

# Mentorship challenges and how to overcome them

Discover the real-world obstacles that stand in the way of successful mentorship, and learn actionable strategies for overcoming them





## What to do if something feels 'off'?

It may seem that you are doing everything you can: you put in the effort, show initiative, you are pleasant, but something just feel a bit "off". Or maybe you feel like you want to cancel the meetings and struggle to keep a natural flow of conversation. If you find that there is no chemistry between you and your mentor, it can be challenging to continue the mentoring relationship. However, there are a few things you can do:

- 1. Acknowledge the situation:** Recognise that there might be a lack of chemistry and that it's okay. It's not always possible to connect with everyone, and that's normal.
- 2. Reflect on why the chemistry might be lacking:** Try to understand what might be causing the lack of chemistry. Is it a personality clash, differences in communication style, or a lack of shared interests? Reflecting on this can help you determine if there is anything you can do to improve the situation.
- 3. Communicate openly:** Schedule a meeting with your mentor to discuss any concerns or issues you have noticed. Be honest and direct, but also remain respectful. Encourage your mentor to share their thoughts and feelings as well.
- 4. Adjust your approach:** If there is a specific area where you're not connecting, try adjusting your approach. For example, if you're having trouble communicating, try different communication methods such as email, video call or in-person meetings.
- 5. Seek help:** Consider seeking advice from other mentees. Ask how their relationship is developing, what their challenges have been. You can also always email us to discuss any issues and possible solutions.

# Overcoming most common challenges

Mentorship is fulfilling and brings many wonderful things to both you and your mentor, but challenges are an integral part of mentoring. For this reason it is essential to be aware of some challenges that you as a mentee might face. Here are some examples from the past and the solutions that helped to overcome these difficulties:

01

## "I'm not sure what questions to ask my mentor."

Solution: If you're struggling to come up with questions for your mentor, try starting with some basic ones to get the conversation going. For example, you could ask about their career path, their biggest challenges, or their advice for someone just starting out in the field. As you get to know your mentor better, you may find that more specific questions arise naturally.

02

## "I don't feel like my mentor is giving me enough feedback."

Solution: If you feel like you're not getting enough feedback from your mentor, it's important to communicate this with them directly. Let them know that you value their guidance and would like more frequent check-ins or feedback on your progress. You could also try setting specific goals or milestones to work towards together, which can help provide a framework for more targeted feedback.

03

## "I'm not sure how to apply my mentor's advice to my own situation."

Solution: Sometimes it can be difficult to apply your mentor's advice to your own situation, especially if there are significant differences between their experiences and yours. In these cases, it can be helpful to ask follow-up questions or for more specific examples to help clarify how their advice might apply to your situation. You could also try breaking down their advice into smaller, more actionable steps that you can implement in your own work.

04

## "I'm not seeing the results I was hoping for from my mentorship."

Solution: If you're not seeing the results you were hoping for from your mentorship, it's important to reassess your goals and expectations. Make sure that you're clear on what you want to achieve through mentorship, and communicate this with your mentor to ensure that you're both on the same page. It's also important to remember that mentorship is a process, and it may take time to see the full benefits of working with a mentor.

### **"I feel like my mentor is too critical or judgmental."**

Solution: If you feel like your mentor is too critical or judgmental, it's important to communicate this with them directly. Let them know how their feedback is impacting you and ask if there are specific areas where they see you excelling. You could also try setting boundaries around what kind of feedback you're comfortable receiving.

**05**

### **"We had a great relationship with my mentor at the beginning but later I started to feel like something is not working well. We had different expectations on how our communication would go and what kind of support I should receive"**

Solution: Remember, managing expectations is an ongoing process that requires open communication and flexibility. At the beginning of the mentoring relationship, clarify the goals and expectations with your mentor. Make sure that both of you have a shared understanding of what you hope to achieve and the expectations you have for each other. Set up regular check-ins with your mentor to assess your progress towards your goals and your mentoring relationship. Use this time to discuss any areas where expectations may not be aligned and to adjust your approach if necessary.

**06**

### **"My mentor is too busy to meet with me regularly."**

Solution: It's important to discuss how often you will meet at the beginning of your mentoring relationship so both of you are on the same page. If your mentor is too busy to meet with you on weekly or bi-weekly basis, it's important to be respectful of their time constraints. Try suggesting having a longer meeting once a month, and using other forms of communication in between these meetings like email or messaging. Don't worry, you can still try to maximize the value of the time you do have with them by preparing specific questions or topics to discuss ahead of time.

**07**

### **"I'm not sure how to maintain a relationship with my mentor after the formal mentorship ends."**

Solution: If you're not sure how to maintain a relationship with your mentor after the formal mentorship ends, consider staying in touch with them through occasional check-ins or by attending events where they'll be in attendance. You could also try sending them updates on your progress or career milestones, or even connecting with them on social media. Building a long-term relationship with your mentor can be valuable both personally and professionally.

**08**

**Remember, that mentorship requires patience, self-reflection and flexibility. Keep an open mind and stay committed to working on your goals with a mentor as a guide by your side.**



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