

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT MENTORING

MYTH	FACT
You need a toga to be a mentor	Gone are the days of proteges sitting at the feet of the wise one; you never know who might be a powerful learning influence
Mentoring only happens on a one-to-one, long-term, face-to-face basis	With modern technology mentoring can take place by e-mail, telephone, or fax and may only need a few hours
Taking time to mentor decreases productivity	Mentoring improves productivity through better communication, goal clarity, increased commitment, and succession planning
A mentor needs to be 5-10 years older than the person he/she mentors	Innovations happen so rapidly or personal experience is such a great teacher that younger people often have opportunities to mentor older workers; peers are often effective mentors
Mentoring is a rare experience and only occurs for a few great people	Informal mentoring is probably the most frequent method of transmitting knowledge and wisdom in society; virtually everyone has experienced it
Effective mentoring can take place just by matching an experienced mentor with a compatible mentoree	Matching without monitoring jeopardizes the value of mentoring for all parties
The person being mentored is the only one who benefits from the relationship	For mentoring to be effective, all parties must perceive benefits; this is the principle of mutuality
The best mentors are those who set out to be mentors	The majority of mentoring occurs without conscious knowledge of either party, but it does help to cultivate key mentor attitudes and behaviors