



## Qualities of Top Mentors

The number of mentoring relationships for both formal and informal interaction has grown dramatically in recent years to help individuals succeed in their careers. The popularity of mentors in career related situations has resulted in a large part by the compelling testimonials given by practitioners, professors, and students who have benefited from the positive influence offered by a more experience individual who has helped them learn how to succeed in academic and industry career situations.

Mentoring comes from the Greek word meaning “enduring” and is usually defined as a sustained relationship between a young professionals or student with an experience adult. In this relationship, through continued involvement, the adult offers support, guidance, and assistance another person goes through a difficult period, faces new career challenges, or works to correct earlier problems in the field.

There are commonly two types of mentoring relationships. The first is the natural mentoring that occurs informally through friendship, collegiality, teaching, and counseling situations that arise in an academic or workplace setting. In contrast, a planned mentoring relationship occurs in structured programs in which mentors and participants are selected and matched through formal processes. In either informal or formal mentoring programs there are several important qualities for people who make good mentors.

### Seven Qualities of Effective Mentors Include:

1. **A Desire To Help or Serve Others:** Individuals must be interested and willing to help others.
2. **Have a Good Reputation:** Individuals must have a good reputation in the field.
3. **Have Time and Energy:** Individuals should have the time and mental energy to devote to the relationship.
4. **Have Expertise in the Field:** People who make good mentors are extremely knowledgeable in their area of the field, and usually referred to by others as experts.
5. **Maintain Expertise:** In order to be good mentors, in addition to their expertise in the field, they must have demonstrated a continued focus on maintaining up-to-date knowledge and/or skills in the field.
6. **Possess Mentoring Skills:** Individuals make great mentors who have previously both developed and demonstrated in the past effective coaching, counseling, and teaching skills.
7. **Have Had Positive Experiences with Mentors:** Individuals are more likely to be good mentors if they have had positive formal or informal experiences with a mentor themselves than people who have never had a good mentoring relationship in their career.