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4 Things To Look For In A Mentor



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I write about the multi-generational workplace, Gen Z, leadership, and careers.

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- Don't be afraid to have a mentor who is younger than you, looks different than you, thinks differently than you, and isn't necessarily the same gender as you.
- Seek out a mentor who will challenge you to improve, isn't afraid to ask the tough questions, and will deliver real feedback, both positive and negative.



Mentors can help you in many ways in your career. They can help you gain confidence, develop skills in a new job, and even help you get promoted. Many women [credit having a mentor as a key to their success](#).

What should you look for when choosing a mentor?

Compatibility


Your mentor is someone who you will be working closely with. You have to be **compatible with this person** otherwise the relationship can feel strained or forced. It does take a bit of time to get to know someone, so don't discount a relationship too quickly, but pay attention to any cues that could indicate long term conflict. Don't be afraid to voice your concerns or end the relationship. Chances are, you and your mentor are both feeling the same way.

If you've been assigned a mentor through your company or a program, you may feel like you have to stick with that person. Most of the time that's not the case, and if you explain to the company why you don't feel like the mentor-mentee relationship will be successful, they'll be happy to match you with another mentor.

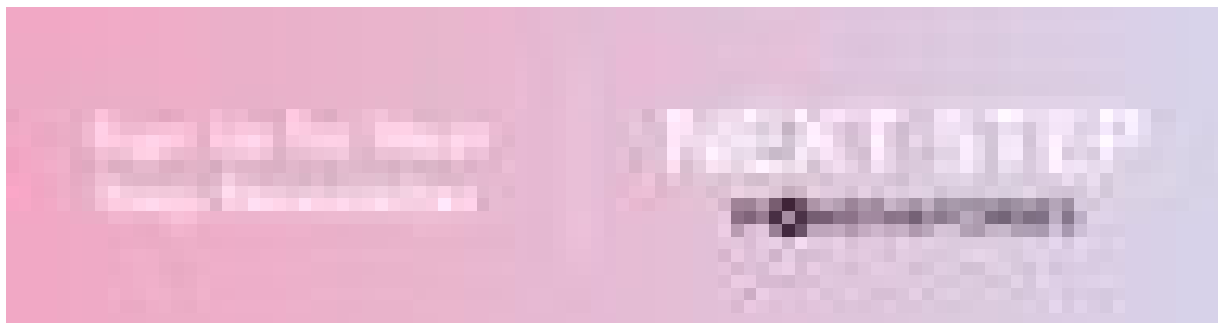
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Contrast

A mentor helps you step outside your comfort zone, so this person should be a bit outside your comfort zone as well. You don't want a clone of yourself or your best friend as a mentor. You need diversity to make sure you're getting a true different perspective on things. Don't be afraid to have a mentor who is younger than you, looks different than you, thinks differently than you, and isn't necessarily the same gender as you. 

Your mentor doesn't even have to be in the same line of work as you. Sometimes having someone to look at things from an entirely unfamiliar perspective and viewpoint helps you gain the most clarity. You might even feel more comfortable opening up to them knowing that you don't share the same professional circles, so there's less risk of any future conflict.



Expertise

It's not about finding a mentor with the most years of experience or the biggest title. It's about finding a mentor with the knowledge and expertise to help you on your journey. You want a mentor with enough experience to help you navigate through any challenges you're facing, but that doesn't always mean someone with the most years of work on their

resume. If your mentor has been in a similar situation to you and has worked their way through it, their title or years in the workforce become irrelevant.

Trust

You will be telling your mentor things in confidence, so trust is of utmost importance. This trust should go both ways, as the relationship will be the most successful when they trust you as well. Build on this mutual trust to get the most out of your relationship.

Take things slow and establish some ground rules up front to avoid any conflicts. After a few sessions you'll get to know each other better and you'll have learned each other's communication styles. Once a solid level of trust is established, you'll be able to really move forward.

Seek out a mentor who will challenge you to improve, isn't afraid to ask the tough questions, and will deliver real feedback, both positive and negative. 🐦 This is the mentor who will help you achieve your goals and help you succeed.

This article is part of a series on Mentorship. Read part 1: [How To Get The Most Out Of Your Mentor Relationship](#), part 3: [How To Be A Great Mentee](#), and part 4: [Questions To Ask Your Mentor](#).

What's your mentor success story? Join the conversation on [Twitter](#) and use hashtag #MentorSuccessStory.

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