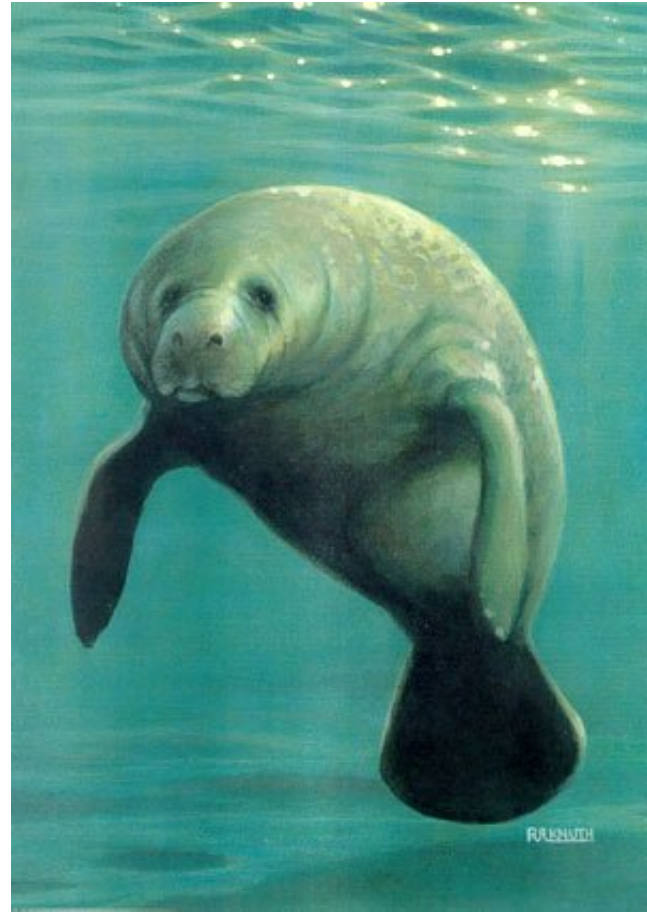


# Mentor/mentee responsibilities and relationships

# Mentor/mentee responsibilities and relationships

- What is a mentee?



# Mentor/mentee responsibilities and relationships

- Buzzwords, psychobabble... or what?

Mentoring Relationship Equation

Successful Mentoring Relationship is Bounded By ...

$$\left( \begin{array}{c} \text{Drive} \times \text{Distance} \\ \text{Mentee} \end{array} \right) \geq \left( \begin{array}{c} \text{Gap} \times \text{Relevance} \times \text{Effort} \\ \text{Mentor} \end{array} \right)$$

# What is mentoring?

- An ancient approach to learning
- Widely used in professional training: medicine, law, science, fine arts, etc
- “A mentor takes a personal as well as a professional interest in helping someone develop into a successful professional.”



# What is mentoring?

- Professional success requires
  - judgment
  - expertise
  - independence
  - adaptability
- Mentoring is individualized



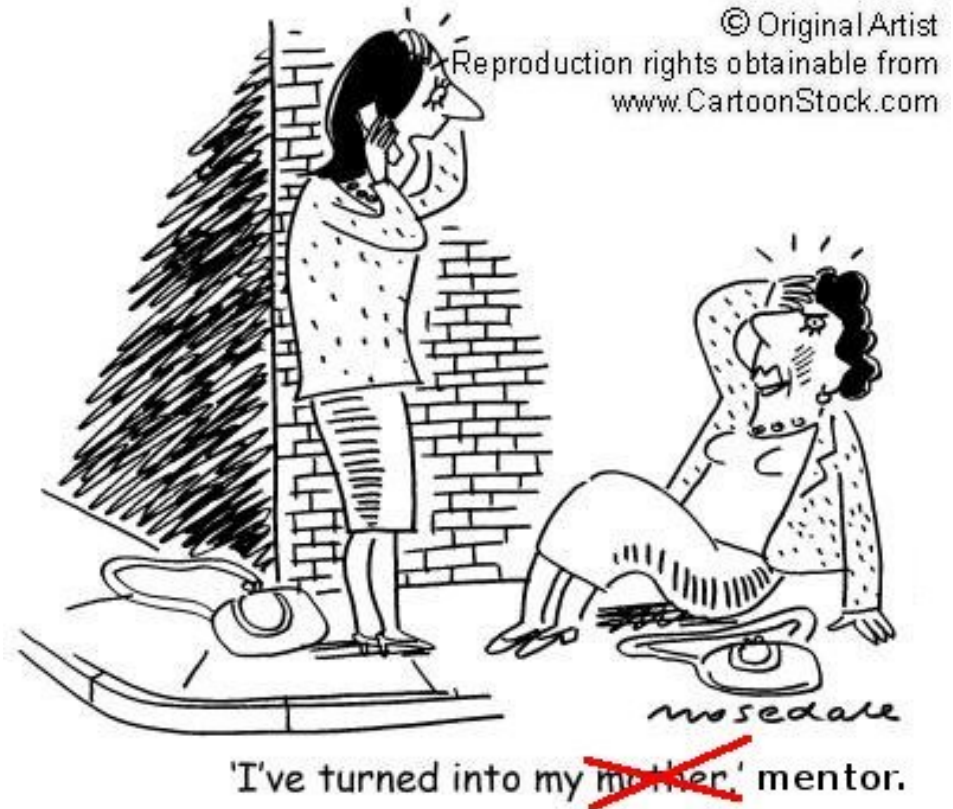
# Why mentoring?

- Science is hard
  - problems are complex
  - lots of training required
  - existing knowledge base is huge
  - professional standards can be vague



# Why mentoring?

- Take advantage of someone else's experience
- Mutual benefit
- *Best way to learn standards of professional behavior*



**Two cases for discussion**



# Good advice or taking advantage?

Joseph came back from a brief summer vacation convinced that he would be able to finish up his Ph.D. in one more semester. Though he had not discussed the status of his thesis with his adviser or any other member of his thesis committee since the spring, he was sure they would agree that he could finish quickly. In fact, he had already made contact with the PI who runs one of the best labs in the field, and it looked like he was going to be offered a post-doc position in the lab.

However, when his research adviser heard about his plans, she immediately objected. She told him that the experiments he had done were not enough to satisfy his dissertation committee. She said that he should plan to spend at least two more semesters on campus doing additional experiments and finishing his dissertation.

Joseph knew the PI of the lab he wanted to join would not wait 12 months to hire him. He wondered if his adviser's advice was self-serving, since he knew she was planning a grant application based on the additional experiments.

- Who is right? Is the adviser abusing her position to advance her career at the expense of Joseph's?
  - What circumstances would make the adviser's position justifiable?
  - What circumstances would make the adviser's position unjustifiable?
- How should Joseph handle the situation?
  - Try to change his adviser's mind?
  - Talk with other members of his committee to get their opinions?
- What actions could Joseph have taken earlier to avoid this situation?

# How to improve mentoring?

At a recent meeting, several faculty in a large, research-oriented science department raised concerns about their mentoring program. While mindful of the many demands they all faced, they wondered whether changes were needed in the way the department assigned, trained, and oversaw mentors. The ensuing discussion raised some potentially good suggestions, which most agreed were best referred to a special committee for further discussion and recommendations. With a little arm twisting, Susan, an advanced graduate student, Linda, a postdoc, and Bill, an established researcher, were recruited to serve.

At their first meeting, the three colleagues quickly agreed to begin with the question of goals. If they knew what mentoring was expected to achieve, they could then assess the strengths and weaknesses of their current program and make suggestions for change.

- What should the goal of a mentoring program be?
  - *How can you evaluate successful mentoring?*
- What qualities make a good mentor?
- Should a mentor have to meet specific criteria?
  - If so, what?
- Should students pick a mentor or be assigned to a mentor?
- Who can be a mentor?
  - PI, academic adviser, post-doc, technician, senior grad student...?



## IMITATION

They learned it from somewhere. Probably you.