

## Find a Mentor: They've Seen What You're Seeing

**Executive Summary.** Finding someone who has been what you're going through, has seen what's in your future, and/or can help you directly or with some sort of connection, can be invaluable to your mental and financial health. Go find someone – it may not be as hard as you think.

**You're not alone.** These days you can go to a "life coach", you can go to a "support group" – call it what you want – but finding others who can relate to your problems can take a huge burden off of you. This is the role of a mentor. And as strange as your issue may be, likely a mentor has been through it before.

**My story (as a mentee).** As I continued on with this article, I realized that I should just jump to the *My Story* section, since I can personally relate.

I never went out to someone and said "hey, would you be my mentor?" It was more like I just found a guy who had more experience in an area than me, and then I just spent time with him. A beer, a sandwich over lunch, invited to the house for dinner – these were the informal events we shared.

I learned a lot. I called when I needed advice. I heard stories about what happened in their business experiences. They shared with me their experiences which helped. Here are the top three things that come to mind:

- Don't know how, but I lost a million dollars – When I was running my construction company, I had a \$248,000 job I spent \$825,000 on. It was a military project digging a electrical trench. I don't even know how it happened. My mentor said he had the exact same problem on a job building a water reservoir. Somehow he lost \$1.5 million on a job and never really could explain it.
- Sometimes you just get lucky – I was traveling in the car with my mentor and he said to me "sometimes you just get lucky". That may seem like an innocent statement, but can you imagine a person with extreme ego and hubris stating this. Here was a man that said, or implied, that "I didn't necessary make all the right decisions, I'm not a business savant, sometimes Scott you just get lucky."
- Bribery – what you need to know – I had a scenario where an Owner's representative said that we could



*Bribery leads to prison time in Honolulu when it comes to public officials.*

pay him money and we'd end up winning a job. Once that offer was in to me I called my mentor. The bottom line was that the ethics were all up to me, but the only thing that would put you in jail would be bribing of a public official.

**My story (as a mentor).** I've never been a mentor in a formal mentoring program, but I've helped plenty of people (both young, and of a more veteran-of-the-business status). I do it because I like helping people and I think I have a lot of life experience to offer. I've done a lot of things right – I've done plenty of things wrong! But I've seen a lot.



*Future Link - a  
formal mentoring  
program.*

- Help me get a job – I've helped numerous college kids become employed. Contacts I've had in industry have opened doors for these folks and they've become great contributors to the community.
- Help me change my career – One of my greatest stories involved a personal friend who wanted out of high end retail, and came to me over a beer and asked for a suggestion. I introduced her to a construction consulting firm and she went from entry level associate to principal of a \$1.5 billion company. Awesome!
- Help me start a business – I recently helped a near-40 year old man meet with a bonding and insurance company. This was a connection he would have eventually made, but I cut three months out of the equation for him.



*There's a wealth of knowledge waiting to be tapped from your mentor. Chances are, he or she would be honored to help.*

There's more stories than the ones above, but the takeaway for the reader is there's always someone out there to help you, you just have to find him or her! Don't be afraid to ask someone out to lunch or a beer after work. Chances are they'll be honored to help you. I always am!

Work safe!