

# LBS LAUNCHPAD - 10 Best Practices for Mentees

(adapted from Centre for Mentoring Excellence)



## 1. Focus on achieving learning goals

- Learning is the purpose and the payoff of mentoring. It's easy to get side-tracked and lose focus. After three cups of coffee and little work on leadership development, mentoring fizzles out. Goals help you stay focused, moving in a positive direction, and benchmark your progress.

## 2. Expect to drive the mentoring relationship

- Mentors are not mind readers. Be prepared to ask for what you need when you need it. They won't know what you need unless you tell them.

## 3. Create SMART goals that will contribute to your development

- Fuzzy goals result in fuzzy outcomes. Make sure your goals are crystal clear to you and your mentor. Goals need to be **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**ealistic and **t**imely.

## 4. Be authentic, open, and honest

- Your willingness to be vulnerable makes a significant difference in your growth and development. If you pretend that all is perfect, your mentor will never get to know the real you, and you will miss out on real learning opportunities.

## 5. Prepare for all mentoring meetings

- Advance preparation for mentoring sessions will save time, make meetings more efficient and result in more meaningful learning.

## 6. Stay connected and in communication with your mentor

- Utilize multiple ways to stay connected to your mentor. Regular and consistent communication is the name of the game, whether it's face-to-face, email, Skype or telephone calls, the operative word is "and."

## 7. Be willing to stretch and step out of your comfort zone

- Expect your mentor to challenge you with questions and learning opportunities that might take you outside your comfort zone. They may initially make you uncomfortable, but the stretch is what will maximize your learning.

## 8. Ask for specific feedback

- Your mentor's honest and candid feedback will contribute to your self-awareness and get you to the next level. Practice asking for specific feedback and be prepared to receive it without being defensive. Share feedback with your mentor and act on what you hear.

## 9. Focus on the future

- It's easy to get bogged down in day-to-day issues instead of focusing on your future. Keep in mind that mentoring creates momentum towards your future development. Be prepared to articulate your vision for yourself so that you and your mentor can create strategies for your future success.

## 10. Keep a journal

- You will want to make notes of conversations that reflect your learning, and also track your mentoring progress. A journal is a great place to record insights and questions in preparation for mentoring meetings. Although keeping a journal requires discipline and practice, it's well worth the effort.



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## 1. Start by getting to know your mentee

- Make sure you take time to get to know your mentee before you jump into the work of mentoring. Nothing of substance will happen until you establish a trusting relationship.

## 2. Establish working agreements

- Agreements lay the foundation of a mentoring relationship. Build in basic structures about how you will work together moving forward. Make sure you and your mentee agree on ground rules.

## 3. Focus on developing robust learning goals

- The purpose of mentoring is to learn. Learning is also the payoff. Make sure the mentee's learning goals are worthy of your time and effort. Developing robust learning goals takes time and good conversation.

## 4. Balance talking and listening

- It's easy and natural to want to give advice, especially because you've "been there and done that." But mentees want more than good advice. They want you to listen to their ideas as much as they want to hear what you have to say.

## 5. Ask questions rather than give answers

- Take the time to draw out a mentee's thinking and get them to reflect on their own experience. Ask probing questions that encourage them to come up with their own insights.

## 6. Engage in meaningful and authentic conversation

- Strive to go deeper than surface conversation. Share your own successes and failures as well as what you are learning from your current mentoring relationship.

## 7. Check out assumptions and hunches

- If you sense something is missing or not going well, you are probably right. Address issues as soon as possible. Simply stating, "I want to check out my assumption which is ..." will prevent you from assuming your mentee is on track.

## 8. Support and challenge your mentee

- Work on creating a comfortable relationship first before you launch into the uncomfortable stretch needed for deep learning. Mentees need to feel supported (comfortable) and yet be challenged (a little uncomfortable) in order to grow and develop.

## 9. Set the expectation of two-way feedback

- Candid feedback is a powerful trigger for growth and change. Set the expectation early on. Be prepared to offer candid feedback, balanced with compassion. Model how to ask for and receive good feedback by asking your mentee for specific feedback on your own mentoring contribution.

## 10. Check in regularly to stay on track

- Keep connected and develop a pattern of regular engagement. Both partners need to be accountable for following through with agreements. By holding an open, honest conversation about how you're doing and what you need to do to improve, you encourage mutual accountability and deepen the relationship.