A Discussion on Mentoring and Being Mentored

Amy Clement
Acknowledgements

Jay Fisch and the SLED

- **Context**: feedback to faculty
- **Results**:
  - Informative survey
  - Discussed at faculty retreat
  - 19 nominations for outstanding mentor!!
Acknowledgements
Acknowledgements

YAY!!
Acknowledgements
My (main) mentor

Mark Cane
Columbia University
National Academy of Science
My (main) mentor
A two way street....

On Being an Excellent Mentor

- **Be there**: The data is in: Mentorships flourish when mentors are proactive in seeking out the protégé, scheduling routine appointments, and inviting more spontaneous interaction.
- **Affirm, affirm, affirm...**: Even your most accomplished mentees may suffer bouts of “imposter syndrome.” Encouragement and support are the most highly rated mentor functions from the perspective of mentees. Convey respect and confidence in no uncertain terms.
- **Ask questions and actively listen**: Take time to get to know your mentee. Ask good questions and listen carefully to the responses so that you gain an accurate picture of your mentee's short-term goals and professional “dream.”
- **Communicate expectations clearly**: Tell your mentee precisely what you expect and what you most appreciate in mentees; if expectations conflict, work to resolve differences early on.
- **Be an intentional model**: Seek opportunities to model the skills and attitudes of a professional in your field. Bring your mentee to meetings, rounds, conferences, and other venues where he or she can watch and participate in these activities. Embody the application of your ethics code in all of your professional behaviors.
- **Give honest and timely feedback**: Provide objective, clear, and constructive appraisals of mentee performance—academically, clinically, and professionally. Confront and correct when needed.
- **Provide coaching and socialization**: Without gossiping, offer mentees a window in on the workings of the institution, grant getting, politics, and appropriate professional behavior. Explain the hidden curriculum in your organization and denormalize the system.
- **See the big picture**: Help your mentee take a few steps back and see their current situation in a larger perspective.
- **Challenge and sponsor**: Help your mentee avoid complacency and underachievement by encouraging increasing risk-taking as a professional. Sponsor your mentee for entrée into organizations and networks.
- **Model healthy balance in work & life**: Show mentees how to find balance between devotion to work and time away. Go home on time, exercise, pursue hobbies and encourage the same in mentees.
- **Maintain a sense of humor**: Humor is an excellent antidote for anxiety, frustration, and catastrophic thinking; nearly all mentees appreciate a mentor who can help them keep things in perspective when times get tough.
- **Encourage increasing reciprocity and mutuality**: Recognize the importance of promoting increasing collegiality as your mentee develops. The objective of any excellent mentorship is the eventual independence of the mentee; you are growing a colleague, not protecting a hierarchy.

On Being an Excellent Mentee

- **Be proactive**: Take initiative for seeking your mentor out, arranging appointments, and communicating requests for time and assistance. Invisible protégés are rarely mentored.
- **Keep commitments (meet deadlines)**: Demonstrate that you are self-motivated, self-monitoring, and reliable when it comes to delivering work promised at the time you promised it. Few things will impress a mentor more than sterling reliability in a protégé.
- **Always strive for excellence**: Excellent protégés set themselves apart by refusing to settle for mediocrity—particularly in work produced for the mentor.
- **Demonstrate openness to feedback**: Accept praise and criticism with openness and nondefensiveness; protégés who can tolerate and learn from correction are more likely to be mentored.
- **Demonstrate responsiveness to coaching**: When your mentor takes the time to offer counsel or advice, be sure to follow-up later with evidence that you have put it into practice (or at least considered it thoughtfully).
- **Communicate honestly and directly**: Be forthright, clear, and tactful in letting your mentor know what you need and how he or she can help.
- **Accept increasing responsibility and autonomy**: As you progress in the academic program, accept larger tasks and greater independence; your job is to move from advice to junior collaborator with your mentor.
- **Accept imperfection and admit mistakes**: Although excellence is required, perfection is impossible; avoid getting mired in fruitless demands for perfect performance and be quick to admit mistakes when you make them.
- **Be mindful of your mentor’s goals**: Remember that mentorship is a two-way street and that your mentor’s time is precious. When possible, offer your mentor assistance with projects (e.g., lab, writing, teaching) that might simultaneously afford you experience and supervision.
- **Keep your expectations reasonable**: Avoid falling prey to unrealistic expectations of your mentor; your mentor cannot meet all of your needs, know everything about the field, or always offer undivided attention.
- **Maintain a sense of humor**: Humor is an excellent antidote for anxiety, frustration, and catastrophic thinking; most mentors appreciate a protégé who can keep things in perspective when times get tough.
- **Build a mentoring constellation**: Rather than expect your mentor to be all things, seek out a range of personal and professional support during your program including peers, more advanced junior faculty, and even faculty outside the institution.

The Elements of Mentoring  by W. Brad Johnson
A two way street....

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My humble advice to mentors

• Be kind
• Create a dynamic environment (lab meeting results)
• Be aware of gender/diversity issues- Implicit bias
• Keep tabs on people (after they graduate)
• Don’t type while someone is in your office
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My humble advice on being mentored

• Communicate
• Don’t be shy about being strict (deadlines, you can ‘just say no’)
• But be kind
• Have a thick skin
• Have an open mind
  “A mind is like a parachute. It doesn't work if it is not open.” – Frank Zappa
• Be aware of gender/diversity issues- Implicit bias
• Seek mentors that are a good fit
  “’Are you my mentor?’ If you have to ask the answer is probably no’ – from Lean in by Sheryl Sandberg
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Challenges and Strategies....

• What do you do to advance writing skills?
• What do you do to advance presentation skills?
• What do you do when the advisor is very busy?
• What do you do when the student is not progressing?
• How do you maintain clear communication between mentor and mentee?
• What do you do when your student is interested in pursuing a career outside research/academia?
• How do you handle the job search? What if your student is not finding a job after their degree?
• How do you provide tough criticism without being demoralizing?
• How do you maintain fairness among students in the lab?
• Gender/diversity issues?
• How do you identify a good mentor/mentee match?
• How do you encourage/gain independence?
• How to you encourage/gain confidence?
• How much involvement in personal lives do you have?
• How do you give feedback to your mentor on their mentoring?
• How do you measure success?

“I think i won't sleep at night now. Maybe...”
THANK YOU!!!
Survey results

Student-Mentor Survey Results
Survey developed by:
Jay Fisch (GAC student rep)
Pete Finocchio (MPO)
Sharm Giri (MGG)
Esther Goldstein (MBF)
Dave Ortiz-Suslow (AMP)
How often do you have one-on-one meetings?

- **Current**
  - Never: 4
  - <1 month: 3
  - 1 month: 5
  - 2-3/month: 7
  - 1/week: 7
  - 2-3/week: 4
  - Daily: 6

- **Ideal**
  - Never: 6
  - <1 month: 1
  - 1 month: 5
  - 2-3/month: 7
  - 1/week: 6
  - 2-3/week: 4
  - Daily: 7

What is average response time on paper revisions (or other time-sensitive items)?

- **Current**
  - >1 month: 5
  - 1 month: 4
  - 3 weeks: 6
  - 2 weeks: 7
  - 1 week: 6
  - <1 week: 7

- **Ideal**
  - >1 month: 4
  - 1 month: 3
  - 3 weeks: 8
  - 2 weeks: 7
  - 1 week: 6
  - <1 week: 4
You are happy with the level of engagement (2015)

Would you want more or less?
More - 16 (30%)
Less - 0
I am happy - 38 (70%)

Your advisor provides with valuable post-graduate advice

Are you given the opportunity for collaboration?
Yes – 47 (87%)
No – 7 (13%)
Do you feel comfortable going to your advisor about...

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Professional Issues</th>
<th>Personal Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>30 (56%)</td>
<td>17 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>18 (33%)</td>
<td>14 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
<td>14 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Open-Ended Questions

**What they're doing well:**
1) Supportive (19 responses mentioned this)
2) Available/Approachable (14)
3) Invested/Involved (11)

**What they could do better:**
1) Not engaged/Present (7)
2) Communication (6)
3) Lab management (4)
4) *Nothing* (5)