



MANDELA  
WASHINGTON  
FELLOWSHIP  
FOR YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS

## HELPFUL RESOURCES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR MENTORING

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Below are some suggested activities as well as additional literature and resources to guide you during your mentorship.

### Sample Menu of Activities and Discussions

When you fill out the Action Plan with your mentor/mentee, please refer to this list for ideas on discussion topics and guiding questions, activities, and workshops.

### Discussion Topics and Guiding Questions

#### Climbing the Career Ladder

- Mentorship goals and expectations
  - Career goals and career trajectory
    - How did you get to where you are today?
    - What challenges do you think you face getting to the next step in your profession?
    - What skills do you need to acquire to move forward and how do you plan to acquire those skills?
  - Leadership Development Plan
  - Sector hiring practices
    - Do you need to know someone in order to get hired? How can you use your existing network to connect with the company/organization you are interested in?
    - What kind of materials does the company want to see (e.g. business plan, writing sample, presentation, etc.) and how can you assess and gain the education and experience necessary to get the job you want in your field?
  - Marketing Yourself
    - What's your "story" of how you got to where you are today, and what is your vision as a leader? Develop and practice an "elevator speech."
    - Do the steps along your career path make sense to an outside listener? Work to craft a story that is compelling and intriguing.
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- Networking
  - How do you typically introduce yourself at a networking event, and what kind of approach is appropriate and professional?
  - Work to develop a system for developing and managing your network (i.e. excel file, database, etc.)
  - Work to identify venues and events for networking and expanding the mentee's network.
- Discussion of professional business writing etiquette (e.g. requesting informational interviews, writing thank you letters, requesting references, and submitting writing samples)
  - Work to craft important business correspondence, providing tips on: keeping correspondence brief and professional, crafting an "ask" in a way that will make someone want to respond, and tailoring correspondence to different audiences.
  - References: Who should you ask for references, and what kind of support can you offer them to make writing a reference easier?
  - What kind of writing samples should you submit for different objectives? How should these be formatted?

## Professional Life

- Managing conflict within the office or unit
    - Have you experienced conflict in a professional environment? How did you handle it and what is your conflict management style? How might you change your conflict management style to become a more effective leader?
    - What ways of managing conflict are effective and what kinds are ineffective?
  - Leadership development/Influencing others
    - What is your leadership style ?
    - Do you win people over by inspiring them (i.e. transformational leadership)?
    - Do you earn people's loyalty through mutual benefit (i.e. transactional leadership)?
    - What kinds of leadership styles are most effective in your workplace/organization, and what might you do to better adapt your style to the environment?
  - Managing politics in the office and organization
    - How political are you, and do you need to become more politically savvy to achieve your objectives? How might you do so?
    - In your country, what does the organizational hierarchy typically look like, and what are some strategies for navigating it?
    - How do you ensure that you continue to grow and develop in your profession while still respecting the unwritten rules of the office environment?
  - Newest trends in technology
    - How comfortable are you on the computer? What applications do you use most often and what applications do you need to master to be successful in your field?
    - How proficient are you with social media, and what can you do to develop a strategy to use it?
    - What kind of technology is relevant in your sector? Are there free online guides or available courses that can help you improve your skills?
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- Time management
  - Do you keep a calendar or a schedule? How do you budget your time?
  - What does your typical day look like, and how could you manage your time more efficiently?
  - What do you wish you had more time for?
- Work/life balance
  - What in your personal life places demands on your time? Family? Children? Volunteer work? Friends?
  - How much time do you wish to devote to different aspects of your life, and what strategies can you employ to help you maintain a balance in your life?
  - Is your company or organization flexible and understanding about your needs, and have you had a conversation with your supervisor about how you can best manage your work/life balance?
- Public speaking
  - Are you a confident public speaker, and if not—what might you do to improve your skills and confidence?
  - Discuss public speaking tools and techniques.
  - If this is a potential area of improvement area? Consider filming the mentee giving a speech and provide constructive feedback on body language, tone, posture, presentation skills, etc.

### Growing Your Business/Organization

- Strategic planning
    - What short-term and long-term goals do you have for your business/organization, and what personnel, funding, activities, etc. will help you achieve those goals?
    - Working backward, what does your timeline look like for the next year? Next five years?
  - Fundraising and attracting investment
    - What kind of grants do you have available to you and what donors/partners do you have? Map out potential funding opportunities and connect mentee to potential partners in mentor's network.
    - What is the business environment in your country? Are there barriers to investment?
    - What makes investing in your business attractive? How can you advertise that?
  - Budgeting
    - What is the overall income of your business/organization, and what are the costs associated with it? Work to develop a working budget for his/her organization and to set financial goals.
    - Work to identify areas where mentee can reduce costs or to develop key partnerships to secure funding or in-kind donations (e.g. free office space, supplies, etc.).
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- Product development from idea to market
  - Work to conduct a market analysis of mentee’s product, including: costs and margins, assessing the market for the product, product testing, launch and advertising, and obtaining consumer feedback to improve the product.
- Proposal writing
  - Work to develop a proposal for funding. Are you tailoring the proposal to the appropriate audience? Have you thought about what they already know and what they are expecting to learn from the proposal?
  - Should you use jargon or stick to simplified language? Should the tone be passionate or stick to the facts?
- Developing an Executive Board/Board of Advisors
  - What kind of expertise do you need, and what kind of partnerships do you want to cultivate?
  - How will you structure the board, and what are the by-laws?
  - What decisions can the Board make without your input? What do they need to consult you on?
- Ensuring transparency and accountability
  - How are decisions made within your business/organization, and are there ways to make your organization more transparent, for example by soliciting greater input from staff?
  - Who is in charge of the budget, and is it transparent? Do you publish an annual report that outlines the financial decisions you have made in the past year?
  - How do people get hired or promoted in your business/organization? Are there hiring and promotions standards in place, and do you have salary standards?

## Activities

- Sector-specific panel discussions
- Networking events
- Local conferences
- Site visits to other similar or relevant organizations/companies

## Training Workshops

- Tailoring your resume to different cultures, audiences, and companies/organizations
  - Perfecting the elevator pitch
  - Writing cover letters
  - Practicing interviews
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## LITERATURE AND OTHER READING ON MENTORING

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### General Links

United States Office of Personnel Management – Best Practices in Mentoring:

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/training-and-development/career-development/bestpractices-mentoring.pdf>

AACEI Mentoring Orientation:

[http://www.aacei.org/career/mentor/Mentoring\\_Presentation/player.html](http://www.aacei.org/career/mentor/Mentoring_Presentation/player.html)

Mentoring.org

Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition: [http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring\\_1222.pdf](http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_1222.pdf)

How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program: [http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring\\_413.pdf](http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_413.pdf)

### Links for Cross-Cultural/Gender Mentoring

Brigham and Women's Hospital:

[http://www.brighamandwomens.org/Medical\\_Professionals/career/CFDD/MentoringToolkit/Ch4\\_MentoringToolkit.pdf](http://www.brighamandwomens.org/Medical_Professionals/career/CFDD/MentoringToolkit/Ch4_MentoringToolkit.pdf)

Herminia Ibarra, Nancy M. Carter, and Christine Silva. "Why Men Still Get More Promotions Than Women." Harvard Business Review, September 2010: 1-6.

Karine Mangion, Regent's College London:

<http://regentsthoughtleadership.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/article-leadership-thoughts-short-version-karine-mangion2.pdf>

Kram, Connie J. G. Gersick and Kathy E. "High-Achieving Women at Midlife." Journal of Management Inquiry, 2002: 104-127.

David G. Smith and W. Brad Johnson, "Men Can Improve How They Mentor Women. Here's How." Harvard Business Review, December 2016:

[https://hbr.org/2016/12/men-can-improve-how-they-mentor-women-heres-how?utm\\_campaign=harvardbiz&utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_medium=social](https://hbr.org/2016/12/men-can-improve-how-they-mentor-women-heres-how?utm_campaign=harvardbiz&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social)

### Links for Women's Leadership

National Democratic Institute's tools for women leaders in politics:

<https://www.ndi.org/dcc-leadership201>

UN Global Compact's Women's Empowerment Principles:

<http://weprinciples.org/Site/PrincipleOverview/>

Coady International Institute's case studies on women leaders:

<http://www.coady.stfx.ca/themes/women/publications/>

UN Women publications:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications>

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## General Literature

Murphy, Ellen Ensher and Susan. *Power Mentoring: How Successful Mentors and Proteges Get the Most out of Their Relationships*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley and Sons, 2005.

Stone, Florence. *The Mentoring Advantage: Creating the Next Generation of Leaders*. Dearborn Trade Publishing, 2004.

Zachary, Lois J. *The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships, Second Edition*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012.

## Literature About Mentorships with Someone from a Different Race/Ethnicity

Robin J. Ely, Debra E. Meyerson, and Martin N. Davidson. "Rethinking Political Correctness." *Harvard Business Review*, 2006: 78-87.

Stacy Blake-Beard, Audrey Murrell, and David Thomas. "Unfinished Business: The Impact of Race on Understanding Mentoring Relationships." *Harvard Business School*, 2006.

Thomas, David A. "The Truth About Mentoring Minorities: Race Matters." *Harvard Business Review*, 2001: 98-107.

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