Mentoring the New Pediatric Cardiologist

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Outline

- Roles of a mentor
- Finding a mentor
- Being a successful mentee
Roles of a Mentor

In Homer’s *Odyssey*, when Odysseus left for the siege of Troy, he placed his son, Telemachus, in the hands of Mentor, a trusted friend. Mentor, with the help of Athena, guided Telemachus’ growth and development from child to independent young adult.
Roles of a Mentor

- **Teacher**: technical, research, writing skills, and rules of career advancement
- **Sponsor**: introduces mentee to the cast of characters in a discipline; networking; opens doors; grants; committee assignments and roles in professional organizations
- **Advisor**: listening, helps mentee craft his/her own solution to problems

*Tobin MJ. Am J Respir Crit Care Med 2004;170:114-7*
Roles of a Mentor

- **Agent:** supports mentee’s need for resources (e.g. money, equipment, time)
- **Role model:** professional and personal values; must “walk the talk”
- **Coach:** motivator, when to push and when to tolerate inaction; helps the mentee to take risks
- **Confidante:** someone to talk to in strict confidence; has your best interests at heart

_Tobin MJ. Am J Respir Crit Care Med 2004;170:114-7_
Finding a Mentor

- Assess and define your current career goals: clinical, research, education, administrative
- Identify someone you respect as both a person and professionally who is good at what you want to be good at
Finding a Mentor

- Must actively search for a mentor
- Talk to other junior faculty about possible mentors; office of faculty development
Finding a Mentor

• Approximately one career stage/academic level above mentee
  – Mentor has sufficient experience
  – Less competition
  – Opportunities that may no longer be appealing to the mentor still represent attractive opportunities for the mentee
Finding a Mentor

- Best if you are comfortable not intimidated
- Not your boss (or supplement with additional mentor)
Finding a Mentor

- Proven track record of success in mentoring
- Enthusiastic: believes his/her area is the most exciting in the world
- Makes time to see his/her mentee
- Look for generosity
- Someone who will provide constructive criticism of your work
Finding a Mentor

• Useful “courtship” ritual is to create small tasks with deadlines for both the mentor and mentee
• May take more than one try to find the right mentor
• May need more than one person to fill these roles (clinical, research interests, work-home balance)
Finding a Mentor

Avoid

- People who are unable to meet or make time
- Just being used as a technician
- Wants all the glory and credit
- No transition to colleague
- Expects you to be a replica of them
- Boundary violations
Being a successful mentee

- Mentor-mentee relationship will not last unless both parties derive some benefit
Being a successful mentee

- Develop short and long-term goals together and concrete steps to achieve them
- Meet the goals
- Be someone worth investing in; demonstrate seriousness; you’re a player
Being a successful mentee

- Focus, focus, focus
- Do not over commit: need to say no to some offers (e.g. review articles)
- Review offers from other faculty to do projects with mentor before accepting
- Meet with your mentor regularly
- Respect your mentor’s time; show up prepared
Being a successful mentee

- Review academic promotion criteria together
- Do not be afraid to ask for help; not a sign of weakness
- Open yourself to criticism (otherwise not teachable); beg for feedback
- Consult with mentor about difficult decisions
- Take advantage of the opportunities provided
Being a successful mentee

- Recognize mentor’s time and efforts; show appreciation
Being a successful mentee

- Find ways to be helpful
- Whenever possible say “yes”
Job Interviews

• Good mentors will encourage you from time-to-time to look at other jobs

• Be honest and openly discuss going on job interviews
Job Interviews

“Stealth” interview is myth
Job Interviews

• When you go on job interviews, ask who are the mentors in the program and for specific examples of mentor-mentee pairs
Summary

• Roles of a mentor
• What to look for in a mentor
• Finding a mentor
• Being a successful mentee
Summary

“We must acknowledge the most important, indeed the only thing we have to offer our students is ourselves. Everything else they can read in a book.”

Daniel Tosteson
Former Dean of Harvard Medical School