

WHEN A POTENTIAL MENTOR TURNS YOU DOWN

Submitted by Beth Braccio Hering on Wed, 04/04/2012 - 1:00pm

Share This: [in](#) [g](#) [t](#) [f](#) [e](#)



You've identified the perfect person to be your career mentor – someone with industry insight, a great attitude, and the experience to help guide you through the politics of your workplace. You summon the courage to ask the person to be your mentor, hoping he will be flattered and the two of you can get to work building a solid relationship. Then, you hear the dreaded phrase, "No, I'm sorry."

While being turned down isn't fun, don't assume that the reason is personal. Lisa Quast, president of [Career Woman, Inc.](#), in Seattle, Wash., and founder of the [Wing to Wing Women's Mentoring Project](#), recommends gracefully thanking the person for his/her time and trying to gain an understanding of why – Is he too overloaded with work currently to take on the role of a mentor? Is she willing to consider mentoring you in the future? Is there someone else he can recommend you contact instead?

"Don't be upset or discouraged if you are turned down by a potential mentor," Quast says. "Early in my career, I was turned down twice when seeking a mentor. In both cases, the person I had hoped to have as a mentor was male. Both told me they thought it would be inappropriate to be mentoring a female."

Quast suggests that you keep looking until you find a mentor you trust and respect that is willing and able to help you with your career. "Don't restrict yourself. Good mentors can be found in a variety of places, such as your current workplace, other companies in your area, non-profit organizations, church groups, and community groups such as the chamber of commerce."

Prior to seeking a mentor, Quast recommends writing down and clarifying your specific expectations and the role you want the person to play. When both sides share the same commitment and enter a relationship with a clear understanding about the time required and the topics to cover, good things are bound to happen!

Image courtesy of Thinkstock/Jupiterimages

