

Best Practices & Resources for Mentors and Mentees

Companion Guide

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Mentors

Mentors are crucial to helping mentees navigate the business and political landscape and work-related challenges mentees face daily. You've heard the saying, "It's not what you know, it's who you know." There's truth to that statement—although I would add that *what you know* will buy you staying power. A mentor is someone with experience and sometimes seniority who, ideally, is aware in some way of your industry or field, and who also is familiar with the types of challenges you face regularly. Mentors should have mentors. If you have a mentee, allow them to lean on you for support and guidance. Mentors should be people you trust and who genuinely have your best interests at heart. If you are a mentor, that applies to you too.

Overall, being a mentor in a corporate business environment can be personally and professionally enriching, allowing you to make a lasting impact on the lives and careers of others while developing yourself as a leader.

Being a mentor has many benefits, including:

- **Professional Development:** Mentoring allows you to sharpen your leadership and coaching skills. It helps you develop a deeper understanding of different business functions and industries, which can enhance your professional growth.
- **Networking Opportunities:** As a mentor, you get to interact and build relationships with mentees, their colleagues, and other mentors. This expands your professional network and opens doors to new opportunities, collaborations, and partnerships.
- **Personal Fulfillment:** Mentoring provides a platform to share your knowledge, expertise, and experiences with other professionals. Seeing your mentees grow, succeed, and achieve their goals is incredibly rewarding, adding a sense of fulfillment to your professional life.
- **Enhanced Leadership Skills:** Mentoring allows you to practice and refine your leadership abilities. It requires effective communication, empathy, guidance, and problem-solving skills. These experiences can strengthen your leadership capabilities and make you a more effective leader in your own role.
- **Continued Learning:** Mentoring is a two-way street. While guiding your mentees, you also learn from their fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and unique experiences. This continuous exchange of knowledge and insights keeps you updated, fosters personal growth, and broadens your horizons.

From a mentee's perspective, what is the role of a mentor?

Great mentors can help you navigate the landmines and mirror back to you what you sometimes can't see for yourself and connect you to various resources within his or her own network. For the mentor relationship to be the most effective, it's important for mentors to give you objective and open feedback, not sugarcoat things for you. Let your mentors know you welcome their frank and honest feedback; show them you have thick skin. Do not get upset when they give you feedback or argue and become defensive.

Source: [Fearless Women at Work: Five Powerful Strategies to Thrive in Career and Life!](#) Dr. Ginny A. Baro

Mentors develop trust, safety, and honesty by listening mindfully, being impeccable with their word, not judging, but instead seeking to understand others' perspectives and challenging points of view curiously and respectfully.

As healing leaders, we value, uplift, and mentor others; lead, engage, and influence them toward constructive action with empathy, respect, and conviction. These kinds of transformations occur when you build relationships with your centers of influence.

Source: [Healing Leadership: How to Lead, Love, and Thrive in Business and Life.](#) Dr. Ginny A. Baro

Building Trust

Building trust is essential for a successful mentor-mentee relationship. When a mentee trusts their mentor, they are more likely to openly communicate, seek guidance, and be receptive to feedback. Here are some strategies to build trust as a mentor:

Confidentiality: Maintain confidentiality to ensure a safe and secure environment for the mentee to share their concerns, challenges, and goals without fear of judgment or repercussions.

Active Listening: Show genuine interest and actively listen to your mentee. This demonstrates that you value their perspective, feelings, and experiences.

Empathy and Support: Be empathetic and understanding towards your mentee's struggles and aspirations. Show support by encouraging their growth, celebrating their achievements, and offering guidance during difficult times.

Honesty and Transparency: Practice open and honest communication. Provide feedback constructively, giving both positive encouragement and constructive criticism when required. Being transparent and authentic builds trust.

Reliability and Consistency: Be reliable and consistent in your mentoring commitments. Honor scheduled meetings, follow through on promises, and provide timely responses. This helps build trust by demonstrating your dedication and reliability as a mentor.

Building trust is an ongoing process that requires time, effort, and consistent actions. By building trust with your mentee, you establish a strong foundation for a meaningful and effective mentorship relationship.

What the Best Mentors Do

“At its highest level, mentorship means committing to helping others become fuller versions of themselves.” Anthony K. Tjan. Harvard Business Review

- Build a relationship before the mentorship. No amount of mentorship training outweighs the value of an authentic connection between mentor and mentee.
- Focus on developing your mentee’s character and not just their job skills. Invest in your mentee’s self-awareness, empathy, and capacity for respect.
- Share your optimism much more than your cynicism. If your mentee shares an idea that seems unrealistic, try the 24 x 3 rule: spend 24 seconds, 24 minutes, or a day thinking about all the reasons that the idea is good before you criticize any aspect of it.
- Finally, be more loyal to your mentee than you are to your company. If your mentee’s passions and skills are not a good fit for their job, or if your company has limited opportunities for your mentee to move up, you should help them move on.

Source: <https://hbr.org/2017/02/what-the-best-mentors-do>

Mentoring Matters: Essential Elements of Success

The Mentoring Relationship must be managed and nurtured [*GB: refers to an “official” mentor/mentee program*]. It is a joint venture that requires both parties to actively attend to its care and feeding. The chances of creating and sustaining a successful mentoring relationship are enhanced by adopting a few simple best practices:

1. **Design The Alliance.** Take the time to discuss the structure of the relationship. Both parties need to have a shared understanding of the relationship process. This means discussing and articulating things like:

- a. Contact and response times: Who contacts whom? How? What are acceptable response times?
 - b. Meetings: Where, when, how often?
 - c. Confidentiality: What's shareable and what isn't?
 - d. Focus: What are the parameters of the mentoring? What's in and out of bounds?
 - e. Feedback: What are the expectations around giving and receiving feedback?
 - f. Goals and accountability: What would each party want from this experience? How does the mentee want the mentor to hold her accountable? How does the mentor want the mentee to hold her accountable?
2. **Get To Know Each Other.** A mentoring relationship takes time to develop. It will grow faster and stronger if both parties take the time to get to know each other as people. Resist the temptation to dive headfirst into career problem solving and advising. Build trust by learning about each other!
 3. **Set The Agenda.** Both parties need to be clear about the purpose and focus of the mentoring. Additionally, the mentor and mentee should articulate what they hope to get out of the experience.
 4. **Reflect And Evaluate.** Every few meetings, one (or both) of the parties should ask: "How is this going for you? What's been helpful? What hasn't? What could I do differently to make this a more rewarding experience?" Initiating evaluative conversations will keep the relationship working for both of you.
 5. **Closeout.** If you are part of a formal mentoring relationship or have negotiated a specific number of mentoring meetings, take the time to close out. This is when each party should reflect and appreciate. What was most rewarding? What did you find the most valuable? What are you most grateful for?

Source: Mary Abbajay - Forbes.com

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/maryabbajay/2019/01/20/mentoring-matters-three-essential-element-of-success/?sh=5648124045a9>

Best Practices for Mentees

Own the opportunity: Take responsibility for your own development and career goals. Identify your initial objectives and be proactive in driving the relationship with your mentor.

Communicate and follow up: Reach out to your mentor regularly to schedule meetings or phone calls. Be prompt in following up within 24 hours to their responses or requests for communication.

Be prepared and organized: Create a clear agenda for each meeting with your mentor. Come prepared with specific topics or questions you would like to discuss. This shows that you respect your mentor's time and value their guidance.

Seek and be open to feedback: Actively seek feedback from your mentor and be open to constructive criticism. Embrace feedback as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

Let your mentors know you welcome their frank and honest feedback; show them you have thick skin. Do not get upset when they give you feedback or argue and become defensive. (Baro, 2017. Fearless Women at Work).

Discuss goals and obstacles: Be willing to openly discuss both your short-term and long-term career goals with your mentor. Additionally, be willing to share any obstacles or challenges you're facing in order to receive guidance and support.

Help Mentees Build Their Mentoring Action Plan (MAP)

1. What are the skill(s) you want to develop?
2. What type of organizational knowledge do you need to develop?
3. How will you know when you have successfully enhanced a skill or competency?
4. What developmental activities would help you to develop the most? (Brainstorm a list of possibilities and options.)
5. Of all the ways you might develop, which are most feasible?
6. How will you apply your learning on the job?

Source: <https://your.yale.edu/work-yale/learn-and-grow/career-development/mentoring/mentee-best-practices>

ABOUT DR. GINNY A. BARO, MBA, MS, CPC



Dr. Ginny A. Baro, Ph.D., MBA, MS, CPC, immigrated to the U.S. at age 14 with nothing more than a dream. Today, she is an award-winning international transformational speaker, leadership coach, career strategist, and author with over three decades of experience in the corporate world. As the founder and CEO of ExecutiveBound™, Dr. Baro helps emerging executives by providing a unique approach to leadership development that is grounded on research, best practices, and lived experiences, which she uses to help her clients unlock their full potential.

Named one of the Top 100 Global Thought Leaders, Dr. Baro's expertise in leadership development has been recognized by Fortune 500 companies and partners, including McKinsey&Company, Verizon, Merck, and Pfizer, where she has been invited to speak numerous times on the topic. She has also been featured in numerous media outlets, including NBC, ABC, Fox, Univision, USA Today, Yahoo Finance, New York Business Journal, and Latinas in Business. She is a highly sought-after leadership coach and speaker for McKinsey&Company's Hispanic/Latino Executive Program and a subject matter expert on Personal Branding for the Management Accelerator since 2021.



Dr. Baro is the author of [two best-selling books](#): *Fearless Women at Work* and *Healing Leadership*. Her books have been praised for their practical advice and actionable strategies. In 2020, Dr. Baro created the [Fearless Leadership Mastermind™](#) to help high-potential female leaders of all backgrounds grow and advance. Her expertise, passion, and commitment to helping leaders and women make her an invaluable resource to any organization looking to unlock the full potential of their talent and achieve success in their business. To learn more, please visit www.ExecutiveBound.com.

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