

# Getting the Most Out of Your Mentor

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# “Making the Most of Mentors”

## A Guide for Mentees

### Key Concepts:

- Know yourself and your needs first
- Take an active role in the mentoring process by communicating expectations and “managing up”
- Address problems/issues directly and respectfully

# Defining the Mentor Relationship



# Roles Defined

## Mentor

- Advanced rank/experience who guides, teaches, develops novice
- Skill development
- Academic guidance
- Research

## Mentee

- Active role: plan and set agenda
- Follow through
- Ask questions and for feedback
- Managing up

# Desired Qualities

## Mentor

- Available and accessible
- Coach & role model
- Recognizes potential
- Provides opportunities
- Inspires risk taking
- Improves
  - Sense of identity
  - Competence
  - Effectiveness

## Mentee

- Well organized and takes initiative
- Creative and motivated
- Open to new ideas
- Seeks feedback
- Respectful and considerate
- Knows resources
  - especially other people

# Stages of Mentoring

Initiation

Initially hierarchical

Cultivation

Interactive sharing

Separation

Plan to independence

Redefinition

Collegial relationship

# Initial Steps: Know yourself

## Clarify *Values*

- Know what energizes you!
- What values do you respect?
- Interpersonal preferences
- Work style: Hands on vs. gentle guidance

## Clarify *Your Needs*

- Knowledge/Skills
- Personal
  - Work/life balance
- Professional
  - Networking
  - Academic guidance
- Confidence level
- What do you want mentor for?

## Set A *Clear Vision*

- Write down goals
  - Three months
  - One year
  - Three years
- Be specific
- Even if you don't know – try!

# Securing A Mentor

## Where to Look



- Target those you know & respect
- Look w/in your department & outside
- Conduct informational interviews
- Ask for recommendations

## Common Difficulties



- Perceived unavailability
- Fear of rejection
- Career indecision
- Trying to find “all-in-one” mentor

## What to Do



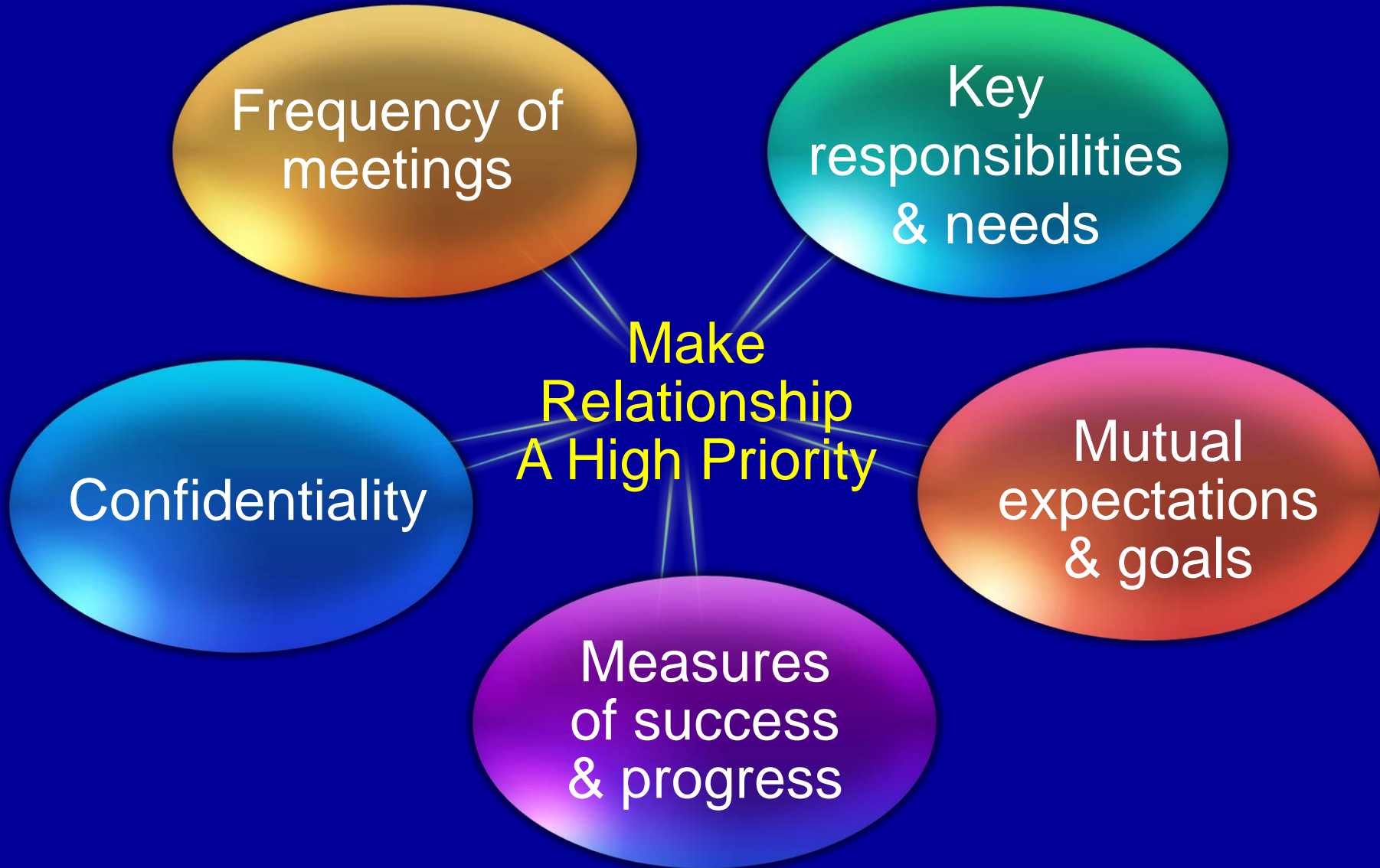
- Be persistent and don't give up
- Find more than one
- Find junior and senior mentors



# Marketing Yourself

- Conduct informational interviews
  - Come prepared (like in a job interview)
  - Communicate your goals & needs
  - Ask questions
  - State exactly what you are looking for
- Be accountable: follow up & stay engaged
  - Ask if you can contact again for more advice
  - Make mentor feel appreciated

# Cultivation: Agreement on Structure and Objectives



# Cultivation: Managing Up

- Let your mentor know what you need
- Set own goal schedule and stick to it
- Be responsive and available
- Straightforward, bring up issues
- Directly ask how success judged
- Understand yourself and your mentor

# Communication: Managing Up

- Ask directly about mentor's preferred style
  - Detailed facts/figures vs. overview
  - Email and phone
- Talk frequently and effectively
- Avoid defensiveness
- Think very carefully if disagree
  - Should put forth own ideas
  - Disagree respectfully, ask clarifying questions

# Meetings

- Set-up regular meeting schedule
  - Usually 1-2 times per month for 1 hour
- Create agenda for meetings
  - Send to your mentor ahead of time
- Know what is expected of you
- Let your mentor(s) know what you are doing
- Ask questions & listen actively

# Special Situations

- Multiple mentors
- Long distance
- Dissatisfaction/problems

# Managing Multiple Mentors

- Potential problems
  - Unclear expectations
  - Disagreement or competition
  - Inefficient/overlap
- Making it work
  - Clarify roles & expectations
  - Create good relationship among mentors
  - Complementary experience

# Managing Long Distance Mentors

- Potential problems
  - Not as effective as on-site
  - Lack of direct observation
  - Problems with email or phone
- Making it work
  - Establish locally and then continue
  - Clarify expectations
  - Plan for occasional face time at national meetings



# Dissatisfaction and Termination

- SGIM mentoring survey
  - 84% unsatisfactory mentoring relationship
  - 23% terminated mentoring relationship
- Most common complaints
  - Mentee did not follow through
  - Mentee did not use mentor's time effectively
  - Poor fit with work style and/or personality

# Challenges

- Mismatch of goals, commitment, expectations
- Reluctance to own and pursue own development
- Reluctance to ask for personal help
- Mentor or mentee can suggest change
  - Depends on style how approach
  - Ask for advice

# Conclusion

- Mentees have an active role in mentoring
  - Know values
  - Know needs
  - Manage up
  - Show appreciation
- Mentoring requires time and nurturing
  - Worth the effort!