



Questions for Mentors to Ask Mentees

Now it is time to flip the script! Mentors, here are some questions you can ask your mentee on both the personal and professional to better understand him/her and why s/he is interested in this mentoring partnership.

1. What was your favorite gift you received from the Tooth Fairy?
2. If you could learn to play any instrument, what would it be?
3. Who is your favorite person (friend, family member, etc.)?
4. What is something silly that made you angry as a kid?
5. What superhero do you resonate with the most? Why?
6. If you could have the life of any famous artist or musician (dead or living), whose would you choose?

Next, we will dig into the professional side of things a bit more.

1. Who do you talk with about the struggles and successes of your job?
2. In your current role, have you ever thought about quitting? Why?
3. Do you feel you are a part of a community, either in or outside of work?
Who makes up that community and how do you support one another?
4. If you could learn any new professional skill (it does not have to be related to your current role or industry), what would it be?
5. Where do you ultimately want to end up in your career (role, title, income, etc.)?

7 questions to ask a mentee.

1. What are your short-term goals?

First things first: You need to know what your mentee hopes to accomplish soon. Why did she seek out your support in the first place? What does she hope to do soon — say within the next few months or year? This will help you set the agenda and help you both make the best use of your time together.

2. What are your long-term goals?

It is also important to understand where your mentee hopes to be in the next, say, five to 10 years. Your advice will be quite different for someone who hopes to move up the ranks at her current place of work than it will be for someone who wants to branch out and start her own business, after all.

Moreover, many industries are continually evolving and changing. Some goals may no longer be applicable in the next few years, so knowing your mentee's long-term aspirations can allow you both to work on alternative paths and steps in case her original plan is no longer feasible down the road.

3. What is working in your career?

This question multifold. You want to know:

- What she is doing to make strides in her career
- What circumstances are going well for her (say she just got praise for project or received a promotion)
- Her innate and learned skills and talents

This can give you a sense of her current motivation and ambition, as well as her confidence. If your mentee were to say that nothing is going well, for example, you would know that you need to work on developing strategies for boosting her self-esteem and outlook on her career.

4. What is not working?

Understanding the challenges your mentee is facing is also important for your work together. Perhaps they are self-imposed, in which case you will need to develop strategies for overcoming them together. Or maybe other people or circumstances are getting in the way of her success. If that is the case, then part of your guidance should cover methods of getting around roadblocks and dealing with work struggles head-on.

5. What ideas have you developed to help you overcome challenges and meet your goals?

You are not there to solve problems for your mentee. Rather, you are someone who can offer advice and support for overcoming them. That means she needs to put in the work, too. She should have come up with some ideas for dealing with the obstacles standing in her way. If she's just spinning in circles and hasn't taken the time to work on solutions, it could be a sign that she's helpless or lazy — in which case, you have deeper issues that you need to address.

Of course, if she has already come up with some ideas, you can assess their feasibility and work on a plan together, as well as develop new thoughts.

6. What areas do you feel comfortable addressing on your own and what areas require more support?

You could very well start off your first [mentoring session](#) thinking your mentee wants one thing out of the relationship and find that she already has that under control and really needs help with something else entirely. It is important to establish which areas require further guidance and which ones she feels comfortable handling independently. After all, time is precious, and you do not want to waste it on helping her with something she does not need.

7. How can I help you achieve your goals?

This is really the most important question, and it goes hand in hand with #6. Your mentee's response will define the entire course of your mentoring relationship.

It is okay if your mentee does not have an exact picture of how you will help her achieve her goals. Still, she should have some thoughts on it. There should be some key areas she wants to address, and she should have taken the time to consider what you can work on together and how you can do it. Moreover, she must be realistic in her expectations. For example, you can't get her that raise she's coveting, but you might be able offer suggestions about [negotiating](#) effectively. Is her self-esteem holding her back in her career? You are not going to heap praise on her (although some words of encouragement will probably help some), but you can give her some strategies on coping with setbacks and being more confident at work.

The mentoring relationship can be a powerful thing for both the mentee and the mentor, but you both need to work on building it together. Of course, your mentee will need to put in plenty of hard work toward the end goal of, well, achieving her professional goals. But she may very well look to you to set the tone for your meetings.

These questions can help you kick off the relationship on the right foot, giving you both a starting point. You will learn about your mentee and what she wants out of both your time together and her career in general and allow you to set a clear agenda. This will ultimately lead to more trust and a stronger bond between you.

Mentor and Mentee Questions and Tips

Questions and suggestions for mentees to share with their mentors

- Check-in time. Discuss the goals you agreed upon at the outset of the program. Are you on track or are any adjustments necessary?
- From your perspective, how is this mentorship going? What am I doing well and what can I be doing better?
- If you are a sophomore or junior, discuss potential classes to consider for the upcoming semester.
- If your mentor put themselves in your position as a soon-to-be Marquette graduate, what three objectives would they consider when seeking a full-time opportunity?
- What did your mentor want to do after graduation and how did it unfold? What reinforced or changed their plans?
- If your mentor were not in the career that they are currently, what would they be doing?
- Who were your mentor's favorite Marquette professors? Why?
- If your mentor could have done anything differently at Marquette with respect to career preparation, what would it have been?
- Did your mentor attend graduate school? Why or why not? What advice can they offer you?
- What were the first five years following graduation like for your mentor? Did they move to a different area or change jobs, have a new group of friends, or begin, continue, or end a serious relationship? Volunteer? Did those years unfold as they anticipated? What advice can they offer for your post-Marquette journey?
- In your mentor's opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of accepting your first job after graduation in your hometown?
- How does your mentor instill confidence and support in a new employee?
- Follow up on advice and suggestions that your mentor provides.
- Does your mentor have any career-related resolutions for 2018? If so, how do they plan to accomplish them?
- What professional development books does your mentor recommend?
- What has been the biggest professional challenge your mentor has faced? How was it addressed, what was the outcome and what was learned? Looking back, would they have done anything differently?
- Work/life balance is important. What does your mentor enjoy doing during non-work hours? How did they get interested in those activities and what has it taught them?
- What is on your mentor's bucket list?
- What types of skills does your mentor look for in a potential hire?
- Does your mentor have a mentor? If so, what have they learned from them?
- How does your mentor encourage innovation at your workplace?

- What is the best job your mentor has ever had? Why?
- What is the worst job your mentor has ever had? What did it teach them?
- Who was your mentor's best boss? Why?
- Who was your mentor's worst boss and what did they learn from them?
- In your mentor's opinion, why is it important to leave a former employer in good standing?
- Google a topic which you may have discussed recently with your mentor to continue the dialogue. What are others saying? Do they differ from what you discussed?
- If you have not done so, ask your mentor if it is possible to schedule a mock interview with one of their colleagues, either in person, via phone or Skype. Many initial interviews are via phone or Skype, so do not discount them. There is no such thing as participating in too many interviews.
- How does your mentor approach time management and prioritize their workload?
- Ask your mentor why they believe it is more important to work smarter and not harder?
- Why is networking so important?
- Does your mentor travel often for work? What are the pros and cons of traveling for business?
- Send your mentor a handwritten note thanking them for their support and service as your mentor.