

How Do I Know I AM Making Progress With My Mentee?

Among the most frequently asked questions from mentors are: “How do I know that I am making progress with my mentee?” and “When will I know that I am making a difference?”

The dictionary definition of a mentor is a trusted guide and friend. A mentor is a supportive, caring adult who serves as a role model and spends quality time with a young person to make a positive change in his or her life. By sharing their knowledge and experiences, mentors serve as examples for young people and help teach them the skills they need to succeed in life.

Think back on the mentors in your life, who were the individuals who stick out in your mind and why? What qualities did they possess? Maybe it was a parent, grandparent, sibling or neighbor.

Now take your remembrance one or two steps further. Think about the people during your entire educational experience in school and during your post secondary life that cared about you and were advocates and friends. Maybe it was a teacher, a professor or even a peer. Did you know during those experiences that the individual was your mentor and was making a difference? Do you think that the individual knew how you were progressing? Sometimes it may take years before a mentee may reflect back and say. “Do you know you made a difference in my life?”

Most mentors want to see progress immediately, you need to be patient. Think of mentoring as planting a seed in a garden does the flower bloom right away? Of course not it takes time nurturing, cultivating and weeding in order for it to grow and flourish. It’s understandable that a mentor doesn’t want his/her labor to be in vane. Believe in the positive efforts and believe you make a difference.

Signs of progress may include better attendance in school, improved attitude or better grades. Remember that there are small signs of progress that count too. For example, if your mentee is usually late to your meetings and suddenly arrives early and is waiting for you, consider that a sign of success. If a mentee has had difficulty relating to peers and begins to improve in that regard, maybe you had something to do with it.

Do not get discouraged, it is important for mentors (and kids) to recognize that it takes much quality time for a relationship to build. The latest survey information from The Connecticut Mentoring Partnership shows that mentoring is widely viewed as a successful prevention strategy in addressing drug use, consumption of alcohol, and violent behavior by young people.

The number one recruitment tool for recruiting new mentors is by word of mouth. Share your positive stories about mentoring to your family, friends and co workers and be “THE DIFFERENCE” in a child’s life.