



**RV
UNIVERSITY**

Go, change the world

an initiative of RV EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

THE MENTOR'S TOUCH 30 TALES OF TRANSFORMATION

Real stories. Real Guidance. Real Growth.

VOLUME 01



THE MENTOR'S TOUCH

30 TALES OF

TRANSFORMATION

Real stories. Real Guidance. Real Growth.

DR PHANI KUMAR PULLELA

DIRECTOR, CORPORATE AND ALUMNI RELATIONS
RV UNIVERSITY



**RV
UNIVERSITY**

Go, change the world

an initiative of RV EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

2025 Dr. Phani Kumar Pullela
All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means – electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise – without the prior written permission of the author.

This book is published with the kind support of RV University, Bengaluru, as part of its ongoing initiative to strengthen the culture of mentorship and lifelong learning.

The views, narratives, and interpretations expressed in this book are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official views or policies of RV University.

All real-life experiences have been documented with consent, solely for academic and educational purposes within the scope of the Copyright Act, 1957 (as amended).

Title: Before the Offer Letter–The conversations that decide your career

Author: Dr. Phani Kumar Pullela

Publisher: RV University, Bengaluru (Supported Publication)

Edition: First Edition, 2025

ISBN: [To be assigned]

Printed and Bound in India

AUTHOR



Dr. Phani Kumar Pullela
Director–Corporate and
Alumni Relations
RV University

Dr. Pullela is a distinguished scientist, innovator, and mentor known for his “Design Thinking by Panchatantra,” a unique story-based innovation system. He believes that the most profound lessons in leadership and entrepreneurship are often found in timeless stories.

Holding a PhD from the University of Mysore and having completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Marquette University, USA, his career is marked by 6 US patents, over 25 publications, and more than ₹30 crore in secured research funding.

The true measure of his impact, however, is reflected in the success of his students. He has guided over 37 entrepreneurs, mentored 17 startups, and his students have collectively won over 60 national and international awards.

In recognition of his contributions, Dr. Pullela was honored with the DBT’s Biotech Product, Process Development & Commercialization Award by the President of India in 2017.

Contents



Serial No.	Title	Page Number
1.	The power of a small push	7
2.	The valley of the high-achiever	9
3.	The power of reframing the problem	11
4.	Channeling talent, not changing it	13
5.	The mentor's most important meeting	15
6.	Your performance is your loudest voice	17
7.	The mentor's mirror: reminding a mentee of their own strength	19
8.	The 5000 rupee challenge: turning gratitude into opportunity	21
9.	The mentor's compass: guiding, not deciding	23
10.	The mentor's safe harbor: creating opportunity, not just giving advice .	25
11.	Trusting the unconventional goal	27
12.	The mentor's reminder: stronger together	29
13.	Forged in crisis: the lessons that last a lifetime	31
14.	The mentor's memory: a powerful antidote to fear	33
15.	The mentor's role: from advisor to architect of experiences	35
16.	Nurturing a superpower: the art of personalized mentorship	37
17.	The mentor's network: the ultimate resource	39
18.	The power of practice: the real work behind an 8-minute win	41
19.	When in doubt, bet on their strengths	43
20.	Trusting the unconventional goal	45
21.	The mentor's anchor: grounding advice in proven strength	47
22.	The currency of character	49
23.	The resilient achiever: process over prizes	51
24.	The enabler's impact	53
25.	The ripple effect of care	55
26.	The mentor's rolodex	57
27.	To build confidence, don't just offer praise — offer proof	59
28.	The aligned artist	61
29.	The story behind the grades	63
30.	Layers of strength	65

Introduction

Over my years as an educator, I have been asked one question more than any other: "What is the secret to good mentorship?"

The answer, I have found, is that there is no secret. There is no formula or standard operating procedure that works for every student, because every student is a unique story waiting to be understood.

I have learned that true mentorship begins only when we look beyond the grades and performance metrics. A mentee's transcript tells you what they did, but our job as mentors is to uncover why.

This book is a collection of real, unfiltered tales from that journey of discovery. It is not a theoretical guide but a window into the complex, challenging, and profoundly rewarding world of guiding young minds.

Within these pages, you will meet the high-achiever trapped in a valley of self-doubt, the team of friends torn apart by ego, and the quiet student whose failing grades hid a story of incredible resilience. Each tale is a lesson in empathy, resourcefulness, and the art of personalized guidance.

You will find that in many of these moments, my role was not to provide an answer. Sometimes it was to ask the right question that reframed the entire problem; at other times, it was to hold up a mirror to a mentee's own forgotten strengths. Often, the most powerful thing a mentor can do is create an opportunity, offer a crucial connection, or simply show up when it matters most.

I have compiled these tales, inspired by my philosophy of "Design Thinking by Panchatantra", with a simple hope: to encourage a more human and empathetic

approach to leadership. These stories are a testament to the belief that every problem has a solution, provided we are willing to understand the person who is facing it.

I invite you to read these stories not as a set of rules, but as a collection of shared moments. At the end of each tale, you will find a message for the mentee and one for the mentor. It is my sincere hope that in these reflections, you will find a piece of your own journey and a spark of inspiration for the next one.

Welcome to The Mentor's Touch.

Tale 1

The Power of a Small Push



Mentorship isn't always about grand gestures or scheduled meetings. Sometimes, it's a quiet conversation on a college campus that can change a life's trajectory.

Years ago, I came across a first-year student of mine shortly after their semester results were out. Their face was etched with despair. They shared that they had walked several kilometers that evening simply because they couldn't afford the bus fare.

After failing one subject, the relative funding their education had withdrawn all support, telling them to get lost. The student was shattered and on the verge of giving up. They were short just a few marks to pass but had lost all hope and didn't even want to apply for a re-evaluation. Seeing their immense potential clouded by a moment of crisis, I felt a responsibility to step in.

I encouraged them not to lose faith and, with their permission, I submitted the re-evaluation form on their behalf. It was a small act, a simple token of belief to show them that someone still saw their capabilities.

The results came back. They passed. That tiny push was the spark they needed to reignite their confidence.

Fast forward to today. That same student now earns a handsome seven-figure salary. More inspiring, they recently purchased a beautiful home for their single mother—a dream they once thought was impossible.

This is a powerful reminder for all of us. You don't need a formal title to be a mentor. A small moment of your time, a word of encouragement, or a simple act of faith can be the catalyst that propels someone toward their destiny. It can be the one thing that helps them see beyond their current failure to their future success.

A small token of interest can truly inspire a lifetime of achievement.

Message for the Mentee:

Even when the world turns its back, remember that one person's belief in you can rekindle your own. Let every setback be an invitation to rediscover your strength and prove that you were always capable.

Message for the Mentor:

Never underestimate the power of a single act of faith. Sometimes your smallest gesture—a form submitted, a few kind words—can become the turning point of another person's entire life.

Tale 2

The Valley of the High-Achiever



We often celebrate the triumphs of top performers, but we rarely talk about their silent battles. This is a story about why mentorship is most critical when a star, for the first time, begins to doubt their own light.

I knew a brilliant, world-ranked programmer in their final year of college. Confident in their skills, they made a quiet, selfless decision: they intentionally skipped the campus placements for many lucrative roles to give their classmates a better chance, believing they could land a more significant opportunity on their own.

But the road became unexpectedly difficult. As their peers started getting job offers, the very people they had tried to help began to mock them for being unplaced. As graduation loomed, the confidence of this top performer began to erode under the constant pressure and commentary. For the first time, they found themselves in a valley of self-doubt a territory they had never visited before.

I was with them during this trying period. I vividly remember the day of their interview with a top tech giant—a grueling, five-round marathon. We were on the phone after

every single round, navigating the anxiety, dissecting the technical questions, and rebuilding their belief moment by moment.

Then came the final call. They had cleared all five rounds. The offer they received wasn't just a job; it was validation. It was a package that was one of the highest in their entire graduating class.

This experience taught me a vital lesson. Every student, whether a topper or a struggler, faces moments of doubt. But when a high-achiever stumbles, their fall can feel catastrophic because they have never learned how to land. That is the precise moment a mentor must be present—not just to inspire, but to understand the depth of their mentee's doubt and provide the steady hand needed to help them climb out of the valley.

Message for the Mentee:

Even the strongest minds have fragile moments. When doubt creeps in, remember that your past excellence is not erased by a temporary setback—let it remind you that you have already proven your worth once and can do it again.

Message for the Mentor:

High-achievers often need empathy, not applause. The greatest gift you can give them is a safe space to be vulnerable and rediscover their confidence without fear of judgment.

Tale 3

The Power of Reframing the Problem



True mentorship often isn't about giving the right answers; it's about helping someone ask the right questions. A lifelong bond is forged when a mentor helps a mentee see their problem through a new lens.

A few years ago, a former student, now a talented engineer, came to me with a heavy heart. They had a dream of pursuing a Master's degree online but were caught in a financial bind. Their company offered a generous but partial tuition reimbursement, while the total cost of the program was nearly four times that amount.

This was at a time when their family was navigating serious health crises and managing a housing loan. Taking on a significant education loan felt like an impossible and irresponsible choice. They were stressed, and their entire focus was on whether they could risk taking on more debt.

We sat down, and I listened. But instead of debating the pros and cons of a loan, I suggested we were asking the wrong question. The problem wasn't, "How do we fund the gap?"

The real question was,

"Where is there no gap?"

My logic was simple: if one great company values education enough to pay a part of it, there must be another great company that values it enough to pay for all of it.

This single shift in perspective changed everything. Their job search was no longer just about a new role; it was about finding a company that would fully invest in their growth. They began exploring opportunities with a renewed sense of purpose.

It wasn't long before they landed a position at another leading tech firm—one that offered 100% tuition coverage.

Today, they hold a Master's degree from a top university. They accomplished their ambitious goal without ever compromising their deep commitment to their family's well-being.

This is the essence of the mentor–mentee relationship. It's a bond of trust that extends far beyond graduation. It proves that our role is not just to guide them through the problems they bring to us, but to empower them to see solutions they never thought possible.

Message for the Mentee:

When faced with a roadblock, don't just ask "how do I fix this?"—ask "is there another way entirely?" The moment you reframe your question, new paths appear where there once seemed to be none.

Message for the Mentor:

Your value lies not in providing ready-made solutions but in expanding the mentee's lens. A true mentor helps others see possibilities that lie just beyond the frame of their current thinking.

Tale 4

Channeling Talent, Not Changing It



Mentorship isn't about molding someone into a new person. It's about helping them channel the powerful person they already are. Sometimes, a simple shift in direction can unlock a mentee's entire potential.

I once worked with a student who had one of the sharpest, most articulate minds I've ever encountered. They were incredibly talkative and quick-witted, but this strength had become a weakness. They faced rejection from over twenty companies, never making it past the group discussion stage.

The situation became so concerning that their classmates grew worried, fearing the toll these repeated rejections were taking on their well-being.

I found them sitting alone and asked what was happening. They vented in frustration, explaining that the arguments their classmates made in discussions were illogical and that they were simply using their time to criticize and prove those points wrong. From their perspective, they were just being the smartest person in the room.

That's when I saw the opening. They passionately said, "Ninety-five percent of what they're saying is just wrong!"

“Then forget the ninety-five percent,” I replied. “You have a powerful skill for analysis. Instead of using it to dismantle the bad, use that exact same skill to find the five percent that has merit. Focus all your energy on that small kernel of a good idea. Acknowledge it, amplify it, and build upon it.”

The advice was not to change—it was to channel.

The shift was immediate and profound. In the next group discussion, they stopped being a critic and became a builder. They used their powerful voice to find value in others’ ideas and elevate the conversation. People didn’t just listen; they were drawn to them.

They were selected by the next two companies they interviewed with.

This was a stark reminder that a mentor’s role is often to be the lens for a young person who has immense talent but lacks perspective. Our job isn’t to force them to develop new skills, but to show them how to aim their existing strengths in a direction that empowers not only themselves but everyone around them.

Message for the Mentee:

Your greatest strength can either build bridges or burn them—it depends on how you use it. Channel your gifts with empathy and purpose, and your brilliance will naturally draw people toward you.

Message for the Mentor:

The best mentors don’t silence strong personalities; they refine them. By redirecting raw energy into constructive power, you turn intensity into influence and intelligence into leadership.

Tale 5

The Mentor's Most Important Meeting



What is a mentor's true responsibility when they believe their mentee is making a huge mistake? The answer I found lies not in winning an argument, but in understanding who the most important stakeholders are.

I once had a mentee, a gifted young entrepreneur who, while still in their first year of college, was already running a successful company with real revenue and traction. One day, they came to me with a bold decision: they wanted to drop out to pursue their venture full-time.

My immediate instinct, rooted in a firm belief in the value of completing a formal education, was that this was a short-sighted mistake. I felt it was my duty to intervene. I called a meeting with the student and their parents, fully preparing to argue my case for why they needed to stay in college. But the meeting took a turn I never expected.

After I laid out all my logical reasons, the parents looked at their child, and then back at me. With complete conviction, they said,

“We believe in our child.”

They saw the passion, they saw the sales traction, and they saw the future their child was already building. They were in complete alignment with the decision to leave.

In that moment, I learned one of the most profound lessons in mentorship. My role was not to impose my worldview. It was to ensure the most critical stakeholders—the mentee and their parents—were on the same page. The decision might be debatable, controversial, or even seem risky to an outsider, but that was secondary.

I realized that a parent's stake in their child's life is of a higher order than a mentor's. Our ultimate responsibility is to facilitate crucial conversations and respect the family's unified decision. It's a humbling but vital part of guiding the next generation.

Message for the Mentee:

Follow your convictions—but do it with clarity, communication, and respect for those who've stood by you. When your passion aligns with your family's trust, it becomes a foundation, not a gamble.

Message for the Mentor:

Sometimes mentorship means stepping back gracefully. The mark of a mature mentor is knowing when to guide a discussion, not dictate a decision—and respecting when belief outweighs logic.

Tale 6

Your Performance is Your Loudest Voice



One of a mentor's most challenging roles is navigating the delicate space between a parent's agenda and a mentee's true potential. Our primary loyalty must always be to the mentee's success.

I once had a parent come to my office, deeply concerned. Their child, a bright first-year student, had just failed a notoriously difficult subject. But the conversation quickly moved beyond grades. The parent was worried about their child's passion for dance, their personal style of dress, and a perceived lack of discipline. In the parent's mind, these lifestyle choices were the clear culprits for the academic setback.

As I listened, it became clear that two very different issues were being bundled together. One was a common academic hurdle that many students face and overcome. The other was a parent's personal agenda about their child's life, and they were attempting to use me, the mentor, to enforce it. That's a line a mentor must never cross.

My subsequent conversation with the student was very different.

I told them,

“Your performance is your loudest and most convincing voice. Right now, your parent is connecting your grades to your lifestyle. The most powerful way to prove them wrong is to excel in your studies. Make your academic comeback so strong that it silences all the unrelated criticism. Let your success be the justification for your passions and your choices.”

They took that advice to heart. They channelled their energy, came back incredibly strong by the second year, and became a top performer in their batch. This turnaround gave them the confidence and the indisputable proof to show that their lifestyle and their academic capabilities were not in conflict. They fought their way back, on their own terms.

Today, they are thriving in a top MNC.

This was a powerful reminder: a mentor must be an independent advocate for the mentee. Our role isn't to enforce a parent's agenda, but to provide the mentee with a strategy to succeed. Often, the best strategy is simply to empower them to prove their critics wrong through sheer competence and undeniable results.

Message for the Mentee:

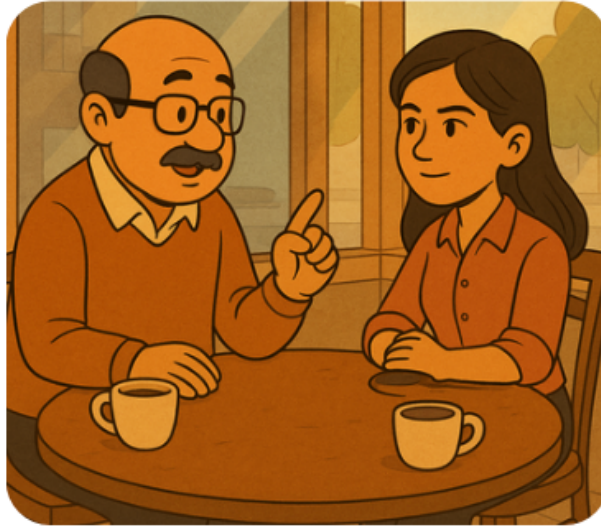
When others question your choices, let your results speak for you. Success earned through discipline and consistency becomes the strongest defence of your individuality.

Message for the Mentor:

A mentor's integrity lies in staying neutral and advocating for the mentee's growth, not external expectations. The best guidance is empowering a student to let their achievements do the talking.

Tale 7

The Mentor's Mirror: Reminding a Mentee of Their Own Strength



Sometimes, the most powerful thing a mentor can do is not offer new advice, but simply hold up a mirror to a mentee's own past triumphs—no matter how small they seem.

Years ago, a first-year student, busy organizing a college fest, came to me in a panic. She had an attendance shortage, her parents were upset, and she asked me to bend the truth for her. I refused, but I saw a spark in her. So I offered a challenge instead: "Score 44 out of 50 on your upcoming exam, and I'll handle the explanation to your parents."

A few days later, while grading her paper, I saw she had scored exactly 44. When I congratulated her, she revealed something astonishing: "Sir, I only attempted 45 marks' worth of questions. I wanted to prove to you that when I set my eyes on a target, I can hit it." I was blown away. This wasn't just about grades; it was about focus and sheer will.

Fast forward a few years. She called me after graduation. She had a 4.2 lakh job at HP but felt unhappy and lost, lacking the confidence to leave it all behind to pursue a Master's degree abroad.

I didn't give her a lecture or a five-step plan. I simply held up that mirror.

"Do you remember what you told me in your first year?" I asked.

"That when you set your eyes on a target, you hit it. You've already proven that to me, and more importantly, to yourself."

That reminder was the only spark she needed. She went on to win a \$10,000-per-semester scholarship, completed her MS at Northeastern University, and landed a job at super star MNC.

The story doesn't end there. One day, founder of super star MNC needed someone for a critical assignment at their plant in China. She volunteered. Before she left, we met, and she said, "You reminded me of what I was capable of. Now I'm going to China to fix issues for the MNC."

And she did. That's the beauty of mentorship. Our most potent tool is the mentee's own history. Reminding them of a moment they proved their strength is far more powerful than any advice we can give. It transforms a young professional, once uncertain about leaving a 4.2 lakh job, into someone solving critical problems for Tesla on the global stage.

Message for the Mentee:

You already possess the evidence of your own capability—your past victories. Whenever self-doubt strikes, revisit those moments when you surprised even yourself.

Message for the Mentor:

True mentorship is often about reflection, not instruction. When you remind a mentee of who they once were at their best, you reignite the confidence they already own.

Tale 8

The 5000 Rupee Challenge: Turning Gratitude into Opportunity



What do you do when a mentee makes a request that stretches the very definition of mentorship? My answer: you look for the opportunity hidden within it.

The first student in his batch to get a campus placement came to me, beaming with pride. He was starting a paid internship the next month and was absolutely ecstatic.

Then, he asked for something unexpected.

“Sir,” he said, “can you give me 5,000 rupees?” He explained that he didn’t want to ask his family for the money, but he desperately wanted to treat his classmates to ice cream at Baskin Robbins. They had always paid for him, and this was his chance to finally show his appreciation.

I saw that his heart was in the right place. His request wasn’t about money; it was about gratitude and community. So, I made him a deal.

“I’ll give you the 5,000 right now,” I said, handing him the cash.

“But on one condition: you pay it forward. Take five of your classmates who are struggling to get placed and train them in Java for one week, eight hours a day. Help them succeed.”

He accepted the challenge. What happened next was remarkable. Not only did he throw that ice cream party, but all five of the students he coached—some of whom were previously considered ‘ineligible’ for placements—landed jobs. One of them even secured a higher package than he did.

That one peculiar request, when channelled correctly, sparked a movement. We turned his idea into a trend: every placed student was given an incentive to train five more. That single experiment, born from a student’s desire to buy ice cream for his friends, ultimately helped over 100 students find their careers.

This was a powerful lesson. When a mentee comes to you, listen for the deeper intention behind their words. A small act of trust and a creative challenge can unlock a ripple effect of success you never could have imagined.

Message for the Mentee:

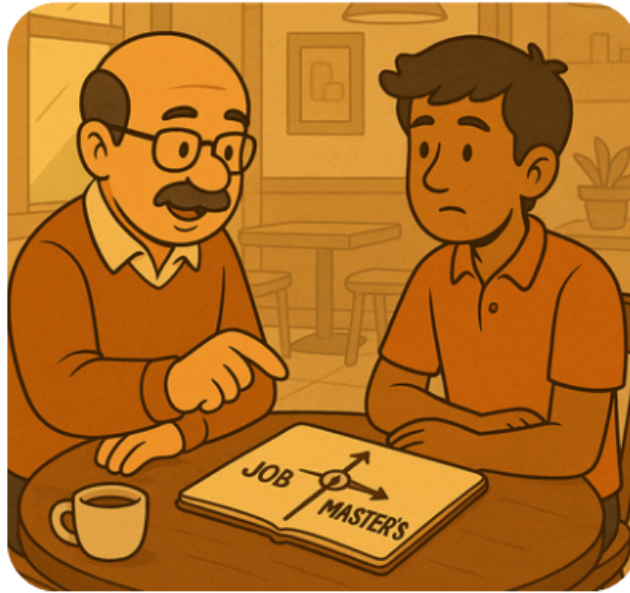
Your good intentions can become a catalyst for change when paired with action. Gratitude expressed through service multiplies your impact far beyond what you can imagine.

Message for the Mentor:

Look beyond the surface of every request. A mentor’s insight lies in converting a simple desire into a meaningful opportunity that uplifts not just one student—but an entire community.

Tale 9

The Mentor's Compass: Guiding, Not Deciding



When a mentee comes to you with a life-altering choice, they aren't just looking for an answer. They're looking for clarity. Our role isn't to make the decision for them, but to hand them a compass that points toward their own true north.

A bright engineering graduate came to me at a classic crossroads: pursue a Master's degree abroad or take a corporate job right away. He was stuck in a difficult choice and wanted me to tell him which path to take.

Instead of weighing the pros and cons of each option, I asked a different question:

"Forget these two choices for a moment. What is your ultimate goal a few years from now?"

His answer was immediate and clear: "I want to start my own company. To do that, I need to build a strong network, understand the fundamentals of business, and forge key relationships."

That was the key. The dilemma was never really about job versus master's. It was about choosing the most efficient path to his own stated ambition.

With his ultimate goal now in focus, the immediate choice became obvious. The intensive one-year Master's program in the UK, known for its immense global networking opportunities, was no longer just an option; it was a strategic step.

My advice wasn't my opinion—it was simply a reflection of his own dream, paired with a logical path to achieve it.

He took that path. He came back roaring with ideas, connections, and confidence, and successfully launched his own company. Today, he's a thriving entrepreneur who recently purchased a three-crore home outright in Bangalore.

This is a powerful lesson in mentorship. Our job isn't to bear the weight of our mentee's choices—it's to help them find their own why. Once their long-term goal is clear, the short-term decisions often make themselves.

Message for the Mentee:

The right choice isn't always the safest or the easiest—it's the one that aligns with your deeper purpose. When you find your why, every decision becomes a step forward, not a gamble.

Message for the Mentor:

Great mentors don't provide direction—they reveal it. By helping mentees connect their choices to their aspirations, you empower them to make confident, self-anchored decisions.

Tale 10

The Mentor's Safe Harbor: Creating Opportunity, Not Just Giving Advice



One of the toughest challenges for a recent graduate is watching their friends start new careers while they are still waiting for their own break. A mentor's role in these moments is to be resourceful and, sometimes, to create a safe harbor for talent to regain its confidence.

I once worked with a talented student who didn't secure a job through campus placements. She was worried, and her confidence was visibly eroding with every success story she saw from her peers.

I realized her biggest hurdle wasn't a lack of skill; it was the psychological weight of feeling 'left behind.' She needed a zone of comfort—a professional environment where she could break that negative pattern and remember her own capabilities.

So, I made a decision. I hired her for a small internal project on a very modest stipend. The goal wasn't a long-term role; it was to give her a project to own, a team to join, and a professional identity to step into. It was to replace the label of 'unplaced' with 'working professional.'

The transformation was immediate.

Once she was in a professional setting, free from the constant anxiety of the job hunt, her true performance emerged. Her confidence returned, and shortly thereafter, she landed a fantastic full-time job at another company and moved on.

This was a powerful lesson. Sometimes, the best mentorship isn't just advice—it's providing a tangible opportunity. Finding that internship, that small project, or that first break for a struggling mentee can be the single most impactful thing you do. It creates a space for them to weather the storm, rediscover their strengths, and launch successfully into their careers.

Message for the Mentee:

When life pauses your progress, don't lose faith in your ability—momentum can be rebuilt. Every small opportunity is a launchpad if you approach it with purpose and gratitude.

Message for the Mentor:

When words no longer heal, create space for action. A mentor who offers a real opportunity—no matter how small—gives their mentee more than employment; they give them dignity and direction.

Tale 11

Trusting the Unconventional Goal



What do you do when a brilliant mentee sets their heart on a goal that seems not just difficult, but statistically impossible? You trust their fire.

I mentored an exceptionally brilliant student who had already won a ₹10-lakh award with me in his first year. He was clearly destined for great things. In his third year, he came to me with an extreme idea. A top tech company, XXXXX, had a consistent three-year pattern of hiring only female candidates from our campus. He looked at me and said,

“I want to be the one they hire this year.”

To make it even bolder, he refused to sit for any other campus placement. It was VMware or nothing. As a mentor, logic might tell you to advise a safer path.

But what truly drives a person is a complex biology we can't always interpret. I looked at his track record—the award, the sheer determination in his eyes. My gut told me to

trust him, not the statistics. Sometimes, we have to set aside our limited view of what's possible and simply support the brilliance we see in someone.

When XXXXX finally came to campus, I was with him through the preparation for all seven grueling interview rounds. And he did it. He broke the pattern and got the job.

The story doesn't end there. Just nine months later, he leveraged that hard-won position to join YYYYYY for a salary of ₹40 lakhs—more than double his already impressive XXXXX package.

This was a profound lesson. Our role as mentors isn't always to chart the most logical course. It's to observe where a mentee's heart truly lies, trust their proven potential, and provide unwavering support as they chase down their own "impossible" goals.

Message for the Mentee:

When everyone tells you something can't be done, let your preparation, persistence, and performance prove them wrong. The rarest victories are born when conviction outshines caution.

Message for the Mentor:

Trust, when grounded in evidence of past excellence, can be the highest form of mentorship. Sometimes the mentor's wisdom lies in silence—in choosing belief over interference.

Tale 12

The Mentor's Reminder: Stronger Together



Individual brilliance is powerful, but collaborative genius is transformative. One of a mentor's most important roles is to be a patient observer, ready to remind a team of the magic they create together.

I once mentored a trio of brilliant, inseparable friends. In their first year, they were an unstoppable force, winning a ₹10-lakh award at a major innovation challenge. Their synergy was their superpower.

But as it often happens, external pressures and individual egos began to create friction. By their second year, the team had fractured. The friendship was strained, and they decided to go their separate ways. For the next two years, they each pursued success on their own, competing in events like the Smart India Hackathon. They were still talented individuals, but the big wins eluded them. They couldn't replicate the magic.

One day, they came back to me, frustrated by their lack of progress. They asked for the secret to winning again.

My advice was simple and direct: "The answer isn't a secret. It's each other. Come together as a team again."

As a mentor, you can't force a reunion or solve personal conflicts. But when the time is right, you can point them back to their greatest strength. They chose to listen. They put their differences aside, re-formed their original team, and entered the prestigious Hult Prize competition.

They won!

This is the essence of mentorship. It's not always about teaching new skills. Sometimes, it's about reminding people of a powerful truth they've forgotten: they are, and always have been, stronger together.

Message for the Mentee:

Never underestimate the power of the right team. Talent wins applause, but trust and collaboration win legacies. When ego fades, excellence multiplies.

Message for the Mentor:

Great mentors recognize when to let silence heal and when to speak the one reminder that reunites purpose. Sometimes your quiet nudge rekindles the chemistry that once built greatness.

Tale 13

Forged in Crisis: The Lessons That Last a Lifetime



The most profound lessons in leadership aren't taught in a classroom; they're forged in moments of crisis. A mentor's greatest tool is creating the environment for those moments to happen.

I remember a massive college competition where I was managing 19 first-year student teams. At the very last minute, all of them sent me their presentations, expecting me to fix everything. I was swamped, frustrated, and ready to pull everyone out of the event.

Just as I hit my breaking point, a trio of first-year students from one of the teams walked up to me. They said,

"Sir, you sit. We will handle this."

And they did. For the next day and a half, they took complete ownership. They organized and printed all 19 posters. They prepped every single team for the judges. They single-handedly turned chaos into order. In that moment, they learned more about leadership and teamwork than any textbook could teach.

That one event shaped their entire professional lives.

One of them started his career in a low-paying job. But he remembered the value of supporting a leader in a crisis. He found an industry mentor, earned their trust, and followed their advice to specialize in .NET. His loyalty and coachability paid off—his salary jumped from ₹3 lakhs to ₹11 lakhs in his very next role.

Another from the trio went on to pursue his Master's in the US and joined ZZZZZ Inc. He didn't just climb the ladder; he reached back down for his friend. He helped the third member of their team not only get a job at ZZZZZ Inc but placed him in the same team, found him an internal mentor, and ensured he had a support system from day one. That "we will handle this" spirit never left them.

This is the real work of mentorship. Throw your mentees into challenges. Give them opportunities to lead, to fail, and to support each other. The soft skills they learn in the fire of real-world problems will empower them far more than any grade on a report card.

Message for the Mentee:

When faced with chaos, don't step back—step up. Leadership is not assigned by titles but earned through action, composure, and courage in moments of crisis.

Message for the Mentor:

A true mentor doesn't always protect mentees from the storm—sometimes, they place them in it. The greatest growth happens when responsibility is trusted before it's mastered.

Tale 14

The Mentor's Memory: A Powerful Antidote to Fear



A mentor's most critical job is to be the keeper of their mentee's best moments, ready to play them back when they're needed most.

I remember a brilliant first-year student from my computer science class. One day, we discussed a complex new concept, and the very next morning, he walked in with a completed prototype design. He had built it entirely overnight. It was a display of initiative and passion I had rarely seen before or since.

Years later, that same student called me at 11:30 PM. He was in Chennai, and his visa interview for a Master's program abroad was the next morning. He hadn't sat for any campus placements—this was his only plan. Panic had set in.

"Sir, what if I don't get the visa?" he asked, his voice full of worry. "I have no backup plan. What will I do?"

I didn't offer generic reassurance. I reminded him of who he was.

"Hold on," I said. "You are the same person who built an entire product prototype

overnight in your first year. The focus and brilliance you had then are the same focus and brilliance you have in you right now. Remember that person.”

This is one of the most vital roles of a mentor. When your mentee is overwhelmed by doubt or fear, generic encouragement is useless. You must become a mirror, reflecting their own proven strengths back at them. Reminding them of a specific, pivotal moment when they were at their best is a powerful antidote that can pull them out of a spiral of worry and into a state of confidence.

Message for the Mentee:

In moments of fear, remember who you’ve already proven yourself to be. The version of you that once created, led, or persevered still lives within you—trust that memory.

Message for the Mentor:

Never underestimate the value of remembering your mentee’s milestones. When fear blinds them to their worth, your recollection of their triumph can restore the courage they’ve forgotten.

Tale 15

The Mentor's Role: From Advisor to Architect of Experiences



Sometimes, the most powerful mentorship isn't about giving advice; it's about guiding someone toward an experience where they find the answers themselves. Our job isn't to be a lecturer—it's to be an architect of transformative moments.

I mentored a top student who held a strong belief that women should achieve as much as men. She had the conviction, but I felt she needed an environment to see that belief reflected back at her on a massive scale.

Instead of giving her a speech or sharing articles, I recommended her to attend a specific event: the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing (GHC). I knew this wasn't just a conference; it was a community and a catalyst. She went. The person who came back was different.

She was no longer just a believer in equality—she was emboldened by it. The experience of being surrounded by thousands of brilliant women in technology had turned her conviction into a deep, unshakeable self-confidence. That single event did more for her than a hundred of my lectures ever could.

This is a vital lesson for every mentor. Don't just give your mentees information. Identify the key experiences—the conferences, the workshops, the projects—that will allow them to have their own powerful realizations. Those are the moments that truly shape a career and a life.

Message for the Mentee:

Seek experiences that stretch your comfort zone and reshape your worldview. Growth doesn't always come from advice—it often arrives disguised as an opportunity you dared to embrace.

Message for the Mentor:

Your greatest contribution may not be what you say, but where you send them. Guiding a mentee toward the right experience can ignite a transformation that words alone never could.

Tale 16

Nurturing a Superpower: The Art of Personalized Mentorship



Every mentee has a unique superpower. A mentor's job is to help them nurture it—and just as importantly, to teach them how to wield it.

I once mentored a gifted programmer with an incredible trait: if someone told him he couldn't do something, he wouldn't argue. He would work ten times harder than anyone else to master it, simply to prove them wrong through sheer achievement. He turned negativity into fuel like no one I'd ever seen.

But this superpower had a flaw. He came to me in his second year, ready to give it all up. He was deeply frustrated because after all his hard work, the people who doubted him... simply didn't notice. His motivation was tied to their reaction, and their indifference was burning him out.

This is where mentorship goes beyond technical advice and touches something deeper.

I had to counsel him on a simple but profound truth, one you might find in the Bhagavad Gita: “Your tenfold effort is your gift—that is 100% in your control. The reaction of others, however, is 100% outside of your control.” We worked on shifting his focus from seeking external validation to finding satisfaction in the mastery itself.

This is the heart of true mentorship. It’s not a one-size-fits-all script. It’s about understanding a mentee so deeply that you can identify their most unique strengths, help them amplify them, and protect those gifts from the noise of the world—and sometimes, from their own expectations.

Message for the Mentee:

Your greatest gift loses power when it depends on others’ applause. Master your craft for yourself—because fulfillment earned from within will always outlast external recognition.

Message for the Mentor:

Personalized mentorship is about precision, not persuasion. To truly nurture a mentee, identify what fuels them—and then teach them how to keep that flame alive without needing the world to watch it burn.

Tale 17

The Mentor's Network: The Ultimate Resource



A mentee's biggest challenge isn't always technical; sometimes, it's the quiet voice that gets drowned in a loud world. And that's when a mentor's network becomes their most powerful tool.

I once mentored a talented mechanical engineering student who was exceptionally shy. His fear of speaking and worrying about what others thought held him back, and he struggled to get placed during our campus recruitment drives. His ability to work was excellent, but his quiet nature didn't translate well in high-pressure interviews.

I realized that no amount of public-speaking advice would solve his immediate problem. He didn't need a lecture—he needed an opportunity, a door to walk through where his work could speak for itself.

So, I reached into my own network. I called a trusted friend and former classmate, explaining the situation honestly: "He is hesitant to speak, but his ability to execute is outstanding." My friend gave him a chance.

That one connection was all he needed. Once he was in a professional environment where his contributions were valued, his confidence grew. Over time, he flourished and built a successful career.

This is a crucial lesson in mentorship. Mentees come to us with unique problems that have no textbook solutions. Our role is to be a one-stop, resourceful solution—and our network is our greatest asset. When mentors connect and share resources, we don't just help our own mentees; we strengthen the ecosystem of mentorship itself.

Message for the Mentee:

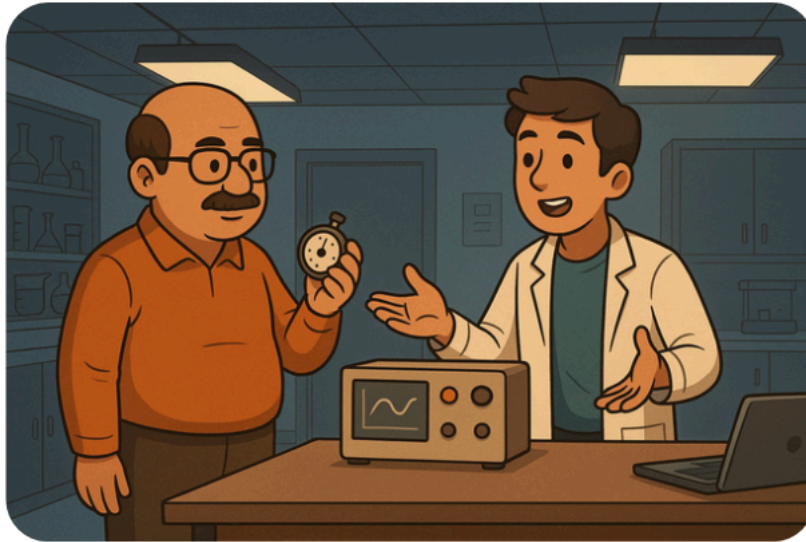
Your talent may open doors—but sometimes, your mentor's trust opens the first one. Honor that trust by delivering excellence, and you'll soon build a network of your own.

Message for the Mentor:

Your connections are more than contacts; they're bridges. Using your network to lift a deserving mentee isn't favoritism—it's faith in potential, multiplied through opportunity.

Tale 18

The Power of Practice: the Real Work Behind an 8-Minute Win



Success in a high-stakes pitch isn't always about perfect English or polished slides—it's about smart strategy and relentless practice.

I mentored a talented civil engineering student who was competing for a prestigious government grant. He had a brilliant product idea, but he struggled to communicate confidently in English, which caused him enormous stress.

First, we made a strategic pivot. Knowing that the judges in the initial round were native speakers of our local language, we decided he would present in the language he was most passionate and comfortable with.

But that strategy was only 10% of the work. The remaining 90% was practice. We rehearsed his eight-minute live product demonstration nearly thirty times in the lab. We timed it, refined it, and repeated it until it became pure muscle memory.

On the day of the pitch, he was flawless. He presented with confidence, executed a perfect live demo, and impressed the committee so much that they awarded him a ₹30-lakh grant.

What the audience saw was an eight-minute success. What I saw were the dozens of hours of preparation that made it possible. That's the invisible foundation behind every visible victory.

This is a timeless lesson in mentorship. When a mentee aims for something outside their comfort zone, a mentor's greatest gift isn't motivation—it's the discipline of practice. Confidence isn't born in the spotlight; it's forged in repetition.

Message for the Mentee:

Great performances are rehearsed long before they're revealed. Every hour of deliberate practice sharpens your craft and silences your self-doubt.

Message for the Mentor:

Your task is to turn enthusiasm into endurance. By insisting on preparation over pep talks, you teach your mentee that true confidence comes from the grind, not the applause.

Tale 19

When in Doubt, Bet on Their Strengths



What do you advise when a mentee’s passion and their “safe” career path pull them in two different directions? The answer isn’t in a textbook—it’s written in their daily routine.

I mentored a top mechanical engineering student who came from a humble background. While excelling as the topper in her demanding program, she also worked every morning as a gym trainer, running multiple fitness batches before her classes began. It wasn’t just a job—it was her way of supporting her family.

She came to me one day, visibly torn.

“Can I really build a career in fitness,” she asked, “or should I stick to engineering?”

I told her to look not at her fears, but at her patterns.

“For four years,” I said, “you haven’t just studied engineering—you’ve lived fitness. It’s not a hobby; it’s a discipline you’ve pursued with passion every single day. It has

already supported your family and proven to be a world where you thrive. Why would you bet against your own proven strength?”

That conversation changed everything. She chose to pursue her passion for fitness professionally—and she built a successful career doing what she loved. Her story became an inspiration for others who felt trapped between practicality and purpose.

This is a core principle of mentorship. When a mentee is faced with a difficult decision, always guide them toward the path rooted in their inherent strengths and demonstrated passions. A choice built on what they’ve already mastered is rarely the wrong one.

Message for the Mentee:

Your daily discipline reveals more about your destiny than any plan ever could. When the world confuses you with options, trust the strength you’ve already proven through consistent effort.

Message for the Mentor:

The most grounded advice comes not from analysis, but observation. When you help a mentee see the excellence they’ve already been living, you turn uncertainty into clarity.

Tale 20

Trusting the Unconventional Goal



Many believe mentorship ends on graduation day. In reality, that's often when the most meaningful work truly begins.

A former student, a young electronics engineer, came to me a few months into his first job. He was earning a respectable ₹4.2 lakhs per annum, but he felt his potential was far greater—he was aiming for a ₹10-lakh package. Family pressure for stability was high, but his ambition was higher.

We found a path forward: a highly specialized nine-month VLSI course offered by a top training institute known for placing graduates in roles that paid between ₹5 to ₹15 lakhs. The catch? He would have to quit his current job and pay a hefty course fee of ₹1.6 lakhs. It was a major risk.

He took the first step by passing the institute's tough entrance exam, proving his commitment. But the fee remained a significant hurdle. This was where mentorship went beyond words and entered the realm of empathy in action.

We found ways to support him in joining the course.

He did the hard work—studying and practicing nine hours a day for months. Six months later, his dedication paid off. He landed a job with a ₹14-lakh package.

This is the reality of true mentorship. It's not a short-term association that ends with a degree—it's a long-term relationship built on trust and shared belief. The challenges mentees face after graduation are often more complex and personal. There's no fixed playbook, no single formula. But one principle always holds true: be a human first. Listen with empathy, guide with honesty, and support with heart.

Message for the Mentee:

Life after graduation will test your resilience more than your knowledge. Seek mentors who challenge you, trust you, and remind you that every risk backed by hard work builds your next chapter.

Message for the Mentor:

Your responsibility doesn't expire with a convocation. When you stay invested in your mentee's journey beyond the classroom, you stop being an advisor—you become a lifelong ally.

Tale 21

The Mentor's Anchor: Grounding Advice in Proven Strength



Advice is easy to give, but it only lands when it's anchored in a mentee's reality. The secret to truly empowering someone isn't to highlight their flaws—it's to root every suggestion in their proven strengths.

I was once preparing for a crucial pitch to a visiting NGO. We needed an artist who could translate our complex ideas into a single, powerful visual. A gifted student artist from another department volunteered.

The artwork she produced was breathtaking. It didn't just illustrate our concept—it captured its very soul. The visiting committee was so bamboozled by the depth and originality of her art that they awarded us the consultancy on the spot—a project that would later benefit many other students. Her talent had created real-world impact.

Over the years, this brilliant student would occasionally come to me feeling lost or full of self-doubt. And every single time, my response was the same. I didn't offer new advice or generic reassurance—I retold that story. I reminded her of the day her art

wasn't just beautiful but transformative, the day her unique strength created an opportunity for an entire community.

This is a cornerstone of mentorship. Before you can tell a mentee where to go, you must remind them where they've already been. Every piece of advice should rest on the foundation of their prior victories. A lecture is forgotten, but guidance built on the memory of success becomes a compass they'll never lose.

Message for the Mentee:

When doubt clouds your vision, revisit your defining moments—they're proof that your strength is real and repeatable. Growth doesn't mean becoming someone new; it means remembering who you already are.

Message for the Mentor:

Ground every word of guidance in a mentee's lived success. By anchoring advice in their proven strengths, you transform motivation from abstract encouragement into credible belief.

Tale 22

The Currency of Character



A mentee's greatest achievement isn't the prize they win; it's the character they build.

I once mentored an exceptionally brilliant student who had already won seven national and international awards under my guidance. After securing a ₹5-lakh prize from a major competition, he came to me with a dilemma:

"I was the one who did most of the work," he said, "but I have three teammates. How should I divide the money?"

My advice was simple—honour the team.

"Give each of them 10 percent," I suggested, "irrespective of their contribution."

He did exactly that—each teammate received around ₹50,000, and he allocated the remaining 60 percent to an R&D fund for future projects.

A year later, when applying for an MBA in Entrepreneurship at an Ivy League university, he asked for help with his CV. I told him,

"After listing your awards, add one line: 'I chose to share my prize money with my teammates, irrespective of their individual contributions.'"

He hesitated.

"It's such a small thing," he said. "Why does it matter?" I told him to trust me.

He got in. On his first day in the US, a faculty member said,

"Oh! You're the guy who shared your prize money with your team!"

For a 22-year-old, a technical prize is fleeting; character endures. Mentorship often extends beyond academics—it shapes values that define a lifetime.

Message for the Mentee:

True success lies not in the trophies you collect but in the values you uphold when no one is watching.

Message for the Mentor:

Your influence is measured not by your mentee's achievements but by the principles they carry into the world.

Tale 23

The Resilient Achiever: Process Over Prizes



How do you mentor a student who keeps winning the race but losing the prize? You teach them to focus on the running.

One of my brightest students was known for his exceptional performances at national-level competitions. Every event he entered, he would dominate through the early rounds – judges would call, congratulate, and even compliment his articulation and creativity. Yet, in the final round, something strange kept happening. Despite his stellar performances, the results would somehow shift, denying him the trophy he so clearly deserved.

After a few such disappointments, he came to me visibly disheartened. His voice carried the weight of unfairness and fatigue.

“Sir,” he said quietly, “I don’t know what else I can do. It feels like no matter how well I perform, the result is already decided.”

I looked at him and said something that became a turning point:

“Forget the result. You can’t control outcomes decided by others. But you can control your effort — your preparation, your execution, your integrity in the process. Focus on that.”

He took it to heart. Over the next few months, he stopped chasing medals and started mastering his craft. He rehearsed, refined, and reflected after every experience. The spark in his eyes changed — it was no longer fueled by external validation, but by internal pride.

And then, life rewarded him in a different way. His consistent discipline and resilience earned him two major government grants — both purely on merit, both his own victories.

It reaffirmed an eternal truth: when systems fail, process saves. The shine of a medal fades quickly, but the glow of steady growth never does.

Message for the Mentee:

The world may not always be fair, but your discipline will always be yours. Win the process, not just the prize.

Message for the Mentor:

Teach perseverance before performance. The student who learns process mastery never truly loses.

Tale 24

The Enabler's Impact



A mentee's worth isn't only in what they accomplish, but in what they enable others to achieve.

One of my students was deeply talented — intelligent, creative, full of potential — yet luck didn't favor him when placement season arrived. Every interview ended the same way: polite smiles, but no offer letter. I could see the disappointment growing, but I also knew something he didn't: this wasn't the end of his story.

I arranged for him to work as an intern in our lab for ₹8,000 a month. His role was simple: support others. He accepted it with quiet humility, never complaining, never seeking attention. But within weeks, something beautiful unfolded.

He became the invisible engine behind two student teams working on critical projects. He helped them troubleshoot issues, refine their presentations, and meet deadlines. When those teams went on to win government grants, he didn't seek credit — he just smiled in quiet satisfaction.

Later, while updating his resume, we added a single line:

“Enabled two startups to secure government grant funding.”

That one line changed everything. Recruiters noticed. Interviews became conversations of curiosity and respect. Within weeks, he landed a strong position – and today, he’s been promoted multiple times.

It reminded me that contribution is as powerful as creation. Those who lift others, rise too.

Message for the Mentee:

Your success multiplies when you make others succeed. Enabling is the highest form of achievement.

Message for the Mentor:

Recognize and celebrate the silent supporters – their impact builds ecosystems, not egos.

Tale 25

The Ripple Effect of Care



Sometimes, the most powerful thing a mentor can do is simply show up.

One of my top students had a crucial scholarship interview scheduled at 6 PM – just half an hour after classes ended. She was anxious that the commute across the city would make her late. I reassured her,

“You come as soon as you can. I’ll go ahead and hold your place.”

So, after finishing my own lectures, I boarded a crowded bus and made my way to the venue. When I arrived, the professor in charge looked surprised to see me.

“Why are you here?” he asked.

“I’m her teacher,” I said simply. “I came on her behalf.”

He paused for a long moment – and smiled. That single act of care spoke volumes. That evening, not only did my student receive the ₹15,000 scholarship she deserved, but the professor decided to extend similar support to 11 other students, granting a total of ₹1.8 lakhs.

All because someone showed up.

It's moments like these that remind me — mentorship is not just about knowledge or strategy. It's about presence. One small act of care can create waves of opportunity far beyond your intention.

Message for the Mentee:

Never underestimate the power of gratitude — carry forward the same care for others someday.

Message for the Mentor:

Presence often outweighs pedagogy. Just showing up can change many lives at once.

Tale 26

The Mentor's Rolodex



A great mentor doesn't need to know everything – just someone who does.

Two ambitious students approached me with an exciting idea for a continental Project Management challenge: a game that would teach project principles in an interactive way. The concept was brilliant – but there was one problem. Neither of them knew a thing about game design.

I didn't either.

But instead of letting that stop them, I connected them with another student who had a knack for gamification and design. What followed was a burst of collaboration, brainstorming, and late nights spent coding and testing.

When the competition arrived, their teamwork and innovative idea carried them past some of the most elite institutions in the country including IIT Madras and IISc. Their victory wasn't just about talent; it was about connection.

That experience reminded me that mentorship isn't always about answers — it's about access. Sometimes, the most valuable thing a mentor can offer is a bridge to someone else's expertise.

Message for the Mentee:

Value networks as much as knowledge; collaboration multiplies innovation.

Message for the Mentor:

Your true expertise lies in connecting people, not in knowing everything yourself.

Tale 27

To build confidence, don't just offer praise – offer proof.



One of my brightest students constantly struggled with self-doubt. He was full of ideas but lacked belief in his own ability. Even when praised, he'd say, "Sir, I think I just got lucky."

Then came a rigorous government exam that many toppers couldn't clear. To his surprise and mine he passed the written test with flying colors.

That moment became a turning point. Every time he doubted himself afterward, I reminded him of that fact: "You did this. You earned it. You proved your capability once, and you can do it again."

Over time, he began to internalize that truth. His posture straightened, his voice steadied, and soon he was leading projects with the same confidence he once lacked.

It taught me something vital motivation is fleeting, but proof endures. Confidence rooted in evidence cannot be shaken easily.

Message for the Mentee:

Trust the evidence of your own effort; your past victories are your future's foundation.

Message for the Mentor:

Don't just motivate document. Remind your mentees of their wins until they believe them.

Tale 28

The Aligned Artist



Even the most focused mentee can lose their way before the finish line.

One of my students dreamt, from her very first semester, of pursuing a Master's degree at a top-five global university. Her father and I guided her every step through grades, projects, portfolios, and recommendations all in alignment with that single dream.

But as the time to apply drew near, anxiety took hold. She began doubting everything her qualifications, her finances, her worthiness.

"What if I don't get in? What if we can't afford it?" she kept asking.

I noticed her creative spark fading under the weight of worry. So I simply said, "Paint."

She hesitated at first but eventually returned to her easel. Through her art, she found the clarity she'd lost — realizing her fear wasn't about failure but finances. Once we arranged scholarships and a loan, her confidence returned as quickly as her brush strokes.

Today, she's thriving abroad, excelling academically and creatively. That experience reminded me that sometimes, a mentor's job isn't to fix things — it's to guide someone back to their own center.

Message for the Mentee:

When confusion strikes, return to what centers you — your passion holds your answers.

Message for the Mentor:

Great mentors listen not just to words but to silence; they remind mentees to use their own language to heal.

Tale 29

The Story Behind the Grades



A mentee's transcript shows what they did; a mentor must uncover why.

One of my Telecom students puzzled me. Bright, sincere, hardworking — yet every semester, he failed one subject. Not the same one, not due to neglect — just one, every time.

Curiosity led me to dig deeper. I discovered that he worked every evening from 4 PM to 11 PM at a small job to support his family. He studied through the night, often getting just a couple of hours of sleep. Whenever exams were spread out, he managed. But when two papers fell on consecutive days, exhaustion caught up — and he failed the second.

His “underperformance” wasn't failure; it was resilience disguised as struggle.

Eventually, his exceptional project work caught the eye of recruiters from Dell Technologies. They saw what I had seen all along – talent, tenacity, and truth. He landed a ₹6.5 lakh job, on merit and strength.

That day, I was reminded again: the numbers never tell the full story. Compassion does.

Message for the Mentee:

Your struggles don't define your limits; they define your strength. Keep turning hardship into honor.

Message for the Mentor:

Before judging results, understand realities. Compassion often reveals the truest form of excellence.

Tale 30

Layers of Strength



One of my mentees from the 2015 batch once came to me visibly upset. Someone in her friend group had made an unwanted remark about her hippie hairstyle and her height. She was hurt, not because it was from an enemy, but because it came from a friend.

She was, in fact, one of the class toppers – far ahead of the rest in at least one subject. The remark had shaken her confidence. When she approached me, I first asked whether it was an intentional insult or an incidental comment made during casual banter. She said it came up as part of a fun argument among friends, but it had lingered longer than it should have.

She didn't want to file a complaint.

"Sir," she said, "I just want you to counsel my friend. I still want to be friends, but I don't want this to happen again."

I smiled and told her,

"Before I speak to your friend, can I tell you something first?"

She nodded, curious.

“In life,” I said, “people will often make remarks. The most powerful response is silence – followed by performance. Let your success become your correction.”

Something about that struck her deeply. She asked for a day to think about it.

After that, she never brought up the issue again – instead, she went back to being the class topper, again and again. Later, she went abroad for her master’s degree in Europe – not the UK, US, or Australia, but Ireland. She proved every critic wrong, not by words but by achievement.

She still writes to me sometimes, telling me how she remembers that phrase: silence and performance.

As a mentor, I often say – we’re not here to chop onions, but to help students see the onion whole. Life may peel layers of hurt and criticism, but each layer only makes you stronger – and more valuable.

Message for the Mentee:

Let criticism fuel your growth, not your anger. Silence and success are the most dignified responses to hurtful words.

Message for the Mentor:

Don’t rush to react or protect. Sometimes the lesson lies in teaching perspective – helping a mentee see that strength often grows from silence and self-belief

Conclusion

As our journey through these thirty tales concludes, a single truth emerges: mentorship is not a process to be managed, but a human connection to be nurtured.

We've seen that the greatest impact comes not from giving textbook answers, but from looking deeper—from understanding the hidden struggle behind a failing grade, from holding up a mirror to a mentee's forgotten victory, and from anchoring every piece of advice in their own proven strength. It is the quiet act of showing up, trusting in potential, and empowering a student to find their own clarity.

The world does not need more managers of talent; it needs more cultivators of potential. Be the mentor who looks deeper, who listens with empathy, and who has the courage to make that one small gesture of faith.

Go, and be that turning point.

Acknowledgment

This Mentor–Mentee book is sponsored by RV University as part of its sustained focus on nurturing mentor–mentee relationships that can last a lifetime.

The author gratefully acknowledges the kind support and encouragement of:

- a) **Hon’ble Dr. Ramkumar Kakani**, Vice Chancellor, RV University;
- b) **Dr. Sahana D. Gowda**, Registrar;
- c) Pro Vice–Chancellors – **Dr. Anuradha Chatterjee** and **Dr. Dwarika Prasad Uniyal**
- d) Deans of Schools of Study – **Dr. Shobha G**, **Dr. Priya Nair**, **Dr. Alok Varma**, **Dr. Piyush Roy**, **Dr. Arindam Mitra**, **Dr. Pushkarni Panchamukhi**, **Dr. Sahithya Arya Thatachar (Dean – Research)**, and **Dr. Diganta Chakrabarti (Dean – Academics)**.

This book is humbly dedicated to the student mentors of RV University as a token of gratitude and recognition of their selfless service toward student well–being and, by extension, society at large.

The book forms part of a series documenting the mentoring experiences of Dr. Phani Kumar Pallela over the past decade. While mentee identities have been anonymized, informed consent has been obtained to share these experiences for the greater benefit of students and educators.

References to “Boss Alumni” denote the mentees of Dr. Phani Kumar Pallela, and all narrations are confined to the scope of academic engagement and protected under the provisions of the Copyright Act, 1957 (as amended).

Editors

This book has been carefully reviewed, refined, and shaped by a dedicated editorial team whose efforts have ensured clarity, coherence, and consistency across every narrative.

The editors have played a crucial role in preserving the authenticity of each story while enhancing readability and structure for a wider audience.

Editorial Team

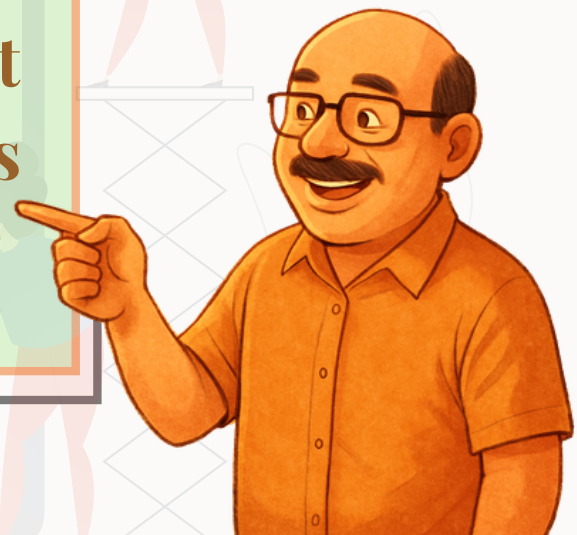
- **Harshith Gowda K**
- **Rajesh S**
- **V Spandana**

The author sincerely acknowledges the time, attention to detail, and thoughtful contributions of the editorial team. Their work has been instrumental in transforming raw experiences into a structured and meaningful manuscript.

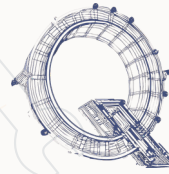
Boss Mentee Startups



A mentor's true reward isn't the spotlight - it's seeing his stars shine.



Boss Mentee Startups



Each of them carries a part of the mentor's dream — to turn learning into lasting impact.



What is a mentor's true role when the textbook answers fail?

This book is a collection of raw and powerful mentoring tales from the front lines of education. Inside, you'll find real-life stories of students facing extraordinary challenges—from crippling self-doubt and ethical dilemmas to unconventional paths and impossible goals.

Discover a philosophy of mentorship that looks beyond grades to see the person, focusing on empathy, resilience, and channeling each student's unique superpower.

An essential read for educators, leaders, and anyone invested in unlocking the true potential in others.

"To overcome a challenge, a mentee doesn't always need a new skill. They need a new persona."

— Dr Phani Kumar Pullela