

# HOW TO STRENGTHEN MENTORING SKILLS AND RELATIONSHIPS



Discover new ways to improve and maintain mentor/mentee relationships with these tips from Stephanie Coppola, MS, RD, LDN, Josh Hingst, MS, RD, CSCS, and Mike Minnis, MS, RD, CSCS, of the Philadelphia Eagles Sports Performance Team.

## CONVERSATIONS ARE KEY

As you navigate your career path, it's important to engage with others in your fields of interest to open your eyes to new opportunities. These conversations can be informal or more structured, depending on the individual and setting. The important thing is to approach each conversation with the willingness to learn and connect. Here are a few key points to keep in mind along the way: **explore new careers and industries, gain specific insight and advice, and establish long-term relationships.**

## GETTING THE CONVERSATION STARTED

An introduction email is often the hardest one to write. Including the following five details can help set you up for success:

1. Introduction
2. Who referred you or how you found the contact (if applicable)
3. What you have in common
4. What you hope to learn
5. Specific request with what you're looking for (20 minutes to talk or meet, etc.)

## FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS

Developing and maintaining relationships is key to meaningful relationships with mentors. Here are some steps that can set you up for success:

### THINK OF THE FUTURE

Consider where you want your career to be in five, ten or twenty years and try to connect with someone who has your dream job or inspires you.

### PUT YOURSELF OUT THERE

Ask if they are willing to take time for coffee or lunch to discuss your career path periodically. If they can't, don't take it personally. Ask if they have a recommendation for someone else.

### MAKE IT A TWO-WAY CONVERSATION

Don't only make it about yourself and your growth; see if there is anything you can do to help your mentor.

### KEEP IN TOUCH

Maintain the relationship, and schedule frequent check-ins. Give the relationship the time it needs so you can grow together.

## KEY QUALITIES

It's important to put your best foot forward. Here are some standout characteristics that mentors look for in potential mentees:

- Humility
  - Willing to take on any task with a great attitude
- Growth Mindset or Curiosity
  - Asks questions and shows a proactive desire to learn and grow professionally
- Maximizes Each Opportunity
  - Strives to go above and beyond when given responsibility
  - Treats simple tasks as an opportunity to exceed expectations
- Strong Work Ethic and Proactiveness
  - Looks for ways to contribute and add value
  - Finishes tasks prior to deadline and always to the best of their ability