



# How to be a Mentor

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# Mentor

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A person who helps a more junior person develop professionally through a combination of advising on projects, skills development, creation of opportunities, and personal growth in an intensive manner over an extended period of time.

# Greek Mythology

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Homer's *Odyssey* – Mentor is Odysseus' trusted friend

# A Spectrum of Helpers

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Advisers – Focused, pointed help

Facilitators – Door openers, opportunity creators, linkers

Mentors – Full-blown deal



# Benefits of Being Mentored

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Mentored medical school faculty

- Better research skills

- Better research preparation

Mentored primary care fellows

- More likely to publish 1 or more papers/yr

- More likely to secure funding as PI early

Steiner JF, et al. Acad Med 2000;75:74-80.

Steiner JF, et al. J Gen Intern Med 2002;17:845-51.









# Features of a Great Mentor, According to Mentees

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Writes well

    Macroedits

    Microedits

Stickler for details, yet sees the bigger picture

Fast; never the “rate limiting step” in mentee’s research

Door always open, literally

Keeps up with the literature



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Encourages mentees to pause and ask the “So what?” question

Excellent teacher

Willing to take chances

Always encouraging

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# Expectations of Mentee

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Know thyself

Work hard

Be pro-active

Be flexible and innovative

Focus, focus, focus

Be respectful

Be prepared when meeting with mentor

Be responsive to mentor's feedback

# A Good Mentee ...

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Identifies personal goals

Seeks feedback

Keeps record of her development/progress

Takes responsibility for herself

Stays open to new ideas and suggestions

Uses feedback to improve performance

# Special Issues

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Gender, race, age, etc. differences – should not be issue for core areas

Co-mentorship is generally effective

87% of co-mentors believe that co-mentored protégés have received a better experience

Sample model

1° mentor for the research domain

2° mentor(s) for professional development, advocacy, psychosocial support

Long-distance mentorship is generally ineffective

78% of long-distance mentors did *not* find long-distance mentoring as effective for protégé

Luckhaupt SE, et al. J Gen Intern Med 2005;20:1014-8.

Anderson L, et al. Clin Trans Sci 2012;5:71-7.



# Mentoring Agreement: Key Points

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## Research

- Mentee's productivity (abstracts, papers, grant applications)
- Progress of mentee towards independence
- Responsible conduct of research by both parties

## Educational activities

## Professional/career development

- Skills development (writing, speaking, reviewing, managing time, leading teams)
- Progress towards promotion
- Networking by mentor on behalf of mentee
- Work-life balance
- Plans for independence from mentor



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## Support

Protected time

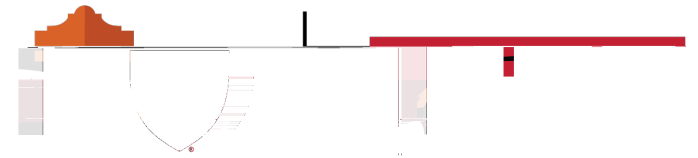
Resources

Advocacy, emotional support

## Communication

Frequency and structure of meetings

Progress reports



# Managing Relationships with Mentees: A Series of Case Studies

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# Changing Horses in Mid-Stream

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One of the post-doctoral fellows in your group has asked you to be his 1<sup>o</sup> mentor and chair of his dissertation committee. He is not the easiest person to work with, never takes the initiative to set up meetings, but shows up when you set up the meetings, and seems to get a lot out of your guidance.

You've carefully reviewed 3 drafts of his protocol and helped him obtain a small dissertation grant to support his work.

# Changing Horses in Mid-Stream

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When the final version of the protocol comes around 3 months later, you are surprised to see that one of your colleagues in GIM is listed as the chair of his committee and you are listed as the “outside representative.”

Your feelings are hurt and this feels unethical because so many of the project ideas are yours and you have made a huge investment time-wise to help this fellow out.

# Discussion

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What should you do?

Why did this happen?

How can you avoid this problem in the future?

Would a mentorship contract help?

# Damned if You Do, Damned if You Don't?

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A young investigator is doing research with 2 mentors. He decides to write an abstract for a national meeting.

3 weeks before the submission deadline, he circulated a draft of the abstract to his co-authors.

Mentor A provides feedback immediately, but Mentor B does not. Despite numerous attempts to contact Mentor B, the submission deadline arrives, and still no

# Damned if You Do, Damned if You Don't?

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Unsure whether to include Mentor B as an author, the mentee asks Mentor A. Mentor A says to go ahead and include Mentor B, so the mentee does.

Finally – after the abstract is submitted – Mentor B gets around to reading it, and disagrees with some of its content. He tells the mentee in no uncertain terms that the abstract isn't very good and, in its present form, he would not have agreed to be listed as a co-author.

# Discussion

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What went wrong here?

Have you ever submitted an abstract without approval of the final draft by all co-authors? Has anyone ever done that to you?

Is an abstract really “just an abstract?”

If you were Mentor A, what would you have recommended?