

WE² Mentee Tip Sheet

1. Remember Your Mentor is a Volunteer

First off, it is important to remember your mentor is a volunteer. They have more experience in the field, and they are taking time out of their schedule to help you develop and grow, so there must be healthy boundaries and respect in your relationship. This means as a good mentee, you should be aware of and minimize time wasters that occur during your meetings. Make requests, not demands. Show gratitude for the time and advice. Recognize and never minimize their advanced knowledge and experience in the field.

2. Have a Goal

Know what your end goal is for your conversations with your mentor. Figure out what it is you want from your education and career so that your mentor can better direct and advise you on career path. Come with questions to ask.

3. Show Professionalism

Show up prepared and on time (or better yet, early). Your mentor has a lot of room to help you, but remember that they are likely a busy person. Take initiative in the relationship, and where you can make the first/extra effort. Be respectful and gracious as you would in a job interview. Give advanced notice if you have to cancel or postpone a meet-up.

4. Get to Know Your Mentor

Do your research. Come to your first meeting with some idea of who your mentor is and what they may be able to help you with. Mentorship is a two-way street so bonding and getting to know each other on a personal level can be just as important as on a professional level. As you get to know them better, allow this idea you have of them to change, and adapt your goals based on this evolving relationship.

5. Be Open About Your Needs and Expectations

Like any other relationship, your mentorship must be suited to fit your needs. But also like in any other relationship, your mentor will not be able to read your mind, so tell them what you need from them. Be honest if you need something to change, and let them know if you don't understand something. Also make sure you tell them when they are doing a great job and show them gratitude. They are here to help you, so they will be excited to know that it is working.

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6. Recognize Your Mentor's Limitations

Your mentor may be phenomenal, but they will have a limit to their knowledge and abilities. Don't get frustrated because they personally do not have the answers you need. Talk with them and work in areas where they can help you. If you need guidance beyond that which your mentor can give you, ask for their recommendations to help you find others who have the necessary skills.

7. Take Appropriate Risks

Your mentorship offers the opportunity to have someone else committed to your progress. They will help you remove barriers and pull you out of your comfort zone. Don't fight them on this. Leaving your comfort zone is often where the real work happens. Try new things and allow yourself to make mistakes. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

8. Be Flexible and Take Advantage

Make the most of this opportunity for networking, self-improvement, and path exploration. A mentorship can be an amazing and productive way to improve your-self. Take advantage of the resources and wealth of knowledge your mentor offers you.

9. Keep Up Communication

Life gets busy. This goes for both you and your mentor. If you find your-self too busy to meet up, let them know. Stay in contact even if it is just to let them know you have finals coming up so you may be difficult to reach for the coming month. Be specific. Take the initiative to lead communications with your mentor. If you have not heard from them in a while, follow up with them. And most importantly, if something in the relationship is not working, be honest and confront the issue in a way the works for both of you. Try to change it before you decide it isn't going to work.

10. Follow Up

Always end your current meeting by scheduling your next meeting and clearly setting expectations for any follow-up work that needs to occur. If you have not heard from your mentor lately, send a quick check-in email.