

The Importance of Mentor

Julie Ann Freischlag, MD

Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions

A MENTOR is a person, a guide, or a teacher - the keeper of selective wisdoms.

The MENTOR'S SPIRIT is the "almost anything" that deepens our sense of the sacred or our understanding or transmits a kind of gladness about life itself.

Relationships between mentors and their trainees: prepare the next generation of science professionals.

Both the mentor and the trainee have responsibilities for the success of the process.

The Good Mentor (James B. Rowley)

- 1. The good mentor is committed to the role of mentoring.**
- 2. The good mentor is accepting of the beginning teacher.**
- 3. The good mentor is skilled at providing instructional support.**
- 4. The good mentor is effective in different interpersonal contexts.**
- 5. The good mentor is a model of continuous learning.**
- 6. The good mentor communicates hope and optimism.**

Truly Complete Mentor

Serves as an advisor/guide, **developer of talent/coach**, opener of doors/advocate, **role model**, interpreter of organizational or professional rules, **protector**, rule setter/boss and carries on all of these functions on a long term basis

W. Silen, MD

Dean for Faculty Development and Diversity/Harvard

Medical School, 1998

Responsibilities of Mentors

1. Should be part of the definition of a scientist
2. Be available
3. Allow for differences in personalities
4. **Let trainees make their own decisions**
5. Teach by words and example
6. Keep learning about effective mentoring

How to Mentor Students

1. Affirm being a scientist and its further potential
2. Be genuine and emotionally available to enter into a dialogue about being a scientist
3. Set clear boundaries - list the good and bad of the specialty/subject
4. Enlist others with whom the student can talk for specific reasons - (specialty, gender, race, location, family issues, background, etc.)
5. Share the values and virtues of your specialty (the good, the bad and the ugly)
6. Stabilize the students' doubts and uncertainties- it's OK not to know
7. Be available more than once- in person, email, by phone.
8. Congratulate them on a good job of figuring it out.