



THE FIRST CONVERSATION: A GUIDE FOR MENTEES

Getting Started

We encourage you to kick off your mentoring relationship with an in-person meeting, phone call, or Skype chat so that you can have a more personal connection.

The most important thing to do in your first conversation is to introduce yourself and build rapport. Building rapport simply means attempting to get to know someone on a personal level. It might be helpful to reread your mentor's profile and ask questions based on the information he/she provided. You can think about what you want to share with your mentor about your background, choral experience, and interests.

Following are some question ideas to ask your mentor. Choose a few beforehand and then let the conversation flow.

Tell me about what you do for a living.

What do you wish you did while you were in school.

What do you wish someone had told you to prepare for your first conducting job?

What jobs have you had in the past?

What do you like best about belonging to ACDA?

Where are you from originally? Or what is it like to live in . . . ?

Rest assured that you have your love of choral music and your choir experience in common, so you will be able to relate on that level. The mentors are excited to talk with you, so don't worry too much about saying the right thing. Remember to communicate your enthusiasm and gratitude about working with your mentor.

Setting Goals and Expectations

We communicate to the mentors the importance of setting goals and expectations for the mentoring relationship, and ask them to take the lead in having this conversation. But if your mentor does not initiate this conversation, feel free to ask him/her about it as it is a critical step in developing your relationship. Our Mentoring Agreement is a helpful guide on which questions to answer, and can be found at www.acdamentoring.org under the "Resources" tab.

Adapted with permission from the Stanford Alumni Mentoring Program, Career Development Center, Stanford University.