

# 16 LAWS OF MENTORING

Adapted from *Bridges Out of Poverty*

1. **POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT:** There needs to be sufficient time and a positive environment to encourage honest, open discussion.
2. **DEVELOPING CHARACTER:** Meaningful mental, social, physical, and spiritual, issues of impact will be part of the process. Youth are not lacking the values that develop good character. Like all of us, however, they might sometimes need help in translating those values into real action. Everyone experiences times when an inner conflict occurs because our actions and values are at odds.
3. **INDEPENDENCE:** The boundaries between mentor and friend should be well established. Talk with your friend about the time, energy, contributions you are willing to make.
4. **LIMITED RESPONSIBILITY:** Be responsible to them, not for them. Friends will need the latitude to choose their own course and make their own mistakes. Care for your Friend through these ups and downs.
5. **SHARED MISTAKES:** Share your failures, as well as your successes.
6. **PLANNED OBJECTIVES:** Set goals together.
7. **INSPECTION:** Monitor, review, critique, and discuss potential actions. Don't just expect performance without evaluation. The true value of mentoring is in its interactive nature. Listen, share, process, and be open to learning while teaching.
8. **"TOUGH" LOVE:** Know when to intervene and when to let go.
9. **SMALL SUCCESSES:** Accomplish huge goals one step at a time. Mentoring is time intensive and the results are not always obvious.
10. **DIRECTION:** Be careful of your tone of voice – speak to your Friend as you would to an adult companion. Make "I statements" when sharing and ask questions regarding consequences. There is usually more than one way to accomplish something.
11. **RISK:** It is better to offer possible solutions than to give direct advice. Leading your Friend in a discussion of options and potential consequences is an optimal strategy. Allow your Friend to 'own' their problems, your advice may not always work.
12. **MUTUAL PROTECTION:** Maintaining some privacy is part of a healthy relationship.
13. **COMMUNICATION:** Listening is the best way to gather information about the needs of your Friend. A certain balance should be established so that both parties share and respond.
14. **EXTENDED COMMITMENT:** Relationship longevity is the key to successful mentoring.
15. **LIFE TRANSITION:** Mentoring can give the mentor a new sense of direction and energy.
16. **FUN/LAUGHTER:** Humor enhances relationships. It is a shared response. Enjoy!