

# MENTOR

## TOOL KIT



**MENTORING  
RESOURCE CENTER**

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

# MENTORING

A PURPOSEFUL AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP IN WHICH A MORE EXPERIENCED PERSON (**MENTOR**) PROVIDES GUIDANCE, FEEDBACK AND WISDOM TO FACILITATE THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A LESS EXPERIENCED PERSON (**MENTEE**)



## MENTORING

is a brain to pick,  
an ear to listen,  
and a push in the  
right direction.

- JOHN C. CROSBY

# WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring, at its heart, is having *intentional conversations* with another person, conversations that are focused on the other person's growth and development. A mentoring relationship can last several weeks or months or even years depending on the needs and goals of that particular relationship. Mentoring conversations can focus on personal or professional decisions and choices, career or academic development and exploration, or organizational socialization and orientation. No matter the duration or goals, mentoring is not to be taken lightly. Mentoring requires

- Asking thoughtful and thought-provoking questions to guide decision making and problem solving
- Practicing active listening in regular, meaningful conversations
- Role-modeling behavior through words and actions
- Providing objective feedback and guidance
- Demonstrating critical thinking through problem analysis and decision making
- Facilitating the mentee's ability to practice self-reflection and self-development
- Displaying a sincere passion to support the growth of another person
- Expending time, energy, and enthusiasm

---

Before you agree to mentor another person, you should take the time to reflect on some key questions:

- How do you feel about being a mentor?
- What benefits would you gain from being a mentor?
- What would it cost you to be a mentor?
- Do you have the time and can you make the commitment to mentor someone?

## TIPS ON BEING A MENTOR

- 1 Establish an Agreement.** This is an *intentional* relationship, so even if you consider your mentoring relationship to be informal in nature, you should still establish an agreement that will take into account the goals you will be working on, the length of the relationship, ground rules for your conversations, and considerations of confidentiality.
- 2 Set SMART Goals.** Mentoring relationships are built around developmental goals, which should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely. Use this model to help your mentee write out two or three goal statements that will guide your work together during the course of your mentoring relationship. What will you work on together?
- 3 Use the Mentoring Conversation Model.** Mentoring conversations are built around four key questions: *Where are you now?* (What is the situation, issue, or problem you are working on?); *Where do you want to be?* (What is your goal?); *How do you plan to get there?* (What, specifically, are you going to do to work towards that goal?); and *What happened?* (What action did you take and what did you learn?). As your mentee works through these four phases, you – the mentor – should provide objective feedback and guidance, ask thought-provoking questions, and practice active listening.
- 4 Create and Look for Growth and Reflection Opportunities.** There will be many opportunities during the course of your mentoring relationship for you to push your mentee to reflect on his (or her) experiences and how they are contributing to his growth. You can also create these sorts of experiences by taking your mentee to meetings with you, introducing him to colleagues and peers, and pushing him to step outside of his comfort zone.
- 5 Celebrate and Come to Closure.** Mentoring relationships are not necessarily intended to last forever. Be sure to take time to celebrate your successes together and to bring the relationship to appropriate closure when the time is right. This is another opportunity for growth and reflection and for you and your mentee to discuss how you each will use what you have learned from the mentoring relationship in the future.





## TWENTY YEARS FROM NOW

you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.

- H. JACKSON BROWN, JR.

## KEY QUESTIONS

Mentoring asks that mentors be skilled in active listening, providing objective feedback, and helping mentees learn how to be reflective. One of the best ways to do this is to develop a tool kit of key questions that you can ask as mentees embark on and complete growth experiences. These experiences can include

- ▶ Study Abroad
- ▶ Internships
- ▶ Volunteer Experiences
- ▶ Leadership Experiences
- ▶ Classes, Research, and other Academic Experiences



Key Questions to Help Plan for Experiences:

- ▶ What is your goal? What do you hope to achieve from this experience?
- ▶ What steps can you take to achieve that goal?
- ▶ What skills or knowledge do you hope to gain from this experience?
- ▶ What do you think will be most challenging or rewarding for you?
- ▶ What are you the most worried about/afraid of?

Key Questions to Help Unpack Experiences:

- ▶ How well did you accomplish your goal?
- ▶ What did you learn? How can you use that new knowledge, skill, or ability in the future?
- ▶ What was most challenging or rewarding for you?
- ▶ How are you different now than you were at the beginning?
- ▶ How can you describe this experience and the insights gained to an employer or graduate school?



## EFFECTIVE QUESTIONING

brings insight,  
which fuels curiosity,  
which cultivates wisdom.

- CHIP BELL

## LEADING DISCUSSIONS

### ABOUT MENTORING

Mentoring does not happen in isolation. It is a developmental learning process that involves at least two people: the mentor and the mentee. Additionally, students have the opportunity to learn from one another about their mentoring experiences. As you lead these discussions, remember some key points about effective group facilitation:

- ➔ **Have a Plan.** Think through your key questions and plan how you will handle dominant or submissive personalities ahead of time.
- ➔ **Don't Try to Find a "Right" Answer.** The goal is for the participants to engage in discussion and to learn from one another; therefore, all comments are valued and represent individual perspectives and opinions.
- ➔ **Push for More Information.** Ask open-ended questions (questions that cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no") and follow-up with a "why" or "why not" question. Your role is to keep the conversation moving forward.

Small-group discussions about mentoring can focus on the following questions:

- ➔ What do effective mentors do? How have you experienced this?
- ➔ What skills do mentors use? How have those skills had an impact on you?
- ➔ What have you learned about yourself from mentoring relationships? How can you use this knowledge?
- ➔ Who are examples of mentors from literature and film? What did they do? What impact did they have? (There are numerous examples; watch a movie as a group and then discuss.)
- ➔ How are mentors different from teachers, advisors, coaches? How are they similar?
- ➔ Whom do you know who could be an effective mentor?



# TIPS ON PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Why is good feedback important?

- It prevents small issues from festering into unmanageable problems
- It clears up misunderstandings
- It builds trust in relationships
- It is a learning opportunity
- It is a way to acknowledge and recognize skills, contributions, and accomplishments



Remember the following tips when you are giving feedback:

- **Check for Understanding.** Make sure that you accurately understand the situation before jumping to conclusions. Repeat what you think you heard by saying, "What I heard you say is..."
- **Check for a Willingness to Listen.** Ask for permission to deliver the feedback and make sure the other person is in a good frame of mind to receive it. This is as simple as saying, "Can I offer you some feedback?"
- **Check for Positive Intent.** Make sure that your intentions are to help with the other person's growth and development and not related to any personal feelings that you may have about the other person.
- **Focus on Behaviors and Results.** Frame your message around concrete behaviors and results of those behaviors; in doing so, you ensure that the other person knows exactly how the behavior can be avoided or repeated in the future.



## WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSSES

another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us.

- ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL

# TIPS

# FOR GRATITUDE ACTIVITY

Mentoring requires an extensive investment of time, energy, and emotions. People generally do not mentor for recognition, awards, or thanks; they do it because it is the right thing to do, because they have something to offer, and because they see something in another person that is worth their investment. Taking a moment to thank these important people is a way that you can give back and reward them for that investment.

A good opportunity for student discussion is a mentor gratitude activity. First, facilitate a discussion about the people who have served as mentors in their lives. Key questions you can ask them to reflect upon and share with one another include

- ▶ Who has served as a mentor in your life? It may have been a teacher, a coach, a parent, or a friend.
- ▶ What did that person do for you? How?
- ▶ What did that person **not** do for you? Why not?
- ▶ What did you learn from that relationship?



Next, ask each student to write a brief note of thanks to his or her mentor. These notes do not have to be extensive – a few sentences will do! Notes should express

- ▶ Why the student is writing
- ▶ How the mentor has impacted the student
- ▶ What: a sincere expression of thanks

# RESOURCES

## Looking for more information and resources about mentoring? Check these out:

Dungy, T., & Whitaker, N. (2010). *The mentor leader: Secrets to building people and teams that win consistently*. Winter Park, FL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

International Mentoring Association. <http://mentoring-association.org/>

Johnson, W. B. (2007). *On being a mentor: A guide for higher education faculty*. New York, NY: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Johnson, W. B., & Ridley, C. R. (2008). *The elements of mentoring*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mentor. <http://www.mentoring.org/>

Mentoring Works. <http://mentoring-works.com/index.html>

Mullen, C.A. (Ed.) (2008). *The handbook of formal mentoring in higher education: A case study approach*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.

Sanft, M., Jensen, M., & McMurray, E. (2008). *Peer mentor companion*. Belmont, CA; Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Shea, G. F. (2002). *Mentoring: How to develop successful mentor behaviors*. Menlo Park, CA: Crisp Learning.

Wake Forest University Mentoring Resource Center.  
<http://mentoring.opcd.wfu.edu>

Wright, W. C. (2004). *Mentoring: The art of relational leadership*. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press.

Zachary, L. J. (2000). *The mentor's guide: Facilitating effective learning relationships*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc.





We make a living  
by what we get,  
we make a life by

**WHAT WE GIVE.**



- WINSTON CHURCHILL

**A MENTOR** is someone who  
allows you to see the hope  
inside yourself. - OPRAH WINFREY





**MENTORING  
RESOURCE CENTER**

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

Reynolda Hall, Suite 230  
(336) 758-3741  
[www.mentoring.opcd.wfu.edu](http://www.mentoring.opcd.wfu.edu)