



MENTORING MYTHS AND TRUTHS BROUGHT TO YOU BY WOMEN'SVISION FOUNDATION

Mentors Walk is about possibilities, making choices and planning for the future. Women'sVision Foundation hopes that the 5th Annual Mentors Walk provided you with new insight, information and inspiration. Consider these common mentoring myths, and use them to find the right mentoring relationship for your career needs and goals!

Myth #1: Mentoring is a lot of work and takes too much effort ...

Truth: Mentoring will require some additional time and effort on your part; however, with good time management skills the impact should be minimal and the pay-off in terms of career development and growth is well worth it! In a recent study by Catalyst, the top three missed career strategies of young professionals were wishing that they had:

- Sought out mentoring relationships with higher-level managers
- Participated in informal networks within their organization
- Made sure they got credit for their work

Myth #2: You should only have one mentor ...

Truth: Don't limit your access to information and advice! Mentor/mentee conversations are a great place to explore new ideas in a safe and confidential space. This is particularly important in environments that may be less open or transparent. Where better to test out new ideas, or talk about concerns or fears without risk of retribution? The relationships can also be an incubator for creativity and development that spills over into the job for both mentor and mentee. (*Catalyst*)

Myth #3: The mentor should have the same career interest as the mentee ...

Truth: Not necessarily – a good mentor is the one you can relate to in a number of ways. You will choose your mentor based on how they achieved their accomplishments and overcame obstacles, and the connections they have. Choose a mentor who matches your development needs. Diversity in interests and knowledge might lend a different and useful perspective to your skill set.

Myth #4: Good mentors are hard to find ...

Truth: Only if you don't look! Women's Vision Foundation is a great resource for emerging leaders and senior executives alike. Because of the variety of events and programs offered by the Foundation, and its wonderful community of professional women and men, you have a wealth of opportunities to make connections and build mentoring relationships.

Myth #5: Formal mentoring programs never work ...

Truth: Communication and feedback with colleagues, peers and supervisors plays a considerable role in how people learn unwritten rules, so it should come as no surprise that mentoring and networking are essential for gathering information. Smart organizations know that mentoring and networking programs improve communication, facilitate knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer, and foster strong working relationships and inclusive cultures, thereby adding to business success. (*Catalyst*)

Myth #6: Do good work and a mentor will find you ...

Truth: It's competitive out there! Research has clearly established that talent with decreased access to influential mentors – often fall behind those with more access. Leaders are a wellspring of sage advice and introductions to influential others. So, it's up to you to be proactive and seek out a leader or colleague whom you admire for their knowledge, initiatives or best practices. (*Catalyst*)

Myth #7: Mentors must be older and they should be the same gender ...

Truth: Don't overlook colleagues in your organization or across industries for mentoring opportunities – it happens at every level in every career stage. The more diverse your mentoring network, the better! Men and women have different, but complementary approaches to business. As women assume more leadership roles within their corporations, understanding those differences will be important for women and men to lead together successfully.

Myth #8: Mentors should also be friends ...

Truth: While friends make good confidants, their objectivity may be tested when it comes to giving the right advice for your career. The best mentoring relationships are those when formal goals are outlined in advance and tracked, and mentors match your skill and development needs. Keep your friends, but build your career development network too!

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