

How to Succeed as a Mentor

Mentoring successes or failures most often depend upon the skills of the mentor. Consider the following simple rules to be better prepared to assume this very important role:

- **It's Not About You!** The primary focus of mentoring is on the individual being mentored; you should be humble while mentoring and check your ego at the door.
- **Always Maintain Confidences:** Trust is critical; matters discussed between a mentor and protégé must remain confidential. Always remember, trust takes a long time to become fully established, yet it can be destroyed in a matter of moments.
- **Set and Enforce Boundaries:** This will ensure a professional relationship is maintained at all times.
- **Know Your Limitations:** You don't have to know everything, but you can share your experiences and when necessary point the protégé in the right direction.
- **Keep Your Promises:** Once you've made a mentoring commitment, you must follow through with your promises - do what you say you are going to do, when you say you are going to do it.
- **Listen and Ask Questions:** You must use effective listening and should refrain from simply telling the protégé what to do in order to develop problem-solving skills in the protégé.
- **Be Approachable:** You must break the ice; initiate conversations and get to know those you don't know. It will make the protégé feel comfortable in seeking you out as a mentor.
- **Don't Sugarcoat Feedback:** Feedback needs to be specific and, when necessary, include constructive criticism.
- **Be Yourself:** Understand yourself and develop a mentoring style that is authentic and consistent with whom you really are.
- **Commit to Continuous Learning:** Dedicate yourself to continuous learning – technically, tactically, and as a mentor. Read professional journals referencing technical discipline in your field as well as leadership development.

Remember: Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care!