

A Primer On Finding a Mentor

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MENTORING: What, Why, How, Who, etc.

- *WHAT*: What is a mentor?
- *WHY*: What goals should I have?
What might I ask a mentor?
- *HOW*: How do I find a mentor?
How do I approach a potential mentor?
- *WHO*: What qualities do I seek in a mentor?

WHAT IS A MENTOR?

- <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mentor>

(1) *capitalized* : a friend of Odysseus

entrusted with the education of Odysseus' son Telemachus

(2) a trusted counselor or guide ← Useful definition

- How do I find a mentor?
- What goals should I have?
- What might I ask a mentor?
- How do I approach a potential mentor?
- What qualities do I seek in a mentor?

FINDING A MENTOR

- GOALS

What goals should I have? What should I be looking for?

You are looking to start long-term professional relationships!

You ideally want someone (or a few people) to help you answer all of your important/urgent questions.

There are (and will be) many questions that you will need partial/comprehensive answers to.

...short-term and long-term

...throughout your professional careers...

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR MY MENTOR(S)

- major/minor/course selection, course planning/scheduling, specific coursework, note taking, reading, time management, prioritizing, study tips, study aids/guides, instructor selection, learning styles
- academic/professional/personal development
- research topic selection, open problems, (realistic) problem formulation, sub-problem formulation, alternative technical approaches, senior design, honors thesis
- the BIG picture, state-of-the-art, literature survey (useful references, books, papers, theses, websites, etc.)
- project, internship, and job opportunities, letters of recommendation
- career planning, career/job moves/transitions
- critical self-evaluation (professional/personal)
- life long learning
- evolving technologies, international trends, global economy
- national priorities: federal funding/budget, national/local politics
- graduate school, financial aid, scholarships, fellowships, MS thesis topic, PhD thesis topic
- publishing, writing technical papers

MORE QUESTIONS FOR MY MENTOR(S)

- group/team interactions
- professional conferences, presentation tips
- resume, cover letter, interviewing tips, salary negotiations, networking tips
- job selection (location, environment, opportunities, flexibility, benefits, salary, politics, etc.)
- proposal writing, entrepreneurial tips, protecting intellectual property, patents, trademarks
- incorporating vs LLC, tax tips, schedule C, venture capital, business planning (short and long-term)
- family planning, investing, retirement (pensions, IRAs)
- childcare
- professional problems
- personal problems!! e.g. boyfriend/girlfriend, etc.

...and much much more!

THE APPROACH

- Where do I look?

Your area of specialization (department, industry)

How do I approach a potential mentor?

Carefully

BE PREPARED

being unprepared is a very bad way to start any relation

READ!!!!!!

What have they worked on?

What are they working on?

See personal web site, papers, patents, etc.

Speak to former/current mentees/students

- Proceed Slowly...do not unload all your questions in one session

...come prepared with a specific set of questions

show that you have made some effort to think about each question

THE IDEAL MENTOR: QUALITIES, ATTRIBUTES, etc.

- willing to address/answer some/most/all of your questions
- in your area of interest (not essential, but helpful)
- understands BIG picture
- willing to brain storm
- technically astute
- experienced
- wise
- available (in person, phone, email)
- considerate
- sensitive to your concerns (e.g. gender, race, ethnicity, etc.)
- critical
- resourceful (technical, funding)
- caring
- role model

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- be prepared (PLEASE!!!!)
- get your questions answered asap, learn what you need to learn
- seek deep understanding (superficial understanding wastes time)
- do NOT procrastinate...wasting time is a waste of life
- work hard
 - ...the easy way out is usually the worst and most time consuming way
 - ...there are NO short cuts
- be considerate, respectful, professional
- do not take criticism personally...learn from it, improve....
- leave all your defense mechanisms at home
 - ...they interfere with learning/progress
- in short:
 - take responsibility for everything....it's your life

Summary

- Amazing times
- Amazing opportunities

A truly amazing ongoing technological revolution!

- Do not waste time
- Take control of your future...it can be GREAT!!

GET STARTED NOW !!!
DO NOT PROCRASTINATE!!!



THANK YOU

VERY MUCH !