

## **MENTORING – FINDING THE RIGHT ONE!**

Mentoring is a responsibility; a commitment that requires valuable time and focused attention to assure the mentee's goals are progressing forward. If you have one steady mentor that is adding value to your career and life, you're fortunate.

Finding a mentor is difficult and making it work is even more challenging – the rewards are abundant.

Here are five ways to secure a meaningful mentor and make it matter:

### **1. Know Your Needs and Be Committed**

Once you know what you want from a mentor, you can begin your search. Much like you match job opportunities with your qualifications, you must do the same with a mentor. Only you know what your goals, desires, dreams and aspirations are and what type of person can help you get there.

Commit yourself to the search and don't get distracted. While I realize that finding a mentor can happen serendipitously – you must create the opportunity. Here are a few questions to ask yourself if you are stuck:

- Do I associate myself with the right people? Do they add-value to my career?
- Do I belong to the right networking groups? Am I challenging myself or do I just go with the flow?
- How did my colleagues find their mentors?
- What did it feel like the last time I had a boss who invested in my growth and who helped me figure things out?

These questions will help challenge your thinking and get you on the right track. Be committed and take your time. Understand why a mentor would be important for you and equally begin to think what value you can add to this relationship.

Mentors do not have to be from the same industry, gender or generation. Open your mind to new possibilities by working outside of your comfort zone.

## **2. Invest and Be Responsible**

Now that you know your needs and what you can bring to the table, begin to explore where your mentor can be found. For example, you would have the right credentials but didn't have the right network. Or you needed to find a thought-leader in the subject area. Identify the person and look to see where they hang out and so and attend one of their conferences, speaking events etc and approach them afterwards – with one sentence about how you think they can help you.

You have to invest in yourself to find the right mentor. Know your needs and how someone can serve in this capacity. Be honest with yourself.

## **3. Be Accountable to Yourself and Others**

Be accountable to yourself and others that can benefit from the lessons learned. In other words, don't be selfish – and share your hard work and progress. Your mentor is not a “shrink” – he or she is someone who is helping you progress forward in your career. Be mindful that your mentor is monitoring your progress and when you slip, they begin to re-evaluate the time they commit to this precious relationship.

For example, my mentor Neil and I have a good relationship, he knows what buttons to push to get me motivated. He stretches my thinking; introducing me to new ways of doing things better. Not only do I accept the challenge (even when I may not agree with it), but after seeing the results – I then share my experience with others that can benefit from them. Mentors are not selfish and will open new doors and opportunities. These opportunities can also allow you to meet new potential mentors along the way.

## **4. Be Selfless and Create Opportunities for Your Mentor**

Making the mentor relationship work requires you to equally create new opportunities for your mentor. The mentor-mentee relationship represents two-sides of the same coin (this is an unwritten rule in mentorship). Make it a point to create opportunities for your mentor. They can also use your help, regardless of their success. Get to know their business and their personal goals more closely. Listen and take note of their needs. Be selfless. A good mentor appreciates it when you can reciprocate.

## **5. Make the Relationship Endless**

This is more difficult than you might think. As time passes on, your life evolves, your needs change and the desire for a new mentor may become apparent. However, the mentors that helped you grow and prosper should never be ignored. In fact, there exists the likelihood that you will have outgrown the need for a particular mentor. This is when you reach the point of role reversal. This is another unwritten rule – but the most important one.

Though you may now have different mentors, the relationships you formed with those from the previous chapters in your life must remain active. For example, Steve will always be considered a mentor from the earlier years in business. Though he is not right for my needs today, I continue to live the lessons that he taught me and remind him of how he has shaped my life and success.

[Email](#) or follow-me on [Twitter](#).