Being authentic is vital for establishing any mentorship relationship.

With the new year in full swing, my focus this month is on personal and professional growth. Over the years, one of the most powerful forces of growth that I’ve engaged with has been mentorship. From my father to Wallace Wattles to Wayne Dyer, my mentors have shaped my life. Thinking back on their impact inspired me to dig deeper into the concept. Let’s talk a little about the different aspects of mentorship and what they can be.

**Mentor, Mentee, and Reverse Mentor: How to be the best at each**

When I began formulating my thoughts about mentorship, I immediately thought of my father. He taught me not just about life but also about the value of having a mentor. Our relationship has lead me to seek other mentors and teachers throughout my life.  
   
Being on both sides of mentorship has shaped my career, so I know that these kinds of relationships are very different than one might have with a father, friend, or colleague. There’s a different kind of work involved, regardless of whether you’re a mentor, a mentee, or the relationship for you is something unique—like a reverse mentor.  
   
The guiding principle of mentorship is learning. It seems obvious, but in a professional context, motivations can get blurry. Approaching from a context of learning ensures that both mentor and mentee are well-intentioned. More importantly, learning guarantees positive growth.  
   
So, what are the most important things a mentor can do, a mentee can do, and how can we succeed in a reverse mentor relationship?  
   
For a mentor, the most important thing to me is seeking understanding. Seeking understanding is a strong way to display commitment to the relationship. Your advice shouldn’t just be canned solutions you think your mentee needs to hear. Instead, listen for and ask questions that will give you a deeper understanding of what your mentee is going through and why they are experiencing this problem. There is almost always an underlying circumstance that can more deeply inform the advice you offer.  
   
As a mentee, the biggest key is checking your ego. If you check your ego and approach mentorship with humility, from a context of learning, everything becomes an opportunity for growth. To receive feedback from a mentor properly and apply it to your life and work in the most positive ways, your ego needs to be fully disengaged.  
   
In a reverse mentorship, the typical roles of the older generation mentoring the younger generation are reversed and you find yourself moving from your more comfortable role as mentor or mentee to the opposite one. The most productive thing you can do if you are more experienced and used to being the mentor is being open to having your mind changed. Your worldview is likely very different than a Millennial’s. Gleaning a youthful perspective and opening yourself up to a dramatically different worldview will help you think about problems more effectively and devise more pointed solutions.  
   
Mentorship has resulted in some of the most meaningful and impactful relationships in my life. I speak from experience when I say it’s a truly rewarding endeavor, but only with the right approach. If mentorship matters to you, be sure to read my [blog series on mentorship](https://coreykupfer.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=b71856720cc9639d191092834&id=318fb5a2be&e=1e2b7c669c).  
   
Here you can check out some of the mentors who shaped my life and career: [https://coreykupfer.com/resources/](https://coreykupfer.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=b71856720cc9639d191092834&id=a0c19ae543&e=1e2b7c669c)