



## Coast Guard Flag Voice 67

### BE A MENTOR

Job satisfaction through mentoring!

One of the most commonly heard comments by mentors is, "I believe I've gained a lot more from this than the person I've been mentoring has!" What do they gain?

By being a mentor, you can:

- Increase your self-confidence by passing on your successes
- Achieve a feeling of satisfaction by helping others and helping the Coast Guard retain good people (yes, mentoring helps us with our retention goals!)
- Cultivate your management, leadership and interpersonal skills (being a mentor may very well help you advance in your career)
- Earn the respect and appreciation of others
- Keep in touch with what's going on at various levels of the work force
- Expand your network of contacts

So how do you go about being a mentor?

Why not look around your unit and seek someone out who is new to the unit or Coast Guard. Don't say, "I'd like to be your mentor." Rather, offer to sit down with him or her and answer any questions he or she may have about career opportunities, how to advance, educational opportunities, benefits, career resources, etc. Later, you can offer to help them with goal setting and a plan to reach their goals. Let the relationship build naturally - research has shown that this "natural" mentoring is very effective for professional development.

What else can you do?

We have a database on the Web where people can sign up as mentors and look for mentors. This fills the void for many of our people who cannot find a mentor at their own unit. To sign up, go to the ONE DOT Mentoring Program on the Web at <http://mentor.dot.gov/>.

You don't have to wait for training to be a mentor.

All you need is common sense and the desire to help others. As one SES member recently said, "Look, I

have eight people on my schedule to mentor, and I've never been to mentoring training."

To give you some helpful information and guidance, the Coast Guard Mentoring Program's Web site, <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wt/g-wtl/mentoring.htm>, has information on:

- What to look for in a mentor
- How to be an effective mentor/mentee
- How to get started in a mentoring partnership
- Skill-building modules on communication and counseling
- Mentoring testimonials
- Frequently asked questions

I encourage everyone to reach down to help someone else up the ladder behind you. Don't forget how important it is to seek a mentor of your own, either. Every one of us can benefit from mentoring, having a partner to discuss our goals with, giving us a listening ear, providing another perspective, and giving positive reinforcement that can sometimes make all the difference in our career success.

Have a happy Thanksgiving!

Regards, FL Ames

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