

The Art of Mentoring and Being Mentored

because we are all always both

Why Give This Talk?

Who needs a mentor?

What is a mentor then?

Someone who helps give you an honest assessment of your capabilities, who will assist you within reason, and keep you accountable to your goals.

What is a mentorship not?

A mentor is not your partner and a mentor is not necessarily your sponsor.

What are my responsibilities as a mentee?

- Initiate conversation
- Have specific goals in mind
- Research appropriate mentors
- Ask questions appropriate to your mentor
- Be flexible about scheduling

Emotional Labor

Recognizing potential mentors

Bad mentorship candidates

- Family
- Roommates
- Romantic Partners
- Anyone with whom you have a financial relationship

Good mentoring candidates

- Managers
- Peers (work/meetup groups/code & coffee)
- Community organizers
- Open source maintainers
- Twitter! 🐦

Iffy mentoring candidates

→ Friends

Formal vs informal mentorships

Warning signs: just like any other relationship, mentorships can become toxic

- Scheduling difficulties
- Breaking promises
- Guilt
- Disagreements about commitment

YOU have to ask, they
won't come to you.

Why should I have a
mentee?

What are my responsibilities as a mentor?

- Showing up on time
- Honest feedback
- Shutting down rabbit hole excursions
- Admitting ignorance and vulnerability

How do I show that I'm
available as a mentor?

Warning signs: you'll need to be on the lookout for different things as a mentor

- Sponsorship asks
- Financial asks
- Feelings of resentment
- Relitigating and adjusting your boundaries

It's okay to say NO!

But you should try saying yes if you
never have before.

How to end a mentorship

 Memento Mori 

Thank you



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