

Mentorship

vs

Sponsorship

@deniseyu21

This is not going to be a
“self-help” talk for
individual contributors

If you are an
individual contributor:

Your lived experiences are valid,
your feelings are real, and
your contributions are valuable.

The actionable bits of this
talk aren't directed at you.

I'm so glad that you're here.

If you are a
member of leadership:

You are my primary
audience today.

Thank you for
being here!

Mentorship



Sponsorship



Mentorship

The onus is on individuals to change their behaviors and/or perspectives.

Sponsorship

The onus is on leaders to change the environment so that individuals can be recognized for things that they're already doing.

Mentorship is important



Bear in mind that your **lived experiences** will be different from those of your mentee

What worked for you
might not work for
someone else

And advice can
sometimes be harmful.

Example of
ineffective mentorship
I received:

“No one will take you seriously unless you spend a lot of time contributing to Open Source. Your GitHub profile should be full of green squares before you apply for a new job.”

Example of
effective mentorship
I received:

“If you spend too much time on diversity work, that will become your visible work. If you want to be an engineering leader, you should focus in the short-term on building technical credibility. Once you’re a senior engineer, it will be safer and more impactful for you to vocally advocate for inclusion and diversity.”

**Tanya Reilly, “Being Glue”
@whereistanya**

Effective mentorship...

- Builds on a strong understanding of the mentee's career goals
- Accounts for realities about how the mentee's contributions are likely to be valued within their current context

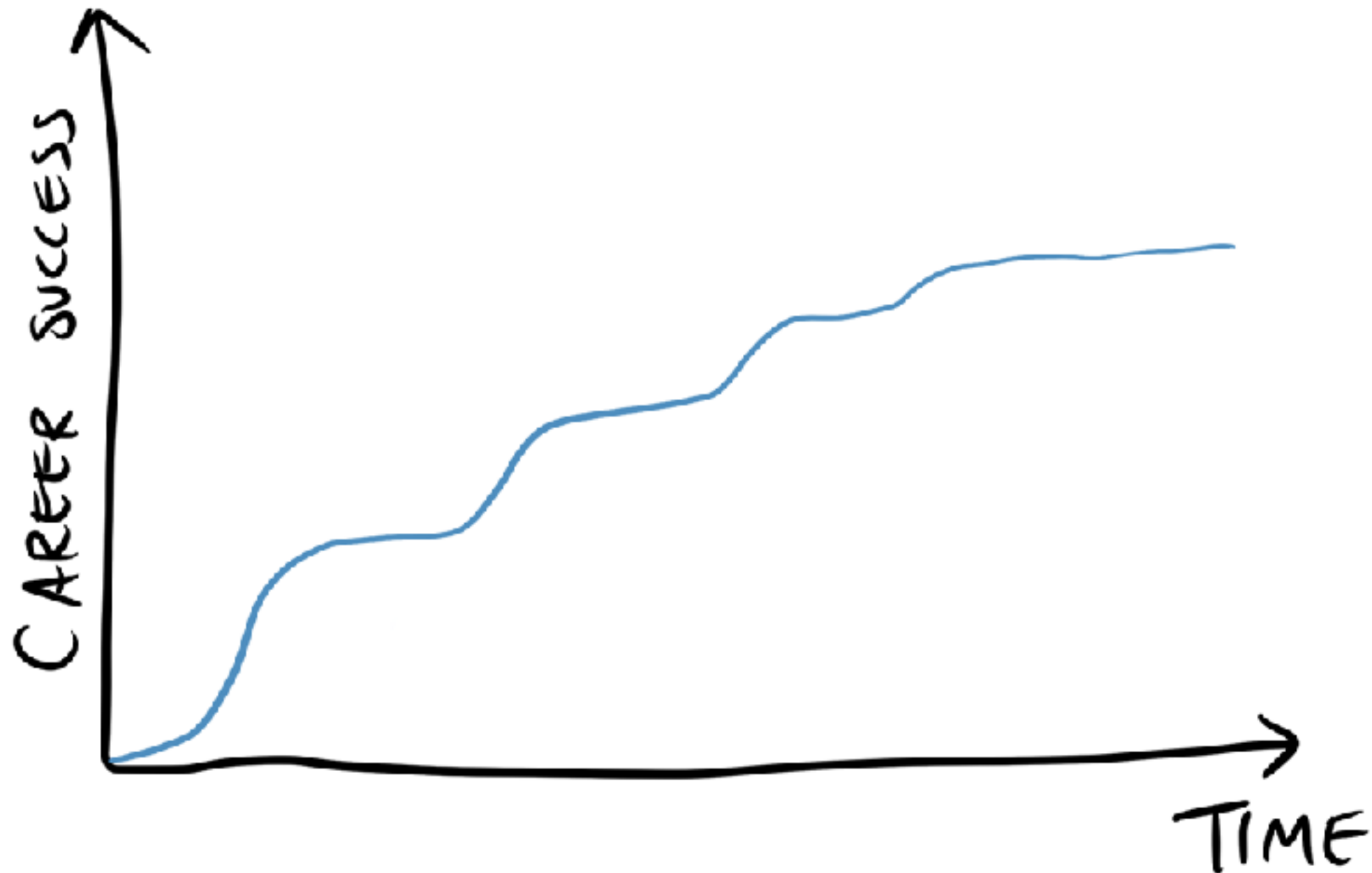
“Is my mentorship
likely to cause harm?”

Ask for consent
before giving advice

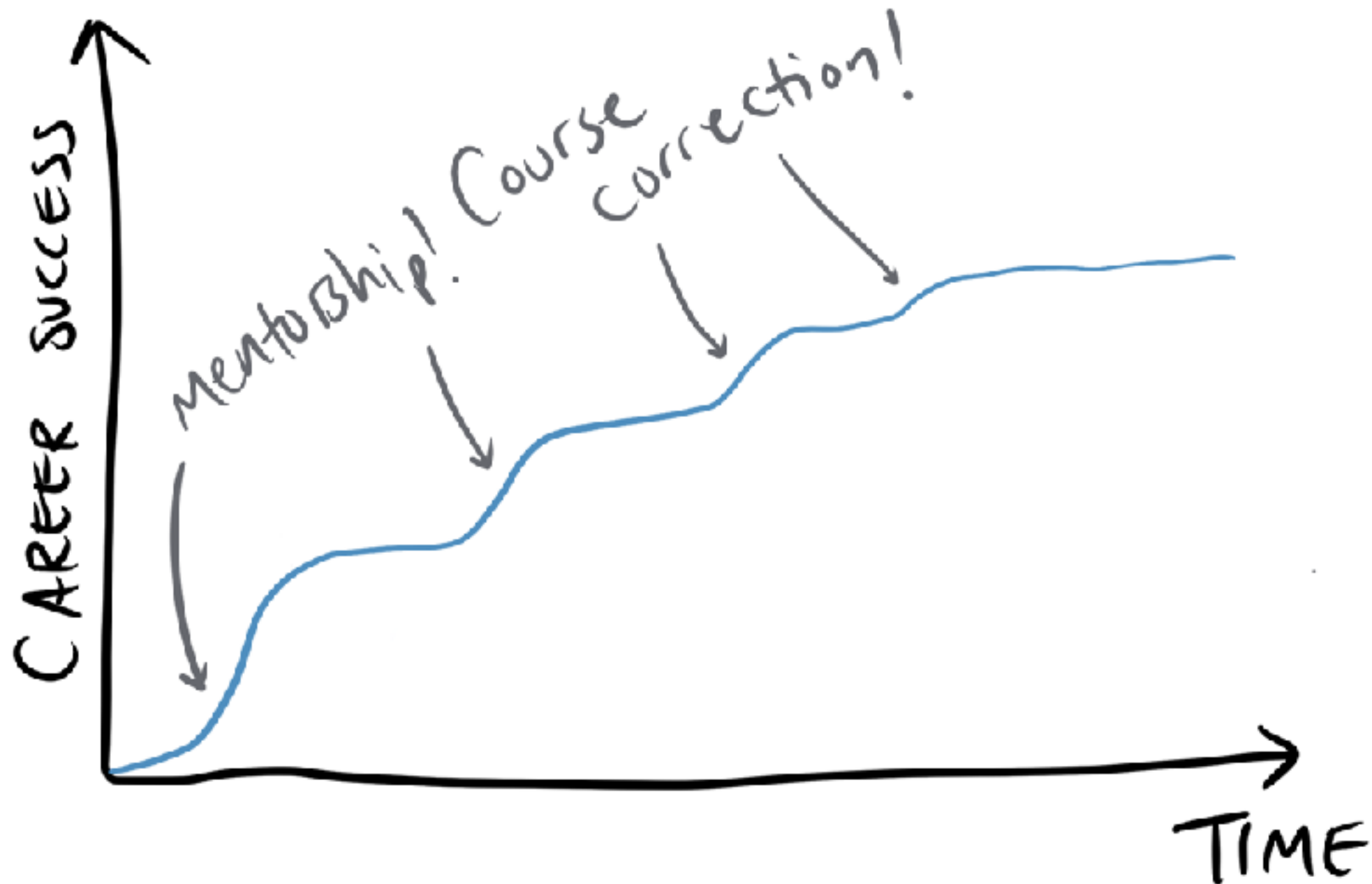
“Would you like for me to **listen**, or would you like my help with **problem-solving**?”

Even after lots of thoughtful
mentorship, individual
contributors can still plateau.

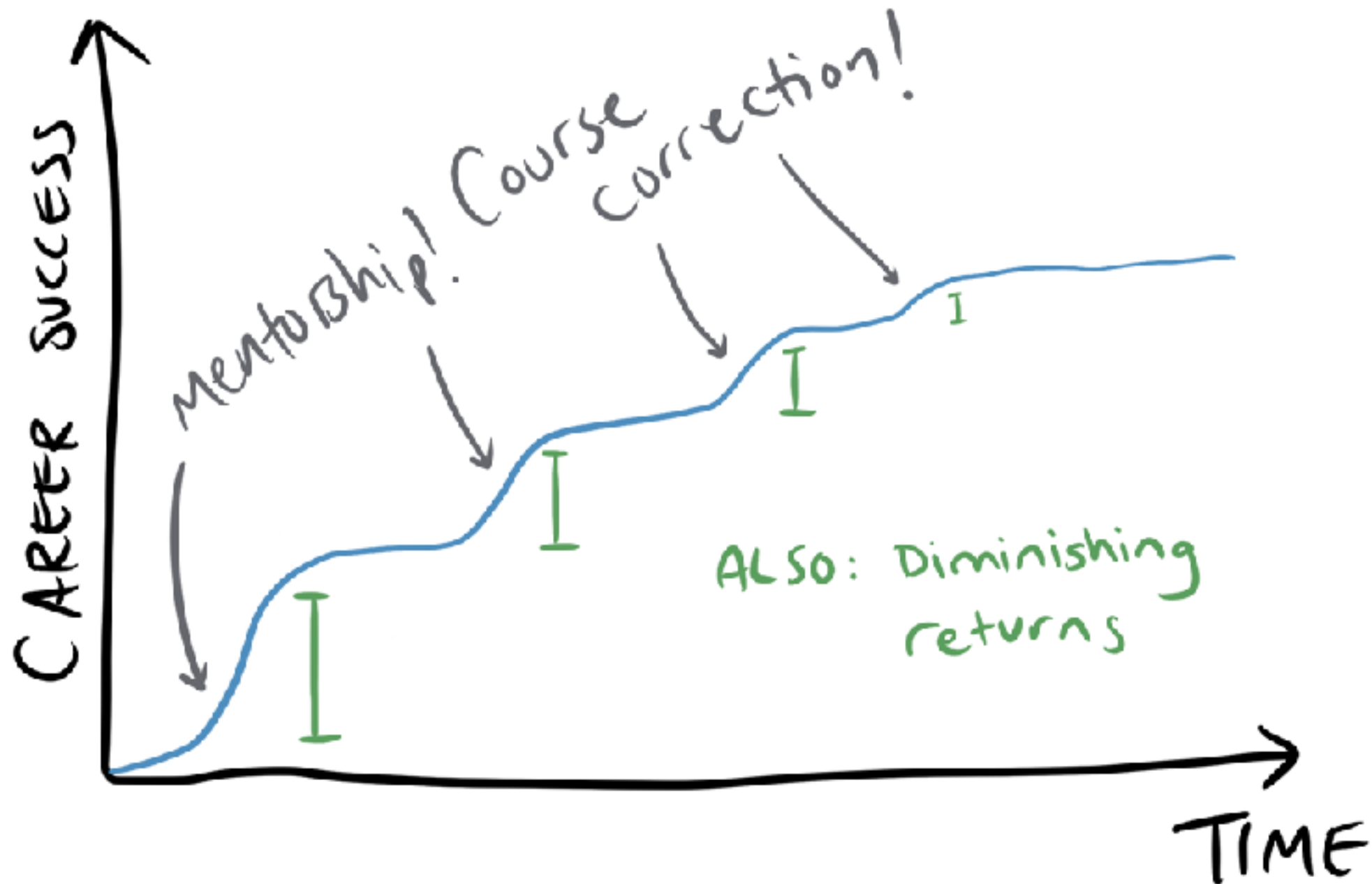
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This is a good time for
sponsorship to come in...

(Although it is more impactful
to sponsor frequently and
freely, before the plateau.)

Mentorship

The onus is on individuals to change their behaviors and/or perspectives.

Sponsorship

The onus is on **leaders to change the environment** so that individuals can be recognized for things that they're already doing.

What does sponsorship
look like in practice?

**Advocating for someone to
rotate into a visible leadership
role on a high-impact team**

**Exercising some of your
influence to help someone earn
a promotion or salary
adjustment**

**Recommending someone to
participate in an event that will
further their career**

Sponsorship boils down to asking:

What are the things that are
currently holding this
person back, and what can I
do to **remove those
obstacles?**



Final thought:

You might be able to start
sponsoring people before
you're a senior leader.

Just remember...



Always put on your own oxygen mask
before helping others!

Thanks!

Slides:

deniseyu.io/sponsorship

@deniseyu21

Resources

Lara Hogan, "What Sponsorship Looks Like." <https://laraahogan.me/blog/what-sponsorship-looks-like/>

Herminia Ibarra, Nancy M. Carter, and Christine Silva for the Harvard Business Review, "Why men still get more promotions than women." <https://hbr.org/2010/09/why-men-still-get-more-promotions-than-women>

Toria Gibbs and Ian Malpass, "Recommended reading for allies." <https://codeascraft.com/2016/08/10/recommended-reading-for-allies/>