

How to be a Good Mentor

Not every Furman graduate or parent will be a good mentor. Below are some traits that are essential in mentors:

- *Good listeners.* They take time to understand what is going on with their mentees before they offer advice and information.
- *Self-aware.* They know what they can and cannot offer, and they note how their advice is being received by those they mentor.
- *Flexible.* They are willing to adjust to mentees' needs.
- *Good role models.* They demonstrate effective academic practices.
- *Transparent.* They make their thinking explicit so mentees understand why they do what they do.
- *Positive guides.* They recognize and acknowledge the progress mentees make; they also provide constructive criticism and helpful advice. They strike the right balance between guidance, constructive criticism, and praise.
- *Facilitators.* They provide resources and help mentees connect to others who share their interests and can help them.
- *People of integrity.* They are honest in what they say and do and work for the good of those they mentor; they do not take advantage of the mentoring situation.
- *Accessible.* They are available to the individual being mentored.

*Based on material provided at an April 2010 mentoring workshop at UNC by Deborah DeZure, Assistant Provost for Faculty and Organizational Development, Michigan State University. Material adapted from J. Nakamura, D. Sheronoff, and C. Hooker (2009). *Good Mentoring: Fostering Excellent Practice in Higher Education*.

Good mentors:

- Know mentees by listening, caring, communicating openly, and offering constructive feedback
- Expect Excellence – communicate expectations for excellence, model confidence, professionalism
- Affirm, Affirm, Affirm – affirm them as people, professionals, articulate the dream and affirm the dream is possible
- Encourage and Support –friendly, open, approachable, consistently encouraging
- Offer counsel in difficult times - active listening, accurate understanding of another's feelings, assistance in goal setting
- Stimulate growth with challenging assignments
- Nurture Creativity – encourage risks, temper idealism with wisdom of experience
- Provide correction – even when painful (along with a healthy dose of encouragement)
- Self-disclose when appropriate – success does not come without struggles. Practice humility. It is inappropriate when self-disclosure is done for the gratification of the mentor
- Teach faceting – develop a range of interests and skills, ask about life interests and involvements
- Are an intentional model – model ethical behavior and professional responsibility
- Display dependability – consistency and reliability, attend all meetings, be emotionally consistent

*Johnson, W. B., & Ridley, C. R. (2004) *The Elements of Mentoring*. Palgrave Macmillan.