

Will You Be My Mentor? 4 Archetypes to Help Mentees Succeed in Academic Medicine

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The Traditional Mentor (guides)

- formal, dynamic, reciprocal relationship aimed to promote career growth of both mentor & mentee
- provides feedback on papers, projects, scholarship, and career milestones, usually in frequent hour-long meetings
- resembles professional parenting bond rather than a boss-employee relationship

The Coach (improves)

- strategic advice re: how to improve in particular skill or subject (e.g., stats, writing, job negotiations)
- focus = performance related to specific issue rather than multidimensional growth
- spends less time with mentees; can provide feedback to a larger number of individuals including in group sessions

The Sponsor (nominates)

- uses influence to make mentees more visible; risk reputation when recommending junior colleagues
- rarely directly benefits from a mentee's success; use their position to grow the field and pipeline of talent
- (1) most useful when a promising opportunity presents itself, (2) not necessarily in mentee's field but knows influential individuals within it, (3) motivated by wielding influence to showcase talent, and (4) expects success

The Connector (empowers)

- pairs mentors, coaches, and sponsors with mentees
- networkers w/extensive social & political capital accrued from years of academic success
- less invested in individual mentees; main interest is legacy
- usually senior leader who has affiliations that span professional societies, government, private sector