

Getting the Most Out of a Mentor

Coaching Questions

What you can learn from a mentor?

- There is a ton that you can learn from your mentor, and mostly you have selected a mentor as they are further along than you or that they have a strength that is a weakness for you. So make sure that you have some learning goals that you would like to achieve.
- Don't forget that they are learning from you as well. The word 'mentor' does not have hierarchy together, but it is a statement about your relationship. Remember that they are helping you as there is something in it for them as well. It could be that they feel good, it could be that they are reminiscing about when they started up, or it could be that they are starting something else new and enjoy the connection.

Why is following up with your mentor important?

- It is always the responsibility of the mentee to follow up with the mentor. As the mentee, you need to reach out, set the agenda, find the places to meet, and in general be proactive.
- Often mentees are daunted by their mentor, and expect them to take the lead. This is not true. The mentee is to take on the responsibility of fostering this relationship even more than a mentor.
- A mentor that begins to take the lead may start to think that the mentee is not taking their advice and support seriously, and might get disengaged from the relationship.

When a mentor offers something, do they mean it?

- Yes. If they offer to it, they mean it. So make sure that you follow up on what they offered. They won't offer again. And if an offer is an introduction to someone, they want you to make them look good. So they won't offer to introduce you to someone if you don't make them look good the first time. So take these introductions seriously!
- At the same time, don't push your relationship too far too early by asking for too much. The mentor is already giving you their time, their trust, and their knowledge. That is already priceless.

How do you keep a mentor?

- Keeping a good mentor is just as hard as finding a good one. You need to thank them. You need to follow up with them. And you need to do what you said you were going to do. By doing that, you continue to respect their advice and you continue to move forward in a positive direction. That is hugely important to your mentor as they will feel that they have made an impact.
- The number one reason why a mentor stops mentoring is that they don't feel that they are making an impact. As the mentee, you will feel that they have made a huge impact as your business is doing better than you thought it could. But for them, they don't have the same positive satisfaction or have seen things grow faster, so they will wish that they could make a bigger impact. Make sure that you tell them how their advice and connection has helped you. That will help you keep them!

How to mentorships end?

- Some mentorships go on forever. But that doesn't mean that they all should.
 - Some morph into friendship. This is a common outcome, as you will have shared some intense times with your mentor and you will want to continue to reminisce over these times. Starting your business is the best of times and it is the worst of times. Having someone that you shared this time with instantly creates shared memories and feelings together.
 - Some slowly fade. This is also common as the small business owner continues to get busier and busier with things going well. The knowledge that the mentor had to share has mostly been passed over. Many mentors start up their own initiative as they are motivated by their mentee. Whatever happens, it was the right time for both of you.