

Developing Tech Talent ... Role Models, Mentors & Champions




WITA January 2020 - Susan Wands

WHY!

Just about every source of self-help or career development advice suggests finding role models and mentors is key to getting better results or achieving success.





“The greatest good you can do for
another is not just to share your riches
but to reveal to him his own”

— Benjamin Disraeli

Role Models

... a person whose behavior,
example, or success is or can
be emulated by others



The Nope ... not doing that

These are the people in our lives that give us clear examples of what not to do.

We can look at what they have done, see the results and decide not to follow that path.

Learning from other people's mistakes saves us the pitfalls of having to learn the hard way.



The See Me

Sometimes have **limiting beliefs** about what we are capable of...

- how we look
- gender
- cultural background
- socioeconomic background
- childhood circumstances
- bad experiences
- abuse
- limited education



The See Me

These are people we can find who have had our circumstances and have achieved great things anyway.

They help us see that we can overcome whatever challenges we think we have.

To find a good 'SeeMe' you need to be honest with yourself about your limiting beliefs.



The Trailblazer

These are the folks that have achieved something that you want.

If you study what they did, then they can reveal a path to help you get there too.

These are people who have hit your goal. So to find a good Trailblazer role model you need to have a goal.



Mentor

- an experienced and trusted adviser
- advise or train someone



**What does a
Mentor do?**

Discovering Limiting
Beliefs

**So what are some things that you
think mentors are supposed to do?
What are they supposed to help
you with?**

Address Obstacles /
Finding Solutions

Assessing
Strengths &
Weaknesses

Cheerleading
Success

Accountability

Milestones & Action
Steps

Goal Setting

So how do you find a mentor?



“The thing with finding mentors is you probably shouldn’t ask someone formally to be your mentor. From my experience on the other side, it actually sounds really taxing. It sounds like work and it sounds like commitment—something a lot of busy people don’t feel like they have time for. But a one off email or coffee every now and then isn’t taxing, if anything it is quite pleasurable. So reach out to them now, on social media, over email, LinkedIn, whatever... just keep it casual...”

—Sam Jarman

What do I say?

“Hey there X, I was wondering if we could grab a coffee this week or next. I see you’ve been doing Y and I would love to chat about your experience doing it. I think I’m in a similar situation now.”

- Short, to the point and a clear ask. It’s important people know what you want from them and why it can’t be anyone else.

Sometimes employers offer mentorship

A tech lead or team lead or manager having regularly scheduled meetings with a subordinate to assess goals and achievements in preparation for the next performance review.

GOOD

- Advice given is typically directly applicable at your current company.
- Progress and positive results can be included in your review process and someone else can speak to your accomplishments.

POTENTIALLY NOT SO GOOD

- Since your mentor is usually directly tied to your performance reviews there is a limit to how honest and forthcoming you can be.
- An assigned mentor may not come across as truly invested in you ... kind of a forced relationship

Mentorship After #meToo

Lean In Study Results:

60% of managers who are men are uncomfortable participating in a common work activity with a woman, such as mentoring, working alone, or socializing together.

That's a 32% jump from a year ago.

Mentorship After #meToo

Lean In Study Results:

Senior-level men are now far more hesitant to spend time with junior women than junior men across a range of basic work activities. They are:

- 12x more likely to hesitate to have 1-on-1 meetings
- 9x more likely to hesitate to travel together for work
- 6x more likely to hesitate to have work dinners

Mentorship After #meToo

As for why this is happening, 36% of men say they've avoided mentoring or socializing with a woman because they were nervous about how it would look.

Women get less support from managers and less access to senior leaders, especially women of color: almost 60% have never had an informal interaction with a senior leader.

**Let's Talk About It ... what are some ways
we can overcome this?**





Champions or Sponsors

Someone invested in your success and advocates for you



Why is it so special?

Sponsorship comes with time and trust. If you find someone who will put their reputation on the line for you, don't let them down and show your appreciation.

Sponsors are personally vested in your upward mobility and success

They often use their own platforms, reputation and connections for your benefit

They use their influence to connect you to people or platforms that you don't have access to yet



Extra reading:

- <https://thenextweb.com/contributors/2018/04/21/tech-mentorship-two-way-street-heres/>
- <https://www.techrepublic.com/article/how-to-launch-mentorship-programs-for-women-in-tech/>
- <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/winter2019/Pages/why-male-leaders-should-mentor-women.aspx>
- <https://leanin.org/sexual-harassment-backlash-survey-results>
- <https://hackernoon.com/how-to-find-mentors-for-a-career-in-tech-949237eea4e7>