Establishing your Relationship with your Mentor

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Q. How do so many mentor/mentee relationships, comprised of motivated intelligent mentees, and caring, committed mentors, go so wrong?

A. Frequently, it’s because they fail to establish their relationship: share the key goals, establish the structure and explore individual preferences (assessing the gap between the mentor you want/need and the mentor your mentor wants to or has the capacity to be) in the first 90 days of the relationship.

When problems/challenges emerge (as they do in most professional relationships at some point) mentors/mentees don’t have the foundational knowledge or required to effectively address them.
Agenda

1. How it’s supposed to work
   What is the life cycle of a mentoring relationship, and why the first 90 days are so important?

2. 6 things you need to SEE by day 90.
   What are your benchmarks of success in establishing a mentoring relationship?

3. How to SEE
   SHARE goals, ESTABLISH connection, and EXPLORE preferences

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What is the Life Cycle of a Mentoring Relationship?

1. Identify
   - Your goals
   - Potential mentors

2. Connect
   - Request that this person support you in some capacity

3. Establish
   - Your relationship with your mentor
   - Share goals
   - Establish connections
   - Explore preferences

4. Maintain
   - A relationship with your mentor
   - Give feedback
   - Track progress
   - Offer support

5. End
   - Your relationship with your mentor

Goal: To navigate my first year at UCSF
What is the Life Cycle of a Mentoring Relationship?

1. How it’s supposed to work
   What is the life cycle of a mentoring relationship, and why the first 90 days are so important?
   - You and your mentor need to establish goals and structure around how you’re going to work together.
   - The mentee (reasonably) expects that the mentor will take the lead on establishing this out of deference, because they have more experience, power, etc.
   - But the mentor might not, believing that want the mentee should take the lead, defining the goals and shepherding the relationship because the relationship exists to meet the mentee’s needs.
   - The result: no one does it, and without the foundation, the relationship loses its way.

Goal: To navigate my first year at UCSF

2. 6 things you need to SEE by day 90.
   What are your benchmarks of success in establishing a mentoring relationship?
**How to SEE**

1. **GOALS**
   - What are your goals – and what are theirs?

2. **CONNECTION**
   - How often will you meet and how long will you meet for?
   - What will happen in those meetings? What other ways will we connect?

3. **TEACHING**
   - How do they teach?

4. **EXPECTATIONS**
   - How do they set expectations?

5. **FEEDBACK**
   - How do they give kudos and corrective feedback?

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1. **How it's supposed to work**
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3. **How to SEE**
   - SHARE goals,
   - ESTABLISH connection, and
   - EXPLORE preferences
### Milestones in first 90 days

#### Share Goals

1. **GOALS**
   - What are your goals – and what are theirs?

#### Establish Connections

2. **CONNECTION**
   - How often will you meet and how long with you meet for?
   - What will happen in those meetings? What other ways will we connect?

#### Explore (unarticulated) Preferences

3. **TEACHING**
   - How do they teach?

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#### My Goals

- My goal is to make the most of my first year.
- What are common benchmarks for success in the first year? That includes Knowledge Goals, Skill Goals, Experience Goals and Professional Connection Goals.

#### My Mentor’s Goals

- How can I find 3-5 people to talk to about benchmarks for success in my first year?
Everyone focuses on the mentee’s goals.....

But what about the mentor’s goals?

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**How to SEE**

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**My Mentor’s Goals**
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Homer! Greek Mythology! Odysseus went on an odyssey for 40+ years.

...and while he was away, his friend, Mentor, watched over and advised his son, Telemachus, from boyhood to adulthood.

A mentor is a person who positively influences a protégé/mentee’s (personal, academic, professional, spiritual, etc.) development.

A Mentor’s Core Question:

- Is my protégé making progress towards their own self-defined developmental goals?

10 essential benefits a mentor could offer

1. Access to resources
2. Access to opportunities
3. Time and attention
4. Emotional support
5. Role modeling/inspiration
6. Advice, direction
7. Training/Skill development
8. Access to your network
9. References
10. Protection

From the French protégé: “one who is protected,” Origin: from Latin protegere.
Your Mentor’s Goals

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8. Access to your network
9. References/letters of Recommendation
10. Protection

These benefits are like essential vitamins. You need them all; but you probably won’t get them all from one place.

Everyone focuses on the mentee’s goals…. But what about the mentor’s goals?

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Share Goals

1. GOALS
   What are your goals – and what are theirs?

Establish Connections

2. CONNECTION
   How often will you meet and how long with you meet for?
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My Mentor’s Goals

• Most comfortable: Role Modeling, Time and Attention, Emotional support
• Least comfortable: Training/Skill Development, Protection

Ask them to tell their story:

• “How has mentorship played a role in your professional life?”
• “How do you like to work with your mentees?”
• “Why did you decide to join the first gen mentorship program?”
• “How have you interacted with your mentees in the past?”
• “What have you found most rewarding about being a mentor?”

Your Turn: How will/do you connect?

MEETING

• How does your mentor prefer to meet?
• How long do they want to meet?
• What is the format of those meetings?
• What content do they want to cover?
• What works about this format for you?
• What do you wish was different?

• What other ways do you connect

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Not just about ‘more time’. What do you want to happen in those meetings?
How to SEE Milestones in first 90 days

1. **Share Goals**
   - **Goals:** What are your goals — and what are theirs?

2. **Establish Connections**
   - **Connection:** How often will you meet and how long will you meet for?
     - What will happen in those meetings? What other ways will we connect?

3. **Explore Preferences**
   - **Explore (unarticulated):**
     - **Preferences:** My mentor seems to prefer face to face meetings no more that 30 minutes, about once a month.
     - Rather than being directional or structured, they seem to prefer me to lead the conversation by asking questions and asking questions/for advice.
     - They also seem to appreciate short update emails between our meetings. Also, I will also follow and interact with them on Twitter and connect to them on LinkedIn/Doximity.

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   - **My Mentor’s Goals:**
     - Most comfortable: Role Modeling, Time and Attention, Emotional support

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**TEACHING**
1. Defining learning goal
2. Setting performance expectations/success benchmarks
3. Taking baseline assessment
4. Developing learning plan
5. Implementing the learning plan
   - Giving kudos/corrective feedback throughout
6. Assessing, acknowledging progress, modifying tactics to address issues
7. Celebrating success/achievement

**ROLE MODELING**
- Discussing own learning path and/or barriers
- Allowing you to observe and/or giving you examples of their own work for you to extrapolate from.
How to SEE

**EXPECTATIONS**
- How have you come to understand what their performance and conduct expectation are?
- Did they verbalize them, are they documented anywhere? Or is it unarticulated, or assumed under the umbrella of “professionalism”?
- Were you then penalized for not knowing those expectations?
- If this is happening to you: reach out to a mentor/us. There are strategies!

**FEEDBACK**
- Are they giving you both Kudos (yay!) and Corrective (Stop. Do this differently) Feedback?

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My Mentor’s Goals
- Most comfortable: Role Modeling, Time and Attention, Emotional support
- Least comfortable: Training/Skill Development, Protection

Teaching: They are better at role modeling, more than teaching. So it’s better to ask for help finding someone to teach me, and/or use them to verify I correctly learned it.

Expectations: They don’t, really. To understand their expectations, I will need to be a constant inquirer. E.g.: How long should our meetings last? What topics have people covered in the past?

Feedback: They are great at giving kudos feedback, but I have to ask for corrective feedback. I will try to solicit feedback. “What’s one thing I could do to make this better?”

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Milestones in first 90 days

1. **Share Goals**: What are your goals – and what are theirs?
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3. **Explore (unarticulated) Preferences**: How do they teach? How do they set expectations? How do they give kudos and corrective feedback?
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Feedback
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Only Kudos? Ask for Corrective
- Great to hear that I did X correctly. What’s one thing that would make it even better?
- What are some ways I could improve this? For example, could I make it shorter, document it differently, use different language. What comes to mind?

Only Corrective? Ask for Kudos
- I now understand that I need to do Z. I will do that. Last week we talked about me doing Y differently as well. Did I do that correctly this time?
- You previously gave me feedback that this should be more concise. I focused on that. Has it improved to your expectations?

Number 6: Are you SEEing Eye to eye?

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My Goals
- Most comfortable: Role Modeling, Time and Attention, Emotional support

My Mentor’s Goals

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6. **Number 6: Are you SEEing Eye to eye?**
   - Whatever you’re not SEEing eye to eye on is the gap you need to manage to maintain your professional relationship

**Agenda**

1. **How it’s supposed to work**
   - What is the life cycle of a mentoring relationship, and why the first 90 days are so important?

   What it looks like when it works?
   - *It looks like a game plan*
   - A. You should have a clear sense of what your mentor is interested and capable of offering you
   - B. A strategy about how to engage/elicit those benefits most effectively
   - C. A plan on how you are going to secure the outstanding mentoring benefits your need be other mentors, support, tools, resources, etc.
   - D. Tactics to both honor and support yourself while you navigate the gap.

   **Goal:** To navigate my first year at UCSF

Without a game plan, it’s going to be harder for you two to see and reach goals together, because it takes more than just good intentions.
Check us out!

Set appointments to discuss mentoring issues in your graduate or postdoc training for help in:
- Finding a mentor
- Establishing a relationship
- Reviving a mentoring relationship that has gone dormant
- Answer your mentoring questions!

Book an appointment: career.ucsf.edu/appointments

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