

Mentor/Mentee: A symbiotic relationship (built on trust!)



Role of the Mentor

Visionary and Leader

- Recruitment and team building
- Short and longer term planning for lab or program
- Goals and expectations for team members
- Show lab members where they fit into the program

Advisor and Role Model

- Use experience to advise individuals
- Lead by example
- Provide encouragement, be pragmatic and honest
- Stay positive (whenever possible!)

Role of the Mentor

Provide Resources

- Intellectual resources
- Material resources (equipment, supplies, animals)
- Networking and collaborations (SPONSOR ROLE)

Set Expectations

- Scientific progress, milestones, deadlines
- Authorship – discuss often (NCS issue)
- Funding – pathways to independence
- Work hours, vacations, family time etc

Role of the Mentor

What can go wrong??

- Belief that your mentees should be mini-you
- Failure to appreciate strengths and weaknesses
- Inability to discuss important issues as they arise
- Allowing mentees to perform “busy work” because you are busy

How to correct the situation

- Be accessible and reliable – don't cancel meetings
- Understand individual needs and skills
- Give (at least one) project with reasonable chance of success
- Listen well, be patient but provide honest feedback

Role of the Mentor

Sometimes there is no solution

If you have to let someone go, it should never be a surprise

Make sure you follow the institutional rules and regulations

Be respectful and as helpful as possible in helping your former mentee move on

Encourage mentees to seek help from resources such as the HMS Ombudsperson, the ORCD office (me!!), or HR

Role of the Mentee

You are always a mentee!!

As you progress up the ladder, you always need a mentor

The nature of the relationship evolves

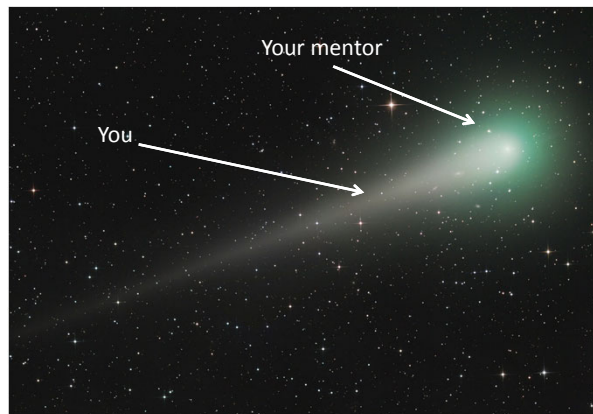
Early stage – day to day interaction, scientific guidance

Middle stage – career expansion, growth opportunities

Late stage – leadership positions, programmatic issues,

Role of the Mentee

Good mentees will make sure that their mentor succeeds.



Role of the Mentee

Good mentees will see the big picture

- What is best for the group?
- How can my goals be best served within the group?
- Understand the goals and motifs of your PI
- Success of the PI is critical for survival

Good mentees are team players

- More scientific interaction/techniques
- Rapid advancement of project
- Increased publications, funding and fame

Role of the Mentee

Relationships are built on trust

Allow a mentor (SPONSOR) to help (funding, opening doors)

Don't be automatically suspicious of his/her motifs

The vast majority of PIs want mentees to succeed

Put yourself in the position of your PI

Accept justified criticism without being defensive

Role of the Mentee

Reasons for a breakdown of trust

Lack of two-way communication

My mentor is "using " my data for grants etc

My mentor doesn't realize how hard I work

My mentor isn't interested in my project

I should have been first author

My mentor doesn't give me opportunities to grow

Do you need to “divorce” from your mentor

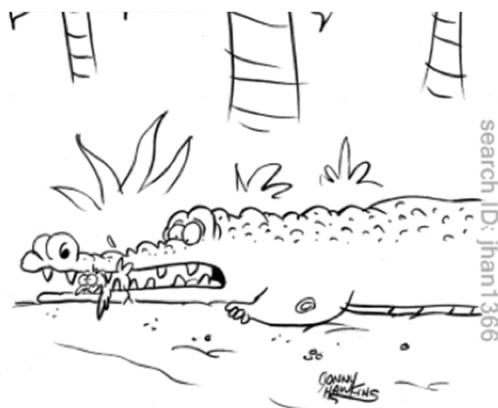
No, but you should eventually have a distinct pathway that is clearly different from that of your mentor

New NIH guidelines: reviewers are not allowed to use the word “independence” or “young” investigator but may question your ability to be the PI of a grant

You can write an RO1 as an Instructor

Assembling the best team for the best science is key

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"On a scale of one to ten, what is your pain level?"