

**Supporting Inclusion through Mentoring and Sponsorship Breakout**  
**MSBA “Cultivating Diversity & Resilience in Challenging Times”**  
**April 1, 2019**

**Inclusive Mentoring**

**Key Terms**

**Diversity**-recognition that we as a profession are a stronger profession when all participate and bring our unique backgrounds to serve others.

**Inclusion**-the keys to creating diverse and equitable environments.

**Inclusivity**-“the extent to which someone feels they matter to an organization or a group of humans.”<sup>1</sup>

**Equity**-recognition that the playing field is not level, and “equality” doesn’t go far enough.

**Mentor**- experienced and trusted guide to a less experienced protégé

**Sponsor**-a champion of a promising protégé’s career - promote and groom the protégé for leadership, promotion and success

**#1 Characteristics of Great Mentors**

1. Good human being. Genuine, caring, helpful, supportive, empathetic, respectful.
2. Interested in the protégé. Gets to know the protégé and allows the protégé to know them. Appreciates differences, cultivates awareness of the mentor’s own assumptions and biases, and respects the protégé’s viewpoint and story.
3. Committed to mentoring the protégé. Makes time on a regular basis to meet, pays attention to how the protégé is doing, and gives thought to how to best assist the protégé’s development and well-being.
4. Communicative. Makes an effort to connect with the protégé frequently, checks in to see how the protégé is doing, and actively listens. Is responsive to communications and requests from the protégé.
5. Supportive. Actively helps the protégé learn the ropes. Provides constructive feedback on skills and talents. Gives advice and encourages the protégé. Promotes the protégé’s sense of belonging and well-being.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellie Krug, Human Inspiration Works, LLC “The Ripple” Vol. 4, No. 2 (Feb. 2019).

6. Committed to self-growth. Willing to learn from the protégé, and to improve and grow themselves to support the protégé.

## **#2 Welcome Opportunity to Mentor Across Difference**

**(Gender, Sex, Race, Nationality, Sexual Orientation, Culture, Generation ...)**

Accept your protégé for who they are  
Assure the protégé that they belong  
Set, discuss, and observe boundaries  
Be aware of your biases and assumptions and discuss them  
Listen and learn about the protégé's experiences  
Talk about difficult topics  
Be a resource for your protégé

### **Strategies for Establishing Cross-Gender/Cross-Race Mentoring<sup>2</sup>**

Use work and work-related activities as a natural starting point to begin  
Search for common interests and values instead of focusing on surface differences  
Form bonds through shared status as outsiders to mainstream culture of the workplace  
Make efforts to learn about each other  
Use empathy to understand each other's concerns  
Be clear about needs and expectations  
Avoid stereotypes and untested assumptions about each other  
Risk discomfort to make the relationship work

## **#3 Sponsor Underrepresented Protégés**

Make sponsorship of underrepresented protégés part of firm culture  
Learn about the protégé's ambitions, goals and leading strengths  
Consider how to help the protégé meet goals through work assignments,  
professional opportunities, and client introductions  
Speak up for, defend, and advocate for the protégé  
Use influence to create positions or endorse the protégé for a key role

Sources and Resources:

Verna A. Myers, What If I Say the Wrong Thing? 25 Habits for Culturally Effective People (ABA 2013)

Ida Abbott, The Lawyers Guide to Mentoring (NALP 2018)

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<sup>2</sup> Minority Corporate Counsel Association "Mentoring Across Differences: A Guide to Cross-Gender and Cross-Race Mentoring" <https://www.mcca.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Book7-Yellow.pdf>

“Mentoring Across Differences: A Guide to Cross-Gender and Cross-Race Mentoring” Minority Corporate Counsel Association <https://www.mcca.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Book7-Yellow.pdf>

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Kori S. Carew, “*The Heat is On: How Law Firms Should Respond to Increased Calls for Diversity from Clients*,” Inside Counsel (Sept. 11, 2017) (attached with author’s permission) and accessible here: <https://www.shb.com/~media/files/professionals/carewkoriambanyakori/inside-counsel-the-heat-is-on-part-one-and-two.pdf>

Kathy Gurchief, “7 Essential Guidelines for Mentoring in the Post-Weinstein Era” <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/pages/guidelines-for-mentoring-in-the-postweinstein-era.aspx>

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