

TOP 4 WAYS TO FIND A MENTOR



Finding a mentor is much easier than you think--if you're ready to be a good student, you will likely run across people who enjoy teaching and seeing someone less experienced than themselves use their strategies and wisdom to achieve success. Most people don't seek out mentors because they think they would be imposing. Yet, over and over again, my research has shown that people who are at higher points of success in their respective industries are willing to share. There are, however, important strategies that you should follow to find your mentor. They include:

1. **Do your research.** Check out all the trade associations in your chosen field. Find out who the top industry leaders are through newspaper and magazine articles written about them. Look for things you sincerely admire about several leaders.
2. **Write a letter.** You may already know someone who knows one or more of these leaders. If you do you can ask for an introduction. But if you don't, start by writing a letter where you introduce yourself and point out the things you admire about that person. For example, is he or she involved in some cause you care about, like the environment or child abuse, etc.? If so, you can comment in the letter: "Like you, I am very interested in the cause of _____." This shows your prospective mentor that you have taken the time to find out more about him or her. It shows you care, you're respectful and you're worth taking time to talk. In the letter ask something like, "I am looking for a mentor relationship if you are not too busy. I would like only 30 minutes of your time initially to discuss this."
3. **Send letters to as many people as possible.** I tell a story in my book, "Make Your Connections Count," about a young man who wrote to 100 potential mentors--CEOs of computer companies. Ten wrote back and said they would be a mentor. This young man, instead of going on to get his MBA, started a computer company and in a few years was at \$10 million in sales!
4. **Always follow up meetings with thank you notes.** A simple handwritten note says, "I really listened to what you told me and I am going to take your advice seriously." Nothing is more heartwarming than seeing someone succeed from your advice.

Understanding that mentoring is truly a two-way street is very important. By appreciating your mentor, you are giving something of value in exchange for this person's years of experience and wisdom. Your attitude is the key to a successful relationship.