

Mentoring Best Practices

Tips for Success

1. Prepare with intention

Reflect on your own experiences to set the stage for mentoring. Think about mentors who influenced you, the challenges you overcame, and the lessons you carry forward.

Ask yourself:

- *Who guided me at critical points in my career?*
- *What role models shaped my values or approach?*
- *When was I pushed to grow outside my comfort zone?*
- *Who helped me recognize a hidden strength?*

2. Lead with empathy

Seek to understand your mentee's perspective, challenges, and goals. Build trust by listening with compassion, acknowledging their experiences, and offering feedback in a way that feels supportive and actionable.

3. Ask powerful questions

Use open-ended questions to help your mentee explore their own insights rather than jumping to advice.

Examples:

- Instead of *"Did you try X?"* → *"What approaches have you considered?"*
- Instead of *"Are you frustrated?"* → *"How is this situation affecting you?"*
- Instead of *"Was this easy or hard?"* → *"What made this task challenging or rewarding for you?"*

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4. Practice active listening

Give your full attention. Notice body language, tone, and energy. Listen to what is said and not said. Reflect back key themes or reframe their words to deepen understanding.

Allow pauses; silence often creates space for valuable reflection.

5. Guide, don't solve

Your role is to develop your mentee's problem-solving ability, not to hand them answers.

Explore challenges together with questions like:

- *"What options do you see for moving forward?"*
- *"Have you seen this situation in another context?"*
- *"Who in your network could you learn from?"*

Encourage them to test solutions and own the outcome.

6. Capture and reflect

Take notes throughout each session using the "Mentor Notes" template. Record key themes, progress, and personal details (e.g., important milestones, interests, motivators).

This builds continuity across sessions, helps you spot growth patterns, and ensures both mentor and mentee see clear progress.