



Mentoring with Stephanie

What to Expect from Our Creative Mentoring Relationship

There are many different mentoring and coaching styles, and oftentimes people enter into a mentoring relationship with assumed expectations. To help you understand what you can expect when entering into a mentoring relationship with me, and so that we get off on the right foot at the beginning, I would like to share the following information so you will be able to better envision what our partnership will look like.

First and foremost, before entering into any mentoring relationship, you should ask yourself the following questions, even if you do not necessarily have definitive answers yet, and be prepared to discuss them during the mentoring session:

1. Where are you now with your photography (ICM or otherwise) and/or your creative journey?
2. Where would you like to be with your photography (ICM or otherwise) and/or your creative journey?
3. How do you think you will get to where you want to be? Do you have a clear vision/path and just need help realizing it? Or do you need help clarifying the vision or path?
4. Is there anything you feel is preventing you from getting to where you want to be? Are there any obstacles holding you back?
5. What do you want to your imagery to say or communicate? In practical terms, what do you want from your creative work?

It is important to understand that mentoring relationships are a partnership. Mutual support and respect are necessary ingredients for maintaining a healthy relationship. These are some of the common expectations that each side of the mentoring relationship both often have:

<i>Common Expectations of Mentors</i>	<i>Common Expectations of Mentees</i>
That they provide help, offer suggestions, and be a sounding board for things related to the mentee's goals and development.	That they take initiative to drive the relationship for their own development and planning.
That they provide and be open to feedback from the mentee. When they are providing feedback to the mentee, that they be honest, yet tactful and appropriate in their tone.	That they provide feedback about the mentoring relationship and process and be open to receiving honest feedback from the mentor. When providing feedback to the mentor, they are honest, yet tactful and appropriate in their tone.
That they provide suggestions, thoughts, ideas, and advice on goals, activities, and progress of the mentee.	That they ask for suggestions and advice early in the relationship. When advice is given, they listen to the mentor and apply at least some of the mentor's ideas. Then, let the mentor know the results.

The following are some of the **expectations we should agree on** at the beginning of our mentoring relationship:

- We always maintain confidentiality between one another
- We keep the commitments we make to each other
- We both evaluate the relationship at various points
- We accept and value each other's differences
- When meeting, we give each other our full and undivided attention, free of outside distractions
- You are responsible for your own learning, growth, and actions
- We are both open to trying new things
- We build trust by being open and honest with one another

These are some of the **things a mentor should not be expected to do**:

- To spend more time on the relationship than the mentor is willing or able to provide.
 - To take the lead in the relationship, such as setting up all the meetings and driving the development of the mentee.
 - To continue the mentoring relationship beyond the agreed-upon time.
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Practical strategies for the mentee that help build the mentoring relationship:

- You own your development. It is up to you to identify objectives and keep the relationship moving forward.
 - Use active listening skills at all times.
 - Be prepared to ask for specific advice on your skill sets, ideas, plans, and goals. The more specific you are, the better.
 - Be complete, yet concise, in your comments and explanations.
 - If you receive constructive criticism, don't defend yourself or get upset. Thank your mentor for being honest with you. Practice the advice and then follow up on the feedback given to you.
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How a mentoring relationship with me will benefit you:

- You will gain knowledge, skills, values, and expertise from my own experience with ICM, photography, and creativity.
- You will grow in your awareness of photographic techniques and creativity, as well as for tapping more into your own unique artistic vision.
- You will receive feedback in key areas of the photographic and creative processes behind the camera, as well as in post-processing.
- You will find increased clarity about what is needed for you to grow personally, photographically, and creatively.
- You will learn specific skills that help you reach your goals.
- You will be encouraged and nurtured to identify your goals and challenges, as well as to set priorities.

To help ensure a productive and effective mentoring relationship, our partnership should include the following:

Open Communication

- **Mentor** – I will help you set realistic expectations, and I will maintain open lines of communication throughout the mentoring relationship.
- **Mentee** – You will be upfront and let me know what your goals are, as well as what you hope to take away from our mentoring relationship.

Support and Encouragement

- **Mentor** – I will encourage communication and participation and help create a solid plan of action.
- **Mentee** – You will remember that I am there for you, but I am only a guide. Nothing I say is gospel. I am there to help you generate and clarify ideas and concepts.

Defined Expectations

- **Mentor** – I will help set up a system to measure your growth toward achieving your goals.
- **Mentee** – You will review your goals, and make sure I know what to expect from you.

Responsive and Appropriate Contact

- **Mentor** – I will politely respond to your emails, answer questions, provide advice, offer resources, and give guidance as and when appropriate.
- **Mentee** – You will keep up with your emails and politely ask questions, but don't over communicate.

Honesty

- **Mentor** – I will be honest and tactful with my feedback and advice. My goal is to encourage and inspire you to be the best version of you as possible and to create the best work you can create.
- **Mentee** – You will let me know if you don't understand something or if you have a differing opinion.

Active Participation

- **Mentor** – I will engage in my own learning and collaboration on projects, as well as ask questions and experiment while I am mentoring you, to ensure I provide you with the best possible advice and encouragement.
- **Mentee** – You will actively listen and ask questions of me. Help me understand how I can best serve you.

Innovation and Creativity

- **Mentor** – I will openly and freely share my creative ideas, thoughts, concepts, and processes. I will provide meaningful advice and be a resource for you to develop new ideas of your own.
- **Mentee** – You will offer your own ideas on what activities and exercises we can do together that will be of most benefit to your growth.

Reliability and Consistency

- **Mentor and Mentee** – The more reliable and consistent we both are, the more we will trust one another.

Positivity

- **Mentor** – I will recognize the work you do and the progress you make and be a source of encouragement for you to continue growing, developing, and moving forward with your photographic and creative endeavors.
- **Mentee** – You will remember that my feedback is meant to help you learn and grow, not to criticize or demoralize.

Understanding and Acceptance

- **Mentor and Mentee** – We will both remember that we all come from different backgrounds and experiences. We will get to know each other on an individual basis of respect, understanding, and acceptance of what makes us different, but also for what brings us together.

You may use the following fillable worksheet to help you clarify your thoughts and responses to the questions at the beginning of this handout. Please feel free to share your answers with me should you decide to enter into a mentoring relationship with me.

Full Name and Location

Full Name	
Location	

Where are you now with your photography (ICM or otherwise) and/or your creative journey?

Where would you like to be with your photography (ICM or otherwise) and/or your creative journey?

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How do you think you will get to where you want to be? Do you have a clear vision/path and just need help realizing it? Or do you need help clarifying the vision or path?

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