

one ^{up} one down

Mentee Guide



FOREWORD

The purpose of this document is to act as a supporting resource for OneUpOneDown mentees throughout their role as a mentee. It is to help them understand how to get the best out of their mentor and therefore mentorship experience.

An excellent mentor-mentee experience requires a collaborative effort from both sides. The mentorship relationship provides an opportunity for mentees to take control of their learning and development, supported by a mentor with the relevant experience to guide them through.

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THE ROLE OF A MENTEE

Mentorship is a relationship designed to build a mentee's confidence and support them to make decisions while taking control of their learning and development.

As a mentee, your role is to be open and honest with any challenges you're facing • or areas you'd like support in, and shape the conversations so you get what you need out of the sessions. The mentoring relationship is a two person effort, therefore it's important for you to drive the conversation as much as the mentor. Additionally, it's your role to take action based on your sessions, then build on them as you go. Here are a few tips for how you can approach and manage your mentoring relationship:

- **Learn as much as you can** about your mentor, their experience, what they're good at and how you can use the three months to take advantage of their knowledge and experiences. This is particularly important in preparation for your first session.
- **Agree on your relationship expectations upfront.** It's important to set clear expectations around how you would like your relationship to work best. This may include discussing: varying communication styles, frequency of meetings, method of meetings (online vs in person), being clear on your desired outcomes etc.
- **Be open and honest in discussion.** Conversations should be two ways and the discussion co-shaped by you and your mentor. Be open and honest with your communication and don't be afraid to give feedback as well as challenge the conversation where you see fit. Being honest and authentic with your communication will help build trust and allow your mentor to provide support appropriately.



- **Remember, you know yourself better than anyone.** It's important to remember that mentors are offering support and advice based on their learned experiences. What they offer might not always be what you need and/or want to hear. Remember, you know yourself better than anyone so if you feel as though a piece of advice doesn't align with you, you don't have to take it on.

- **Take action.** If you and your mentor agree on actions to take as a result of your session, we highly recommend doing them! Progress comes from putting in the work and when your mentor sees that you are doing this, they'll feel that their time is valued and they're doing a great job supporting you. Report back to your mentor after you've taken these steps to see what worked and didn't work so you can both learn from it.

- **Be proactive** with your communication and when booking in your next meeting. Try to respond to your mentor as soon as possible, so they know they're adding value and/or you're interested in continuing the mentoring relationship. If you do find you can no longer continue, be proactive in communicating with us (OneUpOneDown) so we can pause your profile.



MENTORING GUIDELINES

We understand there isn't always one framework that suits everyone, so we like to let each mentor-mentee relationship find what works best for them. However, we have learnt what has been most effective for past matches and put together the following mentoring guidelines you might like to use:

Meeting frequency - We suggest that you meet with your mentor for a minimum of 4x1 hour meetings throughout the 3 month period, twice in the first month and once each month following. Many of our successful matches have found meeting every fortnight works well too, in order to continue to hold them accountable and keep up momentum.

Location - Many of our mentors are based overseas, or in varying cities, therefore, we recommend running your mentoring sessions online, using Skype or Zoom. Video calling is encouraged over phone calls as it gives you the opportunity to put a face to a name and read the other person's body language. Alternatively, if you are matched with a mentor in the same city as you, you may like to connect in person for a couple of your sessions or find a balance between this and video calling.



MENTORING EXPECTATIONS

We aim to provide you with the best possible mentor-mentee match, mentorship support and overall experience. To assist us in doing so, we have the following expectations for you in your role as a mentee:

Communicate with us. If you find your mentor has dropped off, is missing meetings or is not as engaged as you were hoping for, we expect that you let us know. We can't do anything to rectify the situation if we are unaware it exists! Alternatively, if you have general questions or would like to know how to better support a mentor, be sure to reach out.

Show up. Mentoring can often be de-prioritised when other things pop up or life happens. However, you might be surprised how valuable a mentoring session is even if you are busy and have other priorities. Please respect the time and commitment that has gone into the relationship and make it a priority during the matching.

Keep up the momentum. It's easy to kick off a mentoring relationship with a lot of momentum then let it drop over time and become disengaged. We expect you as a mentee to do your best to stay engaged, honor your commitment and continually contribute to the relationship. We do also understand that life happens and you may have to pull out of a mentoring relationship temporarily, this is absolutely fine. Just please let us know!

Our tip: schedule your next meeting immediately after the previous one. This will keep momentum and support you to not missing call times and/or creating time in your calendar. If you like to prepare for your sessions, be sure to book extra time in your calendar. This applies for the following tip also.

FIRST MENTORING SESSION

The purpose of your first mentoring session is to establish your mentor-mentee relationship with regards to direction, expectations either you or your mentor have, and desired outcomes. Part of having a great experience as a mentee and feeling as though it has been valuable having the support, is getting clear on what you'd like to achieve from the beginning.

Additionally, your first session is a great chance to get to know each other better, to understand why you were matched, how your mentor can add the most value and how you'd like your sessions to run. We recommend using this session to agree on the frequency of meetings, best communication method and/or platform, agreed topics of discussion, the scope of the relationship and more.

To start, here are a few questions you can ask your mentor to get to know them and understand which of their experiences you can tap into:

1. Can you please tell me more about your background? Did you study? Which job(s) have you had until now?
2. Can you please tell me about how you became a [...Product Manager at X company]?
3. What are some of the qualities that you have, or have developed that have contributed to your success in this role?
4. What have been some of the most challenging hurdles or biggest learning curves you've experienced along the way? in [Entrepreneurship and Marketing]? Fill in the brackets with the areas you were matched in.
6. What are your expectations of me as a mentee?
7. What made you decide to sign up to be a mentor?
8. Do you have experience as a mentor? If yes, are there aspects of those mentoring relationships that worked well that we could bring into ours?
9. How can I help you also get value out of this relationship?

At this point, you may want to share about yourself, your journey and what you are looking for support in. Here are a few ideas for talking points you might like to start with:

- A brief background of both your personal and professional lives to date (we suggest incorporating both as they are so very intertwined!).
- Key or pivotal moments to date that have contributed to the way you think and/or approach situations.
- Why you're looking for support from a mentor.
- Whether you've been a mentee before and if yes, anything that did or didn't work well.
- Any notable strengths and weaknesses you have.
- Where you'd like to take your career and/or life. Where do you see yourself in 1,3,5,10 years?

ON-GOING SESSIONS

Before each session it's helpful to take a little time to think about what you'd like the focus of the session to be, starting by reflecting on the last one. Here are a few reflection questions to check in with how you're feeling ahead of the session, what you can build on from last time and anything new you'd like to introduce into the conversation:

Self-reflection:

- How are you feeling?
- What's top of mind for you right now?
- What are you most excited about at the moment?
- What are you most nervous or fearful of at the moment?

Last session reflection:

- What did you discuss last session?
- What did you enjoy about your last session?
- What didn't you enjoy about your last session?
- Is there anything you have realised since this session that has had an impact on you?
- Were there actions you needed to take from last session? If yes, have you done them? If no, why not?
- Is there anything on your mind that needs to be brought up on in this session?

New topics for this session:

- Are there any new challenges or opportunities that have popped up since last session, that your mentor could help you work through?
- Are there areas you find interesting that your mentor may have some experience in or a new perspective they could offer?
- How do you want to feel when you leave this session and why?

As a mentee , sometimes you may find yourself stuck in conversation. Here is some great examples of questions you may ask your mentor when the situation accure.

Stories

- Can you please tell me more about your background?
- Did you study? Which job(s) have you had until now?
- Can you please tell me about how you became a [...Product Manager at X company]?
- What are some of the qualities that you have, or have developed that have contributed to your success in this role?
- What have been some of the most challenging hurdles or biggest learning curves you've experienced along the way?
- Can you tell me about your experience in [Entrepreneurship and Marketing]?

Situations

- What did you discuss last session?
How can I let my boss know that I don't need to be micromanaged?
- My boss said I need to be more strategic. What does that mean?
- I have two very different career path options available to me. Can you weigh in to help me make a final decision?

Self-Awareness

- Any notable strengths and weaknesses you have?
- Where do you see my strengths?
- What do you see as some of my blind spots and how can I improve?
- How could I have communicated my idea more clearly?

Skill-Building

- What tools do you use to keep yourself organized?
- Have you read any books that helped you develop your skills?
- What new skills do I need to move ahead?

COMMUNICATION

A person's ability to communicate and the way in which they do so can impact a mentor-mentee relationship. We've found that some matches where mentees and mentors have different communication styles, it can be harder for them to form and maintain a connection. Mentors can often be left feeling as though they've been ineffective as a mentor, and mentees as though they couldn't relate to their mentor.

In our initial survey, we ask both mentors and mentees to select one or multiple communication styles they feel suits them best, so we can factor this in when finding a suitable match. It's important to recognise that while we try our best to make great matches, they may not always align and that could be the reason a mentorship doesn't work, not because your mentor has been ineffective.

If you find that you're not able to connect with your mentor immediately, or recognise that your mentor has a different communication style than you, try:

1. Asking your mentor how they would like you to communicate with them.
2. Understanding which communication style and/or personality type your mentor is, so you can better understand their thought patterns and/or how they like to give and receive information.
For example, if your mentor is direct with their communication, it is likely they are outcome focused and like to understand the purpose of a given topic rather than the small details associated with it.
3. Observing your mentor's body language. Do they get uncomfortable or look disengaged when you communicate in various ways? Or do they get animated and excited when you communicate a certain way? This should help you understand which style and/or method of communication they prefer.



FAQS

How much time should I give to my mentor?

As a general guideline, your minimum time commitment as a mentee is 4x1 hour sessions throughout the 3 month period. Twice in the first month and once per month following this. Many of our successful matches have found meeting fortnightly to support continued momentum and creates a higher level of accountability.

However, we understand that one framework doesn't suit everyone, so we like to let each mentor-mentee relationship find what works best for them. We also understand that we're busy women and fitting in a mentoring session every fortnight may not be realistic or suitable for our mentors and mentees. It's best to decide with your mentor what is suitable for your relationship based on the amount of time you have to give.

What if I don't hear from my mentor after our session?

If you don't hear from your mentor after a session, please don't assume that it's because they didn't get value. The lack of communication may be because your mentor is conscious of your time and doesn't want to feel like they are bugging you for the next session.

A mentor-mentee relationship needs to be driven by both mentors and mentees, so we recommend you follow up with your mentor to check in and arrange a time for the next session, if you didn't do so at the end of your previous session. If after this, you still haven't heard from your mentor, please let us know. We'll get in touch with them then find an appropriate solution.

What if my mentor stops responding to my communication?

If you've been in communication with your mentor and they have stopped responding, please let us know so we can help to manage the situation. We want to ensure mentors are respecting and valuing your time and can only take action if we are informed of the situation.

For more questions, please visit our [FAQs page](#).

If you are a "mentor & mentee" you might be interested in our [Mentor Guide](#).