

## ANSWERS FOR MENTORS

“Answers for Mentors” provides expert answers to questions mentors frequently ask. Information spans from basic questions about mentoring to advanced skills and strategies mentors can use to take their mentoring to a higher level.

### What is the difference between a “mentor” and a “tutor”?

The word “mentor” comes from Greek mythology. Mentor was the friend to whom Odysseus entrusted his son. He was an instructor, a moral example, and a wise, loyal advisor. In today’s school culture, mentors: are interested friends who share activities, during and after school hours, offering individual attention, fun, and guidance in life skills to a student who is in need of those things. Sometimes mentors also assist with schoolwork. Tutors, on the other hand, give academic help in a friendly fashion, usually during or immediately after school. Some tutors develop mentoring relationships with their students over time.

For more information on the role of a mentor visit the website for the National Mentoring Partnership at [www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org).

#### References

*The National Mentoring Partnership available at [www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org).*

### Why do people mentor?

Mentors often report that they get a lot more out of their mentoring relationship than they feel they could ever give. It is a truly rewarding experience to have a positive influence on a young person’s life. The following lists gives some reasons why people mentor:

- Mentoring is a rewarding experience because you can really make a difference in someone else’s life.  
*A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove. But the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child”*  
--Mary Futrel, National Education Association
- Mentoring allows you to learn more about yourself. It is an opportunity for personal learning and growth because as you explore the meaning of life’s experiences with your mentee you reflect on your own life and growth experiences.
- Mentoring allows you to give back and contribute to the future. Remember those who made a difference in your life? Mentoring allows you to repay that debt and make the world a better place  
*Mentors not only touch someone’s life, they have the potential to touch and change the life of a nation.*  
--Newsweek “How to Be a Great Mentor”
- Mentoring is an opportunity to have fun while doing something worthwhile. You and your mentee will enjoy laughs, school events, sport events, community events, etc. together.

### What does it mean that my mentee is considered “at risk”?

Most every child in today’s society is “at-risk” to some degree or another. Your mentee is probably a child with more “at-risk” than the average child (or else he wouldn’t have requested or been recommended for a mentor).

The following indicators are commonly noted in at-risk children:

- Poverty- most likely factor to put a person at risk for drug abuse, teen pregnancy, child abuse, violence, and school failure (Benard, 1997).
- Neglect
- Abuse (physical, emotional, sexual)
- Physical handicaps
- Learning disabilities
- Mental illness in the family
- Alcoholic in the family
- Criminality of parents
- Family violence
- Insufficient guidance or motivation from caregivers
- Single parent home
- Inappropriate parenting styles
- Death of parents or grandparents
- Divorce
- Separation of parents
- Illness of parent or sibling
- Moving, family or friends
- Abandonment
- Suicide committed by a family member or friend
- Remarriage of a parent
- Homelessness
- Poor health (child or family member)
- Disabled family member
- Primary language at home different than that used by the primary culture
- Parent’s loss of a job or income

Schorr & Schorr (1988) report that when a child faces many risk factors, the chance of a favorable outcome is greatly reduced. For example, when children are faced with multiple issues such as family violence and substance abuse, compounded by the risks of living in poverty, they are more likely to be adversely affected because these issues intensify each other (Weinreb, 1997).

#### References

Benard, B. (1997). *Turning it all around for all youth: From risk to resilience*. Located at <http://eric-web.tc.Columbia.edu/digests/dig126.html>.

Schorr, L., & Schorr, D. (1988). *Within our reach: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage*. New York: Doubleday.

Weinreb, M. L. (1997). Be a resiliency mentor: You may be a lifesaver for a high-risk child. *Young Children* 53(2), 14-20.

### Why do some at-risk students “make it” while others do not?

Many at-risk children (i.e., children exposed to various forms of adversity) grow up to enjoy productive, normal lives, even though some may suffer silent anguish and emotional wounds in some area of their lives (Werner, 1993). Research indicates that fifty percent of at-risk children grow up to be confident, competent, and caring adults (Weinreb, 1997). The difference between at-risk students who “make it” and those who don’t is due to something called resilience.

All humans are born with innate resilience. Werner & Smith (1982) describe resilience as a “self-righting mechanism” meaning that all individuals have the power to transform and change. Other expert definitions of resilience include:

1. “The capacity to cope effectively with vulnerabilities” (Werner & Smith, 1982, p. 4)
2. A universal capacity that allows a child to prevent, minimize, or overcome the damaging effects of adversity (Seng, 1997)
3. The ability to bounce back from adversity and adapt successfully
4. “The human capacity and ability to face, overcome, be strengthened by, and even be transformed by experiences of adversity” ([www.resilnet.uiuc.edu](http://www.resilnet.uiuc.edu))
5. The quality in children, who, though exposed to significant stress and adversity in their lives, do not succumb to the school failure, substance abuse, mental health problems and juvenile delinquency predicted for them
6. Relies on a fundamental belief in every person’s capacity for successful transformation and change, no matter what their life’s circumstance

For those children who develop well, specific protective conditions seem to serve as buffers and are determinants of resilient development. (Werner & Smith, 1982). See the answer to [“What kind of support system benefits at-risk children?”](#) to learn more about what factors serve as buffers.

To learn more about what factors cause a child to be at risk read the article, “Who are the at-risk children of the 1990’s?” by Hixson & Tinzman (1990) available at [http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/rpl\\_esys/equity.htm](http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/rpl_esys/equity.htm).

#### References

Hixson, J., & Tinzmann, M. (1990). *Who are the at-risk children of the 1990’s?* North Central Regional Library available at [http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/rpl\\_esys/equity.htm](http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/rpl_esys/equity.htm).

*ResilienceNet: Information for helping children and families overcome adversities* available at <http://resilnet.uiuc.edu>.

Seng, S. (1997). *Developing resiliency in young children*. Paper presented at the Asian Workshop on Child and Adolescent Development (9<sup>th</sup>, Brunei, September 22-25).

Weinreb, M. L. (1997). Be a resiliency mentor: You may be a lifesaver for a high-risk child. *Young Children* 53(2), 14-20.

Werner, E., & Smith, R. (1982). *Vulnerable but invincible: A longitudinal study of resilient children and youth*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Werner, E. (1993). Risk, resilience, and recovery: Perspectives from Kauai longitudinal study. *Development and Psychopathology*, 9(4), 503-15.

### What kind of support system benefits at-risk children?

The stronger the support system an at-risk child has, the more resilient he will be to any adverse challenges he faces. The following information describes how a sense of resourcefulness, personal characteristics and traits, family factors, opportunities for involvement, and the community can function as buffers to adversity for at-risk children allowing them to bring out their innate resiliency (i.e., the ability to bounce back from adversity and adapt successfully).

#### Sense of Resourcefulness

To overcome adversities, children draw from three following sources of resilience features labeled: I Have, I Am, I Can (Source: <http://resilnet.uiuc.edu>): The “I Have” section describes supportive roles that mentors could fulfill for an at-risk child. The “I Am” section describes attitudes that at-risk children can develop given opportunities to experience success. The “I Can” section describes life-skills that mentors can teach mentees.

#### I Have

- People around me I trust and who love me, no matter what
- People who set limits for me so I know when to stop before there is danger or trouble
- People who show me how to do things right by the way they do things
- People who want me to learn to do things on my own
- People who help me when I am sick, in danger or need to learn

#### I Am

- A person people can like and love
- Glad to do nice things for others and show my concern
- Respectful of myself and others
- Willing to be responsible for what I do
- Sure things will be all right

#### I Can

- Talk to others about things that frighten me or bother me
- Find ways to solve problems that I face
- Control myself when I feel like doing something not right or dangerous
- Figure out when it is a good time to talk to someone or to take action

### Personal Characteristics and Traits

Although we are born with basic personal characteristics and traits, we also have the power within us to transform undesirable characteristics and traits into positive ones. Resilient children have developed the following personal characteristics and traits:

- Resilient children are children who have hope and a positive outlook that they can deal with problems. See "[How can I teach my mentee problem-solving skills?](#)" to learn how to teach your mentee this skill.
- Many resilient children have good self-esteem. Building self-esteem in young children is a fundamental ingredient of any intervention procedure.
- Required helpfulness (a sense that they are needed in their "world") vs. learned helplessness (an over reliance on others)
- A pronounced sense of independence and social ability

### Family Factors

The functional health of the family system of an at-risk child can greatly help or hinder a child. A strong supportive family can affect the resiliency of an at-risk child positively.

- Have had the opportunity to form a warm bond with a responsive caregiver
- Often come from homes in which firm and consistently enforced rules and limits are applied, good supervision

### Opportunities for Involvement

In today's society, children are not often given opportunities to make real contributions to their "world." As a result, children often feel unneeded or unnecessary. Providing at-risk children with real opportunities to make meaningful contributions to their "world" by being involved in social groups, being responsible for duties at home and school, and so forth, helps children feel truly needed.

- Strong support exists for the notion that if a child makes a contribution to his/her social network, it facilitates the development of resilience. Such actions help children feel good about them selves and develop a sense of ownership and commitment.
- Special skills or interests provide children with an opportunity internalize a source of pride and self-esteem.
- When children find a haven and source of self-esteem in hobbies and creative interests, a protective buffer develops.

### Community Supports

Adults in the community can have a great impact on at-risk children by serving as positive role models, providing advice and guidance when needed, etc.

- Enriched child care and school experiences
- Neighbors and religious and community leaders can be very influential, especially when the child's problems originate in the family
- Teachers can have an enduring and profound effect on the children they teach
- Mentors can have an enduring and profound effect on the children they mentor

To learn more about fostering resilience in at-risk children, visit ResilienceNet at <http://resilnet.uiuc.edu>.

#### References

*ResilienceNet: Information for helping children and families overcome adversities* available at <http://resilnet.uiuc.edu>.

#### How can I help my at-risk mentee “beat the odds” and develop into a capable person?

As a mentor you can help an at-risk child “beat the odds.” Resilience is a process of promoting healthy human development, meeting the basic human needs for caring and connectedness, for giving respect, posing challenges, providing structure, planning opportunities for meaningful involvement to promote a sense of belonging and power. We know that a nurturing environment that meets our basic needs enables us to directly access our innate resilience. As mentors, we have the power to become “a protective shield” for youth. Tapping into *innate* resilience means that you make the shift from “fixing the child” to “creating a healthy system” that fosters resiliency. The following quotes address the potential for making a difference in a child’s life:

- *“Human potential, though not always apparent, is always there- waiting to be discovered and invited forth”.*  
--Purkey & Stanley, 1995
- *“In every child who is born, under no matter what circumstances, and no matter what parents, the potentiality of the human race is born.”*  
-- Agee, 1960”
- *“You might be a life raft for a child experiencing threatening risks and highly stressful life events. And you might never know it. Can you dare to care for a child you suspect (or know) lives with big-time troubles? Can you shower this child with nurturance? Maybe you will turn the tide for her.”*  
--Maxine Weinreb, Child Witness to Violence Project at Boston Medical Center

#### Fostering Mentee’s Resilience

*Nobody can change yesterday, but everybody can change today.*

–Dr. Laura Schlessinger

Mentors have the power to transform lives by modeling the following three protection factors that buffer risk and enable positive development by meeting youth’s basic needs for safety, love and belonging, respect, power, accomplishment and learning, and ultimately, for meaning (Bernard, 1991): To accomplish this, do the following things for your mentee:

- **Model What a Caring Relationship Is-** the presence of at least one caring person, who understands that no matter how awful a child’s behavior, the child is doing the best he or she can given his or her experience, provides support for healthy development and learning

- Hold Positive and High Expectations for Your Mentee- Research has shown that the higher the expectations for a child, the higher achievement will be. Keep in mind, however, that your mentee must also be given the necessary support she needs to meet your expectations.
- Ensure Your Mentee Has Opportunities to Participate and Contribute- Humans have a need to participate in and contribute to a community. Do what you can to make sure your mentee is involved in school activities and groups as well as extra-curricular activities.

#### References

Agee, J., & Evans, W. (1960). *Let us now praise famous men*. Cambridge: Riverside Press.

Bernard, B. (1991) *Fostering resiliency in kids: Protective factors in the family, school, and community*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Purkey, W., & Stanley, P. (1995). *Invitational Calendar: 1995-96 School Year*. Greensboro, NC: International Alliance for Invitational Education.

Weinreb, M. L. (1997). Be a resiliency mentor: You may be a lifesaver for a high-risk child. *Young Children* 53(2), 14-20.

#### What qualities do effective mentors exhibit?

(Adapted from source: [www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org))

- Effective mentors have a sincere desire to be involved with a young person.
  - They want to be a part of another person's life, to help their mentee pursue personal interests, to achieve personal goals, and to handle tough decisions. A mentor should be dedicated long enough to make a difference.
- Effective mentors respect young people.
  - They don't treat their mentee as if they need to be "rescued." Instead, effective mentees convey a sense of respect and equal dignity in the relationship to win the trust of their mentees and the privilege of being advisors to them.
- Effective mentors actively listen to their mentees.
  - It is relatively easy to give advice or express your opinion with a mentee. It's much harder to suspend your judgment and really listen. It is most helpful to sincerely listen, ask thoughtful questions, and give mentee an opportunity to explore his own thoughts with minimum interference. When mentees feel accepted unconditionally, they are more likely to ask for and respond to good ideas. See the answer to "[How can I convey to my mentee that I am really listening to him/her?](#)" to learn valuable tips for listening.
- Effective mentors empathize with their mentees.
  - Empathy means you understand what someone else is going through. Showing empathy to another person, however does not involve you getting caught up in the problems yourself.

- Effective mentors see solutions and opportunities.
  - Because of their distance from the problem, mentors are often able to maintain optimism and make sense of a jumble of issues and point out sensible alternatives to their mentees.
- Effective mentors are flexible and open.
  - As a mentor, you need to be willing to take the time needed to get to know your mentee, learn new things that are important to their mentee, and to be changed by the relationship.

#### References

*The National Mentoring Partnership* available at [www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org).

#### How can I convey to my mentee that I am really listening to him/her?

By implementing the following tips, you ensure that your mentee knows you are truly listening because you affirm what you heard. Unfortunately, people rarely feel that they have been listened to and understood. Truly listening to someone else can be a powerful thing!

1. Stay focused on your mentee while he is talking. Pay close attention to what he is saying until it is your turn to talk
2. Make sure you understand what your mentee is trying to say by doing the following:
  - a. Summarize in your own words what you think he said. (e.g., “So you are saying, that you had a hard time with that test. Is that right?”).
  - b. Reflect back to see if you understand how your mentee feels (“It sounds like you felt really frustrated.”)
3. Maintain eye contact as you and your mentee converse.

#### What should my goal or objectives be as a mentor?

When you have a clear idea of what your goals are as a mentor, you will more than likely help your mentee experience greater success. Your goal should be more general in nature. Your goal may be, “To be a positive influence in my mentee’s life.” Setting objectives will help you achieve your goal. Objectives are much more specific than goals. To determine your objectives, periodically reflect on what is going on in the life of your mentee and determine some clear ideas of what you can do to you’re your mentee address any challenges. Examples of possible objectives working to the goal above might be:

- “I will tutor my mentee in math.”
- “I will read aloud books on successful women in science to my mentee.”
- “I will establish open lines of communication channels with my mentee’s caregivers.”

#### How can I help my mentee improve his/her academic performance?

To help your mentee improve his or her academic performance, the first thing you must do is express your high and positive expectations. Research has shown that children tend to “live up” to the expectations of others, whether positive or negative. Follow up your statements of positive expectations by telling your mentee that you

believe that they are capable of meeting those expectations. Make sure that you offer your mentee encouragement as they aspire to meet those expectations. Praise your mentee when he makes progress and cheer him on when progress eludes him. Finally, it is not enough just to expect success from your mentee. Children must be given any the supports necessary for them to achieve. This may involve arranging tutoring sessions for your mentee after school. To learn about specific instructional strategies that you can use to help your mentee learn specific academic skills, search the “Applied Instructional Strategies” database on this site: [www.ibinder.uwf.edu](http://www.ibinder.uwf.edu).

In summary, sending the following messages to your mentee will help him improve his academic performance:

- This work is important
- I know you can do it
- I won't give up on you
- I will help you in your efforts.

### [How important am I as a role model for my mentee?](#)

The strongest influence you will have on your mentee is simply put-- the person you are. You will be a role model for your mentee, whether you want to or not, and whether you are a positive role model or not. According to social learning theorists and cognitive scientists, it is through modeling, not direct teaching, that most human learning occurs (Bandura, 1977; Pearce, 1991; Strayhorn, 1988). With this fact in mind, it is important that you serve as a genuine positive role model for your mentee. If you want your help your mentee to be more responsible, but often fail to keep appointments with your mentee yourself, you are doing a poor job of modeling responsibility and it is very unlikely that your mentee will become more responsible himself.

### References

- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: prentice Hall.
- Pearce, J.C. (1992). *Evolution's end: Claiming the potential of our intelligence*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.
- Strayhorn, J. (1988). *The Complete child: An approach to psychotherapy and preventive mental health*. New York: Guilford Press.

### [How can I help my mentee develop goals and objectives?](#)

In the Alice and Wonderland story, Alice asks the Cheshire cat which way she should go. The cat replies, “That depends on where you are going.” To which Alice says, “It doesn't really matter.” The cat then explains, “Then it doesn't really matter which way you go.” What is the moral of this story? If you don't know where you're going, any road will do. At-risk children often have not considered where they want to go, that is, determined what their personal goals are. For this reason, they often fail to find meaning in their school studies and the activities they choose to participate in.

You can help your mentee a great deal by teaching her the importance of goal setting and how to set attainable goals and objectives. Use the following information to teach your mentee what they need to know about goals and objectives:

- Goal- A goal describes the direction you are headed in over the next several years. Goals are long-term by nature, not short-term and take an extended period of time to achieve.
- Objectives- Objectives are the smaller steps you take to progress toward your goal(s). Use the following mnemonic device to teach your mentee how to formulate “smart” objectives:
  - “S”pecific- What precisely has to happen?
  - “M”easurable- How will I know if I’ve achieved this objective?
  - “A”ttainable- Is this a realistic objective?
  - “R”esult-oriented- Will accomplishing this objective move me toward my goal?
  - “T”ime-limited- Did I include a due date or time limit?
- Study the following example of an objective that contains the “smart” characteristics: “I will join my school’s tennis team (specific) this term (time limit) and play in at least three tournaments (measurable).” This objective was attainable for this child because she had played tennis before and team membership is open to anyone interested in playing. The objective was also result-oriented because it helped this child work toward her long-term goal of becoming more active in her school’s athletic programs.
- Goals and objectives should be directly related. If your mentee’s long-term goal is to make the honor roll in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, he may set the following two short-term objectives to help him achieve that goal: 1) Begin studying at least two days before every test. 2) Bring math grade up from a B to an A by attending free math tutoring sessions after school.
- Encourage your mentee to actually write her goals and objectives down on paper and to keep them posted in a visible place so they can be reminded of their goals and objectives on a regular basis. A study of the Amway Corporation revealed that the only difference between their top 15 percent salespeople and the lower 85 percent, was that the top 15 percent had set goals and objectives for themselves. Within that top 15 percent, the only difference between the top 3 percent and the lower 12 percent was that the top 3 percent had physically written their goals and objectives down on paper. This demonstrates the power of committing your ideas to paper.

### [How can I help my mentee learn from his/her mistakes?](#)

Many children do not realize that most problems contain cause and effect elements. For example, doing poorly on a math test (effect), may be the result of not spending enough time studying (cause). Although the causal relationship may seem obvious to you, it may not to your mentee. Understanding that effects have causes, will help your mentee realize that he has great control over his circumstances. If he runs 2 miles a day, he will get in shape for his upcoming track meet, if he doesn’t, he will very likely do poorly at the track meet. To help your mentee learn from his mistakes try asking the following questions about any mistake he has made:

1. What happened? (effect)
2. Why did this happen? (cause)
3. How can I use what I learned?

It is important to ask the third question, “How can I use what I learned?” so that your mentee learns not to be afraid of failure and to use failures as opportunities for learning. Here is an example of how one mentor used these three questions to help her mentee learn from her mistakes.

1. What happened? “I got after-school detention for talking back to my teacher.”
2. Why did this happen? “I was angry at my brother, but took it out on my teacher instead.”
3. How can I use what I learned? “I learned I need to resolve conflict with the person I am angry with and not lash out at others. If I can’t work my differences with another person on my own, I can go talk to the school counselor, so I won’t blow up at others.”

### How can I teach my mentee problem-solving skills?

Dealing with problems more effectively is something that can be learned. It helps to analyze problems before trying to figure out what to do to solve them. Help your mentee develop problem solving skills by walking them through the following steps with specific problems they may encounter. Examples are included to illustrate each step.

1. Define the problem- “My conduct grade is poor.”
2. Define success in solving problem- “My conduct grade would be at least a C.”
3. Generate alternatives- “Identify what conduct is getting me in trouble most often, ask my teacher to move me away from Kenny my “partner in crime”, reward myself every day I don’t have to pull a ticket, write a note on my desktop to remind me not to talk without permission”
4. Evaluate alternatives- (help mentee choose the top alternatives that make the most sense to try) “ I will try posting a reminder note on desk and asking the teacher to move my desk to a different part of room.”
5. Agree on action- (make an action plan for implementing chosen alternatives by breaking actions down into specific steps) “I will write the note tonight when I get home and post it on my desk tomorrow morning. My mentor will talk to my teacher about moving my desk.”
6. Schedule follow-up- (set up a time to review the issue after the solution has had a fair chance to work, if problem not solved go back to reevaluating alternatives) “My behavior grade for this past week went up from a D to a B, my plan must be working.”

### What can my mentee’s body language tell me?

Your mentee’s nonverbal communication can be as powerful as the words they use. Learning to “read” your mentee’s body language can improve communicate between the two of you. Possible meanings for different body language follows:

- Your mentee is probably open to your ideas if he keeps his arms unfolded, turns toward you while you are talking, and keeps his hands in sight.
- If your mentee looks away, avoiding eye contact, he is probably upset, experiencing discomfort, or feeling disagreeable.
- If your mentee is really interested in what you are saying, he will tend to move closer to you.

- If your mentee crosses his arms, he is probably feeling angry or defensive.
- Your mentee may put his head in his hands if he is upset or fatigued.
- If your mentee agrees with what you are saying, he will tend to mimic your own body position while talking.
- If your mentee backs away or tilts his chair back while you are talking to him, he is letting you know you are in his “space.”
- If your mentee begins to fidget or tap his foot, he may be expressing boredom or attempting to relieve his anxiety.
- When your mentee covers his eyes or face with his hands, he may be expressing sadness or shame.

You can appropriately respond to your mentee’s body language by asking questions to verify your interpretations (e.g., “You seem stressed out.” or “I’m worried I might have upset you...” and “...is that right?”

### How can I facilitate communication between my mentee and me?

To get your mentee to open up and talk with you practice asking more open-ended questions. Open-ended questions are questions that cannot be answered with “yes” or “no.” They require elaboration of some sort. Close-ended questions, on the other hand, can be answered with “yes” or “no” or a brief word or two.

Examples of close-ended questions:

- Did you have a good day at school?
- Are you good at math?
- Do you like pizza?

Examples of open-ended questions:

- What was your school day like?
- What school subjects are you interested in? Why?
- I’ve always loved pepperoni pizza, how about you?

To see the difference in the degree of communication that is likely to occur using either close- or open-ended questions, compare the following two examples of conversation between a mentor and mentee.

#### Close-ended Conversation

Mentor: Did you have a good day at school?  
 Mentee: Yeah.  
 Mentor: Did you get that math test back?  
 Mentee: Uh huh.  
 Mentor: Did you pass?  
 Mentee: Yeah.  
 Mentor: Do you think our studying together last week helped?  
 Mentee: Maybe.  
 Mentor: Do you want to study together again before your next test?  
 Mentee: Okay.

### Open-ended Conversation

Mentor: What happened at school today?  
 Mentee: I got my math test back.  
 Mentor: How did you do?  
 Mentee: I passed.  
 Mentor: That's great! What was your score?  
 Mentee: I got an 82.  
 Mentor: That's the best you've done on any test so far! What do you think made the difference?  
 Mentee: I think it helped when we studied together for it.  
 Mentor: What can I do to help you do better on your next test?  
 Mentee: Maybe we could study together like we did last time. Can my friend Jim study with us too?

### What are some expert resources that might be useful to me as a mentor?

Remember that there are many resources for help when you need them as a mentor. Struggling on your own, instead of seeking help when you need it, can lead to frustration for you and your mentee. Some valuable resources for mentors you might want to begin with include:

- The staff for the volunteer program you are working under (e.g., school district volunteer office)
- Internet
  - *Resilience Net*: This site is a comprehensive worldwide source of current, reviewed information about resilience- <http://resilnet.uiuc.edu>
  - *The National Mentoring Partnership*: This site provides comprehensive information about mentoring- [www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org).
  - *ibinder*: Find additional information for helping you fulfill your role as a mentor- [www.ibinder.uwf.edu](http://www.ibinder.uwf.edu)
- Books
  - *Raising Self-Reliant Kids in a Self-Indulgent World: Developing Capable Young People* by Glenn & Nelson
  - *Mentoring and the Rites of Passage for Youth* by Ralph Steele
  - *Reclaiming our Prodigal Sons and Daughters: A Practical Approach for Connecting with Youth in Conflict* by Scott Larson and Larry Brendtro
  - *Intensive Caring: Practical Ways to Mentor Youth* by William Hendricks.
- School personnel...teacher, counselor, special ed. teacher, more experienced mentors
- Mentoring Experts: Submit your specific question to "Ask an Expert" at [www.mentoring.com](http://www.mentoring.com)

### What is the best way to end a mentorship?

For different reasons, mentoring relationships sometimes have to come to an end. Some reasons might be when one person has to move from the area, when one's life circumstances change making it too difficult to continue the relationship, the mentoring relationship is just not working despite all efforts, etc. Ending a mentoring relationship

can be upsetting to the mentee. Some strategies for reducing negative reactions include:

- If possible, don't totally cut off the relationship. Talk about how the two of you might keep in touch with each other in the future. You might try writing letters to each other, agree to meet on a less frequent basis, agree to send each other yearly "updates" on a specific holiday, etc.
- Spend time talking about the successes you've experienced together. Consider presenting your mentee with a scrapbook that highlights different things you've done together, photos you've taken of the two of you, documents that demonstrate your mentee's successes (e.g., good grade on a test), etc.
- Plan a "graduation ceremony" of sorts. People often need a sense of closure and planning some type of "rite of passage" can provide that closure for you and your mentee. The ritual need not be elaborate, consider having a special meal together, attending a special event, or anything else the two of you can come up with that reflects what was positive about your relationship.

### References

Agee, J., & Evans, W. (1960). *Let us now praise famous men*. Cambridge: Riverside Press.

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bernard, B. (1991) *Fostering resiliency in kids: Protective factors in the family, school, and community*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Benard, B. (1997). *Turning it all around for all youth: From risk to resilience*. <http://eric-web.tc.Columbia.edu/digests/dig126.html>

Bernard, B. (1993). Fostering resiliency in kids. *Educational Leadership* 51(3), 44-48.

Cesarone, B. (1999). Fostering the resiliency of children. *Childhood Education* 75(3), 182-84.

Garbarino, J. Dubrow, N., Kostelny, K., & Pardo, C. (1991). *Children in danger*. San Francisco: Jossey –Bass.

Garmezy, N. (1985). Stress resistant children: The search for protective factors. In *Recent research in developmental psychopathology*. Ed. J.E. Stevenson, 213-33. New York: Elsevier.

Gelman, D. (1991). The miracle of resiliency. *Newsweek*, summer, pp. 44-47.

Hixson, J., & Tinzmann, M. (1990). *Who are the at-risk children of the 1990's?* North Central Regional Library available at [http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/rpl\\_esys/equity.htm](http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/rpl_esys/equity.htm).

*The National Mentoring Partnership* available at [www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org).

Pearce, J.C. (1992). *Evolution's end: Claiming the potential of our intelligence*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.

Purkey, W., & Stanley, P. (1995). *Invitational Calendar: 1995-96 School Year*. Greensboro, NC: International Alliance for Invitational Education.

*ResilienceNet: Information for helping children and families overcome adversities* available at <http://resilnet.uiuc.edu>.

Sagor, R. (1996). Building resiliency in students. *Educational Leadership*, 54(1), 38-43.

Schorr, L., & Schorr, D. (1988). *Within our reach: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage*. New York: Doubleday.

Seng, S. (1997). *Developing resiliency in young children*. Paper presented at the Asian Workshop on Child and Adolescent Development (9<sup>th</sup>, Brunei, September 22-25).

Strayhorn, J. (1988). *The Complete child: An approach to psychotherapy and preventive mental health*. New York: Guilford Press.

Tarwater, P. (1993). Glass, plastic or steel? *Childhood Education* 69(5), 272-73.

Weinreb, M. L. (1997). Be a resiliency mentor: You may be a lifesaver for a high-risk child. *Young Children* 53(2), 14-20.

Werner, E. (1993). Risk, resilience, and recovery: Perspectives from Kauai longitudinal study. *Development and Psychopathology*, 9(4), 503-15.

Werner, E., & Smith, R. (1992). *Overcoming the odds: high-risk children from birth to adulthood*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Werner, E., & Smith, R. (1982). *Vulnerable but invincible: A longitudinal study of resilient children and youth*. New York: McGraw-Hill.