Lesson 17 – Informational Interviews:

**Questions for Mentor:**

**Informational Interviews:**

* Conversation with a professional who works in desired area
* Agenda driven by job seeker
  + Encourages job contact to open up systematically
  + People like talking about selves
* Tiara Questioning algorithm that starts interviewee as expert and turns into mentor
  + Trends
    - Open ended
    - Establish some raport – big picture
  + Insights
    - More specific
    - Personal successes in particular
  + Advice
  + Resources
    - What research done to stay current in industry
  + Assignments
    - Types of work in job
    - Build up mental toolbox
* Go to company websites
  + Read headlines
  + Know the good news about a company
* Google headlines about the company
* Critical to send a thank you note
  + They’re doing this out of goodness of their heart
* Monthly reminder to follow up with contacts
* Most important thing to take away
  + What keeps you up at night?
  + Will give you a menu of things that keep people in the industry up at night

**How to be awesome at informational interviews:**

* 3 goals
  + Gather info about field or job
  + Help convey expertise and competence
  + Build your network
* A coffee meeting
  + Do your research
    - The company (crunchbase, linkedin, google, news etc)
    - Don’t ask question you could find answer to on google
  + Don’t start meeting asking about job
  + Start with a quick pitch of yourself – well practiced
  + Practice pitch in advance
  + Ask great questions
    - Ask questions that get answer to: Would I like this job?
    - Then ask questions that help you know: Can I get this job?
  + The “beyond” technique
    - Bad question: what do you look for in a data scientist?
    - Better question: beyond a good portfolio and great tech skills, what do you look for in a DS
  + Beginner, intermediate, boss
    - Beginner: what algorithm do you use to predict student engagement
    - Intermediate: in order to predict student engagement, do you use X or Y algorithm
    - Boss: In general, people predict student engagement using X. Do you use Y? Or do you use something else altogether?
  + Use critical questions
  + Resist urge to ask canned questions
  + Be specific, draw on research
  + LISTEN!
    - For info you can act on
    - Whats important to other person
  + Follow up
    - Send thank you email with specific points
    - Do what you say you’re going to do in thank you note
    - Can make intros or recommendations
  + Summary
    - Prepare
    - Do research
    - Practice strong intro
    - Ask Qs
    - Listen
    - Follow up

**Build your professional relationships:**

* Professional relationships (friendships) can become personal friendships as well
* Think about professional dealbreakers

**7 Questions you can’t leave an informational interview without asking:**

* What attracted you to this career path?
* What previous professional experiences have helped you most in this role?
* What’s something that would surprise people about your day to day?
* What’s one thing you wish somebody would have told you before going into this field?
* What are some of the biggest rewards of your position?
* How would you describe somebody who would excel in this career?
* What’s most important to prepare for a role like yours?