

Finding a mentor, and becoming a good mentee

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Objectives

- Describe your mentorship needs
- Formulate a plan for approaching your mentor
- Define types of mentors and how they fit into your career
- Identify components of an effective meeting with your mentors

Road Map

- Observations about mentors
- How to not find a mentor
- Steps to find a mentor
- Mentor types
- Managing mentoring relationships

- At your table (5")
 - What do you want a mentor for?
 - Who have you approached?
 - What worked? What didn't?

Observations about mentoring

Point 1: Mentoring is not a mythical relationship

Mentoring is practical



- Mentorship can happen during a project
- Mentorship is coaching
- Mentorship is a coffee with an admired role model
- Mentorship is learning from your peers

Point 2:

Your Annual Review does not count

- Your annual review is:
 - An opportunity for feedback
 - An opportunity to network (see ‘plan for finding a mentor’, later)
- Your Division Chief may not be your Mentor.
 - Can provide substrate for you to work on
 - Can direct roles to you

Point 3:

No single mentor has everything you need



- Expect to have a number of 'mentors' with different roles
- Being aware of your 5 year plan will help you figure out where you need mentors

Point 4: Mentors can't do for you what
you can't do for yourself

- ‘I need someone to tell me what to do’
- ‘I need a mentor to remind me when things are due’
- ‘I need a mentor to get me a project’

Mentors are guides, coaches, teachers.... not the Oracle or bank (right away).

Point 5

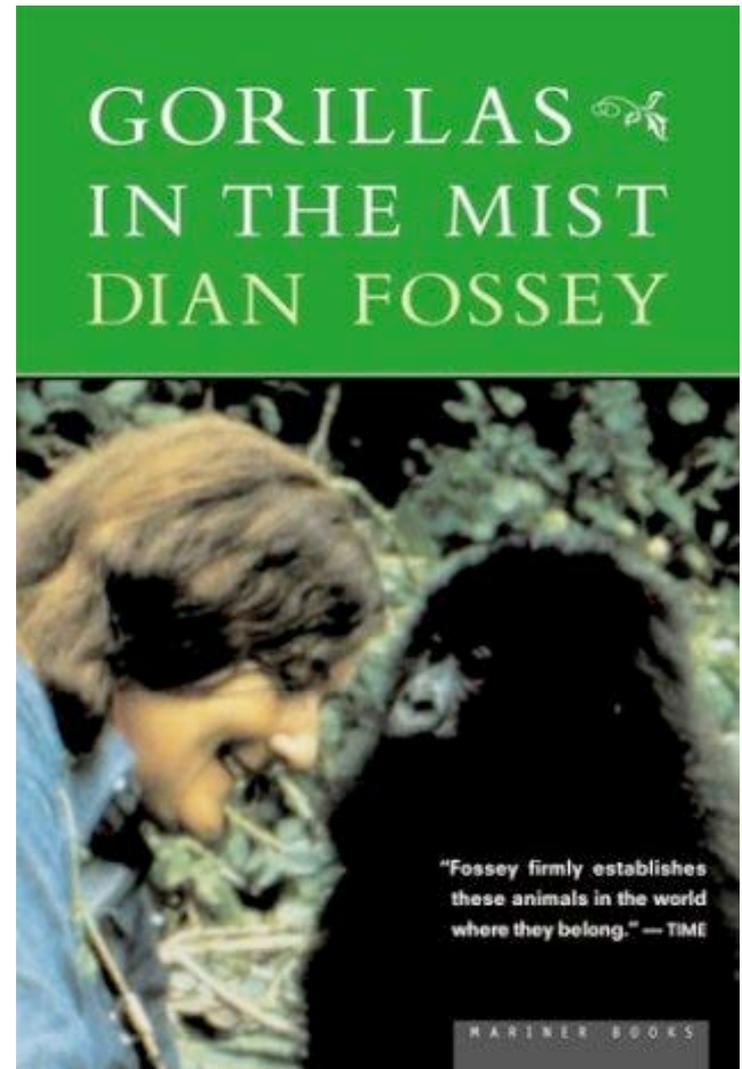
Mentor does not always = friend

- Mentor is closer to a teacher than friend
 - The goal is to become independent of your Mentor, in a professional sense
 - Probably best to be collegial, friendly, but the relationship is by definition asymmetric at outset

How do I not find a mentor?

Approach 1: Gorillas in the Mist Method

- Watch and observe potential mentors or role models in their natural environment
- Hope to be noticed and brought into a mentoring relationship through persistence and occasional shared grooming activities



Approach 2: The Cri du Coeur

- Cri du Coeur *n. pl. cris de coeur* (kr) *An impassioned outcry, as of entreaty.*
 - A visit to discuss concerns about not having a mentor
 - A visit to because you have an urgent deadline or task
 - Finding a mentor can't be a panic button

Approach 3: The Vegas Wedding

- Spur of the moment commitment, often with a unclear motives.
- “Seemed like a good idea at the time”

Finding a mentor, in a few easy steps

Find a mentor checklist

- ✓ Set career goals
- ✓ Begin networking with a 'central' person
- ✓ Develop a list of contacts
- ✓ Set up and keep meetings with those contacts
- ✓ Set post meeting expectations
- ✓ Rinse, repeat
 - Annually, as needs change, as projects change

Step 1: Set Career goals

- What are you looking for?
 - Find the parking garage?
 - Good local restaurants?
 - Good day care choices?
 - Find a project?
 - Find yourself?

Step 1: Set some career goals

- Have a plan ... for yourself
 - Be able to articulate your clinical interests, availability for work, and hopes for the future
 - ~~Elevator pitch~~ Polite introduction
 - 1 and 5 year plan helpful

Step 2: Develop list of contacts and start networking

- Start with your Division Chief, Dept Chair, respected senior colleague (or mentor at a distance)
 - Explain your hopes/vision for your future
 - Also useful: Skills you hope to gain
 - Ask for contacts (local and national)
 - Ask for introductions

Step 3: Set up and keep meetings with potential mentors

- If you have gotten introductions from your Chief, Chair, etc... remind them of that connection
- You should also have a template for a 'cold' email

Example email:

Hey Dr. Hunt,

I am a new faculty member in the Division of Hospital Medicine at UCSF and saw you in the hall at AHA (I think I gave you my card?). Anyway, Dr. Sharpe mentioned you were a nice guy.

I have a grant on medical education due in two weeks and am on service (LOL!). I was thinking you would be a great mentor. Do you have time to talk with me about it? It is going to be a cool project and I am super pumped!

Rock on,

Joe Newguy MD

Assistant Professor of Medicine

Division of Hospital Medicine

Example email:

Dear Dr. Hunt,

I am a new faculty member in the Division of Hospital Medicine here. I was directed to you by my Chief, Dr. Hunt, because of my interests in medical education. A copy of my CV is attached.

I would enjoy the opportunity to have a half hour meeting (or phone call, if more convenient) with you to get your guidance about how to become a successful medical teacher at Emory University.

I want to be respectful of your busy schedule and would be happy to work with your administrative assistant to arrange a time and format which works best for you. Please feel free to contact me by email or phone (415-555-5555). I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Joe Newguy MD

Assistant Professor of Medicine

Division of Hospital Medicine

Step 3: Set up and keep meetings with potential mentors

- Provide the potential mentor with a description of yourself and general interests when the meeting is set.
 - Agenda or at least the points you would like to cover during meeting
 - Read about the person you are going to meet (Google, PubMed, blogs, Twitter)
- Meet everyone on your referral list, and use that list to find other contacts
 - Update your Chief about your progress

Step 4: Set and keep meetings

- The first meeting:
 - Clarity in communication (and expectations) is important



First meeting

- This is a mini-negotiation in the midst of a 'first date'
- Working towards mentor's goals, not yours (initially)
 - Some things mentors want
 - To be viewed as positive contributors to the Division, Department, School
 - To fulfill personal sense of altruism
 - Leadership and teaching skills from mentoring
 - Help fill out the mentoring/teaching 'promotable activity'
 - Expanding scholarly activities
 - Help with projects

First meeting

- I am excited to meet you, thank you for your time
- Let me introduce myself (may not have read CV)
- Review questions you want to discuss
 - ‘Given my goal of ____, what would you recommend’
 - ‘Tell me how successful people in our institution got started’
 - ‘I see you are working on ‘X.’ Can you describe this project and how it got started’
- Avoid an ‘ask’ on a first meetings BUT
 - DO ask for referrals (this is a networking opportunity as well)

Step 5 – Finish the first meetings

- Leave with a mutual understanding of what the next steps might be
 - Don't feel like you absolutely need to meet again
 - At the least, you should send a thank you note
 - If there are 'next steps' you can recap them in your email

How to not be a networking 'leech'

1. Make meeting time convenient
2. Buy them coffee or food
3. Don't argue about advice or explain why it won't work for you
4. Don't ask for intellectual or scientific 'property' at the outset
5. Spend time at the end of meeting offering help*
6. Don't meet the same person twice (for networking purposes).
7. Say thank you multiple times, and in (paper) writing

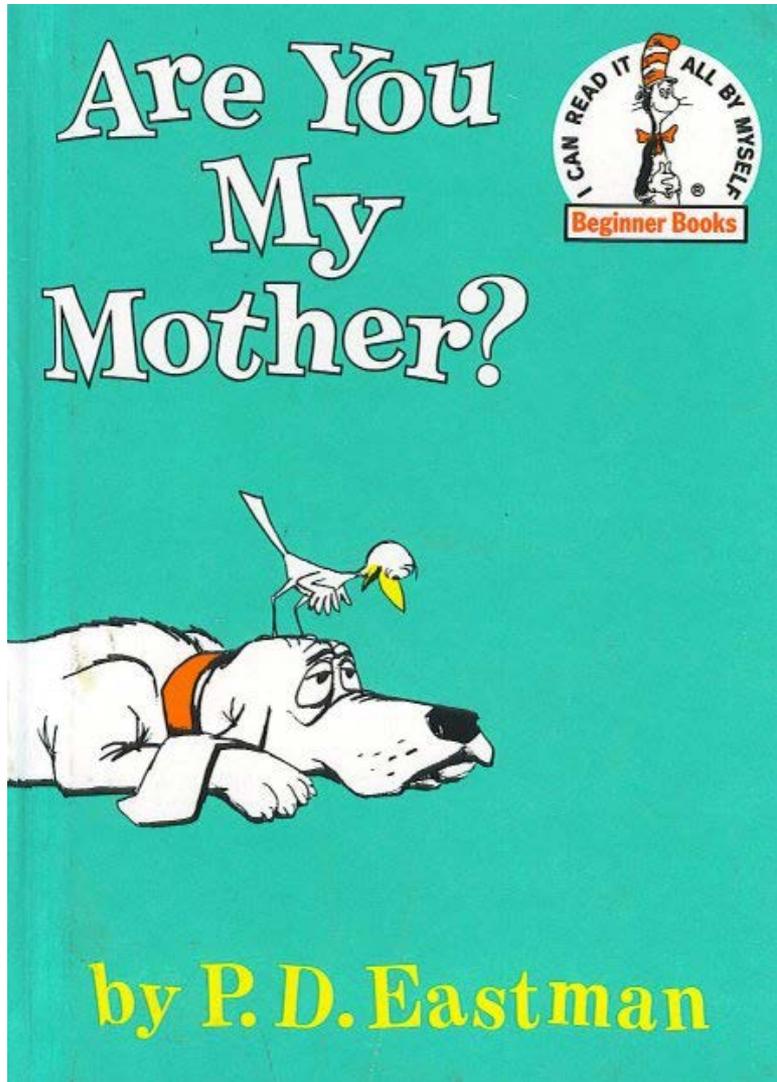
First meetings deal killers

- See 'Things Mentors do not Do'
- See also: How to not get a mentor
- Not being prepared
- Not being on time
- Not following up afterwards

5"-10" Pair Share

- With a table partner, practice what you might say to a potential mentor when you walk into their office.

NOTE: Beware the 'Are You My Mother?' phase



- Keep the initial networking phase short
- Regularly reassess progress towards constituting your mentorship team.

Step 6: Rinse-Repeat

(Reassessing and rebalancing)

- Where are my best matches?
- Decide which projects and people are best
 - Are available
 - Fit your hopes/plans in near term
 - Good experiences or down payments on longer term goals
 - Fit current and future project/career plans
 - Inspire you

Step 6: Reassess/Rebalance

- Set up a second (and third) meetings to facilitate or refine the role you and the mentor identified up front
 - Plan for that meeting, and all subsequent meetings, beforehand.
- How many mentors?
 - Enough of them

Kinds of Mentors

What kinds of 'Mentors' are there?

- Career Mentors
- Task/Project Mentors
- Mentors at a Distance
- People I want to be (Role Models)
- Peer mentors

Kinds of mentors

– Career Mentors

- People who help you stay on track and work towards a niche
- People who give you the 30,000 foot view
- People with great ideas and who stimulate your thinking
- People who are ‘connectors’ in your organization

– Task (or project)-specific Mentors

- Someone who gives you a project, or needs help with one

Kinds of mentors

- Role models
 - People whose job, personal attributes, leadership style, or other professional characteristics you admire or want to emulate.
 - Need not be in your specialty
 - Need not even be physicians

Kinds of mentors

- Mentors-at-a distance
 - Good for impartial opinions (review my CV)
 - Networking
 - Hard to utilize for hands-on professional development
 - Can guide towards a national 'niche'

Peer mentors

- Really important and useful
 - For ‘personal benchmarking’, sharing of practices
 - Networking
 - Sounding board
 - Friendship
- Maybe not as useful for
 - Skill building (Teaching you stuff)
 - Project building (Giving you stuff to do)
 - Career strategery (except for cautionary tales)

Roles in mentorship teams

- In general: Assistant Professor (5-10 y in practice)
 - Someone early in their tenure is trying to establish themselves, and may not have roles/projects/privilege to 'give away'.
- Beware prominent but overextended senior faculty
- All should have a track record of mentorship
 - Note: Productivity does not always = mentorship

Effective mentors

- They should be responsive
 - Not necessarily insta-email, but able to explain when you will hear back
- They should be able to explain their expectations of you
 - Equally good: The potential mentor agrees to what you want from them
 - You should feel like you can communicate with the mentor

Mentorship and Sponsorship

- Mentors can, and in many cases should, provide both as your relationship continues
 - Mentorship = Advice, coaching
 - Sponsorship = Giving away privilege and influence
 - Help with papers or peer reviews
 - Finding (or giving) funding for projects
 - Helping mentee advance in the organization
- It is hard to ask for sponsorship until trust is gained on both sites

Mentorship and sponsorship

- Sponsorship is really important in an era when it is our responsibility to address inequities



Ongoing mentorship relationships

Managing the ongoing mentoring relationship

- How often should you meet?
 - Lead mentor, project specific mentor – weekly-monthly
 - Career mentor – semi-annual
 - At a distance – at major milestones (e.g. promotion)
- How long should the meetings be?
 - Less than 1 hour is preferable, unless working on a big project (Grant, course, etc).
 - See if you can cover your needs in <40”

Format for followup meetings with a mentor

1. Assess the situation
 - Check in, report any urgent issues, share personal stories if comfortable
2. Cover your agenda
 - Assess time available, prioritize issues you can cover in the time available
3. Set clear and measurable goals
 - Agree on timeline for deliverables
4. Ask for general career guidance (Optional)
 - Think about issues which can impact your career satisfaction
 - Review CV periodically (Career Mentor/Mentor at distance)
5. Wrap up
 - Clarify expectations for next time
 - Schedule next meeting

Ensure you are making progress

- The 'goal is to develop an area of expertise/reputation that is your own
 - You must be able to articulate your career goals
- The mentor's goal is to make sure that happens
 - The relationship may transition from pure 'mentorship' to a blend of mentoring and sponsoring over time
- Regular reviews of whether you are sticking to this shared goal are critical.

Finding a Mentor and being a good Mentee

- Important first step is knowing what you want
- Looking for a mentor is an intentional, non-crisis driven activity
- A successful mentoring relationship is actively managed by both parties