

Mentors, mentors, every where... But who's the one for me??

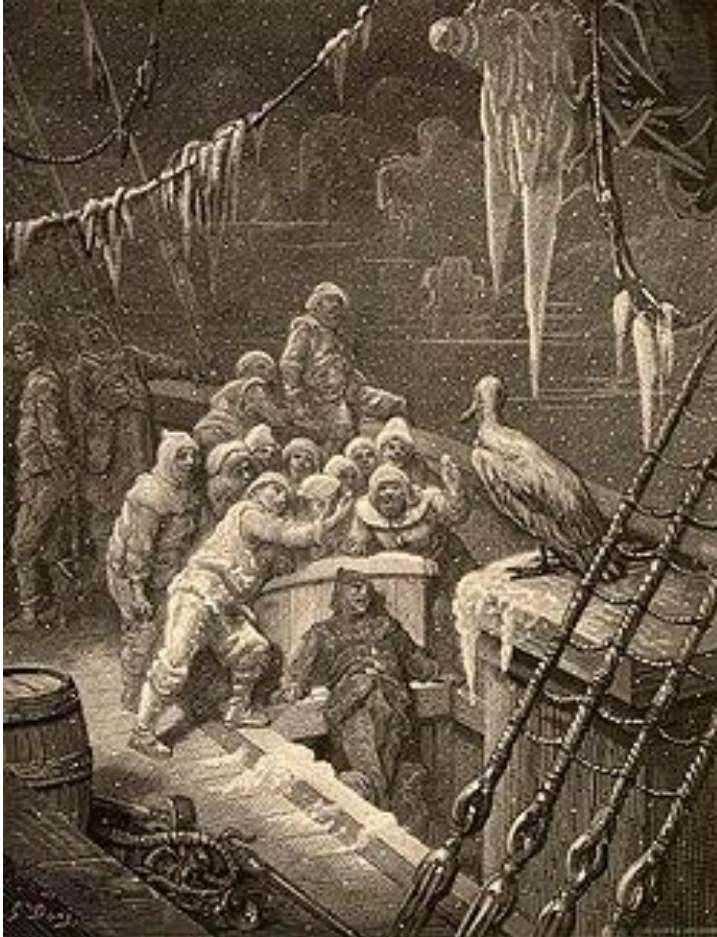
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Resident Research Toolkit

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1798



Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: Oh Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

Things we will explore

- Determining your mentoring needs
- Identifying and approaching potential mentors
- Being a good mentee

Determining your mentoring needs

Mentoring in an umbrella term

Mentoring Roles

- “Traditional” mentor
- Coach
- Connector
- Sponsor
- Advocate / Champion
- Clinical mentor
- Research mentor
- Methodological mentor
- Anchor

Mentoring Needs

- Substantive feedback
- Professional development
- Career advancement
- Access to opportunities
- Sponsorship
- Accountability
- Goal setting
- Emotional support

Determine your mentoring needs by understanding *and clearly defining your goals*

- *Know your goals (both short and long-term)*
 - What do you want to accomplish professionally (and personally) in the next 6-12 months? 3-5 years? 10 years?
 - The more specific you are with your goals, the easier it will be to find the right mentor.

Determine your goals – List (possible) mentors

Goal(s)	Potential Mentor(s)
Professional	
<i>6-12 months</i>	
<i>3-5 years</i>	
<i>10 years</i>	

Start identifying people who (might) meet your mentoring needs

- ***Ask yourself who you look up to***

- Whose job would you like to have in the next five, 10 or 15 years? Is this person inside or outside your workplace? Who is your immediate role model where you work?
- Keep a running list of the jobs and people you are visualizing.

- ***Do the research***

- You may or may not be able to ask one of those people to be your mentor, but what are the stepping stones to get to someone in a similar position?
- Take notes on the path that person took to get to where they are today.

Identifying and approaching a potential mentors



Identifying a potential mentor

- ***Make sure it's the right fit before asking.***
 - You can feel this out by having informal meetings where you discuss your goals and trajectory, before asking them to be your mentor.
- ***It's OK to start with the informational interview ask.***
 - But again, be specific about what you like about the person's work and why you want to meet. Why is talking to you worth their time
- ***Do your research about the possible mentor's work.***
 - Mention what you like about the person's work, especially if you've never met.

Approaching a potential mentor

- *Have an elevator pitch ready*
 - Be clear about your goals and why you think this person is the right mentor for you.
 - Be upfront about the time commitment — what you're willing to put into the relationship and what you expect from them.

Thing to mention during a formal mentor request

- **Tell them specifically what you've gotten out of past conversations with them.**
 - This might be from that first informal meeting.
- **Be clear about how often you want to meet for and how long, and make sure it works for them.**
 - You can reassess this later in the relationship.
- **Mention you'll put together agendas that align with the goals discussed above prior to each meeting.**
- **Make sure they are considering this mentorship as an option and not an obligation.**
 - We're all busy, and you should approach the ask fully aware they might say no. And that's OK! If they do say no, mention you admire their path and thank them for considering. That leaves the door open for a future relationship.

Approaching a potential mentor

- Be as specific as possible in your “ask”
- Establish and align expectation
- Set goals and follow through
- Realign expectations periodically

Who will be a good mentor?

Successful mentors use a core set of practices including the following:

- 1. Choosing mentees using a series of small tests (eg, review an article, summarize findings from a study, or outline a paper) to assess responsiveness
- 2. Creating a mentorship team to support growth while inoculating against mentor malpractice (ie, engagement in behaviors that hinder mentee success)
- 3. Setting expectations about communication and productivity
- 4. Dealing with rifts.

Alignment tools help to create a framework for the mentor-mentee relationship

- Alignment checklists
- Meeting agendas
- Career advancement plans / Individual Development Plans
- Mentorship agreement / compacts
- Set an end date!

Dealing with mentor issues

Table. Diagnosing and Treating Mentorship Malpractice

	Phenotype	Underlying Pathology	Diagnostic Symptoms and Signs	Complicit Mentee Acts	Potential Countermeasures
Active Mentorship Malpractice	The Hijacker	Self-preserving behavior related to string of failures.	Academic and intellectual insecurity, financial challenges, limited creativity, fear of being overtaken by others.	Sacrifice first-author positions; name mentor as principal investigator on projects.	Quick and complete exit. There is no way to protect yourself in this relationship.
	The Exploiter	Self-serving philosophy with tendency to self-worship; promotes personal interests over mentees.	Assignment of tasks such as supervising staff, managing projects unrelated to mentee. Believes mentee should be privileged to work with them.	Willing to accept nonacademic chores that support mentor rather than self.	Trial of firm boundary setting and use of additional mentors to evaluate requests. If or when mistrust ensues, exit the relationship.
	The Possessor	Anxious personality with powerful feelings of inadequacy, fears loss of mentee to others.	Specific instructions to not engage with other mentors or collaborators; constant supervision of mentee activities.	Foster isolation by following mentor demands; misinterpret undivided attention.	Insist on a mentorship committee; confront mentor with concerns regarding siloed approach.
Passive Mentorship Malpractice	The Bottleneck	Internal preoccupation coupled with limited bandwidth or interest to support mentee growth.	Often busy with own tasks or projects; limited time to meet face-to-face; inadequate response to requests for help; delays in feedback.	Allow the mentor to set timelines; facilitate behavior by silence or lack of insistence on clarity/detail.	Set firm deadlines and be clear about what happens on those deadlines; follow through with action and articulate frustration with mentor inability to prioritize.
	The Country Clubber	Conflict-avoidant personality, needs to be liked by colleagues; values social order more than mentee growth.	Avoids advocating for mentee resources such as staff, protected time; discourages mentee from similar debates.	Fail to ask mentor to advocate for mentee.	Develop a mentorship team so other mentors may engage in conflict on your behalf. Approach conflict/debate with focus on impact if not addressed.
	The World Traveler	Academic success fueling personal ambitions, travel requirements, desire for fame/appreciation.	Internationally renowned, highly sought-after for speaking engagements. Limited face-to-face time due to physical unavailability.	Accept lack of mentor availability; fail to connect with mentor via alternative methods of communication.	Establish a regular cadence of communication. Reserve time well in advance for in-person meetings. Use alternative methods for communication.

(Chopra et al, *JAMA*, 2016)

Being a good mentee

“Four Golden rules for effective menteeship”

- Select the right mentor(s)
- Be respectful of your mentor’s time and manage it wisely
- Communicate effectively and efficiently with your mentor
- Be engaged, energizing and collaborative

Understand your own areas for growth

Table. Diagnosis and Treatment of Mentee Missteps

			Potential Solutions	
Phenotype	Description	Diagnostic Signs	Mentee	Mentor
Conflict Averse				
The Overcommitter	Lacks the ability to say no. Ends up overcommitted and underproducing.	Résumé is filled with a host of committees, volunteer roles, etc, yet few have resulted in academic products such as publications.	Learn to use your mentor or allocated effort as a reason for saying no. Before saying yes to a project, determine which project is now getting a no.	Add new items to this mentee's list only after old ones are completed. Have mentee identify his or her career goals, then stick to projects that align.
The Ghost	Appears extremely enthusiastic and energetic, but then disappears without a trace and without notice—especially when problems arise.	Mentee may agree to assignments but fail to follow up. When questions regarding project deadlines arise, the mentee avoids discussion.	When uninterested, suggest an alternative person who may be interested. Address issues early. To reduce anxiety, be prepared with a planned solution.	Mentees should gauge their true interest in new projects and be allowed to decline. Set goals to address problems forthrightly, and praise mentees for their candor when issues raised.
The Doormat	Mentee is on the receiving end of a manipulative mentor. The mentee's energy is used for things that do not further their career, or for which they do not receive credit.	Mentee spends time on work unrelated to their own career. Review of mentee's progress shows few first-authored papers in mentee's field of interest.	Ask directly how new projects align with goals. Trial of setting goals and boundaries. Seek new mentors. Establish a mentoring committee.	Before assigning a project to a mentee, evaluate if it is in their best interest. Allow mentees to use you as an excuse not to participate in another's projects.
Confidence Lacking				
The Vampire	Mentee requires constant attention and supervision, leaving mentors drained and empty.	Mentee requests approval or clarification for every step of a project, regardless of prior or similar discussions. Lacks conviction; pivots to mirror mentor.	Recognize and embrace feelings of insecurity; talk with other junior faculty likely struggling with similar decisions. Before taking questions to a mentor, vet a solution with a colleague.	Set clear goals and boundaries, including what questions require approval and what do not. Have mentees "put their nickel down" when asking for help.
The Lone Wolf	Assertive, self-motivated, and determined; prefers working alone; believes mentorship is a luxury, not a necessity.	Does not trust others or is afraid to ask for help. Does not work well as part of a team.	Realize that asking for help is critical for learning, not a sign of weakness. Appreciate that working with a team is a key skill for success.	Be specific in things that can be done with and without mentor consultation. Define the mentee's role, as well as the role of other team members.
The Backstabber	This mentee rarely fails, but when this does occur, makes excuses or assigns blame to others rather than to personal missteps.	People who work with this mentee once often don't want to do so again. Has difficulty accepting responsibility for any mistake; avoids negative feedback.	Reframe mistakes as a learning opportunity. Make giving credit and accepting responsibility a daily goal.	Emphasize that honesty, not perfection, is critical in a mentee. If mentee cannot accept this responsibility, seek a new mentee.

Three key takeaways

- Clearly define your mentoring needs
- Approach potential mentors with a defined “ask”, use tools to create alignment and set expectations
- Be a good mentee – be respectful of time, communicate, follow through on commitments

Thank You!