

November 3, 2021 | ACP

New Year, New Mentorship Tips

The end of another year always prompts reflection and the re-evaluation of goals, as people review those they set at the beginning of January and deliberate their next steps. As you begin to think about your dreams and expectations for the new year, it's worthwhile to place participating in a career mentorship at the top of your list!

There are countless benefits to having a Mentor, as they deliver constructive advice and help you keep your ambitions within reach. You don't have to be making a job or career change to get a Mentor, you just need to have the desire to grow. It's a gratifying experience, regardless of your job status: Whether you want someone else's input on how to establish a strong work-life balance or seek to improve your leadership style, a mentoring program brings participants one step closer to their dreams.

In particular, American Corporate Partners (ACP) is a veteran mentoring program that has helped over 21,000 veterans since its inception in 2008. With prominent partners like Morgan Stanley, Nike, Amazon and Disney, ACP delivers an exceptional experience that contributes to personal revampment and career success. Post 9/11 veterans and active duty military spouses are called Protégés in this program, and are paired with an accomplished advisor in a career field that is of interest to the Protégé.

You won't regret sending your application for an ACP mentorship as your New Year's resolution once you get paired with a corporate professional for a one-on-one, year long customized program. An involvement with ACP is an effective way to strategize your goals for the future.

—> Interested spouses of active-duty military members can apply through this link: <https://www.acp-usa.org/spouseapp>.

Here is an overview of why an ACP mentorship is advantageous and how a Protégé can contribute to a productive mentorship:

1: Keeps You Accountable

Having a Mentor presents a wonderful chance to keep yourself responsible for goal-setting. Discussing your goals with a seasoned professional increases your initiative to take action and motivates you to take steps toward your dreams.

2: Expands Your Network

An experienced, skillful worker can introduce you to their colleagues and set up informal coffee chats or informational sessions, whether in person or virtual. Participating in informal chats is an excellent way to gain insight about a specific industry and to receive guidance. Since networking and referrals play a crucial role in the job search and interview process, it's a wonderful idea to say yes to a one-on-one meeting with someone in your field of interest. They may even refer you to a job if you make a memorable first impression.

3: Covers a Wide Variety of Topics

Opportunities feel endless when you're participating in a mentorship program: you can discuss different topics in each meeting. ACP Mentors can offer résumé revamping and advice on how to translate military skills into terms the civilian workforce will understand. Additionally, they can conduct mock interviews, discuss articles related to a particular industry, provide book recommendations, and help prepare veterans for certification exams. No two meetings are identical!

If you are unsure of what to discuss in your monthly meetings, your ACP point of contact, an Operations Associate who reaches out for monthly check-ins to ensure participants are still finding the program helpful and fixes any issues that arise, would be more than happy to send you conversation starters, new discussion topics, activity suggestions, and book lists.

4: Contributes to Exponential Growth

It's evident that you will see a strong change in your personal development and mentality after beginning your mentorship journey. Practicing your interview skills, editing your resume, and networking with industry professionals means you are constantly striving to learn. Protégés evolve into confident, driven, and resilient workers who are ready to make an impact on corporate America.

The skills you polish during your advisorship can further transfer over to your personal life: you should notice an improvement in your resolve, self-motivation, and problem-solving tactics.

5: Offers You a Support System

Mentors offer valuable help, resolve issues, and direct Protégés in the right direction. Mentors want to see their Protégés succeed, and are dedicated, patient volunteers who aim to make an encouraging change in their Protégé's life. These knowledgeable workers are always ready to listen to your concerns, and Protégés gain a priceless experience that they will treasure.

As the new year approaches and you begin a mentorship, here are some pointers on how to maximize your time with your Mentor and how to ensure a memorable mentorship:

6: Break Down Goals and Set Deadlines

It's always commendable to have goals, but saying "I want to get a new job" or "I want to have a managerial role at my company" is too broad. Breaking down a goal into 3-4 manageable pieces not only brings more clarity, but it also makes the goal sound and feel more attainable. Instead of writing down "I want to get a job," try writing "I will apply to three jobs daily," or "I will polish my cover letter."

Setting a deadline further creates incentive and your Mentor can help hold you responsible.

7: Prepare Before Meetings

Think about what you would like to go over in the meeting and create an agenda or send questions to your Mentor ahead of time – would you like your Mentor to view your updated resume or answer your MBA application questions? Establishing a plan before your meeting enhances your time together.

8: Be Transparent

While a mentoring program like ACP does have a one hour a month minimum time requirement, it's understandable if there are scheduling conflicts due to work, school, or family commitments. Notifying your Mentor beforehand builds that element of trust, reflects your appreciation of the Mentor's time, and illustrates that you are professional.

9: Track Goals

Keeping track of when you accomplished your goal is personally fulfilling, and it will brighten your Mentor's day when they see your progress! Putting your goals in print is a critical visual reminder, and leaving the goals on a Post-It note or your desk makes you more motivated to fulfill them (what Mentor doesn't want to hear about your success?)

10: Ask Questions

You may believe you are bothering your Mentor when you have a question or ask for clarification. However, asking questions indicates a genuine interest and demonstrates that you are eager to learn. It fosters collaboration between you and your Mentor and proves that you have exceptional listening skills. Your enthusiasm will leave your mentor impressed!

From immersing yourself into your field of interest to receiving critical feedback before your interview, your time in a mentorship is pivotal for career progress and will advance your personal brand. ACP is ready to help bring your dreams to fruition and assist you on your path. Interested spouses of active-duty military members can apply through this link: <https://www.acp-usa.org/spouseapp>.