

How to Ask for Advice



A question I recently answered on Quora was:

How would you go about asking a business professional that you admire, for advice on starting up a business?

My answer could just as easily apply to asking someone to mentor you.

Here's what I said:

Asking someone for advice means you have to adhere to their timeline – meet or talk when they can meet or talk. Offer them email questions as an alternative.

Treat them, if they are willing, to a meal or beverage – breakfast, coffee, lunch, drinks, or dinner and don't be cheap about it if you pick the place.

If you want to stand out, **write them a letter** to ask for their time to give you advice. When meeting, take notes. After the meeting, call or email or write to them to thank them for their time.

Don't make the meeting or call all about you. Ask questions about them, not just what they can share about your situation.

Don't think of this connection as a one-time thing. It could potentially grow into a professional relationship that benefits both parties. You are just starting out and willing to learn, they are willing to share – how can you help each other?