Mentoring Made Easy:

10 Tips for Mentoring Others in Everyday Life

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1. **Encourage the women you meet casually** in every day contacts. Talk to your server at dinner, the medical receptionist, the bank teller, the Wal-Mart clerk. How does she like her job? Is she in school? What's she studying? How much farther does she have to go? How is it going?

2. **Reach out to a woman who is younger or less experienced** with your company. Make it a point to say hello when you get to work. Stop by her desk. Invite her to lunch. Learn more about her. What led her to this job? What does she like about it? What would she change? Where does she want to go next? What does she dream about doing, if she just knew where to start? What is she passionate about?

3. **Call her by name.** Make it a point to ask for her name, and then use it, with respect and warmth in your voice. If you're introducing her to professional peers or potential colleagues, be sure to match the introduction in formality. (That is, use *her* formal last name if you're using *his*.)

4. **Ask her what she needs.** Rather than assume you know what she wants to learn, ask her how you can help. What are her personal and professional goals? How do they mesh with your own experience? What can you offer, and who else do you know who might be able to help her as well?

5. **Show real interest and excitement.** Look at her. Lean forward. Smile. Nod your head. Ask questions. Encourage her to tell you more. Don't be afraid to show your excitement at her potential. When she shares ideas that strike a chord with you, show it!

6. **Say, "*Of course you can*", often.** Women are so often their own worst enemies, doubting themselves and downplaying their contributions at every turn, especially in the Southeastern U.S. Point out her strengths and encourage her to 'own' them. Tell others about her skills and gifts, in her presence.

7. **Teach her to network.** Madeline Albright has said that women are great at making friends, but not at building networks. Take your

protégé to business and professional meetings. Introduce her to colleagues and other contacts. Teach her how to prepare, how to carry herself, what to say, how to follow up.

8. **Challenge her to take risks.** Encourage her to go after opportunities that may seem beyond her. Help her fine tune her skills along the way. Support her if it doesn't work, and praise her if it does. Either way, point out the benefits gained and lessons learned.

9. **Offer constructive criticism.** Many women with real potential but little help in the past may have no idea about things you take for granted. If necessary, teach her about proper dinner etiquette, professional dress, the importance of proper language, how to speak up in a meeting, the subtleties of body language. Avoiding touchy subjects won't help her learn. Just be sensitive and respectful when doing so.

10. Share your own struggles. Let her know about the lessons you've learned the hard way. Tell her about your mistakes, as well as your achievements. Honor your place as role model, by continuing your own professional and personal growth, allowing her to see the steps you take, and the lessons you continue to learn.

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