



Breeder Education Committee

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Mentoring Basics

While there's no definitive approach to mentoring, the following may be helpful to developing a successful mentoring relationship; one that is mutually educational and beneficial to both parties.

- Follow the Golden Rule and treat people the same way you'd like to be treated. Lead by example.
- Good mentors consider different learning styles. Some people learn best when they are allowed to talk with their mentor, others do better when guided by example, and other people do better when guided to find reading material.
- Check in with the person you are mentoring to review their goals and how to achieve them.
- Mentors should not be the conversational lead. Good listening skills are paramount.
- The best mentors provide encouragement and honest criticism. They don't direct; they guide.
- Foster discovery. Thought-provoking questions are more powerful than smart answers.
- Allow for mistakes. They are necessary for growth.
- Put people at ease by being authentic, open and sincere.
- Be a friend; not a dictator.
- Not every pairing is a good match. If your mentoring relationship isn't working, discuss your concerns.
- Be on the lookout for people who exhibit strong leadership skills. Encourage those people to volunteer regionally as well as nationally. People who display energy, commitment, integrity, good decision-making skills and courage are the leaders of tomorrow. Do everything possible to encourage these people.

Keep in touch with the people you have mentored. Both of you can benefit by exchanging ideas, information, and advice. If done well, mentoring can be the beginning of a life long friendship.

Suggested reading material:

- *Mentoring: How to Develop Successful Mentor Behaviors*
by Gordon F. Shea
- *The Elements of Mentoring*
by W. Brad Johnson
- *The Heart of Mentoring: Ten Proven Principles for Developing People to Their Fullest Potential*
by Robert Tamasy