

Tips for being a good mentee

Be ready to work at the relationship

Good relationships don't just happen; they take work. This applies to relationships with family, friends, colleagues, and your mentor. It takes time and effort to get to know each other and build trust. Establishing and maintaining trust is essential to a good mentoring relationship.

Be open-minded and willing to learn

No matter who your mentor is, s/he has experience and expertise to share with you. You and your mentor may have a lot in common or very little. Regardless, if you remain open-minded and want to learn, you will become a better professional as a result.

Be honest and real

Your mentor will be better able to help you if you are open and honest about who you are and what you want for your professional and personal development. Talk about your background, current status, hopes, fears, and goals for the future.

Be proactive and take initiative

Mentoring should be an active and engaging experience for both student and mentor. As a student, you shouldn't rely on your mentor to do everything. Make sure that you are in frequent contact with your mentor and that you are initiating most of that contact. Let your mentor know when you need help. Ask questions. Follow-through on items the two of you discuss. Demonstrate a good work ethic.

Be prepared for your meetings with your mentor

Think about the topics you would like to discuss with your mentor ahead of time, write them down, and possibly even email them in advance of your meetings. The more you prepare, the more you will get out of your meetings with your mentor.

Be a good listener

It is your mentor's job to give you honest feedback and advice, some of which will be positive and some of which will be constructive. Rather than ignoring your mentor's criticism or constructive feedback, or allowing it make you feel bad, listen to what your mentor has to say and consider how you can use that information to improve. Regardless of whether you choose to take your mentor's advice, listening to what your mentor has to share with you is important.

Be forward-thinking

Talk to your mentor about where you are presently but focus your energy on building for the future. Define your goals for the semester, year, graduation, or career. In conversation with your mentor, determine the skills sets, knowledge, and abilities you need to acquire to achieve these goals.

References:

Zachary, L. J., with Fischler, L. A. *The Mentee's Guide: Making Mentoring Work for You*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009.

Institute of Food Technologists (IFT). (Date Unknown). How to be a Good Mentee. *IFT Career Center eMentoring*.