



10 Tips for Mentoring

Employ reverse mentoring—A mentor is most effective when he or she listens to the mentee, as well. Millennials have valuable skills, knowledge, and experience from which you can learn.

Push back, set boundaries, and check reality—Mentoring is not parenting, coaching, teaching, or supervising. It is, however, a little bit of all of these. It's important to set clear boundaries and expectations so your Millennial mentee doesn't confuse your role.

Set tasks and expectations frequently and explicitly—Have specific and concrete projects for your mentee to work on and set goals for him or her to reach. While your conversations should be free to roam broadly, you should also discuss setting near- and long-term goals.

Provide constant feedback, not just affirmation—Feedback means saying "yes" when the answer is yes, and "no" when the answer is no. Mentors sometimes find it difficult to say something's wrong. Don't be afraid to provide negative feedback, but, when you do, be sure to offer a positive solution.

Collaborate and personalize contact—Millennials prefer high-touch relationships. Carve out space in the time you devote to your mentee to work on something together, whether it's a resume, a scientific problem, or a job-related question. This will strengthen your bond.

Focus interests on work—Encourage your mentee's exploratory drive, but show how it can be connected to and channeled into exciting work. This is especially true in the tech domain, with regards to apps, social networking, and other offerings. The temptation is for a mentor to say, "That's not how it's done here." That approach can suppress natural enthusiasm and creativity. Let your mentee's enthusiasm flow, but not overflow.

Discuss online reputation and networking—There can be huge differences among the different generations about how online behavior, photos, and statements are perceived. It's important for Millennials to understand what's professionally appropriate, and that the Internet is written in indelible ink, not in pencil.

Share insight into generational differences—Understand and impart to your mentee your insight into the differences—from perceptions to attitudes—among the various generations in the workplace. Make them aware of how their generation and others are perceived.

Embrace the triple bottom line—Millennials like to see that their employer is not only successful from a business standpoint, but that it also is socially conscious and sees work as a conduit for personal fulfillment. These three aspects are intertwined in the mind of most Millennials.

Network the learning—Remember that, when Millennials graduate from college, they have had many years of being rewarded for their own homework, grades, and performance. They are raised as individuals. In the workplace, everything is networked and collaborative, and an individual's fate is tied to other people. Open up your mentor/mentee relationship to your network so the learning comes from many sources and better reflects the dynamics of the workplace.

Information Obtained from:

David Porush, CEO of [MentorNet](http://www.mentor.net), offers 10 tips for mentoring this generation of college students and graduates: <http://www.nacweb.org/s09262012/mentoring-millennials/>