

# Go together

## Mentoring Program: Suggested Agreement

The first step in your mentoring partnership is to discuss the parameters of your relationship - a contract if you will. There is no need to get bogged down in detail, instead, use this as an opportunity to discuss with each other your expectations and desired outcomes as well as agreed 'rules' (e.g. around frequency and type of communication). We encourage you to write this down when you agree to it and to use the 'contract' to guide you through your experience. You can use this document as a guide for your contract.

This is an agreement between mentor and mentee and you are under no obligation to share it with the program coordinator.

### Agreed Objectives

We recommend that you each set objectives for your participation and discuss them with each other. This will help to create an open relationship and allow you to understand each other's motivations. Please focus on setting objectives that are achievable within the timeframe of your participation. You can set more than three, but we recommend not setting too many.

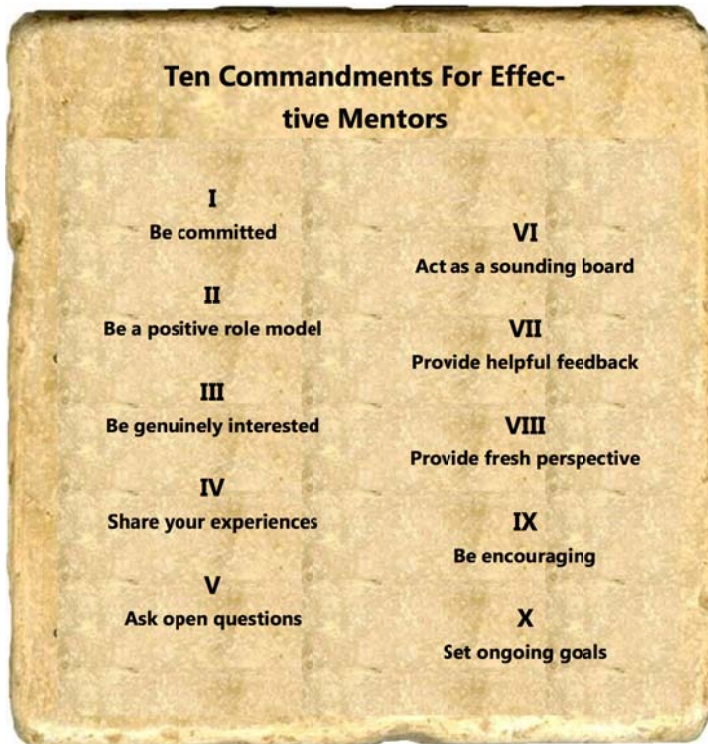
Mentor	Mentee
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

### Communication

How frequent will your communication be?
What will your main method of communication be? (phone, email, face to face)?
Are there any methods of communication that you agree are inappropriate?
What action do you agree to take in the event of lost communication? (e.g. make one phone call then escalate to Program Co-ordinator?)
When things don't go according to plan: outline your agreed plan for how you will respond when things don't go according to your agreed plan.
<i>Please keep in mind that this does happen, it is not necessarily a reflection of personal failing but more often a case of mismatched expectations or a change of situation.</i>

For questions, escalation or assistance, please email Vic ICT for Women: [enquiries@vicictforwomen.com.au](mailto:enquiries@vicictforwomen.com.au)

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## Establishing your relationship

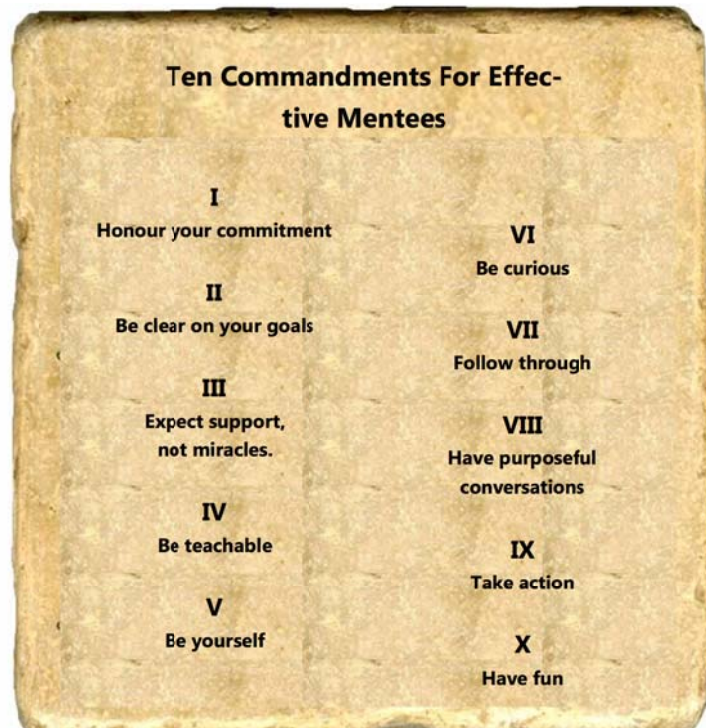
Establish the expectations of your relationship in the first meeting. Ensure that both partners are satisfied with what is agreed. At no time is this mentoring relationship expected to be a job searching activity.

Suggestions regarding session structure:

- Talk about current career state
- Work through the plan
- Review and evaluate what has been achieved
- Discuss forward goals for next session
- Note any tasks or research to be done
- Agree on time, date and place of next meeting (or time of virtual communication)

Both parties must seek to build trust by being open, respectful and responsible. A combination of trust and high quality feedback sets the stage for maximum learning and maximum support or change. Be responsible for your own reactions and share only what you are capable of handling. Avoid information dumps. Work together to define goals for your mentoring relationship, and hold each other accountable to those goals throughout the year.

The successful mentoring relationship demands a high level of confidentiality. Unless otherwise agreed, assume that all conversations are confidential. Be on the side of caution and seek permission before sharing information with others.



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## First contact

One of the keys to a successful Mentor/Mentee relationship is to set some ground rules and stick to them. Sit down with your prospective Mentee and discuss the expectations of both parties, i.e., what do you and the Mentee expect to get out of the relationship?

### Optional ground rules

1. Discuss how often you will get together. Will you meet for lunch once a week or for an hour several times a month? It is important that you create an actual meeting schedule and stick to it.
2. Next, set some guidelines and limitations. How often can your Mentee call? Is it OK for them to call your mobile phone, or would you prefer text or e-mail contact? Can they drop by your office anytime? Can they call you at home after 5 p.m.?
3. If you both agree, set some goals for the Mentee to help the Mentee grow, personally and professionally. Have them outline their business goals in writing. Then set milestones and hold them accountable for reaching them.

## Conversation tools

A standard tool used by professionals to draw out a person and help them talk is the use of Open-ended questioning. Combining these with the use of non-verbal encouragement, such as eye contact, nods and responsive language, reduces the likelihood of a Yes/No or single syllable answer and will assist conversation flow. The following examples are drawn from a media guide for potential journalists, but are useful and applicable in many situations.

### Open-ended Questions

An open-ended question is designed to encourage a full, meaningful answer using the subject's own knowledge and/or feelings. It is the opposite of a closed-ended question, which encourages a short or single-word answer. Open-ended questions also tend to be more objective and less leading than closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions typically begin with words such as "Why" and "How", or phrases such as "Tell me about..." Often they are not technically a question, but a statement, which implicitly asks for a response.



## Example questions

### Closed-Ended Questions

- Do you get on well with your boss?
- Who will you vote for this election?
- What colour shirt are you wearing?

### Open-Ended Questions

- Tell me about your relationship with your boss.
- What do you think about the two candidates in this election?
- That's an interesting coloured shirt you're wearing.

Perhaps the most famous (or infamous) open-ended question is "How does this make you feel?" or some variation thereof. This has become a cliché in both journalism and therapy. The reason it is so widely used is that it's so effective.

## Contact Us

VicICT for Women

[enquiries@vicictforwomen.com.au](mailto:enquiries@vicictforwomen.com.au)

Visit us on the web:  
<http://www.vicictforwomen.com.au>

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### **Concluding the relationship**

All VicICT4W Mentoring relationships will conclude at the specified time. Once the relationship concludes you will be asked to provide feedback via an evaluation survey. Your honesty and reflection will ensure the program grows and maintains relevancy in today's ICT workforce. Mentors will be encouraged to continue their relationship with a new Mentee in subsequent iterations of the program, and Mentees will be encouraged to consider their own capabilities of becoming a future Mentor for the program.

### **No fault closure**

It's important to note that sometimes circumstances mean that a pairing cannot continue, therefore a Mentor or Mentee can conclude the relationship before the agreed closing date if required. This may be unavoidable due to changes in employment conditions or roles, or if either or both of you are no longer benefiting from the relationship. In the case of the termination of the mentoring relationship there will be no further obligation on either party. Additionally, VicICT4W makes no obligation to find another partner. However, we will assist where we can.

A no fault closure e-mail will be issued by the Program Co-ordinator if the Mentee does not contact the Mentor for a period of two months. This will release the Mentor back into the resource pool and allow a rematch if the opportunity arises.