

# What Would You Do? Mentee

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Here's an actual scenario faced by a mentee perhaps similar to yourself. Read the facts, imagine yourself in the situation, and choose your preferred solution...or develop your own! Check here to see how your solution compares to the answer suggested by The Mentoring Group.

## Possible Scenario

*After an exhausting day you check your answering machine and are shocked to receive an irritated message from your formal mentor: "I'm pretty tired of this. I've put more than enough work into trying to mentor you and, quite frankly, I've had it! As far as I'm concerned, we're finished." Your mind races as you try to determine what you did (or didn't do.) In fact, you thought the relationship was going well, and you've certainly received a lot from your sessions. It's Friday night and you've never asked if you could call your mentor on the weekend. What do you do?*

- A.** You decide to sleep on it for the weekend. Monday you'll check with your program's mentoring coordinator to see what to do.
- B.** You have his/her home phone number and decide to risk the call. Before you call, you practice a number of possible responses on your part.
- C.** You pretend you never got the message. You hope he/she was just having a bad day. On Monday, you place a cheerful and appreciative call to the mentor suggesting your next get-together.
- D.** You do nothing and accept this as the end of the partnership. You had a feeling this relationship wouldn't last long and think maybe the mentor was looking for an excuse.

## Suggested Response

We vote for **A** (waiting, thinking, and checking with an expert). One of the benefits of formal programs is the availability with an experienced support person. You can be frank with the coordinator and see what your options are. He/she may have additional information you don't have. Our bias is that you try to salvage the relationship (if it makes sense to do so) or at least have a closure meeting to discuss what worked and what didn't.

- B.** (practicing, then calling the mentor) You run the risk of irritating the mentor further (since you've never talked on the weekend and because you're feeling a little stressed). If you insist on trying, you perhaps will be fortunate and get the mentor's voicemail. You might leave a short message saying how you're anxious to talk, you've gained so much, want to find out how you've disappointed him/her, etc.
- C.** (pretending all is well) Well, aren't you gutsy? Lying usually gets us into trouble, so we veto this very risky ploy.
- D.** (letting this end the relationship) This is tempting, no doubt, and may seem the best idea in the short run. However, you've been enjoying the relationship, it could very well be salvageable, and like all of us, you could use practice in handling difficult conflicts.