

NETWORKING AND MENTORS

Module 2 for Seeding Success



Mark Megalos and a cast of dozens

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I. PREFACE

When I accepted the role of compiling the networking and mentoring module, it sounded fun and was a chance to revisit and acknowledge the friends and colleagues that got me here. It has been that and much more. I began the journey by mentally listing mentors to thank and ended up exploring mentorship, role models, networking and colleagues' advice that help propel a career, personal development, and life trajectory. Identifying the key choices, actions and advice that shape a career was the gift that colleagues shared in interviews, talks and correspondence. Ultimately it resulted in this networking and mentor guide.

Well it's time to deliver. Share what's been found valuable and distilled for your use. There are bullet lists, quotes and summaries of the literature. The 35+ videos of ANREP colleagues sharing their career stories, tips and advice turned out to be most valuable and informative.

Seeding Success's impact will be measured in your collective success. Did we bring the goods, share the secrets to success and stories that got us here? The videos and this summary will be archived at the Seeds of Success website:

<https://sref.info/seedingsuccess>

Building lasting relationships in career and life was the take home lesson highlighted while exploring the role of networks and defining mentor, role model or coach success. Our intent is to reveal the imperative shared lessons that carry one during the course of a professional career. As we delve into the topic don't be surprised to learn, as I did, that it becomes difficult to distinguish who provided the most benefit in the relationship (master or student). Your mentors will share that they got the better end of the deal, while the mentees will insist that they benefited most. If that is true in your case, then you've experienced win-win directly.



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Welcome. Please know there is no right way or limit to how one benefits from mentors, where they may reside, whether in the shared or different profession or merely graduates of the school of hard knocks. Role models may fit the bill early in a career; while, colleagues within your cohort can quickly become lifelong friends whom enrich you into your retirement years. We all have things to share and if we are wise enough to avail ourselves to multiple avenues or sources -then we grow personally, professionally and as a community. With your concurrence then, a short remembrance of those who got me to this point:

"My first forestry role model was a silviculturist and extension professor. While his personal guidance ended by my early 20's I followed his lead, advice, and career exploits until his retirement. My first professional mentor in graduate school was an academic and industry advisor and forestry legend. His decency, integrity and quest to stay current and relevant inspires me to this day. I solicited his advice for this effort and he shared insights of the mentors that influenced him, among them: His uncle, a woodsman; Dr. Bruce Zobel, geneticist; non-degreed underlings with hard-knocks knowledge; and ultimately his former students-turned supervisors in his post-academic career."

In addition to professors and classmates from the collegiate years; hard work, play, curiosity and creativity were learned at the side of family: my grandfather, father and multiple brothers. My mom was a teacher librarian and her love of reading and books is a constant source of peace and learning. My natural resource path was set early on, growing up in a rural area, then recreating and working out of doors thereafter. Multiple colleagues served as role models, coaches and mentors post-college and throughout my forestry and Extension career. What has changed in the last decade is the blossoming of my role as mentor, adviser and believe it or not as mentee to the new fearless generation of millennials. Working with folks whose gender



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neutrality and absence of racial bias is most comforting. It is from this generation that I retain joy, optimism and hope.

So, the map of my career and life progression in a few lines is detailed below:

Role Models: Family, Professors → **Early and mid-career**
Coach/Mentors: Colleagues, Contemporaries → **Currently:** Mentee of the Next Gen /Next Guard are teaching me new tech skills, leadership, tech hacks, and exhibiting life-long learning and growth.

Clemson’s Dr. Tom Straka mentioned at a Society of American Foresters Fellow Initiation that we all stand on the shoulders of Pinchot and other conservation giants. The continuous link to the founders of the profession gives us roots, history, meaning and a quest for the sky.

My take: Regardless of your natural resource education pathway we **all** thrive based on the interest and guidance that instructors, role models, colleagues, supervisors, strangers or friends provide us. And while we honor our roots- we retool, revise and revamp their nature legacy with our own discoveries, technologies and zest for constant learning. Our quest advances our profession.

So here are a few quotes that I found in this journey to demystify coaching, role models, networking and the like. For me, they capture the essence of networking, mentoring or share an insight, tip, “hack” or thought concisely, and often personally. Keep them close and revisit frequently. I hope they will inspire or inform you too. Many thanks to the generous and caring natural resource professionals who helped compile and edit this guide and those who pave the pathway for us.

II. QUOTES, TIPS AND USEFUL SUGGESTIONS

“I found numerous mentors who were willing to teach, share their experiences and encourage – a value I endeavor to pass along to others today. I have been amazed by people who were so generous with their time. I’ve been blessed to work with those people, and I know you could never buy that kind of education.” from the Consultant “ **James L. Able**

“I’ve not had many mentors...but rather lots of role models.” **Laura Parker** <http://leadershipnature.com/podcasts/s3e21-laura-parkergrow-your-people-and-the-people-will-grow-the-business/>

Some “professorial” words of advice:

Imitate the success you see: Scan your department for faculty who may have similar work and life goals and ask them to share their own hacks. Getting suggestions from people who know your work (and possibly your life) well could yield tailored hacks that would be especially valuable. Shevaun D. Neupert, Ph.D., NCSU Department of Psychology shevaun_neupert@ncsu.edu.

“I can’t point to or recount a single mentor that helped me along my extension career. Rather it’s a way in which you gravitate to people and coworkers who share your work ethic, enthusiasm and energy level. Those folks who you meet early and throughout your career help you become what you’re meant to be as a professional.” **Rick Hamilton** (past ANREP President and founding member)

“Everyone is my teacher. Some I seek. Some I subconsciously attract. Often, I learn simply by observing others. Some may be completely unaware that I’m learning from them, yet I bow deeply in gratitude.”– **Eric Allen**



IF YOU REMEMBER NOTHING ELSE:

- ✓ We learn more from the setbacks than the successes.
- ✓ Look for the lesson in everyone and every experience.
- ✓ “The wise learn from adversity; the foolish repeat it.” – Proverb

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/eternal-student-joseph-tumolo-cap-/>

“My doctoral advisor has been a long-term sounding board for me. She taught me how to think critically, to examine a subject from every angle, unearth the unknowns, anticipate criticism, and address it before it is raised. She expected me to be the best scientist I could be, even if I didn’t know what that entailed at the time.

I’ve also continued in her tradition of mentoring women in science. I strive to encourage as many female students (U.G. and grads) to pursue careers in science and to become mentors themselves.” Tracy Wiegner, PhD UH, Hilo. Rutgers Alumni Mag. Spring 2018

“The way that works isn’t always the most impressive.”

R. Holiday, *The Obstacle is the Way*. 2014 **ISBN:** 1591846358

III. MENTORING MADE EASY

Ready: Take Assessment

SET: Refine Interest / Needs

GO: ✓ Seek out Colleague(s)

- Join a Cohort
- Ask a Mentor
- Share & Pay it Forward **Successful**

A. Mentor Checklist:

- *Desire to Enhance Skills and Career Success*
- *Curious about Team, Leadership, Skill Development*
- *Desire for Self-Improvement*
- *Desire to Evaluate Strength and Weaknesses*
- *Start or Sustain Relationship with Mentee*

B. Be a Successful Mentee or Mentor

Ask for:

Advice
Information
Contacts
Readings

Be:

Professional
Courteous
Gracious

Respect:

Confidentiality
Boundaries
Protocol
Tradition

C. Best Mentoring Practices

"Best mentoring practices:

Care about students,
Promote ethics and cultural sensitivity,
Ensure that they are making timely progress,
Find outside support if you are unable to meet their needs,
Encourage them to attend conferences,
Mentor them on how to write publications,
Guide them on professional development and



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Groom students to be strategic and confident scientists. "

Personal corr. **Frances Roberts-Gregory, Berkeley PhD**

D. Tips

Tips for a New Mentee:

Be Prepared

Be Timely

Be Polite

Be Appreciative

Be Proactive

Be Responsible

Tips for Successful Mentors:

Focus on Mentee Needs

Keep Expectations in Line

Empathy first

Friend First Advisor Next

Limit War Stories

Share Failures – Lessons Learned

IV. MENTOR/MENTEE OPPORTUNITIES

- *Share Stories & Skills*
- *Make Professional Introductions*
- *Share Meal(s) & Conversation*
- *Share "E"zine subscriptions, Research Articles*
- *Share & Connect via Latest Technology /Apps*

A. Mentors Support Career Development when She/He:

- *Takes a personal interest in Mentee*
- *Shares Important assignments with Mentee*
- *Provides on-the-job coaching*
- *Advises about promotional opportunities*
- *Helps with professional goals*
- *Devotes time and support to Mentee's career*

B. New Pro Tips: Integrate within the Extension Community

- *Build Connections*
- *Share Experiences & Ideas*
- *Offer / Seek Support*
- *Embrace Vulnerability*
- *Join & Create Community*

C. How to Find / Follow A Mentor. Role model? There are many successful informal approaches:

- *Follow on FB, Linked In, Twitter*
- *Read their works*
- *Call email or write*
- *Ask for an Intro*
- *Keep it Simple, Open, Informal**
 - ** Informality yielded better results per research*
- *Ask a Favor*
- *Ask for a Review / Critique*
- *Ask Advice – use it (that's the ultimate compliment)*
- *Listen*
- *Acknowledge and Thank*
- *Formalize the process through an association, Alumni group, your employer*

V. BEST PRACTICES IN READINESS, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION by ORGANIZATIONS

A. **Integrate diversity into the structure, mission and bottom**

line: *A culture of integration and learning should be implemented where employees can contribute the insights, skills, and experiences they have developed as members of various cultural identity groups.*

B. Require accountability: Executive and Senior management should be responsible for ensuring diversity-related issues are given attention, communicated down the line, and executed.

C. Provide incentives: Incentive structures that require cooperation produce results, as team membership becomes more salient than demographic differences

D. Establish a diversity committee or manager: Diversity managers and diversity committees must be senior level positions or comprised of senior level employees so that initiatives that address diversity issues are communicated, accepted, and executed.

E. Develop a comprehensive plan with evaluation: Effective diversity plans and the programs related to them should be based on concrete goals with ongoing evaluations and programs related to them should be based on concrete goals with ongoing evaluations and feedback.

F. Employ metrics to identify organizational needs: Metrics should be used to track progress towards clearly defined goals and request feedback to make refinements as time goes by.

G. Use metrics to attract diverse applicants: Metrics convey the emphasis an organization places on its diversification and inclusion Messages expressing the desire of an organization to target specific groups for recruitment due to the value it places on diversity and diverse perspectives are particularly effective.

H. Recognize limitations of diversity training: The small body of empirical research that does exist about diversity trainings suggests that current practices are largely ineffective over the long-term. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct needs assessments to determine what content should be included in training modules.



VI. MENTEE READY ASSESSMENT

A. Assessment

	Yes	Curious	No
1. Desire to enhance:			
Extension Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career Skills/ Success	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Want to Enhance:			
Team Building Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My Career Vision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Committed to Self-Improvement:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Desire Sage Advice:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Can ID Personal Strengths / Weaknesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Committed to Mentor Relationship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Got the Time/Support to Invest the Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	SUM	_____	_____

Tally **Yes** Votes X 1 point

_____ x 10 =

Tally **Curious** Votes X .5 point

_____ x 5 =

TOTAL SCORE _____

B. **Quotes from Tribe of Mentors, by author Tim Ferris:**

"I strongly believe world-class performers need coaching. I suppose mentors function in that role for many, but coaches in my opinion, are different. [Coaches] focus on you first. Mentors rightly focus on themselves first and you second. Lastly, a good coach builds regimens designed to make you better, [versus simply] providing advice, as a mentor would." P 430.

Adam Fisher

"Mastery is a journey, not a destination. True masters never believe they have attained mastery. There is always more to be learned and greater skill to be developed." P. 441

Terry Laughlin

*"You must seize opportunities when they present themselves, not when they are convenient or obvious. The only way to cultivate your own luck is to be more **flexible** (you'll need to give up something for the right opportunity), **humble** (timing is out of your control), and **gracious** (when you see it, seize it!).*

*Life's greatest opportunities run on their own schedule, not yours".
P. 460*

Scott Belsky

Take the first Step: *"Find a little courage and reach out to a mentor you admire. People respond to passion and a clear articulation of why you are approaching them in particular."*

Linda Rottenburg, CEO Endeavor.org

"Done right, mentoring moves from just helping someone else to also helping yourself. The next time you're playing the "selfless" role of mentor, don't lose sight of the chance to reflect on your own circumstances and the specific areas where you could self-improve."

Dane Holmes, Goldman Sachs

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/goodmentoring-self-serving-dane-holmes/>



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“Asking someone to be a formal /official mentor is like the absolute best / fastest way to never have a good mentor”

Tim Ferris in podcast with Ryan Holiday

Mentorship hack: Ask the questions that are useful to me and easy for them to answer. Ask what would this person do in this situation?

Mentoring is learning from anyone who can give you advice, wisdom and value that they can pass your way. Find someone to emulate.

Ryan Holiday in same

More: [https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-tim-ferris-](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-tim-ferris-show/id863897795?mt=2)

podcast [show/id863897795?mt=2](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-tim-ferris-show/id863897795?mt=2)

C. Meeting Millennial Expectations PwC survey

1. WANTS:

- *Opportunities for career progression.*
- *Chance to work with strong coaches and mentors - most-valued progression opp.*
- *Sustained access to training and development – highest*
- *ranked benefit (higher than financial reward).*

2. DON'T WANT:

- *outdated working practices,*
- *rigid hierarchies,*
- *fixed hours*
- *same, uninspiring place of work.*

3. Characteristics (Important) for Professional Mentors

a. **Approachable-**

- *Honest,*
- *Innovative,*
- *Well-connected,*
- *Balanced, and*
- *Passionate*

b. **Personable-**

- *Easy to talk to,*
- *Knowledgeable about their field*

c. **Want to mentor**

d. **Genuine interest**

- *In me and my professional interests*

e. **Willing**

- *To answer questions,*
- *Be patient,*

f. **Open to shadowing**

- *Gain experience / practice in their field*

“Mentorships are contextual- to be successful they must fit the needs of the mentee yet challenge (and even inspire) that person to grow professionally and succeed inter-personally; a mentee will gain so much more if s/he prepares for and is willing to access that experience, with a lens of curiosity and appreciation.” **Dr. Marylou Addor**

4. **More Characteristics (Important) for Professional Mentors**

- a. **Well connected**
- b. **Similar career path**
 - i. *So, experiences are relatable to me*
- c. **Similar interests** outside of “Field of interest”
- d. **Willing to teach me**
 - i. *About their own successes and failures*
- e. **Passionate** about the profession and area of practices
- f. **Trained evaluators,**
 - i. *Experienced in giving constructive feedback;*
 - ii. *Willing to mentor on an as needed basis,*
 - iii. *Available during nontraditional hours*

VII. CONCLUSION

Closing thoughts by Dr. Mary Lou Addor:

Mentors are those folks who guide you (and may teach you) as result of their experiences and insights, their knowledge and expertise about an organization and/or subject area, and more importantly, how THEY go about working with and engaging with others.

Mentors can be the most senior member of a team and/or of a department (referred to as a master in their field) or a mentor can be the most practical and focused co-worker who orientates the emerging leader to job responsibilities and expectations, and the culture of the work environs. ***It's all about processes, content, and relationships and who can graciously support and connect that new employee to a myriad of professional aspects.***

Within the profession - ask questions about - who is the best person that knows how to pull together and manage an advisory board? a

group of volunteers? or build a clientele base? Who best understands the technical AND applied aspects of that particular subject-matter expertise or can assist in helping the young professional account for and measure the pending successes and the challenges a newer professional will face as they develop their own pathway and career ladder.”

Mentees need to prepare to be mentored.

- *Give thought to the questions you have whether it's specific to your profession or your broader interpersonal development.*
- *Give thought to how you want to access your team of mentors (in person? through their writing or their specific work?).*
- *Learn about yourself (what do you know about the substantive area of your profession? not know? who are folks that can help fill in the gaps? what questions do you have of them?)*
- *Sharpen your saw and allow yourself to grow through the lessons learned of others but continue to assess who you are in your profession and how you are contributing.*
- *Select a mentoring team –*
 - *someone who knows how to coach you - who'll raise the questions that force you to think critically;*
 - *someone who is an expert in the field and can challenge your direction of thought, add value and inspire the passion you have for field of knowledge so that you realize how little you know and how much there is to contribute to the field; someone you watch from and learn from afar who may guide your interpersonal development or professional career through their writing or how they do something.*

“Emerging leaders in the ANREP profession require a third-party individual that s/he can go to in order to think things through, talk about issues of concern in confidence, work through questions and processes, and obtain various perspectives about the field including recommendations on who learn from and connect with.”

VIII. REFERENCES

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NETWORKING RESOURCES:



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2. Community garden information systems: analyzing and Strengthening community-based resource sharing networks
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<https://www.joe.org/joe/2010december/tt8.php>
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2016; 80(3) art. 42 appendix 1
2. The leadership nature podcasts,
Especially this recent topical one:
<http://leadershipnature.com/podcasts/episode-98-s5e9-zakiyaleggett-to-be-a-good-leader-you-have-to-show-that-you-can-be-a-good-follower/> (Note: 5 season's worth of gems. I believe you will find them enlightening)

Minority Mentoring and Academia Resources:

1. Moving Toward Inclusion



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2. PwC Survey: do you know how to manage Millennials?

3. ASK A MANAGER Website : <https://www.askamanager.org/>

4. The Importance of Mentors and Peers in the Undergraduate Experience.

Elon Poll. 7/30-31 31 pages

<https://www.elon.edu/e/CmsFile/GetFile?FileID=1347>

5. And here: <https://theconversation.com/mentors-play-critical-role-inequality-of-college-experience-new-poll-suggests-101861>

Finally, if you are still reading- here's an insight to successful extension work that didn't make the cut for the main text, but I found it superbly useful. Thus, I am sneaking it in here without my editor's permission. :) Enjoy!

Final Tips on the Use of Indirect Communication- Kierkegaard

- **Look for Leverage to "help" them listen**
- **Find common ground and work from there**
- **Show new ways of looking at or understanding the world**
- **Rarely "told" audience to "DO this" or THINK that"**
- **Don't convince the people by challenging their longest and firmly held opinions**