



## Mentors Look for Diamonds in the Rough

By Becky McCray

You are a mentor. Right now, someone is thinking of you as her role model in some area of her life. Do you think of yourself this way? Have you spent time thinking about how to be a better mentor?

Mary McLeod Bethune said, "Invest in the human soul. Who knows, it may be a diamond in the rough." That is what good mentors do; they look for diamonds in the rough.

Some of the qualities of a successful mentor, as detailed by David Hutchins of the Society for Human Resources Management, include:

- **Genuine interest** in the protégé.
- **Sensitivity to her needs and development.** If you are from different generations, keep in mind that her needs may be different than yours at a similar age.
- **Excellent listening skills.** Listening is frequently our downfall. A group of teen-aged Girl Scouts put it this way: "Listen to us. Don't pepper us with questions. Don't jump in right away when we don't know the answer. Don't act like you have all the answers if we'll just listen to you. Listen!"
- **Time availability.** Think about ways to innovate, or take advantage of time you already have dedicated. Can you add a five-minute mentoring session to your existing BPW meetings?
- **Confidentiality.**
- **Avoidance of dominance, control, or over-protection.** The best tools to achieve this are listening and sensitivity.

Here is the unexpected bonus: improvement of any of these skills will improve your career, as well as your mentoring ability. Along with developing your skills, you can think about the role you fill as a mentor. Hutchins identified these roles:

- Help the protégé through difficult situations.
- Build the self-confidence of the protégé. This is especially important for young women.
- Establish clear, open, two-way communication.
- Compensate for the protégé's lack of experience and skills. If you see her headed for a fall, let her know.
- Provide career guidance.

- Help develop creative and independent thinking. The goal is not for her to rely on you, but to grow.

Everyday you have opportunities to mentor. Watch for chances to fill some of these roles and for opportunities to practice your mentoring skills.

Look around; you may be surrounded by diamonds in the rough. For more information on mentoring, check out the BPW Mentoring Manual on the website.

## Score at Work: How to Be the Team Member Everyone Wants

By Joanne Reichardt, Vice  
President of Randstad North  
American



Women need to know how to best position themselves for workplace success. Here are some tips that will show your eagerness and improve your working relationships.

- 1) **Speak out.** Attend employee meetings and let your workplace opinions be known. Colleagues and management will recognize you as a committed employee who understands and cares about the company.
- 2) **Serve as a mentor.** Take part in training and mentoring new employees. Whether simply alerting a "newbie" about the local café or sharing ideas with a team member, you will foster cooperation and teamwork that will be appreciated by others.
- 3) **Go to the top dogs.** Show your confidence by writing, calling or e-mailing management with on-target ideas. This will raise your visibility within the company.
- 4) **Be a social leader.** Arrange social outings with your co-workers. Getting to know your colleagues on a personal basis will create a new level of comfort and team spirit.
- 5) **Head up a committee.** Showcase your responsibility, reliability and enthusiasm by heading up a committee. Impress your boss with your eagerness to take charge as well as your drive to go beyond the call of duty.

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