

Tips for being a good mentor

Set expectations

As you're building your relationship with your mentee, take a moment to establish routines around time and commitment. What does your relationship look like? Will you meet once a week or once a month? How should they contact you? If you get these questions answered at the get-go, there will be less room for conflict, frustration, or disappointment down the road.

Don't assume anything about your mentee – ask!

It's easy to fall into stereotypes or not see a situation from another person's perspective. But great mentors recognize that it's their responsibility to break through common assumptions by asking questions and digging deeper. This is especially true if you're mentoring someone who's in the early stages of their career, or if the two of you are just getting to know each other and aren't sure how transparent to be. While you can do your best to categorize a mentor/mentee relationship, everyone is unique.

Find the joy in helping others

Cutting space out of your career and free time to dedicate to someone else is no small feat. Being a selfless advisor can be a sacrifice, but center the fact that you are making a difference in your mentee's life.

Exercise selflessness

Having a mentee can be a fun, rewarding experience. However, remember to balance your own joy with the reason you began mentoring in the first place: to advise someone who looks to you as a role model, even when it's hard.

Foster a professional AND personal relationship

Just because your relationship is career-based doesn't mean it can't be personal, too. The first few times you meet with your mentee, take time to get to know them as a person. Not only will you deepen your relationship, but their personal attributes will give you a glimpse into their professional persona.

Share your mistakes

You certainly didn't get where you are by being perfect--nobody has! When you humanize yourself by sharing your own blunders, chances are both of you will learn from your past mishaps.

Celebrate their milestones

In our fast-paced, competitive world, it's really hard to stop and reflect on accomplishments. While your mentee might skip over their own achievements, be sure to go the extra mile by marking them with words of affirmation, a social media post, or a thoughtful handwritten note.

Lead by example

Last, but certainly not least, be a positive role model. Your mentee can learn a lot by observation, so be aware of your behavior. Mentoring takes patience and good practice.