

## **A Mentor...**

1. Treats students with respect, treats them as equals, listens quietly to their ideas, helps students experiment even when the mentor already knows the answer (unless it's dangerous!).
2. Avoids sarcasm, condescension, or other verbal or non-verbal slights. Student growth is your ultimate goal not the immediate task at hand.
3. Knows everyone is doing the best they can.
4. Provides an opportunity to learn directly through experience.
5. Is supportive, patient, enthusiastic, compassionate, and available.
6. Looks for that perfect balance - help when necessary, step back when possible, step in to avoid setting anyone up for failure.
7. Helps students explore their ideas. Perhaps the best training is the memory of their own experiences.
8. Serves as a role model in more than the professional sense not the least of which is service to others, accountability, humbleness, accepted social norms.
9. Is a compatriot, teacher, student, challenger, guide, consultant, advisor, and cheerleader.
10. Benefits just as much as the person being mentored. In effective mentoring everyone learns. To get the most enthusiasm out of a mentor, let them focus on what most interests them too.
11. Is needed for both technical and non-technical disciplines.
12. Enables student "research" even down avenues expected to be dead-ends.
13. Gives the student room to explore and "find" themselves and their special interests.
14. Encourages, doesn't yell, force, or judge.
15. Is there for moral support as well as knowledge support.
16. Shows up often, is there when students need guidance. Isn't there when students need independence.
17. Is interested in everyone's opinion, encourages independent ideas, and is even open to ideas that go against their grain.
18. Begins as a teacher and evolves into a colleague. Discusses, never lectures. What begins as an explanation for new students, ends as a colleague discussion. Explanations should be two-way.
19. Measure of success is when the experienced student begins mentoring other students in-turn.
20. Is a person of any age, it's teaching others what you know.
21. Understands the student's intent and purpose with a concept or design and provides encouragement, proposes alternatives to realize the intention.
22. Develops Corporals, Sergeants, Lieutenants, Captains, ... and avoids appropriating the student's tasks and driving students into the role of army privates following orders.

23. Avoids overburdening students with advice by identifying only one or two major errors or problems at a time.
24. Mixes positive praise with corrections to give encouragement and positive reinforcement.
25. Is wary of excessively abstract technical phrasing and terms. Step-down the talk from engineer specialist to pre-engineering student. Step it up as the student gains experience.
26. Is aware of students hovering around the periphery and purposely drags them into discussions and involves them.
27. When called upon for conflict resolution is fair to both sides and finds something positive to say about each viewpoint and facilitates a solution.
28. Emphasizes safety in design as well as use of tools and robot operations.
29. Keeps students busy and involved with some extra (special) projects in his or her back pocket so we don't have idle hands.
30. Maintains focus on the tasks at hand when necessary by providing direction.
31. Keeps the students hopping. Offers up choices that make them think.
32. Treats all ideas as valid and explores beyond conventional solutions.
33. Knows when to push a clingy alumni student forward to pursue their future.
34. Provides students the environment to succeed.
35. Is a model of positive behavior and emphasizes self accountability both for the mentor and for the student.
36. Model an appropriate response when challenged by a student, maintaining a cool demeanor using patience and humor to diffuse and resolve the situation.
37. Is a friend.
38. Is a little bit insane in order to survive the Build Season, but is sane enough to act normal when around students, school administration, sponsors and parents. :)
39. Has the ability to make hard work and a huge time commitment seem like a lot of fun.
40. Recognizes that sometimes a student is just minutes away from solving a problem and patiently waits the extra time.
41. Is a Father/Mother figure guiding students through everything (even if its not robot related), trying to make it as fun as possible.
42. Is a person you can talk to about anything and trust them to not throw it back in your face in any way shape or form.
43. Is someone who will help you as much as they can to deal with the problems and situations in life without forcing their solution or their idea of the way things should be resolved.
44. Knows it's about inspiring and guiding, not forcing a person to do what they might not want to do in their lives.
45. Remembers what's important – the robot is of secondary concern, the students are primary.

---

"You can count the seeds in an apple, but you cannot count the apples in a seed." - [Grey Owl](#)

*Thanks to the following for their contributions: Matt-358, Eugenia-461, Ashley-1511, John-587, Jane-418, Cynette-1511, Kathie-NEMO, Imad-612, Elgin-237, Mark-358*