the experience and knowledge you desire.

It's only fair to both of you to be as upfront as possible about your expectations. If you aren't clear on what you hope to gain, the relationship has little chance for success.

Successful Mentorship Begins with You

Once the relationship has been established, actively communicate your needs to the mentor in order to take the sessions in the direction you'd like to go.

You should be in the driver's seat, even though you're the junior party in the relationship. Without providing your mentor with guidance, the mentorship may not be fruitful for you. After all, if you don't let your mentor know what you need, he can't possibly give you what you hope to gain.

It's important throughout the relationship for the mentor to be supportive. ***A good mentor will be patient with you.*** They'll create an open and welcome environment that allows for earnest questions and concerns while making you feeling safe.

A successful mentorship will enable you to feel more confident, skilled, and knowledgeable. The reward for the mentor will be seeing the results of the positive impact they were able to make on someone else's life.

Follow these tips to find great mentors in any area you'd like to strengthen and enjoy a relationship that brings fruits to your labor and greater life fulfillment to both of you.