



UNIVERSITY *of* WEST FLORIDA

Potential Questions to ask Your Mentor

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It's often difficult for students to know what to ask their mentor. For your convenience, we've drafted up a list of a variety of questions to help you get the conversation going. Enjoy!

Breaking the Ice

- How was your weekend?
- Can you tell me a little about your career path?
- What were you doing at my age?
- When did you realize what you wanted to do?
- How did you get where you are today?
- Who has influenced you the most?
- If given the opportunity, what would you do differently?

Mentoring Experience

- Did you have a mentor helping you along the way?
- What makes a good mentee?
- What do you wish you had asked your mentor?
- What advice do you have for the next generation?
- What was your first impression of me?

Your Mentor's Current Job

- What are your primary job responsibilities?
- How many hours do you work?
- What are the duties performed during your typical day?
- What are the satisfying aspects of your work?
- What are the dissatisfying aspects of your work? Is this typical of the field?
- What are the greatest pressures, strains, or anxieties in your work?
- What are the toughest problems and decisions with which you must cope?
- Is there a typical chain of command in your field?
- Who are the people who usually excel in your field/position? What personal qualities do you need to succeed?
- Are there many opportunities for advancement in your organization?
- How much autonomy do you have in terms of what you focus on at work?
- What is the average starting salary in your organization?
- How much flexibility do new employees have in terms of dress, hours, vacation or job location?

Career Paths

- What has been your career path from college to present?
- What kind of education/training do you have?
- What was your experience at _____ like?
- How did you manage the transition from school to work?
- How did you get your first job post-graduation?
- Have you won any awards?
- Have you ever had a job that you didn't like? If so, how did you handle that situation?

Potential Questions to Ask Your Mentor

- If you could change any aspects of your career, what would you change?
- What do you know now, which would have been helpful to know when you were in my shoes?
- If you were allowed to change careers, would you?
- What advice would you like to have heard when you were starting out?
- If you could do it all over again, would you change anything?

Goal Setting

- What dreams and goals inspired you to succeed?
- What are your short- and long-term goals?
- Where do you want to be in 10 years?
- What are your thoughts about the value of a Master's Degree?
- Will you help me to set and accomplish goals on where I should be by the time I graduate?

Inside the Industry

- How would you recommend I “try out” this line of work while I am still in school?
- What do you see are upcoming trends in the industry?
- What are the five most important skills to be successful these days?
- Are there any other fields or jobs you would suggest I research/explore?
- How do people find out about job openings in your field? Are they advertised?
- When should I start applying for positions and forwarding my resume?
- How is a typical job interview in this industry conducted to companies?
- Is there anyone in your field you would recommend I talk to? When I call them, may I mention that you referred me?
- How can you determine that you have the ability or potential to be successful in your occupation?

Work-Life Considerations

- What is your best tip for maintaining a work-life and personal balance?
- Do you have advice about contributing to a savings account at the beginning of my career, before I am established?
- What values are important to you?
- What do you do to live a balanced life?
- What do you like to do for fun?
- If money were no object, would you be working now?

Leadership and Work Style

- What characteristics or skills set you apart from your peers and enabled you to be so successful?
- How would you describe your leadership style?
- How do you give credit where credit is due?
- If you wanted to create an environment where motivation can thrive, what's the first thing you would do?
- How do you show others that you believe in them?

Potential Questions to Ask Your Mentor

- What do you do to challenge your underlying beliefs, paradigms, and assumptions?
- When is breaking the rules okay?
- What are you grateful for?
- Would you risk making a mistake?
- What does empowerment mean to you?
- If you wanted to encourage innovative ideas, how would you go about it?
- How and where do you find inspiration?
- How do you approach the unknown?
- How do you keep your feelings from clouding your decision-making?
- What's the best way to keep your eye on future results?
- How do you bring courage and conviction to risky situations?
- What is your life's most significant achievement?

Employment

- Do you have recommendations of companies or locations for where I should be looking based on my industry?
- What qualities do you look for in the people you hire?
- What kind of work/internship experience do employers look for in a job applicant?
- How can a person obtain this work experience?
- What are the most important personal characteristics for success in your field?
- What are the employment prospects in your geographic area?
- Where are the best employment prospects?
- Is mobility a necessary factor for success?
- What are some related occupations?

Professional Development

- How important is a graduate degree, designation, or additional certificate in your field?
- What are the five books or podcasts you feel I should read or listen to, and why?
- Are you a member of any professional associations?
- Which ones do you feel are the most important to belong to?
- What are the future prospects like in your field? What trends do you see developing over the next few years?
- What kind of professional development opportunities are available?
- Do you have any recommendations with regards to useful courses to take or extracurricular activities to be involved with?

ALWAYS!

- When would you like to schedule our next meeting?