

# Seek Mentors

Regardless of your administrative title, industry or organization size, you need to find a good mentor explains Joan Burge

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Mentors save you time, energy, and even money. They reduce stress and make life easier. Mentors challenge us to be our best, hold us accountable, and make us take a close look at ourselves; which is not always easy. Whether you are at the beginning of your career, middle or end, you need a mentor.

## What to look for in a mentor?

You want to think about a mentor as someone who has already done what you want to do. Or someone who has behaviors, good habits, or attitudes you want to embrace. Let's say that you want to be confident presenting your ideas to others. You would look for an individual who excels in this area. Maybe you want to work your way into the C-Suite. You seek out an executive assistant who is working in the C-Suite and lives the qualities you admire.

## What can you expect from a mentor?

A good mentor . . .

- **Is transparent.** A good mentor doesn't pretend or act like they are perfect. They are open and honest about their own mistakes and then openly share how they managed those and what they learned from them.
- **Answers your questions.** They have answers to your questions and can usually do it on the spot. They can answer quickly because they have years of experience; they know the ropes; they are confident in what to do. They may do extra research on the areas you two are focusing on, but that is just bonus material. When I am coaching or mentoring, I provide all my insights from 40+ years in the workplace and the administrative profession.



And I usually do some extra research to see what is current.

- **Holds you accountable.** Mentors love to help and will mentor for free. In return, they expect the mentee to be serious about this relationship and make changes or execute ideas.
- **Supports you emotionally.** Sometimes life is a roller coaster. As we try to become better people or improve areas of our life, we can get a bit emotional about it. Even change we want is scary. When I left the administrative profession of twenty years and went into the speaking business and training industry, I was scared. And I needed someone to understand my fears and dreams.
- **Uses emotional intelligence.** A great mentor applies emotional intelligence, especially the third dimension—using social awareness. That is when I adapt based on how you are feeling or acting. I know when to push and when to back off.
- **Maintains confidentiality.** This is a very important trait as you will share your deepest wishes with this person.

## How will you work with your mentor?

- **Be clear on what you want from your mentor.** What kind of support do you need? What do you want your mentor to do for you?
- **Make a list of questions or thoughts.** I write or type them in order of priority so if we run out of time, at least I get to talk about my most important items.
- **Communicate clearly and concisely.** If you know what you want and what you expect as a result of your meeting, you should be able to clearly and concisely communicate. However, some people are chatty and carry on conversations twenty minutes longer than need be. Do not let this happen.
- **Be respectful.** Your mentor is truly trying to help you. If you have chosen him or her because of experience, then respect his or her ideas. You may not always agree, but be respectful.
- **Listen.** I know sometimes when I am being mentored, I am eager to hurry and express what I am thinking or even to explain why my perspective is not the same. I work at being quiet, taking in what my mentor is saying, and then commenting.
- **Keep an open mind.** A good mentor should throw things at you that you don't agree with. There will be times you won't want to buy into it. Be willing to try what your mentor recommends. Give it some time. If it does not work for you, that is okay.
- **Thank your mentor.** During discussions, be sure to thank your mentor for their ideas and their time. If you work with a mentor over several months, occasionally send him or her a hand-written thank you note.

## about the author



Joan Burge is known as the red-lipstick-wearing "Rock Star" of administrative and executive Assistant training. Joan is an accomplished author, professional speaker, consultant and corporate trainer. Her company, Office Dynamics International, is a global industry leader which offers a broad range of solutions and provides high-performance, sophisticated executive and administrative Assistant training and coaching. For more information visit [www.officedynamics.com](http://www.officedynamics.com). Receive Your Free "Clarification of Tasks" assessment. Download at [www.bit.ly/clarificationoftasks](http://www.bit.ly/clarificationoftasks).

Joan's latest book, *Joan's Greatest Administrative Secrets Revealed* is available at [www.OfficeDynamics.com](http://www.OfficeDynamics.com).

