

# Learn to E-Mentor Workbook

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## Differentiating Mentoring from Parenting

Mentor

Listed below are a variety of hats adults wear when interacting with young people — some of these are part of your role as a mentor, some aren't — and some are strictly the role of the young person's parents.

Please put an "X" in the mentor column if you believe a role is part of your mentor responsibility; put an "X" in the parent column if you believe this strictly a parental. If it's a role you both share, put an "X" in both columns.

Once you're done, go back to the training to find out how you did and learn more about the way your job overlaps with — and is different from — that of your mentee's parents.

Role	Mentor	Parent
Confidant		
Advisor		
Disciplinarian		
Teacher		
Friend		
Decision Maker		

## One Role, Many “Hats” to Wear

Mentor

When you think about it, most of us play many roles in life — we’re someone’s sister or brother or cousin, we’re someone’s friend, we’re someone’s neighbor — and now you’re going to be someone’s mentor. We tend to take on these roles as a matter of course, without thinking a lot about it. How many people sit down and ask themselves, “what do I understand the role of neighbor to be?”

Maybe this is because we’re pretty familiar with neighbors — we’ve had them all our lives. Even still, wouldn’t it be a good thing if we did ask ourselves if we and our neighbors saw neighborliness the same way? Maybe one of them would water your plants for you when you went on vacation — and you’d make sure your stereo wasn’t disturbing them.

Anyway, mentor is a role with which we have less experience, so let’s start with a more familiar role first — the role of boss, or supervisor. Take a minute to think about the bosses you’ve had — or yourself as a boss — and answer these questions.

(1) What are the ‘hats’ a supervisor wears in relation to his or her employees? In other words, what is a boss expected to do relative to subordinates? One example: a boss is expected to enforce company policy, what else? Write your responses below.

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(2) What ‘hats’ might you be expected to wear as a mentor?

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## Personal Reflection

Mentor

As you think back on your early years, do any adults stick out in your mind?  
Who were the adults who really made a positive difference in your life? Make a list of them below.

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Why do you think they took a special interest in you? What qualities did you have that made them want to spend time with you or encourage you?

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What was it that made each of them a great mentor? What did these important people have in common?

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What might these experiences teach you about how you want to be as a mentor? What lessons can you take away from these role models?

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# Our First E-mails: A Planning Worksheet

Mentor

Before you undertake anything significant in your life that's new, it can be helpful to take a few minutes to do some planning. Planning is just a way to get clear on what you hope to accomplish — the 'end' — and then to lay out some logical steps to help get you there — the 'means.' This worksheet walks you through some common sense steps to plan your first communication with your mentee. We've also created a companion version for your mentee. You may want to send this to him/her so you can both prepare for your first e-mails.

## Basic Background Information

(make sure you have all the information filled in below)

My mentee's name is: \_\_\_\_\_

Nickname (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Best time to e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

What would I like my mentee to call me? \_\_\_\_\_

Has my mentee been told who I am and that I will be e-mailing?

Yes  No  Don't know

If the answer is "no" or "don't know", please contact program staff and find out the status of this step. E-mailing before your mentee has heard about you can make the first message confusing.

## Thinking Through the E-mails

Typically, first e-mails allow two people to get to know a little bit about each other and gain a bit of comfort. These are tools if you need them, not a formula.

(1) What are some things I could tell my mentee about myself that would help us get to know each other a little bit? What about me and my life story might be interesting and relevant to this young person?

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## Our First E-mails: A Planning Worksheet (cont)

Mentor

(2) What are some questions I could ask my mentee to get to know him/her a little bit without prying? (Write some possible open-ended questions below. Note: these are questions that cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no.')

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(3) What do I want out of the mentoring relationship — what are my hopes?

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(4) How can I find out what my mentee hopes to get out of the relationship — what questions might I ask?

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# Our First E-mails: A Planning Worksheet

Mentee

Before you undertake anything significant in your life that's new, it can be helpful to take a few minutes to do some planning. Planning is just a way to get clear on what you hope to accomplish — the 'end' — and then to lay out some logical steps to help get you there — the 'means.' This worksheet walks you through some common sense steps to plan your first communication with your mentor. We've also created a companion version for your mentor. He or she already has it.

## Basic Background Information

(Make sure you fill in all the information below.)

My mentor's name is: \_\_\_\_\_

He/she likes to be called \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Best time to e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

What would I like my mentor to call me? \_\_\_\_\_

## Thinking Through the E-mails

Typically, first e-mails allow two people to get to know a little bit about each other and gain a bit of comfort. These are tools if you need them, not a formula.

(1) What are some things I could tell my mentor about myself that would help us get to know each other a little bit? What about me and my life story might be interesting to my mentor? What should he/she know about me in order to be a good mentor?

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(2) What are some questions I could ask my mentor to get to know him/her a little bit without prying? Write some possible open-ended questions below (Note: these are questions that your mentor cannot answer with a 'yes' or 'no.')

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**Our First Meeting: A Planning Worksheet (cont)**

**Mentee**

(3) Why do I want to have a mentor?

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(4) How can I find out why my mentor wants to mentor me? Write out some questions to ask.

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## Our Agreement

Mentor

Mentee

This agreement was developed by us — mentor and mentee — together. In it we are writing down some ground rules on how we want our mentoring relationship to work. By creating and signing this agreement we are both committing to do our best to honor these ground rules.

As we spend time together, we will both try to:

- E-mail at least once per \_\_\_\_\_, for at least \_\_\_\_\_ (amount of time)
- If we have a problem or something doesn't feel right to one of us, we'll talk about it — even if it isn't easy. We won't avoid facing a problem. We'll deal with it together.
- Respect privacy. This means that we won't go telling other people what our mentor/mentee told us. Exceptions would include when the law requires the mentor to report a dangerous situation, like abuse, or when the mentee feels unsafe and wants advice from another adult.
- Work on our shared goals for this mentorship, which include (list goals below):

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- Recognize that we are two different people, and that is a good thing. We can learn from each other if we respect and value each other and the ways we're alike and the ways we're different.
- Really listen to each other. Try to understand the other person's viewpoint.
- Make sure we get things done and have fun doing it. Remember to laugh.

# My Mentee's Personal Snapshot

Mentor

As of \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ (fill in date)

Every once in a while it's a good idea to step back from your day-to-day life and ask yourself — where am I? How am I doing? This activity helps your mentee to do just that — and to get feedback from you on how you see him or her too.

## Instructions

This is a two-part exercise — one for you, and one for your mentee. After each of you has taken your own worksheet, take time to complete it on your own. Once you both are done, talk about each question, sharing your answers with each other. Remember: the purpose of this is to help you get a real picture of where your mentee is — if you're not honest, s/he'll end up with a picture of someone else, and that won't help at all.

## Questions

Keeping in mind the goals your mentee has begun to explore, answer these questions as honestly as you can:

(1) What are my mentee's top 5 strengths as a person — the top 5 things about him/her I admire and think s/he should really be proud of?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

(2) What are his/her 5 weaknesses as a person — the 5 things s/he might want to consider working on or improving?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

(3) What are the top 5 opportunities available to my mentee at this moment — things s/he could do or act on or take advantage of that would help him/her develop and reach his/her potential? (These are opportunities in the environment — anything from trying out for a team to applying for a scholarship to learning how to design a web site.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## My Mentee's Personal Snapshot (cont)

Mentor

(4) What are the top 5 obstacles my mentee is facing right now — things “out there” in the real world that could keep him/her from achieving his/her dreams?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

You've just completed what is sometimes called a “SWOT Analysis” — a step in strategic planning, which (if you haven't participated in one before) is basically like the kind of planning you do with your mentee. To be useful you need to use your mentee's answers — and yours — to come up with a plan of action so you can make best use of his/her strengths and opportunities and overcome his/her weaknesses and threats. Use the question below to help start that planning process.

(5) What are the 5 most important things my mentee can do over the next 6 months to build on his/her strengths and overcome his/her challenges?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

# My Personal Snapshot

Mentee

As of \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ (fill in date)

Every once in a while it's a good idea to step back from your day-to-day life and ask yourself — where am I? How am I doing? This activity helps you to do just that — and to get feedback from your mentor on how he/she sees you too.

## Instructions

This is a two-part exercise — one for you and one for your mentor. After each of you has taken your own worksheet, take time to complete it on your own. Once you both are done, talk about each question, sharing your answers with each other. Remember: the purpose of this is to help you get a real picture of where you are — if you're not honest, you'll end up with a picture of someone else, not yourself, and that won't help you become who you want to be!

## Questions

Keeping in mind the goals you've begun to explore, answer these questions as honestly as you can:

(1) What are my top 5 strengths as a person — the top 5 things about myself I feel good about and am proud of?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

(2) What are my top 5 weaknesses as a person — the 5 things I most want to work on or improve about myself?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

(3) What are the top 5 opportunities available to me at this moment — things I could do or act on or take advantage of that would help me develop and reach my potential? (These are opportunities outside yourself — anything from trying out for a team to applying for a scholarship to learning how to design a website from an adult who has offered to teach you.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## My Personal Snapshot (cont)

Mentee

(4) What are the top 5 obstacles I'm facing right now — things "out there" in the real world that could keep me from achieving my dreams?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

You've just completed what business people call a "SWOT Analysis" — a step in a fancy-sounding process called strategic planning, which is basically like the kind of planning you do with your mentor. To be useful you need to use your answers — and your mentor's — to come up with a plan of action so you can make best use of your strengths and opportunities and overcome your weaknesses and threats. Use the question below to help start that planning process.

(5) What are the 5 most important things I can do over the next 6 months to build on my strengths and overcome my challenges?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

# Crafting a Personal Mission Statement

Mentee

A personal mission statement explains who you are and want to be, and what you stand for. You can use it to guide you when making choices and decisions, large and small, by asking yourself — ‘does it help me become who I want to be?’ A personal mission statement also helps you explain who you are to others.

A personal mission statement should answer 3 questions:

(1) What is my life about — what is my life’s purpose?

(2) What do I stand for — what are my values?

(3) What accomplishments am I working toward that will help me fulfill my life’s purpose in a manner consistent with my values?

## Step 1: Clarifying purpose and values

A. Write a list of at least 20 talents you have — pretend there is a big reward for coming up with each one.

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B. What excites you about your life? About the world? What angers you about your life? About the world?

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C. What would a really good day be like for you? Where would you be? What would you do? Imagine anything — it doesn’t have to be true.

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D. Imagine that today is your 30th birthday, and a reporter is writing a story about what you have done. What would you hope your friends, the people you work with, family members would say about you to this reporter? What difference would you hope you had made in their lives? How do you want to be remembered?

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E. Imagine yourself at 100 years old, surrounded by your loved ones — talking with them in a comfortable, relaxed setting. These people have gathered to learn from you and your wisdom. What would you tell them is important in life? What really matters, looking back on your life?

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**Step 2: Drafting a Mission Statement**

Look over what you've written during Step 1. Then look again at the 3 questions a mission statement should answer:

What is my life about — what is my life's purpose?

What do I stand for — what are my values?

What accomplishments am I working toward that will help me fulfill my life's purpose in a manner consistent with my values?

Go ahead and write a rough draft of your personal mission statement. It should be short but still tell who you are. When you read your personal mission statement, you should feel something, like "yes, that's who I really am!"

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Keep your draft personal mission statement with you and look at it several times during the day — see you how it makes you feel. You may want to talk about it with your mentor and see if you want to change it.

## Writing Goals and Objectives

Mentee

In order to create the kind of life you want, it helps to have a clear picture of where you're headed — your personal mission. It's equally important to make a plan on how to get there — how to make your dreams come true, one day at a time.

To help you do that it is a good idea to learn how to set goals and objectives for yourself. Your goals are the things you want to do over the next several years. Your objectives are the smaller steps you're going to take — tomorrow, next week, next month — to get there.

By writing down goals and objectives for yourself you are taking a big step toward making them happen. The next step will be to actually do these things — and keep a record. This is something you and your mentor can work on together over time.

### Writing Goals

Here are some of the kinds of goals a young person like you might be interested in setting.

- Art/Music/Creativity — What goals do I have for my creative side?
- Education — Where do I want to be in several years in terms of my education?
- Relationships — 3 years from now, what do I want my relationships to be like? Do I want more friends? More time with family? A better relationship with my dad? To be married? To be single?
- Spiritual — What kind of spiritual growth or involvement do I see for myself over the next few years?
- Sports/Fitness/Health — If I am successful what will my health and fitness be like several years down the road?
- Work — What direction do I want to go in in terms of my future career?

#### Example:

One young person might write:

In three years from today, I will be:

- In a 4-year college full-time, pursuing a nursing degree
- Living on my own — not married — and not fighting with my father
- Working part time as a nurse's aide or home health aide
- Taking piano lessons
- Working out — more fit
- Active in a church near my college — doing community service

What are your goals? Write out a goal for each area below that's important to you:

- Art/Music/Creativity \_\_\_\_\_
- Education \_\_\_\_\_
- Relationships \_\_\_\_\_
- Spiritual \_\_\_\_\_
- Sports/Fitness/Health \_\_\_\_\_
- Work \_\_\_\_\_

### Writing Objectives

Objectives are the smaller steps you take to make progress toward your goal. To be useful, objectives need to answer the question “what will change, by how much, by when?”

Usually objectives work best when they are written for the next few months to a year. It’s hard to know what will change beyond that time frame, so it’s hard to set realistic objectives several years out.

#### Example

Let’s say you’re a sophomore in high school with a goal of obtaining a BA. Some good objectives might be:

- Begin weekly study for the SAT by \_\_\_\_\_
- Talk with guidance counselor about requirements for admission and what I need to do by \_\_\_\_\_
- Improve GPA to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.
- Get involved in at least \_\_\_\_\_ (number) of extracurricular activities by \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

Take some time to write the goals you just developed in the space below, and then write several objectives for each goal. You can do this with your mentor or on your own and then go over them together.

Here’s a tip on how to test if your objectives are solid — ask yourself, are they “SMART?” Smart stands for:

**S**pecific — do I know precisely what has to happen?

**M**easurable — how will I know if I’ve achieved this objective?

**A**ttainable — is it realistic or do-able?

**R**esult-oriented — will it really move me toward my goal?

**T**ime-limited — does it have a due date?

If your goals are SMART, they’re solid — now go start doing them!

## Goals & Objectives

Mentee

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Objectives:

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Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Objectives:

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- 
- 

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Objectives:

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- 

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Objectives:

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Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Objectives:

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Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Objectives:

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Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Objectives:

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## Activity List

Mentor

### Instructions

Work through this checklist on your own and share your answers with your mentee next time you meet. Use this list to choose activities you might like to do and think about what purposes they might serve. Ask your mentee to do the same with his/her worksheet. Talk about the choices you each made and together compile a list of the activities you would like to pursue — balancing both working toward your mentee's goals and having fun.

Activity	Goal-Related?	Get To Know Each Other?	Just Interested?	Just For Fun?
Tackle some homework				
Talk about life				
Talk about my very first job				
Talk about planning a career				
Work on college applications together				
Explore financial-aid options				
Work on a resumé				
Talk about college				
Talk about dressing for success				
Do a pretend job interview				
Talk about how to look for a job				
Talk about where to find a job				
Talk about networking				

**Activity List (cont)**

Mentor

Activity	Goal-Related?	Get To Know Each Other?	Just Interested?	Just For Fun?
Talk about what it takes to get ahead				
Talk about health insurance				
Talk about taxes				
Talk about balancing work and life				
Talk about balancing a checkbook				
Talk about living within one's means				
Talk about credit cards				
Plan a week's worth of meals				
Analyze what we eat — our diets				
Write "thank-you" notes				
Talk about relationships				
Talk about personal values				
Talk about the future				

For more ideas about activities you can do with your mentee visit [www.mentoring.org/online\\_activities\\_ementor.adp](http://www.mentoring.org/online_activities_ementor.adp) .

## Activity List

Mentee

### Instructions

Work through this checklist on your own and share your answers with your mentor. Use this list to choose activities you might like to do and think about what purposes they might serve. Ask your mentor to do the same with his/her worksheet. Talk about the choices you each made and together compile a list of the activities you would like to pursue — balancing both working toward your goals and having fun.

Activity	Goal-Related?	Get To Know Each Other?	Just Interested?	Just For Fun?
Tackle some homework				
Talk about life				
Talk about my very first job				
Talk about planning a career				
Work on college applications together				
Explore financial-aid options				
Work on a resumé				
Talk about college				
Talk about dressing for success				
Do a pretend job interview				
Talk about how to look for a job				
Talk about where to find a job				
Talk about networking				

**Activity List (cont)**

Mentee

Activity	Goal-Related?	Get To Know Each Other?	Just Interested?	Just For Fun?
Talk about what it takes to get ahead				
Talk about health insurance				
Talk about taxes				
Talk about balancing work and life				
Talk about balancing a checkbook				
Talk about living within one's means				
Talk about credit cards				
Plan a week's worth of meals				
Analyze what we eat — our diets				
Write "thank-you" notes				
Talk about relationships				
Talk about personal values				
Talk about the future				

# Relationship Checkup

Mentor

## How Are We Doing?

### Mentor's Worksheet

Instructions: This worksheet is intended for you to complete and share with your mentee after you two have been working together for approximately 3-4 months. It's time to do a "checkup" if you have already done goal-setting, have gotten to know each other reasonably well and have done a variety of activities together. You can also use this worksheet when things get rocky and you feel some honest mutual feedback might help.

My mentee and I have been communicating for \_\_\_\_\_ (amount of time).

I feel we have established enough trust between us that we can work well together.

\_\_\_Yes                      \_\_\_No                      \_\_\_Not Sure

If he/she is upset or unhappy with me or our relationship, I'm confident my mentee would talk to me about what's going on.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

If I were upset or unhappy with my mentee or our relationship, I would feel comfortable talking with my mentee about what's going on.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

I feel we've made real headway in helping my mentee set goals and take steps to implement them.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Five things I feel are going great in our mentoring relationship are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

One thing I wish I could change about how we interact with each other is...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Relationship Checkup (cont)

Mentor

If I had to guess what my mentee likes best about how we work together it would be...

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Sometimes I think my mentee wishes I would...

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After you've completed this worksheet and your mentee has done the same, consider sharing your responses. Remember to remind your mentee — and yourself! — that no relationship is perfect and constructive feedback is healthy and can help strengthen your connection.

Compare your responses. Be sure to value both where you agree and disagree — it's all good information. After you're done sharing, talk about next steps — what you each can do to strengthen the "good stuff" and overcome any difficulties. Commit to a plan of action together.

# Relationship Checkup

Mentee

## How Are We Doing?

### Mentee's Worksheet

Instructions: This worksheet is intended for you to complete and share with your mentor after you two have been working together for approximately 3-4 months. It's time to do a "checkup" if you have already done goal-setting, have gotten to know each other reasonably well and have done a variety of activities together. You can also use this worksheet when things get rocky and you feel some honest mutual feedback might help.

My mentor and I have been communicating for \_\_\_\_\_ (amount of time).

I feel we have established enough trust between us that we can work well together.

\_\_\_Yes                      \_\_\_No                      \_\_\_Not Sure

If he/she is upset or unhappy with me or our relationship, I'm confident my mentor would talk to me about what's going on.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

If I were upset or unhappy with my mentor or our relationship, I would feel comfortable talking with my mentor about what's going on.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

I feel we've made real headway in helping me set goals and take steps to implement them.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Five things I feel are going great in our mentoring relationship are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

One thing I wish I could change about how we interact with each other is...

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## Relationship Checkup (cont)

Mentee

If I had to guess what my mentor likes best about how we work together it would be...

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Sometimes I think my mentor wishes I would...

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After you've completed this worksheet and your mentor has done the same, consider sharing your responses. Remember to remind your mentor — and yourself! — that no relationship is perfect and constructive feedback is healthy and can help strengthen your connection.

Compare your responses. Be sure to value both where you agree and disagree — it's all good information. After you're done sharing, talk about next steps — what you each can do to strengthen the "good stuff" and overcome any difficulties. Commit to a plan of action together.

# Giving and Receiving Feedback

Mentor

## Reflections

Think back to your childhood — who around you gave you feedback on how you were doing — in school, in the family, at sports? Write their names below.

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How did their feedback — whether it was called discipline, or advice, or coaching, or scolding — feel? Write down words that describe how you felt about the feedback you received from adults when you were a kid.

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Think back on bosses you've had in your career — what did they do to help you look at your performance and figure out how to improve it?

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Think of the person in your life who proved best at helping you see how you were doing and how you might improve without shaming you or making you feel defeated — write his or her name below, and then write how s/he did it. What do you remember about his/her approach?

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# Feedback Worksheet

Mentor

Step 1: Identify the behavior you want to give feedback on.

I would like to give my mentee some constructive feedback on \_\_\_\_\_

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Describe the focus of your feedback in terms of behavior.

I've noticed that \_\_\_\_\_

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Step 2: Describe the effect of the behavior

When you say \_\_\_\_\_, I \_\_\_\_\_

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Step 3: Describe the change in behavior you're recommending.

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Doublecheck your statements to make sure you are not using judgmental language or making generalizations. Then try it — keeping the following tips in mind.

- Do not attempt to give feedback in the heat of the moment if you are upset or angry — wait until you have both calmed down.
- Give your mentee a “heads up” that you want to give him/her some feedback so he/she is prepared to listen.
- Remember to listen and be empathetic — but don't be derailed by sidetracks, like apologies or excuses.
- Get feedback on your feedback! Ask your mentee how he/she feels about the experience — what worked, what you could do better.

# Problem-Solving Worksheet

Mentee

Mentor

## Step 1: Define the problem

What is the problem you want to work on? Write it down as you define it right now.

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Ask yourself: Why is this a problem? Is this the real problem, or a symptom? Is your problem really a proposed solution to the real problem? Write your thoughts on those questions.

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Rewrite your problem statement.

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## Step 2: Define success in solving the problem

If you were to succeed in solving the problem you've just identified, what would success look like? Describe what would happen if you were successful.

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## Step 3: Generate alternatives

What are some ways you could solve your problem and achieve the success you've just described? Come up with a list of choices — don't edit yourself, just think of as many as you can (you'll pick the best ones in a minute).

• _____	• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____	• _____

Which of these approaches do you like best? Pick the 3-5 you like most and circle them.

## Problem-Solving Worksheet (cont)

Mentee

Mentor

### Step 4: Evaluate alternatives

It's time to pick "Plan A" and a backup "Plan B" (in case Plan A falls through) for solving your problem. Here are some things to consider in picking from your list of choices.

- How much time will this take?
- How much money?
- Are there any downsides?
- Is there any positive "multiplier effect" — that is, will this option yield other benefits beyond solving this problem?
- What would I rather do?

Once you've considered these questions, write the letter "A" next to your top choice, the letter "B" next to your next-best choice.

### Step 5: Agree on action

If you want to follow through on this approach to solving your problem, it's important to decide what you need to do and when. Do that below with your mentor.

My plan "A" is to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

To accomplish this, I will:

Task	Who	By When

## Problem-Solving Worksheet (cont)

Mentee

Mentor

### Step 6: Schedule follow-up

Set a time to check back in with each other on how the problem solving is going — or how it went, if it's a real short-term action plan.

We will check in on progress on \_\_\_\_\_ date.

Questions to discuss:

What worked and didn't work in trying to solve this problem?

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What you would do about the problem if it happened again, with the benefit of hindsight?

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Adapted from an exercise included in *Using a Personal Mission Statement to Chart Your Career Course*, by Katharine Hansen found on the Quintessential Careers website [www.quintcareers.com](http://www.quintcareers.com)