

The Gift of Mentoring

Mentoring relationships allow wisdom to get passed on by creating a platform for two people to work together in ways that help career management, navigation of organizational politics and reaching one's highest potential. Mentoring can take place informally or as part of a formalized program. Each mentoring situation is different, and the role of the mentor depends on the mentee and their goals. The kinds of roles mentors can play include:

- **Sponsoring** – Opening doors and advocating for your mentee. Creating opportunities for the mentee and connecting him/her with people in the mentor's network.
- **Guiding and counseling** – A mentor may serve as a confidant, sounding board, and personal advisor. The mentor can help the mentee explore and understand emotional reactions or personal conflict or explore ways to deal with problems. As counsel, the mentor is also in a position to warn the mentee about behavior that is a poor fit with the organizational culture or that is leading him/her into troublesome territory.
- **Teaching** – Many mentors enjoy the teaching aspects of mentoring - transferring knowledge, sharing their experiences and recommending assignments.
- **Modeling** – Just by observing their mentor, mentees “pick up” many things - ethics, values, and standards; style, beliefs and attitudes; methods and procedures. Mentees are likely to follow the mentor's lead, adapt the mentor's approach to their style.
- **Motivating and inspiring** – Mentors support, validate and encourage their mentees. They help their mentees link their own goals, values and emotions to the larger organizational agenda to inspire higher levels of engagement and energy around their development.

The role of the Mentee

A mentoring relationship is a collaborative effort. In addition to the leadership required of the mentor, the person being mentored has several key responsibilities, such as:

Being:

- Honest and open, actively participating in letting the mentor get to know them.
- Receptive to feedback and insight, proactive about seeking information and feedback from the mentor and others to identify development opportunities.
- Eager to solicit concrete suggestions from the mentor, asking how to improve performance.
- Able to follow through in pursuing goals, investing in learning and taking steps toward needed change.
- Enthusiastic and excited about their career and about achieving personal goals.