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# How to Develop an Effective Mentor and Mentee Relationship

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TIMI Study Group



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# Key Elements of Mentor-Mentee Relationship

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- **Characteristics of each individual**
- **Roles & responsibilities**
- **Nature of the relationship**
- **Goals**
- **Problem solving**



# Mentor Characteristics that Portend Success

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- **Sufficiently experienced and senior**
  - Has the right skill sets
  - Can have different types of mentors for different aspects of one's career
- **Accessible & approachable**
  - Need to meet with regular frequency
  - Need to listen & respond meaningfully
- **Altruistic**
  - Helping mentee achieve his or her goals, not (necessarily) the mentor's goals
- **Patient & understanding**
- **Honest & trustworthy**

Allen TD & Poteet ML. *Career Dev Quart* 1999;48:59

Straus SE et al. *Acad Med* 2009;84:135

Straus SE et al. *Acad Med* 2013;88:82





# Mentee Characteristics that Portend Success

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- **Committed to learning & growing**
- **Passion to succeed**
- **Willing to put in the work**





# Mentor's Roles & Responsibilities

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## Academics (Advisor)

- Guide & advise
- Provide research connections
- Help navigate the academic system (job search, promotion, professional societies, etc.)
- Help avoid pitfalls, protect
- Role model (academics, work/life balance)

## Science (Supervisor)

- Improve mentee's abilities
- Oversee experiments, help prepare presentations & papers
- Aid in grant applications
- Provide resources

Allen TD & Poteet ML. *Career Dev Quart* 1999;48:59

Straus SE et al. *Acad Med* 2009;84:135

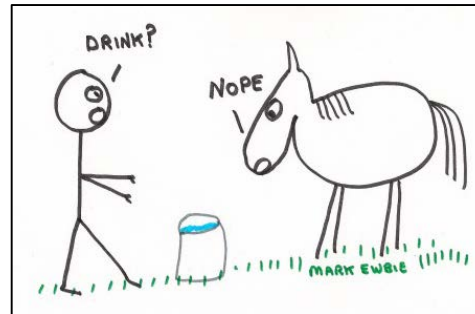
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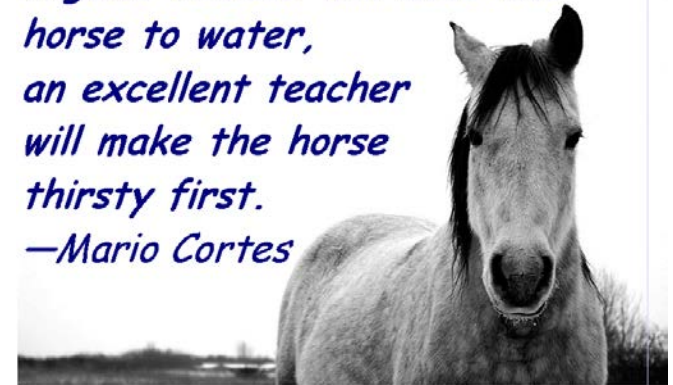


# Mentee's Roles & Responsibilities

- **Open to guidance**



*A good teacher will lead the horse to water, an excellent teacher will make the horse thirsty first.*  
—Mario Cortes

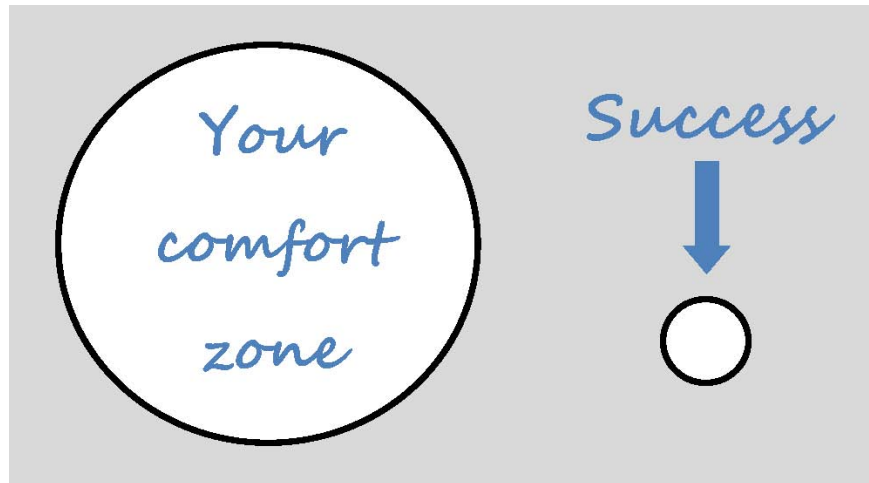


- Learn
- Accept criticism, be pushed
- Put in the work, see projects to completion
- Respectful of mentor's time constraints
- “Drive the relationship”



# Mentee's Roles & Responsibilities

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- **Learn**



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# Mentee's Roles & Responsibilities

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- Open to guidance
- Learn
- **Accept criticism, be pushed**

Accept criticism. If you do not offer your work for criticism and accept that criticism, meaning give it serious thought and attention, then you will never improve.

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*Theodora Goss*

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# Mentee's Roles & Responsibilities

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- Learn new things
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- **Put in the work, see projects to completion**



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# Nature of the relationship

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- **Setting the stage**

- Acquainted
- Mutual respect
- Trust

- **Interactions**

- Regular meetings
- Set clear expectations
- Open communication w/ reciprocal feedback

- **Chemistry**

- Shared values (clinical, research, life)
- Personal connection
- Appreciate the other's position:
  - Mentees are at a fragile stage in their careers
  - Mentors are volunteering their time

*"If you wouldn't do something with [your mentor] after work, then you probably are not going to be doing something with them at work either."*

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# Goals

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- **Long-term goals**
  - Develop skill sets
  - Advance in academia
  - Independence (mentoring may not end, but is redefined)
- **Short-term goals (for research supervisor)**
  - Learn techniques
  - Conduct experiments
  - Present and publish research
  - Awarded a grant





# Problem Solving

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- **Not achieving goals**

- Short-term goals

- Experiments not working
- Papers rejected
- Grant applications rejected

} = Life (maybe)

- Long-term goals

- Career stalling
- Difficulty with independence

- **Issues with the relationship**

- Mentor: accessibility, altruism

- Mentee: accept guidance & criticism; work ethic; normative & quasi-normative errors

- Relationship: open communication