Take Charge of Your Mentoring

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First of all, **you** are in charge of your career and **your** mentoring plan.

Thank you – questions?
Think about 2-3 people that have influenced your life, career, or just you as a person.

How did they impact your life? Why did they mean so much to you?

Did they help you in real time, or in retrospect?
How many people here have formal mentors in place

- means you asked them to be your mentor, they accepted, you have formal discussions, etc...

How many people here have informal mentors

What traits do you expect in a mentor?

What is your best self? (we’ll come back to that)
Let’s set the stage

- Coaching vs. Mentoring
- Coaching – typically tactical, more situational to address specific situations
- Mentoring – typically growth focused – longer view – typically more strategic in nature
Mentoring Options

**Dynamic Mentoring**
- Employer-sponsored mentoring programs
- Community mentor programs (like PMI Nashville's!)
- Professional career coaches
- Self-managed mentor arrangements

**Static Mentoring**
- Online resources
- Books
- Conferences
- Mentoring from afar

**Introspective Mentoring**
- YOUR BEST SELF
- YOU DETERMINING YOUR PATH
Your BEST SELF

Take a moment to think forward about what your best self looks like…
- What kind of person is your ‘best you’
- What did your best self do?
- How did they do it?

Are you your best you right now?
- Probably not
- Is your best self attainable?
- Is it worth it?

Self-realization is difficult – maybe your most difficult activity in life
What a **good** mentor is...

- a listener
- a challenger
- a truth teller
- accountability support
What a mentor is not..

*your* problem solver

your career decision-maker

keys to unlock doors, guarantees of success

a fairy Godmother

a therapist
Mentoring Considerations

• You must be able to take a critical look at yourself
• just because you may want someone specific to be your mentor, they may not be able to serve that role
• you probably are being mentored today, but may not realize it
• it's as much about the mentor as it is about you - their time, their experience, their input
• you may need to have more than 1 mentor to serve various needs
• We typically can't quickly put mentors in our shoes, and we can't fit into theirs – keep in mind:
  • each situation is unique
  • not all feedback from mentors will fit
Traits of Mentors

Mentors have very limited time
  • or at least assume they do

Mentors have very limited attention span

Most mentors like to do one of the following
  • be brought specific problems to discuss
  • discuss concepts and 'the big picture'

Good mentors don’t want to tell you ‘this is what you should do’
  • Remember, it’s your career
Common Areas Mentors Focus On..

Executive presence

Professionalism

Career Path Counseling

Help with difficult interactions / crucial conversations

Good mentors focus on **root causes**, not symptoms
Can my manager be my mentor?
- Maybe, but typically more of a coach than a mentor

Do I have to keep my mentor forever?
- No. Your career needs will change over time – maybe even your careers.
- ‘Doers’ have different needs from managers

Do I have to have a mentor?
- No. It’s your career, but most successful people have a mentor of some type
What should I look for in a mentor?

Simply Put: Expertise and Experience

Leadership expertise
Scale expertise
Subject matter expertise
Industry expertise
Organizational knowledge
Interpersonal Expertise
General wisdom

The mentor requirements depend on your objectives
Mentor Pitfalls

Mentors *may* be out of touch – *may be* reluctant to take on new ideas

What worked for them may not work for you. Each person’s path and circumstances are different

Mentors won’t know all the detail of your circumstances, and you won’t have the time to spend on providing all those details
Negative Mentors

Do all mentors need to be positive influences?

Think back to the people who influenced your life

You can learn more from bad leaders than good leaders many times

Look for those moments
• I don’t want to make that mistake
• I do not wanted to be treated like that

Make note of those moments
Make plans not to repeat
Let’s talk about the process...
Keys Steps to take control...

1. Determine your objectives
2. Identify your improvement areas
3. Plan your mentoring needs
4. Establish the mentoring relationship
5. Examine your mentoring options
6. Put in the effort with your mentor
7. Take in feedback and criticism
8. Act on what you learn
9. Circle back with your mentor
Determine your objectives

• Determine what you are trying to accomplish
• Is it career advancement?
• Do you need to solve a single relationship issue?
• Remember, a mentor cannot guarantee advancement and is not responsible for solving your problem
Identify your improvement areas

- personal knowledge
- honest feedback from managers
- honest feedback from peers
- 360 assessment results
- find out what is holding you back from achieving your goals
Plan your mentoring needs

- determine type of mentor you need
- do you need a coach or a mentor
- tactical or strategic mentoring needed?
- short term or long term need
Examine your mentoring options

- Based on your *needs*, what are your options?
- Who is available?
Establish the mentoring relationship

- informal contract between mentor and mentee
- it may not be formal, but be transparent that you consider a person your mentor
- generally agree on frequency to meet, ground rules
- determine how the mentor sees their role
Put in the Effort

• be prepared for discussions
• let them know in advance what you want to discuss, what you are struggling with
Leading Discussions with Mentors

Briefly frame situations / circumstances
Explain your desired result
Explain you plans / proposal
Ask for feedback on your plan – not in general

Don’t ask a mentor…
• ‘what would you do if you were me?’
• ‘what should I do?’
• ‘what do I need to do to get a promotion?’ or
• ‘what do I need to do to get your job?’
Take in feedback and criticism

- most people don't like 'negative' feedback – don’t get defensive
- remember, mentors don’t know your exact situation(s) – expect general, not specific feedback
- remember, you asked for this
Act on what you learn

- Create an action plan
- Do the work!
- Mentoring is worthless without application
  - Don’t waste your time and your mentor’s time by not acting
Circle back with your mentor

- how are you progressing on actions taken?
- what worked, what did not?
- generally, how are things going?
- what do you want to focus on next?
- when are you done?
Closing Thoughts
Are you a mentor?

you are a mentor if you choose to be by your actions

you are a ‘Negative Mentor' by your actions that don't reflect a positive, supporting, but challenging environment
The stool

Opportunity

Timing

Performance
Remember...

• **you** are in charge of your career and **your** mentoring plan

• Determine who your **best self** is, and acknowledge your gaps compared against your **best self**
Questions?
Thank You!!

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