

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR MENTEE

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# OUTLINE

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A scenic landscape of a mountain valley. In the foreground, a river flows through a dense forest of evergreen trees. The middle ground shows rolling hills and valleys covered in more forest. In the background, majestic mountains rise, some with patches of snow or light-colored rock. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is bright and clear.

**If I have seen further than others,  
it is by standing upon the  
shoulders of giants.**

Isaac Newton

# MENTORING

- Process of informal or formal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and psychological support relevant to recipient's work, career or professional development during a sustained period of time

# MENTORSHIP

- Relationship in which a more knowledgeable and more experience person guides and supports an individual with less experience and knowledge to grow professionally and personally in his/her career

# MENTEE

- Person who has the desire to gain from someone else's experience through a period of guidance and support
- Person who has identified a specific personal or professional goal and believes that guidance and support of a mentor, to whom s/he is accountable, can help achieve her/his goal

# Mentor and Mentee



# MENTOR

- Person who offers knowledge, insight, perspective, or wisdom helpful to another person in a relationship which goes beyond duty or obligation
- “ A mentor is someone who sees more talent and ability within you than you see in yourself, and helps bring it out.”-Bob Proctor
- A mentor is a person or friend who guides a less experienced person by building trust and modelling positive behaviours



# Mentor

- A mentor is someone who has been there, done that, learned from experience and is willing to share
- The emphasis is always on enabling and empowering the person to do things for themselves

# PURPOSE OF MENTORING

- The purpose of mentoring is to help the mentee grow as a person and become the best version of his/herself(mentee)
- This involves :
  - helping the mentee achieve his or her personal and career goals,
  - introducing new ways of thinking,
  - challenging limiting assumptions,
  - sharing valuable lessons and much more

## AREAS TO SEEK FOR UNDERSTANDING

- If you want to succeed as a mentor, first seek to understand yourself and others

# Understanding your mentee

- Getting to understand your mentee is the most important step in the mentoring relationship
- If the personal relationship aren't there first, people won't travel far together
- Mentoring is built on trust and shared value

# Understanding your mentee



# Understanding Goals of Mentee

- Understand each mentee's dreams, desires, aspirations and goals
- Know what is important to them and why
- You can help them focus on area most meaningful and that can drive the most impact
- Ignore what a man desires and you ignore the very source of his power
- Provide needed support, exposure, opportunity and connections to achieve such dreams

# Understand Mentee's personality

- The best mentor understand the personality of their mentee
- By reflecting on the mentee and listen to what motivates them
- Know their strength and weakness, their temperament
- Know those who respond well to challenge and those that needs to be nurtured.
- One will need a game plan drawn for him, the other will be more passionate drawing the game plan

# Understand their learning styles

- There are various learning styles and we must understand the most effective learning style of our mentee for effective mentoring
- Some learn by reading, listening, audio visual, doing, watching
- Some learn fast while some takes sometime to learn
- Some needs motivation while some are self motivated



# Understand the mentee's background

- Allow the mentee to tell his/ her story, where he/she is coming from
- Challenges in the past
- Family and its peculiarity
- Fears and concerns

Understand the mentee's growth stage

- Assess Mentee's level of growth and where he/she is in the growth curve
- This will enable the mentor to identify gaps and know how to develop growth plans

Understand and clearly define each others role

- Success depends on a clear understanding of the role of the mentor and mentee by both parties
- Expectations and terms of relationship should be clearly defined at the beginning
- Boundaries to be set
- Process of interaction

# Expected support from mentor to Mentee

- Provide optimal instructions, suggestions, explanations, guidance and advice
- Analyse mentee's skills and provide constructive feedback
- Provide stable support for Mentee's development
- Realistic options for Mentee's career development
- Provide new perspectives on Mentee's questions and doubt

# Roles and Responsibilities of Mentee 1

- Life long learner- Mentee takes full advantage of opportunities to learn. Desire to acquire and share knowledge
- Mentee identifies the skills, knowledge and goals that s/he wants to achieve and communicate to his /her mentor

## Roles and Responsibilities of Mentee 2

- Mentee works with the mentor to identify resources that is needed to achieve his/her goal
- Have to be reachable and should communicate clearly
- Should expect support and not miracle

# Mentorship Malpractice

- The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves- **Steven Spielberg**
- Small intermittent lapses are natural when managing various responsibilities, mentor behaviour that puts a mentee's professional and career growth at risk crosses a threshold we term mentorship malpractice

# Active Mentorship Malpractice

- Characterized by dysfunctional behaviour that is often blatant and easy to spot.
- Three classic phenotypes exists:
  1. The HIJACKER
  2. The EXPLOITER
  3. The POSSESSOR



# THE HIJACKER

- Hijackers are bullies who take hostage a mentee's ideas, projects, or grants, labelling them as his or hers for self gain
- This type of malpractice occurs in a setting of career challenges such as shortage of funds, publications or intellectual creativity
- Like a Stockholm syndrome variant, the mentee will ingly gives up lead position on manuscripts or grants, mistakingly expecting that the success of the mentor will ultimately cascade to him or her

# THE EXPLOITER

- This mentors torpedoed mentees success by saddling them with low-yield activities. Typified by self serving advice
- They commandeer mentees by thrusting their scientific agenda and non academic responsibilities on them justifying such behaviour as “The price of mentorship”
- They may ask mentee to supervise project staff, or manage project central to the mentor and have no interest in cultivating mentees

# The Possessor

- Their trademark is domination of mentee
- They are insecure and view seeking assistance from others as a threat to their position
- Such anxieties lead possessors to take passive-aggressive approach to collaboration, disparaging potential co-mentors or demeaning mentee for reaching out to others
- Mentees in such relationship become isolated from social and collegial interactions. They are lured into feeling special by the attention of the possessor who does so only to fulfil his or her own needs

# Passive Mentorship Malpractice

- Passive mentorship Malpractice is insidious and shares inaction by the mentor across three distinct subtypes.
  1. The Bottlenecks
  2. The country clubber
  3. The world Traveller

# The bottleneck

- The underlying pathology is internal preoccupation coupled with limited bandwidth or interest to support mentee growth
- Symptoms and signs is that they are often busy with own tasks or projects; limited time to meet face-to-face, inadequate response to requests for help; delays in feedback.
- They insist on signing off on a work product, handcuffing mentee to their timeline
- Mentees often pay the price in diminished academic and career output when working with bottlenecks

# The world Traveller

- The underlying pathology is that academic success fuels personal ambitions, travel requirements, desire for fame and recognition
- They are highly sought-after for speaking engagements, limited face to face time due to physical unavailability
- The more successful a mentor becomes, the more at risk of developing this form of malpractice
- This people take a laissez-faire approach leaving mentee effectively mentorless

# The country clubber

- The underlying pathology is conflict- avoidant personality, needs to be liked by colleagues: values social order more than mentee's growth.
- Evades conflict regardless of need, avoids engaging in difficult but necessary conversations on behalf of the mentees such as negotiations regarding protected time, authorship positions, or research support
- They view mentorship as a ticket to popularity, with the number of mentees serving to promote social capital rather than responsibility
- Mentees in this relationship are unsupported and also finds it difficult to assert themselves

# Preventing Mentorship Malpractice

- Don't be complicit
- Set boundaries and communicate needs
- Establish a mentorship team
- Know when to walk away



# CONCLUSION

- Mentorship can be mutually fulfilling and beneficial to both mentor and mentee if there is understanding
- For any course to be sustainable mentoring is essential
- We must make every effort to avoid mentorship malpractice to achieve mutual beneficial and productive mentoring process
- Mutual respect and open communication is critical to mentor mentee relationship
- To sustain and improve the quality of training and research mentoring is cardinal

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THANK YOU

FOR YOUR

TIME AND ATTENTION