



The Top 10 Qualities of an Inspiring Mentor Relationship

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Mentors hold and create a space of possibility. Mentors help us to evolve ourselves as human beings so that we may move into that possibility.

- 1. Mutual Respect** The mentor and the learner share a deep respect for the common pursuit as well as for the underlying values driving the pursuit. It is the shared respect that connects and provides the foundation for the work the mentor and the learner will do together.
- 2. Trust** When a deep level of trust exists between the mentor and the learner, the individual is able to take great risks—risks they might not have taken without the trust. The mutual trust between mentor and learner provides a safe space for the latter to step out in faith and achieve what might appear difficult, impossible, or overwhelming. The trust the mentor provides as part of the framework is fundamental for the learning experience to occur.
- 3. Mentor as a Conduit** A mentor provides access to learning and growth. It is through the mentor relationship that deep learning occurs. The mentor provides a framework for exploration by creating a context that provides support, encouragement, and growth.
- 4. Space, learning and integration** A mentor creates a space for listening and for helping the person to integrate the learning into their lives. A mentor becomes like an "inner voice"—we borrow the mentor for this guiding voice while we search to find and express our own voice.
- 5. Safe Space** Unconditional acceptance is a key ingredient for establishing trust and a safe space. When we experience unconditional acceptance and a sense of belonging, we are able to more clearly reveal and be ourselves. Accepting others for who they are, without apology or explanation, is therefore an essential aspect of mentoring. With total acceptance, one feels trusted and known, and is able to take great risks. In a safe space, nothing is taboo.

6. Vision A mentor holds a vision of what's possible, and leads the way to the vision. A mentor believes in the vision as much as the learner does.

7. Shared Experience A mentor relationship is rich with learning through shared experiences. The learning's not just academic and has a vibrancy and depth that goes beyond reflective discussion. The mentor has discussions in "real time"--the interaction and the learnings aren't just academic. They are deep and real.

8. Challenge The mentor challenges and stretches the person, and provides inspiration for the person to take on even greater challenges. A mentor stretches a person from within.

9. Inspiration A mentor "walks the talk" and provides inspiration through their very being. A mentor is someone who we aspire to become; the mentor has qualities/skills we want for ourselves. The mentor helps us to see possibility by bringing to life the qualities we aspire for ourselves.

10. Sage Advice A mentor will offer sage advice, will show the learner "the ropes" and will invest time and energy in the development of the individual. The more open the learner is to accessing this wisdom, the more profound the discoveries will be!