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INTRODUCTION

A Minimalist's Guide to Mentorship

IF YOU'VE PICKED UP THIS BOOK, you are likely a higher education professional, or a former one. You could be a faculty member, an administrator, a postdoctoral researcher, or a graduate student. You've worked hard to earn a place in something colloquially termed "the Academy," and you've received varying degrees of help in getting there. Some of you were blessed with excellent mentors, but perhaps all of you, at some point, didn't get the help you needed at a critical juncture in your career, or were the hapless recipient of the wrong kinds of help. You may have been deluged with advice, some of it unhelpful, ill-informed, or just plain stupid. Can you remember that advice? Here are two samples that stand out from my memories of graduate school:

"If you want to be taken seriously as an academic, you should develop a taste for scotch. If you show up at a party and grab a beer, everyone will know you are a graduate student."

“When you go for a job interview, you should wear funky shoes. This will give you and the hiring committee something to talk about.”

You might think that I received these nuggets from other students in my program, but they came from the mouths of faculty. Fortunately, they were silly rather than harmful, but such “tips and tricks,” probably stemmed from my mentors’ feelings of helplessness in the face of what was, over two decades ago, already a dismal job market for PhDs in my field. Like my peers, I devoured these nuggets—without ever developing a taste for scotch—because I was tired of peering into the windows of “the Academy” and I wanted to be inside, enjoying the party. The insiders, my peers and I reasoned, held the keys to the castle, and that endowed them with an extraordinary degree of power.

If you are holding this book, you already understand the importance of mentorship, even if your experience of being mentored was mixed or subpar. You may be formally charged with guiding someone’s academic career, perhaps as the advisor to one or more doctoral students, or the Principal Investigator (PI) in a lab filled with junior researchers.¹ You may be a department chair supporting the professional growth of newly hired faculty or staff, or a mid-career professor participating in a mentoring program for your junior peers. Or you may be a former academic, perhaps a PhD working outside the academy, who enjoys holding mentoring conversations with your younger colleagues. Whether your mentors served you well or otherwise, their role modeling—and your experiences as a mentee—may not be enough to support you in meeting the needs of the brilliant, aspirational person now before you. Your vision of ideal mentorship may still be a work in progress, but chances are you’re crystal clear about the sort of mentor you don’t want to be.

You may find yourself perplexed, even embarrassed, at the lack of confidence you possibly feel, in meeting your mentee's needs. Aren't mentors supposed to know everything? While any mentor could feel this discomfort, academics and other highly educated professionals can feel a heightened sense of disorientation in "not knowing," especially when they are pressed to move forward in the urgency of the moment, to help a mentee who is flailing or struggling. If you are like most academics, your professional formation did not include formal training in mentorship. And even now, it's possible you have had very few discussions with your colleagues about what mentoring is, or what an effective mentor should be doing.

A rapidly changing higher education landscape complicates things further. If you are a faculty member at any type of institution, there's a good chance you are now expected to do more work, and with fewer resources. It's possible, even preferable, that your mentees hail from different backgrounds. And it's not uncommon for mentees to hold you to different expectations as a mentor, especially in confrontation with unprecedented personal and professional challenges, such as a multiyear global pandemic, a widespread mental health crisis among graduate students, political upheaval both on and beyond campus, and the further collapse of the academic job market in many disciplines. And whatever today's mentees go on to do, Artificial Intelligence will transform their workplaces in ways we are only just beginning to understand. Likely you've realized that the "guru" or "apprenticeship" model of mentoring that is so ingrained in higher education no longer fits the current landscape, or the lives, aspirations, and needs of your mentees. In other words, how do you mentor someone who isn't like you, and perhaps doesn't want to become you?

You may aspire to learn and improve for the benefit of your mentees, but where do you begin? There's a jarring misalignment between a wealth of information and resources on mentorship, on one hand, and the lack of disciplined practices and experiences of too many academic mentors and mentees, on the other hand. Widespread frustration and dissatisfaction over these relationships—from people on both sides of the mentoring dyad—is an open secret in the academy. In recent years, academics have sought to address this problem in the way that academics know best—by researching evidence-based mentoring practices, compiling studies and reports, and creating trainings, online modules, and other resources. Most of these resources focus on the mentorship of graduate students, postdocs, and other junior researchers.² While these efforts have yielded important findings and valuable tools for mentors and mentees, the “on-the-ground situation” at many institutions remains problematic. Not only do the needs of many mentees remain unmet, but the volume of available resources can be intimidating. Science can teach us a lot about mentorship. It's also worth asking whether framing mentorship itself as a “science” risks alienating or discouraging potential mentors.³ Can one only mentor effectively after initiation into a specialized body of knowledge, or with the help of extensive training or curricula?

Many excellent resources exist to support academic mentors. I've learned a lot from these resources and will draw upon them in the chapters to follow. External resources and trainings can be helpful for mentors because they are occasions for people to get together, focus on their mentoring practices, and figure out ways to do it better.⁴ But time-bound trainings are no substitute for an ongoing commitment to serve your mentees well, in ways that honor both their needs and your own strengths and limitations. Mentoring, at its foundation, is about human relationships, and

this requires you to spend time and effort thinking about yourself as a human being. No external resource or curriculum can tell you what your blind spots are, or what your mentee needs or wants at any given time. And because every mentoring relationship—as a configuration of two or more unique individuals—is different, mentors (and mentees) face the challenge of continuous learning and growth.

This challenge does not mean that we are deficient—simply that we are human and we strive to do better. I do not favor the term “training,” in relation to mentorship education, because that term implies a deficiency in skill or knowledge that can be remedied within a discrete timespan. Most faculty and other academic mentors I’ve encountered are highly competent, emotionally aware, and resourceful people. Their difficulties in mentoring do not result from ignorance or ill will, but from things like basic lapses in communication, vague expectations, and a lack of role clarity—from both sides of the mentor-mentee dyad. Frequently, faculty approach me for help on mentoring issues—they care deeply about their students, and they are logging more mentoring hours than they can spare. In these situations, it may be a question of working more strategically, and not harder.

Although I am still an academic—a former English professor, and now adjunct faculty in Education—I write this book as a professional coach. Since 2019, I have coached hundreds of doctoral students and faculty across all disciplines and schools at Duke University, in both 1:1 configurations and groups. Contrary to popular misconception, coaches do not tell people what to do. They empower resourceful, competent people to cultivate greater self-awareness, identify goals in alignment with their strengths and values, overcome challenges, develop strategies to meet their goals, and, beyond that, to flourish.⁵ Academics bring many topics to my coaching sessions, and mentoring

is one of the more common ones. As a university-based coach, I enjoy the rare privilege of working simultaneously with both mentors (faculty, research PIs, and program chairs) and mentees (junior faculty, graduate students, and postdocs, some of whom are also starting to mentor undergraduates). This dual role has provided me with an exceptionally good vantage point to observe firsthand the “mentoring pains” experienced by each party, and to observe what interventions work best in changing the tenor of a bumpy mentoring relationship.

When faculty approach me to discuss mentoring challenges, the last thing they need is more advice—that is, somebody else’s opinion of what they should do. Rather, they need encouragement to remember the many resources they already bring to the situation, which often include successful past mentoring interactions. They need a safe, structured space to reflect on their purpose and goal as mentors, which is not always well-defined. They benefit from prompts to consider what their mentee needs, which may not be identical to what the mentee is asking for. Mentors also need support in identifying ways in which they’re falling short of their aspirations, and in pushing against ingrained ways of thinking or doing, to better meet mentee needs.

You may have picked up this book because of your role as a mentor to someone within your home discipline or field. But the lessons herein are largely transferable to a helping relationship you might establish with any academic—and to a nontrivial extent, with anyone at all. Proclaiming something’s value to “everyone” and “anyone” may seem foolhardy in today’s fragmented higher education landscape. Several decades ago, educational sociologist Burton R. Clark observed that the US professoriat, working at institutions spanning research institutions at one end and community colleges at the other, was “evolving into a multisided occupation composed of many dif-

ferent professions, semi-professions, and nonprofessional fields” (4). Highlighting the increasing difficulty of identifying shared values and experiences among academics, he rightly posed the question, “does any integration obtain?” (7). If we have so little in common, what would be helpful to everyone? It’s not a question that many of us are incentivized to ask. The harder we work to affiliate ourselves with a particular subdiscipline or field—and perhaps tie our identity to it—the less inclined we are to flex our muscles beyond it. It’s good to know your limits, but academics can often draw those boundaries too tightly, and far too quickly. This mindset limits not only what faculty think they can accomplish—such as stepping into a leadership role or moving into a new field of research (“I am not an expert in this”)—but also who they think they are qualified to help. In this way, specialization breeds what I like to call “helper imposter syndrome.”

Discipline-specific conversations about mentorship are both necessary and valuable. Supporting a biology researcher in setting up and running their own lab, for example, is a different sort of undertaking than helping a budding historian navigate a set of archives or conduct oral histories. Academic discussions about mentorship tend to take place within disciplinary silos. We talk about “mentoring in the disciplines,” implying that mentorship is fundamentally different from one academic program to the next, and certainly different between STEM, the arts and humanities, and the social sciences. And this is at once true and not true. If one’s definition of mentorship is closely bound up with guiding students through a research program, and modeling excellence in a specific career path, then mentorship will look different in terms of content, if not approach. Tolstoy tells us that “happy families are all alike.” What about mentoring relationships? While there are many permutations

of productive mentoring relationships, they demonstrate commonalities that have little, if anything, to do with discipline. Mentors and mentees enjoy a high degree of reciprocity and trust, mentors are patient and empathetic, mentees feel supported and cared for. And in the absence of those things, mentoring relationships flounder, often with a corresponding amount of drama that Tolstoy might appreciate (“every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way”).

Several rules governed the writing of this book, including that it had to be relatively short. In selecting the topics, I focus on things that will be helpful to every mentor, and for every mentee, no matter who they are. For example, there is no one chapter on mentoring across differences, because transcending difference is inseparable from the job description of the mentor, and no effective mentoring happens in its absence. These differences, both obvious and less visible, might include race, gender, socioeconomic status, disciplinary background, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, age, learning style, and physical or mental ability. Many of the skills and competencies outlined in this guide, such as creating a climate of trust and safety, demonstrating curiosity, and practicing active listening, will provide mentors with an excellent foundation for navigating differences of all kinds. A discussion of mentorship through an explicit diversity, equity, and inclusion framework is beyond the scope of this book, but well worth seeking out.⁶

To assert that one can mentor “anyone” does not mean that you can meet everyone’s needs. It does mean, however, that you have clarity in your role and purpose as a mentor, which should make it easier to know your limits when you cannot help someone navigate a particular challenge. Your mentee’s day-to-day activities, interactions, and long-term goals may be filtered through an entirely different set of life experiences, or

challenges, or categories of identity than yours. You may, for example, be a white, Gen X man from an upper middle-class background, trying to be helpful to a twenty-something, female, first-gen scholar who is also a new parent. If your definition of “mentor” is something more flexible and capacious than that of “guru” or *Doktorvater* (German for “doctor-father,” Grossman 2018), you could certainly be helpful to her. But you will also do well to have the humility to know where you can't be helpful, and the wherewithal to refer her to other people and resources.

How to Mentor Anyone in Academia challenges mentors to align their purpose and actions with a rapidly changing higher education and employment landscape, and to better meet the needs of an increasingly diverse group of young scholars and emerging professionals. In this book, I speak as a practitioner, drawing upon every role I've inhabited in a somewhat unconventional higher education career. I have been a graduate student, a postdoc, a tenured professor at a small college with an evening program for nontraditional adult students, and then a PhD-holding professional building a second career through a series of nonfaculty administrative positions at two research universities. In my work as a mentor, advisor, and coach, I have also supported people who occupy each of these roles. What binds all of these people together is that all of them work in higher education, and many of them—consciously or otherwise—have absorbed habits and assumptions about mentorship that aren't serving them well. Although the professional needs and aspirations of a new faculty member may look different from those of a young PhD working for a nonprofit, both of these individuals have been formed in an intensely competitive, cloistered environment not known for being innovative in how it trains and supports people. And whether you are seeking to

be a better mentor or find better mentorship for your own needs, chances are that the ghosts of your graduate training and academic formation may be holding you back. That's where this book comes in.

If you're feeling frustrated, ineffective, or overextended in your work as a mentor, this book offers a helpful, engaging framework for rethinking your purpose and role, and invites you to consider what you have the agency to change and improve. It is not a training or curriculum, but it could be a complement or follow-up to one. It asks you to build on the knowledge and experience you already have to mentor at the top of your game. It refuses to obfuscate, intimidate, or complicate. While mentoring is never simple, it is not rocket science either. Consider Mark Bittman's *How to Cook Everything*, which attempts to demystify culinary science for the novice cook. Like Bittman's now-classic tome, this book takes a minimalist's approach to something frequently overdone, to allow room for creativity, possibility, and improvisation. For mentoring is an art, as well as a science. There is no one way to mentor, and every mentor is different. Just as every professional coach cultivates a "signature presence" that draws upon their unique personalities, life experiences, and strengths, every confident and capable mentor brings the best of themselves in working with mentees.

This book offers a vision of mentorship shaped by my training and ongoing work as a professional coach. Although some books and reports on academic mentorship list "coaching" as a valid strategy in helping mentees, I've encountered few direct discussions of how coaching can inform and expand mentoring relationships in higher education. Not only can a coaching framework foreground actions and behaviors that are helpful for everyone, but it also gives us new ways to think about the mentor's role. Many coaches, myself included, work in the area

of organizational leadership development. Many academics don't think of themselves as "leaders" until they step into a formal administrative role as department chair or divisional dean. But if we define a leader as someone charged with leading others in a new or daunting direction, then you, as a mentor, are a leader.⁷ How can you think and act like one, as you rise to meet increasingly novel mentoring challenges?

Many barriers to effective mentorship are structural in nature, and scholars of mentorship are quick to point to the responsibility of academic leaders in shaping a climate and culture conducive to mentoring. At most institutions of higher education even now, faculty are expected to mentor without adequate support, recognition, or reward. Research faculty must publish or perish, and less critical pieces of the promotion package, such as advising and mentoring, can fall by the wayside. When academic superstars fall short as mentors—whether through ineffectively guiding and supporting their mentees, or simply by being unresponsive—it creates a host of problems. Teaching-oriented institutions such as undergraduate colleges place less pressure on faculty to publish, and mentorship activities may be weighted more explicitly in tenure and promotion decisions. But faculty juggle more teaching responsibilities, and often heavier service loads as well.

When faculty mentors aren't accessible, more resourceful mentees might identify other people to fill in those gaps. While this is a logical strategy for mentees, it can place pressure on typically younger, female, non-white and other underrepresented colleagues—in a phenomenon that Katrin Schultheiss (2018) calls "ghost advising"—to pick up the slack. Today's junior faculty—younger, cooler, and ostensibly more "tuned in" to the needs and aspirations of students, may find themselves fielding multiple mentoring requests, all the while wondering

who will mentor *them*. Another recurring problem in higher education, sadly, are various forms of advising that are exploitative, abusive, and even illegal (Mangan 2018; Gluckman 2020; Zahneis 2021). When things go south with an influential mentor, mentees are often left without clear and safe avenues for recourse, or ways to resolve the situation without jeopardizing their own academic careers. Even when problems are brought to the attention of university leaders, it can be difficult for institutions to hold powerful, tenured faculty accountable for bad mentorship.

When I talk to mentees, whether graduate students, postdocs, or junior faculty, about getting their mentoring needs met, I often begin by helping them view their challenges within a larger structural framework. There are risks to this approach; mentees, especially younger graduate students, are sometimes bewildered, even angered, to learn about the lack of guidance, institutional support, and recognition for faculty mentors. They find conversations about inequities in mentoring loads enlightening, but some begin having qualms about the asks they make—or were hoping to make—of more junior and underrepresented faculty mentors. And whenever graduate students come together to discuss mentorship, stories about unresponsive or unskilled mentors are sure to surface, along with deep hesitation about reaching out to PhD program leadership to help. Mentees bring with them many assumptions about their doctoral programs—that information may not be kept confidential; faculty will “look out for each other” at the expense of students; and that it might be difficult, if not impossible, to identify appropriate alternative mentors. Rather than complain to program leadership, some students resort to “whisper networks,” in which prospective students are quietly warned against working with problematic advisors.

At the risk of agitating already stressed-out mentees, I find the structural issues important to touch upon for several reasons. First, information about larger contexts—“here are some reasons why this is happening, and it happens a lot”—can have a powerful normalizing effect for mentees who initially perceive their challenges as wholly unique, and entirely their fault. And establishing for mentees what is structural—and thus more difficult to change—can help them pinpoint aspects of the situation that they *do* have the power to change, such as altering their response to the situation, clarifying which of their needs remain to be met, and considering strategies for either managing up with advisors/mentors or getting those needs met elsewhere. Finally, while not all of the mentees I work with will end up in the academy, quite a few of them will go on to launch faculty careers. They are the future of higher education, and I challenge them to begin thinking now about how they'll effect changes in their institutions and disciplines—beyond simply being excellent mentors themselves.

The structural issues are important, but they are not the focus of this book. It's easy and understandable for us, as academics, to lean upon the expertise of others, to tell us how to mentor well. We learn to collect, synthesize, and apply information from our earliest years in graduate school. As critical thinkers, we also develop skills in cultural and institutional analysis, making us quick to identify what's broken in organizations—and particularly, what *everyone else* is doing wrong. What does not come easily to us as academics, but also simply as human beings, is to train both a critical and productive lens on ourselves, and our own mentoring practices. Academics can become paralyzed by self-criticism—a phenomenon I discuss later in the book—yet we are as prone to blind spots as anyone else. If we can take a hard, honest look at what's

going on in our mentoring relationships, we might see things that bump up against the ways in which we like to see ourselves. Are we, for example, as empathetic and effective as we think we are? We might also see more clearly the impact of our attitudes and behaviors on our mentees, which may not align with our best intentions. In today's higher education landscape, it's not enough to "mean well," or to simply avoid mentoring behaviors that are outright negligent or toxic. Nor does an ostensibly successful track record inoculate anyone against mentor mishaps. Beware the faculty member who brags about all the students they've "placed" in Ivy League faculty positions, all the mentoring accolades they've received, and all the hours they spend meeting with mentees. As Edgar Schein (2011) cautions us, there's such a thing as "unhelpful help." The more invested someone is in the identity of Star Mentor, the harder it will be for them to notice when their time-tested approach isn't landing well with a particular mentee. The mentee's peers, however, will be the first to know.

How to Read This Book

To become more effective and empathetic mentors, we might need to change something about ourselves. Personal transformation is difficult, and that's where a coach comes in. A well-trained, effective coach supports people in cultivating self-awareness, identifying what's working and not working, and mapping out strategies for change. This book seeks to create some space for readers, and avoid the "data dump" phenomenon, which can be both intimidating and paralyzing. To create this space, the book integrates all the things a coach can offer in a session, and then some. As you read through each chapter, you can expect to find:

- 👁️ **Perspective**, through introductory discussion of each mentoring issue, helping you to focus on the big picture while providing just enough of the scholarly background for context.
- ✂️ **Building Blocks** for new ways of thinking (reframing) or doing things; whether concepts, visual tools, or evidence-based best practices. Often, however, we first need to identify and dismantle some stumbling blocks.
- 🔙 **Stumbling Blocks**, or things that get in our way as effective mentors, such as self-limiting thoughts (“I can’t help this person”; “this person can’t be helped”), outdated ideas of mentorship (“I must be all things to my mentee”) or bad habits (not listening).
- 🔑 **Coaching Moments** in the form of provocative, open-ended questions that encourage you to reflect on your own assumptions, mindset, and mentoring practices.
- 📖 **FAQs:** Coaching is a conversation, not a monologue. At times, I voice questions that readers are likely to have about a given topic.
- 🗨️ **Takeaways for Mentees:** while this book is written primarily for mentors, we often occupy both the roles of mentor and mentee simultaneously, with one identity coloring the other. If you are a mentee, this section is for you.

Advice: I don’t give advice in sessions. But at times in the book, I transition to a consultant’s role and offer advice gleaned from my cumulative professional experiences, including nearly a thousand separate coaching conversations I’ve had with academics across humanities, social sciences, STEMM, business, law, divinity, and medicine.

Many of us approach advice books as toolboxes, skimming the chapters for the “tips” and “tricks.” For busy readers who need help in a hurry, subheadings mark where we are in each chapter. The structure of each chapter, like that of each coaching conversation, is unique. That may make it harder to skim, but that’s part of the point. This could be read as an advice book, but the primary goal of a good coach is not to transmit information and advice. You’ll likely get more out of this experience by imagining yourself in a sequence of coaching sessions. And if you do this, you’ll need to commit to slowing down, thinking about your unique experiences, and maybe even jotting down notes at the “coaching moments”—and yes, reading the whole book. Although a book can never replace ongoing interaction with an actual coach or mentor, my hope is that you come away with the benefits I’ve seen coachees experience time and again: 1) an enhanced sense of confidence and competence in your ability to meet current and future mentoring challenges; 2) motivation and ability to make long-term, beneficial changes in your mindset, actions, or both. You might even notice your mentees starting to respond to you differently!

What We’ll Discuss

Across nine chapters, this book will guide you through nine dimensions of academic mentorship. Some of the chapters speak to issues that generate an undue proportion of mentoring pain—such as vague purpose and lack of role clarity—and offer other evidence-based practices and strategies for taking mentorship to the next level.⁸ Every topic and chapter also speaks to the urgent need for mentors to reevaluate what’s working and what isn’t, within a rapidly changing higher education landscape, and for the needs of an increasingly diverse group of

mentees. If successful, this approach will help readers come away with a greater sense of confidence, and competence, *in being helpful to everyone*.

The book opens with a call to redefine mentorship, in ways appropriate for today's mentees, and the here and now. In chapter 1, I invite readers to confront embedded assumptions and stale truisms about academic mentorship, and to consider how both these assumptions and past mentoring experiences color their current attitudes and practices as mentors. I uphold a definition of mentoring that foregrounds the needs of the mentee, in the service of their continuous learning and growth. Confronting popular assumptions that great mentors are born not made, possess special charisma, or generate "chemistry," I also guide readers through an inventory of facilitative roles that they can occupy as mentors; consider actions, skills, and competencies that support these roles; and help them separate what they "do" as mentors from the potentially egoistic attachment to who they "are" as mentors.

In chapters 2 through 5, we refocus on the issues most critical to formal, 1:1 relationships, which are typically higher-stakes for both mentor and mentee and often most challenging to sustain, as commitments stretching for several years or more. Chapters 2 and 3 speak to one of the most fundamental problems formal mentors struggle with—challenging mentees and holding them to high standards (showing "backbone") while also creating safe, nurturing spaces for them to learn, fail, and grow (showing "heart"). Chapter 4 explains what mentors might learn from professional coaches, and guides readers through the stages of a basic coaching conversation. It challenges mentors to move beyond what are too often overused and stale mentoring modes—advising and personal role modeling—to helping mentees solve problems for themselves. Chapter 5 tackles an

“invisible elephant” in high-stakes mentoring relationships that rarely gets enough discussion: power dynamics in the academy and how they can inhibit the formation of a trusting, reciprocal, and productive mentor-mentee dynamic.

Chapter 6 invites readers to move past the traditional 1:1 model of formal mentorship and consider all the different forms mentorship can take in today’s higher education landscape and beyond. Alternatives such as informal networks of mentors, peer mentors, and “mentors of the moment” present both challenges and opportunities for those remaining in more “traditional” mentoring roles (such as graduate advisors) to rethink both their mentorship identity and approach. Effective mentorship, especially now, also includes supporting mentees in expanding their networks. Mentees can find this aspect of professional development intimidating at best, and paralyzing at worst. Therefore, this chapter also includes a robust set of guidelines for both mentors and mentees to approach this task as a collaborative undertaking.

Chapter 7 discusses forms of mentoring that might be most helpful for mentees seeking to launch or refashion careers, both within and beyond academia. This chapter merges “how-to” with a bit of memoir. I draw from my picaresque career journey across the higher education landscape, highlighting moments at which I keenly felt the benefit—or lack—of appropriate mentorship. What can other academics who use the modifiers “off,” “beyond,” “alternative,” or “adjacent” to describe their career tracks learn from my experience?

Chapter 8 addresses issues that both mentors and mentees struggle with but often never disclose to one another: time management, personal boundary-setting, and self-care. It will invite mentors to reflect on their own time management and self-care strategies, and offer some concrete, relevant tools and

exercises. Mentors can use these to put their own oxygen masks on first, or share them with mentees as they build their own skills in these important areas.

The book's final chapter explores mentorship in relation to something highly relevant yet rarely touched upon in discussions about mentoring: the impacts of change on both individuals and organizations. When people rise to meet the demands of change, we can say they have "grown." But when people fail to understand or respond well to change, they can stumble in ways that are costly, both personally and professionally. Our mentees, many in their twenties and thirties, are navigating a dense thicket of professional and life changes—shifts in where they go to school, what they do, who they associate with, who they partner with or marry, what "family" might consist of. While it's not a mentor's job to guide mentees through all these changes, a baseline of what I call "change literacy" can help mentors support mentees in adapting to change in ways that enhance, rather than strip down, their confidence and sense of competence.

The second half of chapter 9, the book's conclusion, widens the lens of change, away from individual mentors and mentees and toward our collective responsibility to build cultures of effective mentorship at the local level and beyond. Higher education is a notoriously difficult arena in which to lead change. How can faculty, chairs, and divisional deans initiate change in order to foster a more vibrant culture of mentorship for everyone?

Beyond prompting you to reflect on your mentoring practices, learn some new things, and enhance your confidence, this book will have met its intended goal if it seeds new conversations with your colleagues and mentees. A couple years ago, after I wrapped up a three-hour departmental mentoring workshop

I'd been invited to do with a small group of Duke faculty, I asked, "What are you taking away?" A senior member of the department spoke up: "That this shouldn't be a once-a-year-thing, like Christmas. We need to be having these conversations about mentoring *all the time*." We are never "finished," learning to mentor, and we don't need to do this work alone. What conversations will you have about mentoring, as you read this book, or once it's finished? Who will your conversation partners be?

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