

WHAT IS A MENTOR? WHERE CAN YOU FIND A MENTOR? HOW CAN YOU USE OR BE A MENTOR?

CHI OMEGA WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT BOBBIE GLEITER SHARES HER

Seven lessons in mentoring

1 “SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL WOMEN in this company don’t wear high heels,” said my mentor as I clicked past his desk in my four-inch heels. This was a helpful comment, as I was the only woman in the office. An astute observer and excellent communicator, he is my informal mentor. Informal, in this case, means not assigned by my company, which felt that its professionals could fend for themselves.

MENTORING IS SUCCESSFUL ONLY WITH PEOPLE YOU RESPECT AND LIKE.

2 FORMAL MENTORING PROGRAMS appear to be a current fad in corporate America. Research has shown that most corporate mentoring programs are not effective and could be construed to be a probationary period. However, it does provide a way to get you acclimated to the company and provide an understanding of the corporate culture so that you don’t violate the unwritten rules. **DON’T LIMIT YOURSELF TO FORMAL MENTORING PROGRAMS.**

3 MENTORING IS A COMPLEX AND OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD TOPIC generally associated with the workplace and thought to be initiated by others. Truth be known, mentoring is self-directed and is applicable to all facets of your life. Mentoring allows the more experienced person to share his/her knowledge and background. A mentor can observe you and others in an objective way, and help you see yourself the way others see you—a subtle socialization takes place. **MENTORING WORKS BEST WHEN YOU MIX AND MATCH.**

4 OFTEN THERE IS CONFUSION BETWEEN NETWORKING AND MENTORING—not realizing their differing goals. Networking’s goal is to enlarge one’s contact base whereas mentoring’s goal is establishing one-on-one relationships as sounding boards for various needs. Any contact can result in a mentoring relationship if the intangibles are right.

Our ultimate mentors are assigned when we are born: our parents. Chi Omegas are given a penultimate opportunity for mentoring with our Sisters—from establishing values and sharing opinions and thoughts on jobs, health issues and child raising, to crying on each others’ shoulders. **MENTORING IS NOT ONLY ABOUT THE WORKPLACE.**

5 CHI OMEGA PROVIDES THE SAFEST GROUND for developing mentoring relationships from college through our alumnae years. I have been blessed for many years with a Chi

Omega Sister I both respect and admire as a mentor. Interestingly, Arden does not even suspect that I consider her a mentor and yet I continually draw upon her knowledge and strength.

MENTORING CANNOT BE FORCED BECAUSE IT IS A RELATIONSHIP, POSSIBLY UNSPOKEN IN MANY INSTANCES.

6 A GOOD MENTOR will give you a nudge in the right direction by saying the right words at the right time, but won’t do all the work for you. Watch out for controlling people: Don’t confuse “control” with “mentoring.” One great way to be a mentor is to simply listen.

MENTORING IS ONLY AS GOOD AS WHAT YOU DECIDE TO INTERNALIZE.

7 KEEP A CLEAR, POSITIVE COMMUNICATION LINK for both the sender and the receiver—the receiver must choose to receive. Turning the tables, mentors can learn fresh perspectives from their mentees as in the case of “reverse mentoring” at Proctor & Gamble where senior executives were tutored about issues facing their women subordinates.

MENTORING IS A TWO-WAY STREET.

Final thoughts on mentoring:

- Think of mentoring not as advice but as a catalyst making your thought processes sharper and enriched with previously unthought-of options.
- Value the lessons learned from seasoned and wiser mentors.
- Peers with differing perspectives make great mentors.
- Create a “Board” of multiple mentors.
- *Pass it on!*



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