

12 habits of a Toxic Mentor

1. Start from the point of view that you – from your vast experience and broader perspective – know better than the mentee what's in his or her interest.
2. Be determined to share your wisdom with them – whether they want it or not, remind them frequently how much they still have to learn.
3. Decide what you and the mentee will talk about and when; change dates and themes frequently to prevent complacency sneaking in.
4. Do most of the talking; check frequently that they are paying attention.
5. Make sure they understand how trivial their concerns are compared to the weighty issues you have to deal with.
6. Remind the mentee how fortunate s/he is to have your undivided attention.
7. Neither show nor admit any personal weaknesses; expect to be their role model in all aspects of career development and personal values.
8. Never ask them what they should expect of you – how would they know anyway?
9. Demonstrate how important and well connected you are by sharing confidential information they don't need (or want) to know.
10. Discourage any signs of levity or humour – this is a serious business and should be treated as such.
11. Take them to task when they don't follow your advice.
12. Never, never admit that this could be a learning experience for you, too.