

## Finding the Right Mentor

I was asked a question not too long ago about the best mentor that I had during my various careers. I unfortunately had to reply none! I entered the Air Force when there weren't many women in the military, let alone women officers. Not counting the nurses (people always thought we were nurses), there were only five of us at Pease AFB. Even when I exited the military, women executives, especially in the hospitality industry, were few and far between. I replied that I learned from the "hard knocks" philosophy. My best lessons were learned either from my hard knocks or watching and learning from bad bosses. I am very happy to say that times have changed. Not only are women in executive positions for mentoring but men are also welcoming the opportunity to mentor.

So, I went to Google to find the qualities of a mentor and found an article posted by the Indeed Editorial Team that talks about the "10 Characteristics of a Mentor and Why They're Important". This is a great article. The first characteristic right out of the box was one that is probably the most important. A mentor must be a good listener. I would also couple that with a mentor must be good at asking questions. By asking questions and really listening to the answers, both the mentor and mentee have the opportunity to learn and think about the direction of any conversation. Growth comes from the mentee's learning from experiences, mostly his or her own. The mentee processes through reflection and conversation. The mentor learns how to guide the conversation to the awareness of the growth opportunities. This is the constructive feedback quality of the mentor.

These are just three of the qualities listed in the article. It can be found at <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/important-characteristics-of-a-mentor>. I highly recommend it. A mentor is a valuable tool in any transition strategy. Find someone who can guide you to your desired career. And – remember that this should be an opportunity for the mentor as well. It's not a "paid" career counselor. Seek someone who is really committed to serve.

Best wishes,

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