What the Best Mentors Do

Anthony K. Tjan
Harvard Business Review; February 27, 2017

- **Recognize the importance of the underlying relationship**
  Even the best-designed mentoring programs can evolve into a checkbox procedure; no structure can substitute for a genuine relationship
  Unless mentees have a basic relationship with their mentors, there is no discernible difference between individuals with and without mentors (see publications by Belle Ragins)

- **Help your mentees to develop character rather than competency**
  Focus on values, self-awareness, etc over technical skills or content knowledge

- **Encourage exploration**
  Before you criticize a mentee’s idea, consider all the reasons it might be better than you originally thought

- **Value your mentees above your organization**
  Help your mentees discover their passions; avoid steering them according to anyone else’s ideas or agenda