



Sparks recognize that no one achieves lasting success on their own. We all want — and can benefit greatly from — mentors who can encourage us to be our best and help us leverage our strengths and confront our blind spots.

Finding these mentors, however, can be difficult. Then, when we have them, it's hard to figure out how to nurture these relationships.

This exercise is designed to get you thinking of who within your network can mentor you and will also give you ideas on how to build these relationships.

## 1 DISCOVERING MENTORS

1. Who, within your network, do you admire and why? (List several individuals. These can include personal and professional connections.)

Name	Why I admire this person

2. Who, among the individuals you listed on the previous page, do you feel would be open to a mentoring relationship — i.e. a relationship where you can learn from their experiences, as well as approach them and ask questions related to challenges or opportunities you're experiencing?

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3. What actions are you going to take immediately to approach these individuals to start building your relationship? (Actions can include: Inviting them to coffee/lunch, scheduling a meeting in their office, etc.)

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### *Helpful Hint*

When reaching out to a prospective mentor, keep it informal. Here's some text that you can use:

Dear [Name],

We've worked together for [x] years and I've admired how you've developed your career. Would you be interested in grabbing coffee or lunch soon so I can ask you questions about career navigation? I'm sure your insight, along with your experiences, could benefit me greatly. As I grow in my profession, I'd love to learn more from professionals — like yourself — who can share their best practices.

Thank you,  
[Your name]

2

## DEVELOPING MENTORS

After you've had a chance to meet with a few prospective mentors, here are a few activities you can engage in to continue to develop the relationships:

- Put a reminder in your calendar every other month to invite your mentor to coffee/lunch so you can stay engaged
- Share any career success you have via email
- If they gave you career guidance, share with them your feedback on how you implemented it
- Send along articles of interest and ask their opinion on it
- When you're faced with a difficult career decision, ask them for their opinion — and when they offer it, take it into consideration
- There's no need to treat mentoring relationships as if you have to form a pact — keep the relationship informal so you don't put pressure on yourself or them

Ultimately, you need to own your mentoring relationships — you can't expect your mentors to own them. You can demonstrate ownership by initiating conversations and sharing news. Keep in mind that your mentors are busy, which is probably why they're so successful. Make the relationship easy for them. Don't overwhelm them with communication — reach out to them when it's appropriate.

Developing mentoring relationships takes time, but they're worth it. Good luck on this endeavor!