
MENTORSHIP

and Your Pepperdine Journey

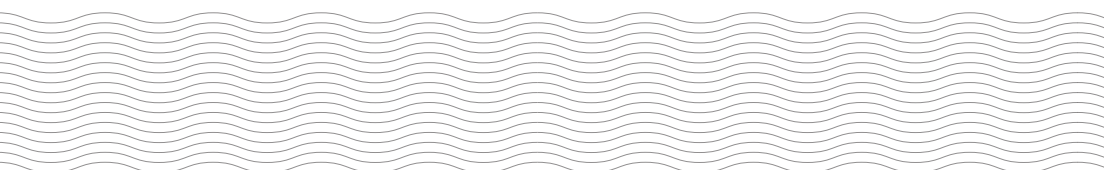
Mentorship has long played a powerful role in shaping lives and careers at Pepperdine University. A simple invitation to have a mentoring conversation over coffee or lunch can lead to meaningful insight, lasting professional growth, and a deeper sense of belonging within our shared community.

At its best, mentorship is not a formal program, but an authentic relationship. When individuals commit to one another's growth, they help cultivate a community rooted in trust, generosity, and shared excellence. Such relationships reflect the very best of Pepperdine and advance our mission.

As you engage with this resource, we encourage you to reflect on two foundational questions:

- Who might serve as a mentor for me?
- Who might I mentor?

These pages are intended to inspire and guide new and existing mentoring relationships in hopes of making a meaningful impact on your life and work as we seek to live abundantly, together.





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BEST PRACTICES FOR MENTORS

AGREE UPON THE TERMS AND GOALS OF THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

- The mentee is responsible for navigating the mentorship process. Ask the mentee what he/she seeks to gain and in what ways you may be most helpful.
- Approach mentoring as a responsibility and form of service, a relationship that will enrich your life as well as another's, and not simply a temporary role you occupy or a requirement to be filled.
- Communicate what you can realistically commit to regarding the length, frequency, and number of meetings, and articulate the ways you anticipate being able to assist. While you will keep your commitments of when you agree to meet, you are not expected to continually be available to speak with your mentee outside of your established commitment.

BUILD TRUST AND LEAD BY EXAMPLE

- Maintain confidentiality and create a space free from judgment and free for your mentee to express concerns, opinions, and questions. The mentorship process is personal; do not compromise the relationship by inappropriately disclosing conversations.
- Trust is built over time. Regularly meet with your mentee, as consistency is key in learning and leveraging momentum from the mentoring relationship.
- Keep your commitments and lead by example. Demonstrate to your mentee the character you possess and how seriously you take your role in his/her development. Demonstrate continued integrity by fostering benevolent assumptions, discouraging gossip, and treating others with dignity and respect. Mentees will learn as much by what you do as by what you say.

SET GOALS TO ACHIEVE DURING THE MENTORSHIP PROCESS

- Help your mentee consider what he/she seeks to accomplish and help set goals and milestones along the way. Goals help to see beyond the day-to-day demands, as well as provide clarity on the benefit of the mentoring relationship.
- Ensure the goals are SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time bound) and that your mentee is able to articulate the value of achieving these goals.

- Help your mentee identify any potentially unrealistic expectations. Unrealistic expectations may include swift career advancement, quick fixes to complex challenges, and immediate integration of new skills, among others.

ACKNOWLEDGE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR MENTEE

- You may find that your mentee has a different approach and/or outlook than you do. There is more than one right way to lead, manage, and view career development, and it is important to resist the natural tendency to steer your mentee toward decisions that mirror your own experience. It is important for you to identify and celebrate your mentee's God-given uniqueness.
- Consider how you can develop your mentee in his/her own style. Actively challenge assumptions or biases you may have related to generational or other differences.
- Demonstrate humility by acknowledging what you do not know and remaining curious about your mentee's unique experiences and perspective. Ask yourself what you might learn and how you might grow from this relationship.

EMPOWER AND DEVELOP PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS, RATHER THAN SUPPLY ANSWERS

- Challenge your mentee through thoughtful questions and productive dialogue that test assumptions and deepen critical thinking.
- Avoid asking, "Why?" which may imply that you have pre-judged your mentee's actions; instead say, "Tell me about the thinking process that led you to this decision."
- Avoid yes/no questions such as, "Do you think you are effective in your work?" and instead ask, "In what specific ways are you effective in your work? In what specific ways might you become more effective?"

PROVIDE FEEDBACK, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Provide honest, regular, timely, and useful feedback. Identify potential areas of improvement and how to develop his/her skills.

- Help your mentee learn techniques to manage the stresses of everyday life, and challenge him/her to see mistakes as fruitful learning opportunities. People often learn more from their mistakes than from their successes.
- Challenge your mentee to see a problem from multiple perspectives and to consider other viewpoints.
- Believe in and reveal to the mentee his/her abilities and strengths. Encouragement is a central and desired component of the mentorship process. Provide opportunities for challenging and high-visibility assignments, and help your mentee to understand what it means to look and act like a leader.

INSPIRE EXCELLENCE AND IMPART WISDOM

- Challenge your mentee to set stretch goals, use out-of-the-box thinking, and take calculated risks.
- Help mentees connect day-to-day experiences to longer-term growth, purpose, and direction. While skill development is important, prioritize growth in areas such as judgment, integrity, self-awareness, empathy, and professionalism.
- Help mentees reflect on who and what they feel called to in this current season. Prompt them to consider how they show up in their work, relationships, and life—and not to focus just on accomplishments.

BEST PRACTICES FOR MENTEES

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR OWN GROWTH

- Your engagement and how much you will benefit from this relationship are directly correlated.
- As a mentee, you navigate the mentorship process. Do not expect your mentor to figure out or drive your needs.
- Be prepared for meetings, ask questions, and be clear on what you hope to achieve/obtain/be during the time you spend together.
- Propose an agenda or discussion points for your meetings.

BUILD TRUST WITH YOUR MENTOR

- Maintain confidentiality. The mentorship process is personal; do not compromise the relationship by inappropriately disclosing conversations.
- Keep your commitments. Demonstrate the character you possess and what you are capable of by following through on what you say you will do.
- Listen to and remember the wisdom your mentor imparts. Consider keeping a journal of what you learn, not only to benefit you but also to demonstrate that you take the mentoring relationship seriously.

SET GOALS TO ACHIEVE AS YOU MEET WITH YOUR MENTOR

- Consider what you seek to accomplish, and set goals and milestones along the way. For example, you may wish to improve your skills in a particular area, or perhaps you seek guidance on a major decision or change you face.
- Goals help to see beyond the day-to-day demands of your work and provide clarity on the benefit of the mentoring relationship.
- Ensure your goals are SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time bound) and that you are able to articulate the value of achieving them.

KEEP YOUR EXPECTATIONS REALISTIC

- Understand what you realistically can and cannot achieve in the time frame you have with your mentor. Unrealistic expectations may include swift career advancement, quick fixes to challenges, and immediate integration of new skills, among others. Your mentor may help you determine what is feasible.

LEARN FROM YOUR MENTOR

- Appreciate similarities and differences between you and your mentor. You may find that your mentor has a different approach to management, leadership, career development, or outlook than you do. Do not undermine your own authenticity by trying to become someone you are not, but learn from and leverage your mentor's perspective and experience that you may incorporate into your life and work.
- Think of your mentor as a learning facilitator, rather than an expert. Seek discussion and input rather than advice. Remember that your mentor may not have all the answers, but may be able to point you to additional resources.
- Show respect to your mentor by seeing your mentor as just that—a mentor—despite his/her title, tenure, style, etc. You may be surprised at what you may learn from someone in a different position or a different part of the University. The quality of the relationship may be just as important as the content covered.

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR MENTOR

- Let your mentor know specifically what has been especially useful to you. Your mentor wants to be helpful to you and will appreciate knowing what is working well.
- Let your mentor know if there is something that may be adjusted, or if you have a need that is not yet met.
- Ask your mentor about his/her satisfaction with the content, pace, focus, and/or relationship, to gain additional insight on progress made.

DEMONSTRATE AN ACTIVE COMMITMENT TO YOUR OWN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Ask questions to clarify what your mentor teaches or suggests. Demonstrate your commitment to development by letting your mentor know what you seek to gain during your time together.
- Be open to constructive feedback. Seek to learn rather than defend what you do or why you do it.
- Pursue learning opportunities and resources on your own, and share your findings with your mentor.

EXPRESS APPRECIATION TO YOUR MENTOR

- Consider what you can offer to your mentor to show your gratitude for the time and energy they are investing in you (write a handwritten note, offer a small gift, etc.).

SHOW RESULTS FOR YOUR TIME TOGETHER

- Regularly share with your mentor any progress made, milestones achieved, or changes you see in yourself or the way you approach your work. Demonstrate the benefit your mentor has given you through achieving goals, initiating new projects, and participating in new endeavors.
- Apply information or strategies you learn to your work, and report back on their successes and challenges. Go beyond the suggestions of your mentor and think of creative applications of what you learn.

DETERMINE WHAT YOU WILL DO WHEN THE TIME WITH YOUR MENTOR CONCLUDES

- As a mentee, take note of what you gained out of the relationship and any ways in which it may be improved. Consider seeking another mentor with a different expertise or perspective.
- Consider enrolling three to seven people to be on your personal board of advisors. Seek out a group of people with varied experiences that could add value to your professional development and career.
- How will you continue your growth trajectory?
- What has your knowledge enabled you to do or be?
- How will you help others succeed with what you learned?
- How are you better equipped to:
 - ▶ Lead others?
 - ▶ Accomplish your duties and goals?
 - ▶ Gain additional responsibility in your role?

"Over time, I've learned this meaningful lesson: the people closest to me determine my level of success or failure. The better they are, the better I am. And if I want to go to the highest level, I can do it only with the help of other people. We have to take each other higher."

John C. Maxwell

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

INTRODUCTION: PREPARE FOR THE FIRST MEETING

- Introduce yourself and describe your background.
- Discuss and confirm the purpose of your work together.
- Agree upon expectations for the mentorship relationship (how often you will meet, what objectives are for the relationship, confidentiality parameters, and the like).
- Set clear goals, identify milestones, and create an action plan to use throughout the duration of your time together. Determine how you will measure success in achieving these goals.
- Plan what you will discuss in or prepare for any subsequent meetings.

PERSONAL

- Describe the life you want (personally, professionally, and spiritually). What must you do to achieve the life you want?
- What is your purpose?
- What person has been most influential in your life to make you who you are today? In what ways was that person significant to you?
- How have past mentors impacted you?
- Who do you admire most? In what ways does that person inspire you?
- What is the greatest accomplishment of your life? Is there anything you hope to do that is even more meaningful to you?
- What is your greatest success in business, personal, and family life?
- When have you failed to be the person you desire to be? What did you learn?
- Which items on your values list might surprise others who know you?
- Is there something you have dreamed of doing for a long time?
- Where do you find inspiration?
- How do you balance your personal, professional, and spiritual lives?
- How do you spend your time outside of work?
- What do you like to do during your personal time?
- Identify your strengths: What was the best day you have had at work in the past three months? Why? (Strengths may not be something you are good at, but something you find inherently satisfying and look forward to.)

- Identify your weaknesses: What was the worst day you have had at work in the past three months? Why? (Weaknesses may not be something you are bad at, but something that drains you of energy and is boring and/or frustrating to do.)
- Maximize contributions to your area/school and the University.

CURRENT WORK

- Why do you choose to work at Pepperdine?
- Describe your current role.
- What is the culture of your current workplace? What are the benefits and challenges of this culture? How can you best navigate this culture?
- Describe the different work environments that you have experienced.
- What accomplishments do you want to achieve in your current role?
- What are you working to accomplish this quarter?
- Describe challenges you have faced. How did you overcome them? How will you overcome current challenges?
- What do you wish you had known when you began your career?
- How have you overcome challenges and/or conflicts?
- How do you spend your time at work?
- With what one thing do you still struggle?
- What would you do if you were me? How would you handle this scenario?
- What book has been most helpful to you professionally? Which books do you recommend I read, and why?

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- What career aspirations do you have?
- What kind of work would you like to do?
- How do you set and achieve goals?
- What interpersonal skills have you found most useful?
- What are some unwritten rules you have observed that help people succeed?
- Who do you recommend I connect with?
- Does your current position reflect your career aspirations?
- With what professional organizations are you associated? In what ways? Which professional organizations may benefit me?
- What publications may benefit me?

- What qualities do you seek in people you hire?
- What do you wish you knew at my career stage?
- If you could do it all again, what would you do differently?

LEADERSHIP

- In what ways do you consider yourself a good leader?
- Who follows you? In what ways?
- What leadership skill(s) do you think you most need to develop to be successful?
- How can your department be the best that it can be? What can you do to help advance your department?
- How do you influence others?
- How do you inspire others to be better than they think they can be?
- How do you give credit where credit is due?
- How do you approach the unknown?
- What have you found to be the most important aspect of leadership?
- Describe a time when you felt you were at your best. What made it so?
- For what do you want to be remembered? What can you do today to help build this legacy?
- What three words would others use to describe you? Which three words do you want them to use?

CULMINATION

- What have you learned?
- What will you remember most about the relationship?
- What were your accomplishments, challenges, and progress made toward your goals?
- What are your goals for the coming year based on what you know?
- What will you do to keep the momentum of your progress?
- What kind of support may you need in the future?
- How will you share what you have learned with others?

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up." **Ecclesiastes 4:9–10**

ACTIVITIES

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- Outline a plan for the duration of time with your mentor and identify milestones to achieve.
- Set a stretch goal or project to achieve, or identify a committee on which to serve during the mentorship time frame.
- Visit each other's workspace to learn more about the work and environment (similar to a shadow day).
- Identify books and/or articles you will read together and discuss.
- Review your resume.
- Develop your portfolio, including work samples, performance evaluations, certificates, awards, transcripts, and the like.
- Review and strengthen your "elevator pitch" and conversation starters.
- Introduce one another to two colleagues unknown to the other.
- Attend a lecture or learning opportunity together.
- Attend an event (athletics event, theatre, volunteer opportunity, or something similar) together.
- Observe each other lead a presentation or meeting, as appropriate.
- Identify an opportunity to present or showcase their work.
- Increase networking skills (by conducting informational interviews; planning lunches/dinners with others in different areas or outside the University; or attending a charity event or gallery opening to meet new people and learn about their work).
- Review the University's organizational chart to understand the distribution of work and key players in each area. Discuss the intangibles of success (such as grooming, attire, organization, event participation, and planning of free time).
- Develop two-, five-, and 10-year plans for career development and network growth.
- Consider spending time with other mentor-mentee pairs.

Notes

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