

# **Why Mentoring Matters for Developing Diverse, Equity and Inclusion**

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# The Mentor *Myth*

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The character, Mentor, in Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey*, is widely accepted as the namesake of the term *mentor*.

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Before leaving for the Trojan War, Odysseus entrusted guardianship of his household and his son, Telemachus, to his faithful friend, Mentor.

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in Homer's original text, Mentor *did not* naturally exhibit the wise and nurturing behavior historically attributed to him; in fact, he was inept.

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Rather, it was the goddess Athena, known in Greek mythology for her wisdom and compassion who took many forms including Mentor's form to guide and protect Telemachus on his journey.

# Fain & Zachary's Mentoring Assumptions

The mentee knows  
what they want from  
mentoring.

The mentor has the  
answers.

Mentoring doesn't  
require much  
preparation.

The mentee aspires  
to be like the mentor.

The mentor will be  
available whenever  
the mentee needs.

The mentor knows  
how to be a good  
mentor.

The mentee will  
dedicate the time  
necessary for  
effective mentoring.

Mentoring is organic  
and just develops  
over time.



# The Reality About Mentoring

- Mentoring is the process of forming, cultivating and maintaining mutually beneficial developmental relationships between one or more mentors and one or more protégés.
- Mentoring involves developmental networks as a group of people who take interest in and action to support and/or advance an individual's career, personal and/or professional development.
- Mentoring involves dynamic relationships that have different purposes or functions.

# Mentoring Matters



- Individuals who have mentors are more likely to be promoted, earn more money, are more likely to have a career plan, are happier with their work, and are more likely to become mentors themselves than those without mentoring experiences
- Professionals who had mentors earn between \$5,600 and \$22,450 more annually than those who did not have mentors

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide features three ropes: a yellow rope with small colorful flecks, a blue rope with small colorful flecks, and a white rope with small grey flecks. These ropes are intertwined to form a complex knot. The background of the slide is light grey, and there are blue and dark grey diagonal stripes separating the image area from the text area.

# Kram's Mentoring Functions

- **Career Functions:** Those aspects of mentoring relationships that enhance “learning the ropes” and supporting the individual’s career advancement and professional development.
  - Sponsorship
  - Exposure & Visibility
  - Coaching
  - Protection
  - Challenging Assignments





## Sponsorship


- *Providing career-focused support for the protégé's advancement in the organization or within the profession.*
- Mentors help the protégé attain desirable positions or career experiences
- Mentors use his/her influence to support advancement for protégé's career
- Can be provided by formal or informal mentors, peers or mentors in other organizations



## Challenging Access

- A study of MBA found significantly less access to mentoring by race
- Research tracked careers of African American and Hispanic business graduates who were less likely to form mentoring relationships with white mentors than their counterparts
- One report shows that limited number of people of color in leadership positions means either cross-race mentoring, outside of unit or inter-organizational mentoring must take place for people of color
- Several studies have documented the barriers to mentoring access among female managers within the context of power dynamics in organizations





## Exposure & Visibility

- *Linking the protégé to opportunities for visibility, expanding social networks and contribution to the positive reputation of the protégé.*
- Mentors helps protégé to be more visible within the organization or profession
- Mentor creates opportunities for protégé to impress key or influential people
- Can be provided by peers, mentors in other firms or via reverse mentoring relationships



# Peer Mentoring

- Viewed as “lateral” relationships in contrast to traditional “hierarchical” mentoring relationships
- Consists of coworkers, team members and colleagues from professional associations and networks
- Frequently cut across traditional organizational and/or functional boundaries
- Research shows that peer mentoring can involve three types:
  - **Information Peers** - primary function is information sharing and networking
  - **Collegial Peers** - serve as career strategists and champions
  - **Special Peers** - provide confirmation and emotional support



## Coaching

- *Mentoring relationships that focus on task and performance-related skills and the enhancement of specific work competencies.*
- Mentor helps protégé to learn about other parts of the organization
- Mentor gives advice about how to effectively perform within the field/profession/firm
- Mentor provide specific suggestions for enhancing performance for the protégé's



# Reverse Mentoring

- Mentoring where the “mentee” is at a higher level within the organization than the “mentor”
- Often credited to former CEO of General Electric®, Jack Welch who recognized his lack of technology skills and believed that the youngest people joining the company were far more knowledgeable about new technologies than their managers
- Often associated with intergenerational mentoring relationships and used to bridge the gap between different generations
- Can often includes mentoring functions of coaching, exposure and visibility, challenging assignments and role modeling
- Can be an important source to support and facilitate diversity within the organization



## Protection

- *Often the “invisible” mentoring function, the mentor provides buffer for negative career outcomes or damaging consequences*
- Mentor “runs interference” for the protégé
- Mentor shields protégé from damaging contact or actions from others
- Can be provided by peers, support persons, or influential external relationships



# Mentoring as a “Buffer”

- Mentors often have complementary knowledge, skills and abilities yet also share core values as they address each others’ unique developmental and professional needs
- Often mentors engage in deep exchange and social support that can provide a “buffer” against unfamiliar or non-supportive environments where knowledge is not openly shared (“code sharing” support)
- Mentoring can also serve as a “buffer” for non-supportive, disengaged or toxic supervisors within the organization
- Mentors also provide a “safe space” to address both workplace and personal challenges that enhance feels of psychological safety





## Challenging Assignments

- *Similar to sponsorship, the mentor provides access to "stretch" opportunities that allow visibility of skills and knowledge of the protégé*
- Mentor gives tasks that require protégé to learn new skills or external opportunities for growth
- Mentor provides challenging or "stretch" assignments (paid and voluntary)
- Mentor provides opportunities that strengthen existing and/or develop new competencies



# Complex Interactions

- Cross-mentoring creates complex inter-racial dynamics that are embedding within organizational cultures
- Previous research studied cross-race mentoring pairs and found that psychosocial support was higher in same-race relationships especially in “skip-level” pairings among peers
- Another project studied African American and white managers and found differences in psychosocial support but no differences in career support in those with same versus cross-race mentoring

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# Kram's Mentoring Functions

- **Psychosocial Functions:** Those aspects of mentoring relationships that enhance a sense of competence, clarity of identity, perceptions of organization support and overall effectiveness in one's professional role.
  - Role Modeling
  - Acceptance & Confirmation
  - Counseling
  - Friendship



## Role Modeling

- *Provides and exemplar or prototype of valued organizational norms, attributes or competencies.*
- Mentor serves as a role model for protégé
- Mentor provides a model that the protégé can identify with or aspire to be
- Often can be served via contact with mentors external to the organization



# Mentoring as “Identity Work”

- Research shows that individuals make social comparisons with others
- People identify with individuals they consider models or exemplars of what they would like to become themselves
- We exchange knowledge and information with individuals who are seen as knowledgeable
- Individuals are therefore likely to compare their professional and job-related perceptions to those who are connected via mentoring (formal or informal) and/or friendship ties
- Mentors can serve the “role model” function of mentoring as a powerful tool for identity formation and transformation



## Acceptance & Confirmation

- *Validation provided by the mentor of the protégé's knowledge, skills, experience and overall contribution to the organization.*
- Mentor accepts protégé as a competent professional
- Mentor see the protégé as knowledgeable
- Mentor thinks highly of protégé – validates contribution or expertise
- Often served by peer or group mentoring






# Mentoring as “Holding Environments”

- Holding environments are interpersonal or group-based relationships that provide support and enable individuals to cope with difficult or negative situations or environments that would otherwise produce anxiety, or withdrawal behavior.
- They include:
  - **Enabling Perspective** – providing context and engaging in collective “sensemaking”
  - **Containment** – creating a “safe space” that includes psychological safety
  - **Empathetic Acknowledgement** – affirming other’s sense of self and aspects of one’s identity



## Counseling

- *Providing advice that extends across professional as well as personal boundaries along with social support to the protégé.*
- Mentor serves as a sounding board for protégé to develop and understand self
- Mentor guides protégé in professional or personal development
- Mentors external to the firm can provide key source of professional and social support



**What types of mentoring  
experiences have you had that  
provide “holding environments”?**



# Leader's Advice Networks

- Leader's social networks can influence corporate policy and/or contribute to strategic inertia
- Leaders assign greater weight to information and advice from personal sources than impersonal sources
- Leaders who utilize closed networks are likely to seek advice that affirms current strategic beliefs which leads to poor decision-making and reduces overall effectiveness
- Diversity and strength of tie is critical for getting to the top and being effective in key leadership positions
- Network diversity is important in reducing biases in advice seeking – especially for strategic leaders



## Friendship

- *Trusting relationships between mentor and protégé that frequently involve social or personal contact.*
- Mentor is someone that can be confided in
- Mentor provides support and encouragement
- Mentor is someone protégé can trust
- Often supported via peer, group and external professional networks



# Relationships, Networks & Salary

- Seigel, Polzner & Stewart looked at the outcomes of salary negotiations in high tech companies
- Analyzes over 3,000 salary negotiations and compared outcomes for minorities and non-minorities
- Looked at number of friendship ties within the firm and impact on *negotiated percent salary increase*
- Found that above and beyond effects for age and education, race accounted for 13% of the difference in negotiated salary
- Having friendship ties within the firm accounted for 28% of the difference in negotiated salary
- Friendship networks fully mediated the salary difference for racial minority group members



# Mentoring Effectiveness

- Characteristics of the protégé/mentee impact willingness of an individual to be a mentor:
  - Individuals perceived as “high potential” are most likely to be selected as a protégé/mentee
  - Motivational bases for mentoring is driven by self-interest as well as concern for others
- Structural aspects of relationships (type, frequency, duration) are weak and inconsistent predictors of mentoring behavior
  - No evidence for universal set of “mentoring styles” that significantly impact effectiveness
- Evidence of reciprocity is noted as key success factor

# Diverse Access, Diverse Outcomes

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One study examined the impact of race and gender on mentoring outcomes from Catalyst, Inc. "Women of Color" national survey

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Overall, only 34% of women of color report having access to a mentor. That percentage is slightly higher for African American women (38.1%) and lowest for Asian American women (26.9%). Hispanic women are in the middle (32.8%).

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Confirmation of "similarity-attraction" effect in that Asians are most likely to mentor Asian women (62.5%), African Americans mentors are most likely to mentor African Americans (90.4%) and Hispanic mentors are most likely to mentor Hispanic women (88.9%).

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Women of color with mentors received more promotions, were at a higher job levels and had higher satisfaction than those w/o access to mentors.

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Women of color with white male mentors earned more money and attained a higher job level than those with mentors of color or female mentors; Women with mentors of color or female mentors reported higher job satisfaction and intent to stay.

# Research on “Negative Mentoring”

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Exploitation

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Malevolent deceptions

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Sabotage

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Harassment

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Interpersonal difficulty

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Mentoring as “entitlement”

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Intellectual ownership

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Negative reputation

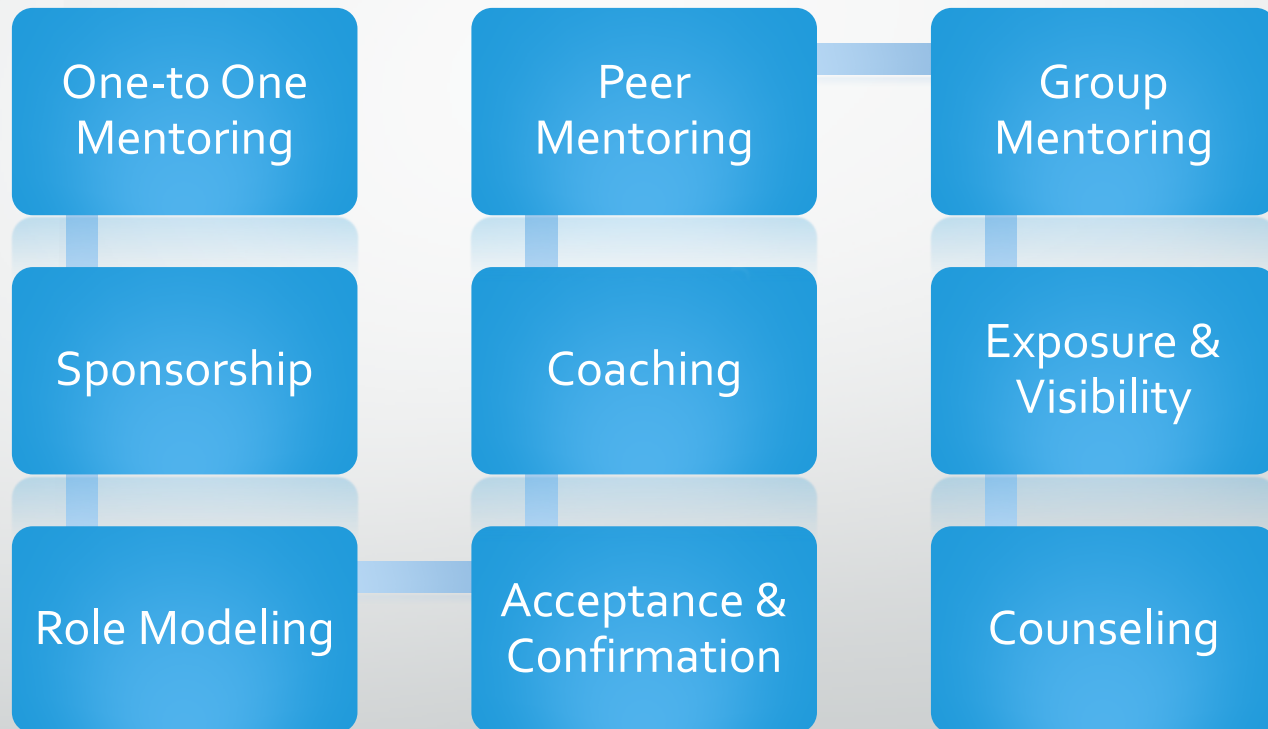
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Role conflict

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Role ambiguity

# Build a Mentoring Portfolio



# Some Final Thoughts...

- Understanding diversity and mentoring in organizations may be a useful lens for broader workplace issues (e.g., miner's canary)
- Need to look beyond demographic similarity and toward notions of identity and diversified - dynamic mentoring relationships
- More work is needed on mentoring and diversity as a catalyst for learning and innovation
- ***How do we use the lessons from research to increase an organization's capability at using mentoring to enhance diversity and effectiveness***

