



MENTORING 101

SEAS Center for Women in Engineering
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womenengineers.seas.gwu.edu



Mentoring: What is it?



- A professional relationship between a mentee and a mentor
 - Driven by the mentee
 - Mutually agreed upon structure
 - Confidential
- What does a mentor gain from the relationship?
- What do you, as a mentor, have to offer?

A mentor is:

- A friend
- A supporter
- A motivator
- An advocate
- A role model



A mentor is able to:

- Work with others one-on-one
- Listen and teach
- Be dedicated to the program
- Devote time to being a mentor



A mentor is not:

- A surrogate parent
- Replacement of a teacher or tutor
- A psychologist
- An ATM
- A playmate
- A social worker
- A savior

A mentor should not:

- Tell the mentee what she needs to do
- Give advice more than listen
- Focus on hard tasks to meet specific goals based on what the mentor thinks the mentee needs
- Push the mentee to discuss issues or concerns about her life
- Try to “fix” the mentee’s problems

Tools for a mentor – active listening



- Engage yourself
 - Focus solely on speaker
 - Maintain eye contact
 - Keep an open mind
 - Minimize distractions
- Respond appropriately
 - Ask for clarification

- Reflect on content
 - Check your assumptions
 - Make empathic connections to content
 - Summarize
- Give feedback
 - Ask questions
 - Paraphrase / restate
 - Use "I" Statements



Tools for a mentor – difficult conversations

It takes courage to stand up and speak, it takes courage to sit down and be silent.

-- Sir Winston Churchill



- Think beforehand about what you want to accomplish.
 - Bring things up early in the visit.
 - Stay serious but supportive.
- Reinforce something positive about your mentee.
 - Separate the behavior from the person.
- Keep responses open
 - "What I heard you say is..."
 - "That's one way of looking at it. What might be another?"
- Discuss sensitive issues in a private place.



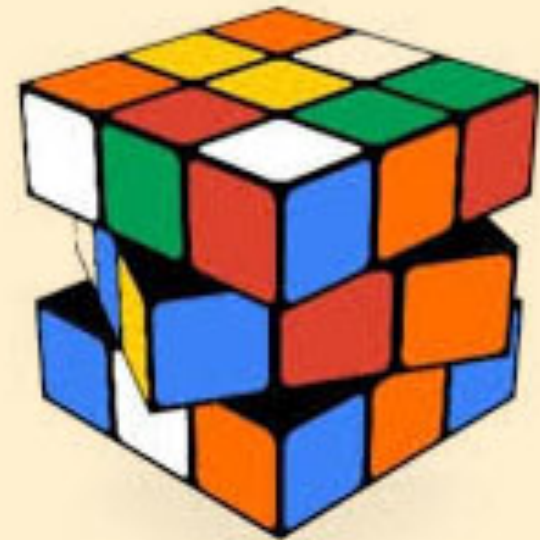
Tool for a mentor: Questions

- Learn to ask questions that require more than one-word answers
- Use “What” or “How”
- Keep the conversation going by asking follow-up questions or providing open-ended responses to questions asked
- Try something like this:
 - What is your favorite thing to do at school?
 - What do you hope to be doing in five years?
 - How are you going to get there?
 - What five words best describe you?



Tool for a mentor: Problem solving

- Define the Problem together
 - Anticipate the Consequences
- Brainstorm Options
 - Respond with the best choice



In summary – watch out for...



- Taking the lead from your mentee
- Failure to communicate or maintain boundaries
- Sporadic meetings
- Imposing personal values
- Giving cash, used items, expensive gifts

Ready?

- Be prepared and be on time
 - Have your first few meetings somewhere/somehow where it will be easy to talk
 - Clarify expectations and ground rules
 - Be predictable and consistent
- Have some icebreaker questions ready
- Establish confidentiality
- Enjoy the experience
- Consider when it is time to review the relationship

