MENTORSHIP

A QUICK GUIDE TO FINDING YOUR PERFECT MENTOR

By Phiona Martin

WWW.PHIONAMARTIN.COM

ABOUT PHIONA

Career Development is my calling in life. It's a calling because I have a Godly burden to help people navigate their careers and I come across individuals, daily, who just need a framework to deal with the various career challenges they are faced with. I am registered Organizational Psychologist, Career Coach and leader in the Talent Management field. My passion lies in solving problems within; career development, succession planning, developing high potential employees, graduate programs, diversity and inclusion, and leadership development.

My key work experience has been within the consulting, education, retail and broadcast media sectors. I have built and spearheaded the design and implementation of strategic talent management processes during my career. While in the education space, I played a key role in developing a suite of career development services aimed at equipping university students from across 42 African countries, to transition into the world of work.

I am a Thought Leadership enthusiast and provide regular expert opinions on Career Development and Talent Management through various platforms. I have been featured on Television (eNCA, The Morning Show SA, Newzroom Africa), Radio (Talk Radio 702, Capricorn FM, Kaya FM), Publications (Fast Company, True Love Magazine, CHRO Magazine, Move! Magazine, Johannesburg Stock Exchange quarterly) and conferences (SuperLead leadership conference, South African Institute of Tax Practitioners conference, South African Rewards Association conference, Tiso Foundation 4IR symposium, MultiChoice Gender Based Violence conference, Johannesburg Business School women's day event, Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology), to name a few.

I have a Masters in Industrial and Organisational Psychology from the University of South Africa and an Honours Degree from Rhodes University. I am registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa as an Industrial/Organisational Psychologist.

You can contact me on info@phionamartin.online

Table of Contents

4 What is mentoring?

5 What Mentoring is *not*

6 Ways a mentor can support you

7 Areas of mentorship

8 How to define your mentoring needs

10 Outlining your mentoring requirements

11 Tips for finding a good mentor

13 How to reach out to a potential mentor

14 Ground rules for the mentoring relationship

15 Potential questions to ask a mentor

16 Mentoring relationship life-cycle

18 How to be a good mentee

19 Ending the mentoring relationship

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a relationship between two individuals, based on a mutual desire for development towards specific goals and objectives.

1. A mentor is a person who guides a less experienced person by building trust and modeling positive behaviors.
2. Mentoring relationships tend to be voluntary on both sides.
3. The relationship is a non-reporting one.

What mentoring is ***not*** :

Mentoring is not a relationship where:

- the mentee is a passive recipient of information from a mentor.
- the mentor is trying to create a duplicate of themselves.
- the mentor provides the mentee with all the answers.
- the mentee feels entitled to the mentors' networks, finances and relationships.

Ways a mentor can support you

A MENTOR CAN:

- Help you develop your skills.
- Help you identify and achieve your career goals.
- Advise you on your job search.
- Advise you on work-life balance.
- Equip you with life skills.
- Help you think more strategically and get a big picture view.
- Assist you in accessing a variety of people and resources.
- Help you expand your networks and broaden your horizons.
- Help you navigate company politics.

Areas of mentorship

You can have multiple mentors at once, each fulfilling complementary but non-conflicting roles. This enables you to grow holistically as well as get a diversity of perspectives. It's referred to as Personal Board of Directors.

A mentor can assist in either one or all of these broad areas of your life:

Technical Competencies

Behavioural Competencies

Career Development

Personal Development

Spiritual Development

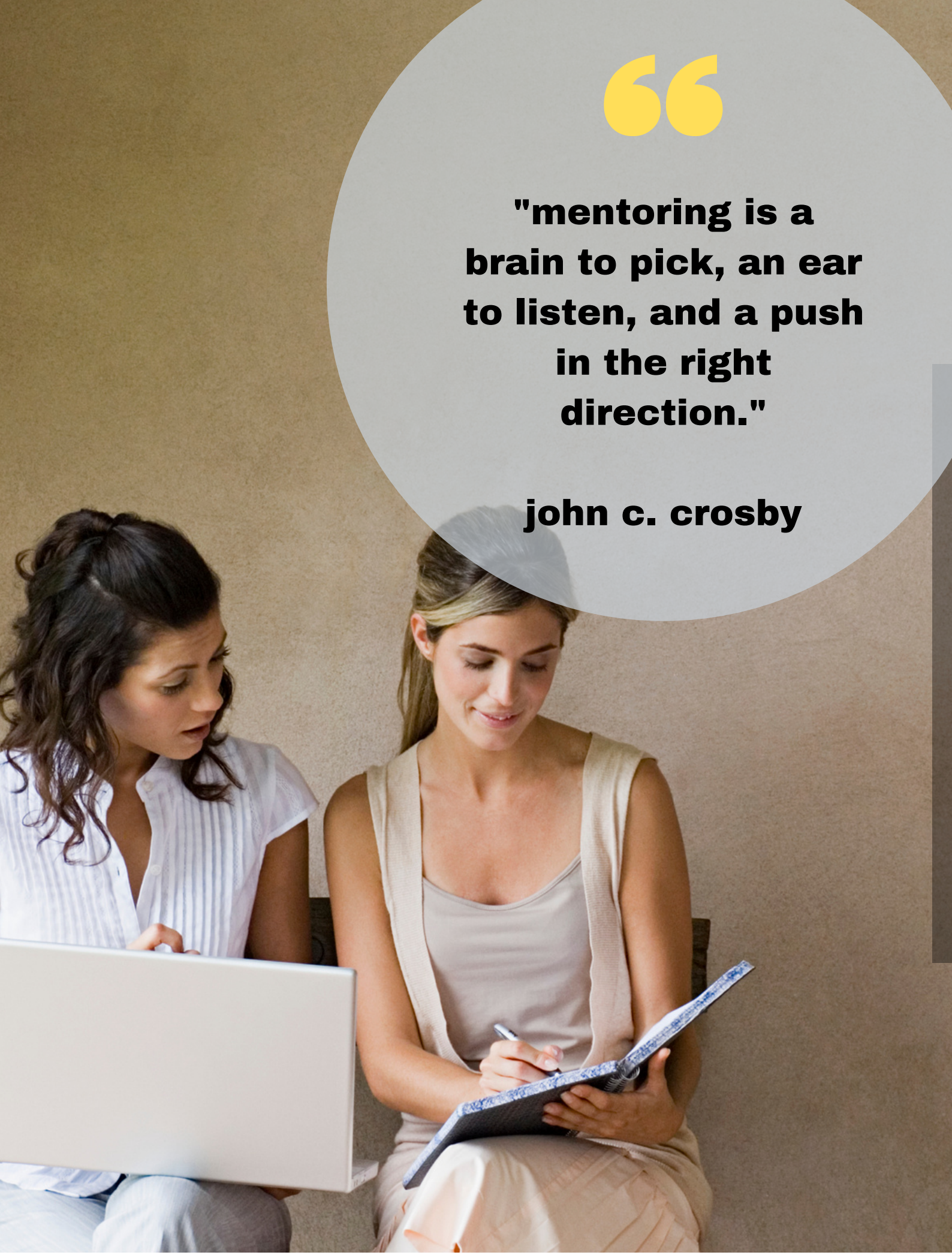
Wellness and Health goals

How to define your mentoring needs

Before you even consider reaching out to a potential mentor, it is important to outline exactly what your mentoring needs are.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What opportunities can this mentoring experience give me?
- What will be different, for me, as a result of the mentoring relationship?
- What will success look like?
- How will mentoring be useful for my future goals?
- Do I respond best to gentle guidance? Or structured, directed guidance?
- How do I learn best? By reading? By listening?



"mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction."

john c. crosby

Outlining your mentoring requirements

If you have an existing personal development plan, you could use it to share with your mentor as a basis for your goals.

If you do not have one, here is an example outline you can use:

Life Area	Goal	Deadline	Success Criteria	Action plan
1. Career	Develop leadership competencies to become a manager	Dec 2020	Promotion at March 2021 performance review	1. Read 2 leadership books a month. 2. Find a mentor to speak to once a month. 3. Look at manager job description and start identifying where I have gaps.

Tips for finding a good mentor

Where do you start looking to find a good or suitable mentor?

First, know what you are looking for;

- Before thinking of people that you can approach for mentorship, first think in terms of characteristics and qualities of your exemplary candidate. This will act like your "job description" or "ideal profile" and will guide you on where to look and how to screen individuals. Example qualities can be; must be a successful entrepreneur, good at public speaking, must have expertise in the IT industry.

- Create a list of people who seem like a good fit to you, the potential mentor should have excelled in the area that you want to develop in.

How and where to find a mentor

- Research your field of interest and find out about the people who are in it.
- It can be a respected former boss or a leader within the company you work for.
- A highly regarded member of your online business network.
- Someone in your professional body or a community organization you belong to.
- Ask family and friends for referrals. Reach out to your extended network - former classmates, colleagues, professors, LinkedIn contacts etc.
- Consider complete strangers - maybe none of the people in your network seem like a good fit for you.
- Profiles of key players in your industry, you can get these from industry publications, online platforms, newspapers, attending conferences etc. But once you have some prospects proceed delicately. Find out as much as you can about the potential mentor and approach them strategically.
- Paid mentors (not recommended) – professionals who charge for mentoring services.

“No person is capable of self-improvement if they see no other model but themself.”

Conrado I. Generoso

How to reach out to a potential mentor

- Just as with a job interview, find out all you can about the person; what work he or she does, past accomplishments, interests, and interaction style. Read what the person has written, and talk to others who know him or her (if possible).
- See if a mutual acquaintance can put in a good word for you or facilitate an introduction.
- Anticipate every possible question or negative reaction, and prepare a response for each.
- Make contact. Determine the most appropriate means i.e. telephone, email or approaching them at an event.
- Practice what you're going to say before the meeting. Role-play the conversation with someone.
- If you get a face to face meeting, stick to the time agreed upon and agenda. Let your potential mentor extend the time if desired. Be a good listener.
- After the meeting, write a thank you note. It demonstrates that you have manners and are grateful for the person's time.
- Proceed to any further follow up action.

Setting ground rules for the mentoring relationship

Clearly-define expectations with your mentor upfront. Do not be afraid to make the first or second interactions "chemistry sessions".

Some ground rules to cover:

- Agree to evaluate early on if you both want to continue the relationship.
- Frequency and location of your meetings.
- "Ground rules" for the structure of your meetings (e.g. should you prepare an agenda?)
- Preferred means of communication.
- Intervals when you will evaluate whether the mentoring relationship is working.
- Goals & outcomes you would like to achieve, with time-lines.
- Any topics that are off-limits?

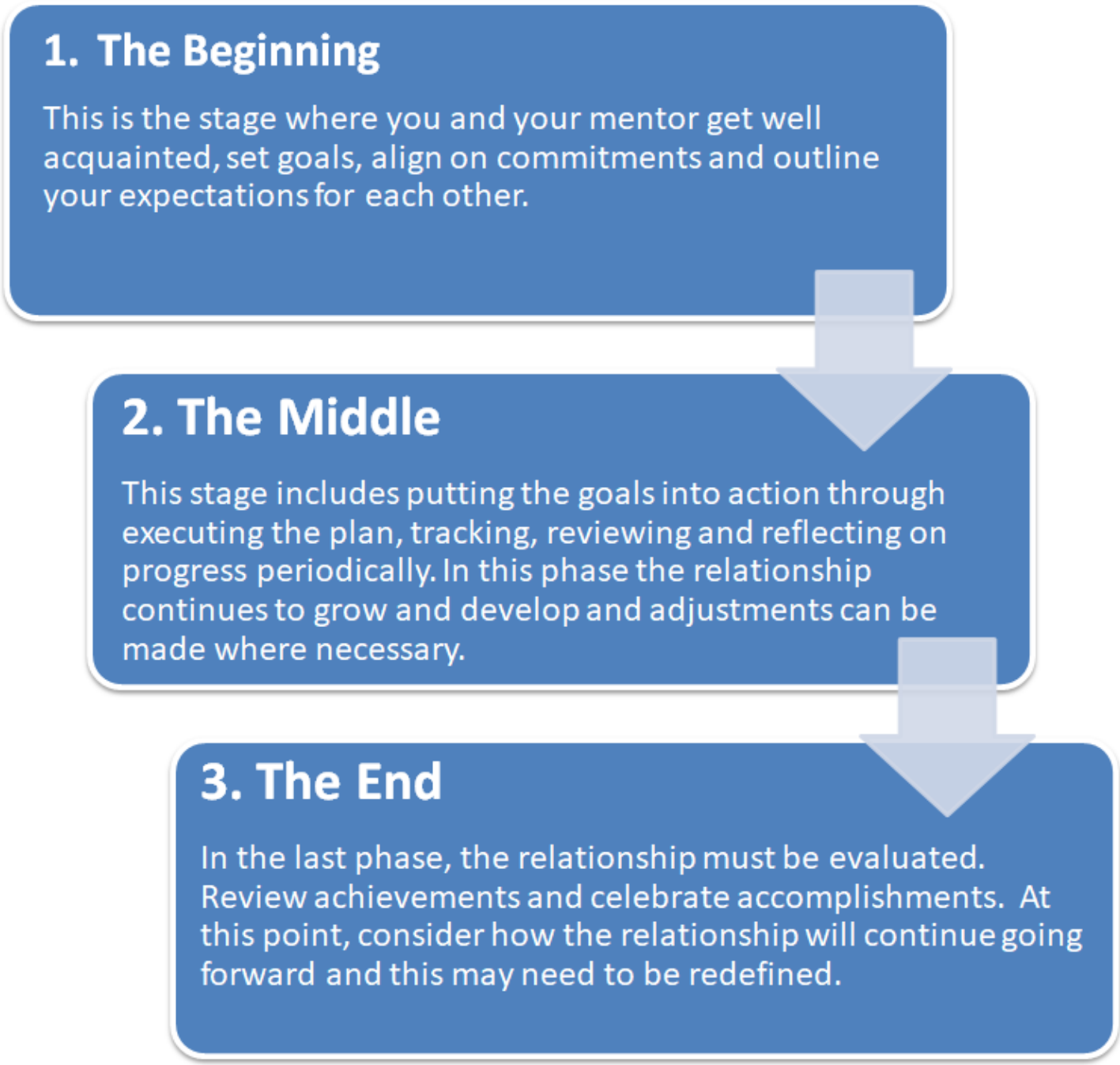
Potential questions to ask a mentor

Once you have approached your mentor, here are some questions you can use to ensure a meaningful interaction.

- What do you wish you knew at my stage?
- Who else would you recommend I connect with?
- If you could do it all again, what would you do differently?
- What would you do if you were me?
- What have been your biggest lessons learnt?
- How would you handle this scenario?
- What's the best advice you ever got?
- How do you encourage innovative ideas?
- Do you have a mentor? How have they influenced you?
- How and where do you find inspiration?
- What values are you committed to?
- Do you have any books that you would suggest I read?
- What mistakes have you made?
- What do you want to be remembered for?
- What daily habits have you adopted that you feel make you successful?

Mentoring relationship life-cycle

A mentoring relationship generally goes through 3 phases:



"If you cannot see where you are going, ask someone who has been there before."

J Loren Norris

How to be a good mentee

Here is how to ensure you are playing your part as a mentee;

- It is you, the mentee, who will need to own the responsibility for your development, learning and professional growth.
- Your mentor expects that you will have a clear understanding of why you want to be mentored.
- Be a good listener, setting aside time for self-reflection.
- You should be able to talk with your mentor about your preferred learning style.
- You must be able to accept constructive criticism and have the courage to provide feedback both positive and constructive to your mentor in order to maintain a healthy productive mentoring relationship.
- Focus on the relationship, rather than the outcomes. Your mentor's role is not to get you your next job or business deal. Do not come with a long shopping list of things you want your mentor to do.
- Do not be afraid to challenge the mentor respectfully if you feel different.
- It is important to be realistic in your expectations. If you build a strong trusting relationship with your mentor, they will help you in more ways than you can imagine.
- Honor the time commitment of your mentor, do not see your sessions as the easiest thing to move around in your diary.

Ending the mentoring relationship

A mentoring relationship can come to an end if:

- Intended goals and outcomes have been achieved.
- There is little or no progress towards goals after a significant amount of time has passed in the mentoring relationship.
- It feels like you are meeting for the sake of meeting.
- One of the parties is no longer committed to the relationship.
- End the relationship on a good note and adopt a “no-fault rule” where no one is blamed if the relationship does not work.

Ending the mentoring relationship

How to close things effectively:

- Provide a summary and evaluation of the experience. What was achieved? What is outstanding? What really worked? What could have improved?
- Show gratitude and give credit where it is due.
- Pay it forward and mentor others.
- Redefine the relationship—talk about how the relationship will continue, and what it will look like.

Thank You