

Guidelines and Suggestions for Mentoring Program

1. The mentor should get the ball rolling by calling the mentee and asking him or her out to lunch. Use that first lunch just to get to know each other on a personal basis. Find out about each other's life, interests both inside and outside the law practice, and that sort of thing.

2. It is difficult to always match the area of law practiced by a mentor to the area of law practiced by the mentee. Many new lawyers, particularly those that are in small practices, don't necessarily spend a majority of their time in any one area of law. They may not have decided exactly what areas of law in which they want to practice. In an area as large as ours there are some geographic considerations in matching senior lawyers to junior lawyers. We're not always going to have perfect match.

3. The program is meant to do more than just give a younger lawyer an older lawyer who will provide informal CEB classes. The idea is to give younger lawyers someone who will take them under their wing and help them get started. Someone to act as a sounding board. Someone who can give perspective on judges, bosses, witnesses, clerks. Someone who can take them around a little bit and help them get to know people other than opposing counsel. A mentor is not going to be up to date on the details of the younger lawyer's most current legal research project but can discuss generalized topics like cross examination techniques and deposition strategies.

4. Younger lawyers need to remember that their mentor is not coming into this program with an outlined program of ways in which he or she can be helpful. At the time you are introduced your mentor doesn't know you, doesn't know your needs, and doesn't know specifically how he can help you. You need to take the initiative to tell him about yourself and how he or she can help. Bring questions every time you meet!

5. Mentors need to remember to make sure that their younger lawyer is sensitive to signs that the mentor is too busy to really take time for them. We are all aware of people that say they have time for us but really don't..

6. If the mentor and his student share interests outside the law try to enjoy them together. Play golf. Go out to dinner with the spouses. Mentors should try to do things that make their students a part of the legal community.

7. Every lawyer gets whacked. Mentoring is a place for younger lawyers to talk about instances where it didn't go well with the judge, witness, counsel, client, boss, etc. Talk about alternative ways to have handled the situation.

8. Mentors must return mentee's phone calls within 24 hours.