

Mentorship That Lasts

Strategies to Sustain Momentum, Overcome Hurdles, and Spark Growth



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Welcome back to our series on Mentorship! In the previous articles of this series, we explored how to find and secure a mentor and laid the foundation for a thriving mentorship. Now, we turn our attention to the long-term dynamics of mentorship, addressing how to sustain momentum, overcome hurdles, and spark continuous growth.

Mentorship isn't static—it's a dynamic partnership that evolves over time. You may face challenges, experience shifts in goals, and even consider whether to continue the mentorship. By proactively addressing challenges and opportunities, you can ensure the relationship remains beneficial, productive, and meaningful for both mentee and mentor.

Sustaining Momentum: Staying Focused and Moving Forward

Mentorships can hit a lull, which is perfectly normal. To keep the relationship dynamic:

- **Break Down Goals into Steps:** Big goals can feel overwhelming if they seem too far away. Work with your mentor to divide aspirations into smaller milestones. Celebrate small wins together—progress fuels momentum.
- **Shift Focus to Reinvigorate Meetings:** Routine meetings can stagnate. Explore a new challenge, seek feedback on recent decisions, or change formats. For example, Julia, my mentee of three years, and I moved our weekly sessions from Zoom to "Walk and Talk" calls. The fresh format energized our conversations and gave us much-needed screen breaks.

Overcoming Hurdles: Navigating Challenges Together

Challenges are inevitable, but they offer opportunities for growth:

- **Tackle Misalignment Early:** If advice doesn't resonate, try saying, "Thank you for your perspective. Can I share more about the specifics of what I'm navigating? I think the context would help guide us to where I need support."
- **Break Through Stagnation:** As the mentee, you set the agenda. If meetings feel unproductive, suggest a new focus. For example, "I'd like to develop my strategic thinking. How do you approach complex decisions?"
- **Addressing a Mentor's Availability:** If your mentor frequently cancels or seems disengaged, ask if this is the right time for them to mentor or if pausing until their schedule eases might be better. You can also adjust the meeting frequency or format to suit their availability.

Sparkling Growth: Unlocking Potential for Continued Success

If you've been focusing on specific challenges for a while, it may be time to broaden the lens. At the start of your mentorship, share short-, mid-, and

long-term goals to give your mentor a complete picture of your vision. This will help them connect the dots as you're working together.

Regularly align with your mentor to ensure you're on track. If goals have been met or priorities have shifted, they can help you refocus. Don't miss the opportunity to ask for their perspective on areas for improvement. Try, "Are there any blind spots you've noticed that I might benefit from working on?" Chances are they have become very attuned to your strengths and blind spots and can provide excellent insights into additional focus areas.

Knowing If, When, and How to Transition

Not all mentorships are long-term, and it's essential to evaluate their natural progression:

- **Revisit or Redefine:** Some relationships evolve. Discuss renewing the mentorship with updated goals and meeting cadence to reflect current priorities.
- **Identify Signs of Completion:** If goals are achieved, conversations feel repetitive, or meetings become infrequent, it may be time to transition. Start with, "I feel we've accomplished so much together. Do you think this is a good time to wrap up our formal mentorship?"
- **End with Gratitude and Openness:** Concluding a mentorship doesn't mean losing the connection. Express thanks, reflect on your progress, and stay in touch through occasional check-ins or updates.

The Lasting Impact of Mentorship

A successful mentorship evolves, deepens, and grows over time. By sustaining momentum, addressing challenges, and sparking true growth, you create a transformative experience for both mentor and mentee.

Research shows that 87% of both participants in mentorships report greater confidence and empowerment—a testament to the power of these relationships when nurtured with care.

With a proactive, thoughtful approach, your mentorship can be a lasting source of inspiration, learning, and growth.

Stay tuned for the next and final article in this series, where my mentee, Julia, will join me for a candid conversation. As a long-term mentee, Julia will share her unique perspective on what makes a successful mentorship from her side of the table—along with valuable advice for mentors to best support their mentees.