



CLC & Capstone

By this point in Career Life Connections, you have hopefully established a relationship with a professional who can serve as your **mentor** as you design and assemble your **capstone project**. If by some chance you are experiencing trouble finding a mentor, please make sure to talk to your teacher right away for help!

There are so many benefits to being in a mentoring relationship, as you will find out over the course of this year. Having a professional mentor will help you develop skills and confidence, add to your professional network, and allow for continuous feedback on both your capstone, and your career-life decisions. Mentors will provide you with an impartial perspective that you may not have normally considered.

As you develop your mentoring relationship, you will likely not be aware of your evolution towards becoming a mentor yourself. Everybody can, will, and should be a mentor at some point in their life. You may not be ready right now, but as you develop your strengths and knowledge in what you can share, you will be ready. What you learn through the relationship with your mentor will help you build a stronger relationship with your own mentee. After all, 90% of people who are mentored when they are young turn around and become a mentor themselves.

In the article "How To Be a Great Mentor" on [Forbes.com \(Links to an external site.\)](#), David Parnell and Ryan Kahn offer some great suggestions about how to become a powerful mentor:

- **Always play both roles.** Ideally, one would never have to make the transition from mentee to mentor - we should all be learning from others (playing the mentee role) and teaching others (being the mentor).
- **Be committed.** Being a mentor is a commitment. If you're offering to help someone, you need to follow through with that promise by being there for them when needed.
- **Know that your mentee can be anyone, anywhere.** Mentoring needn't follow the traditional 'older-younger' prescription anymore. It can be peer-to-peer across functions or industries - it's about helping each person learn and grow. As a mentor, you're someone who knows something your mentee doesn't, and you care enough to help them learn and succeed.
- **Listen.** One of your jobs as a mentor is to provide advice and encouragement, but in order to do so, you need to make the time to listen and understand the situation. Listening to a mentee vent and sort their way through confusion is often enough to get them through the day.
- **Have your own mentor(s) and network.** Today, the most successful people build relationships and gather intelligence from a wide variety of experts in all industries and age brackets. People who are insular—who always return to the same small circle for advice and support—become closed off from opportunities.
- **Be open-minded and compassionate.** If you've ever argued with someone, you know that they will never see your side until they're convinced that you've seen theirs. In order to provide valuable guidance and advice that is well received, it is necessary to first

understand the mentee's needs, wants, and feelings. This can only come in the form of deep empathy.

- **Have patience.** Mentoring can be a satisfying, but also a long-term and trying endeavor. While the mentee needs and wants direction, often times this requires a bit of constructive criticism, which can be hard to take. It is vital that a mentor be extremely patient.
- **Be a role model.** As a mentor, your actions are being evaluated, so you must set the bar for yourself just as high, or higher, than you'd expect from your mentee. Your goal is to not only provide direction and advice, but to get your mentee to act upon them.
- **Care about the relationship.** Invest yourself in your mentee and you'll get so much more out of the experience.