



## **FREEDOM EMPLOYABILITY ACADEMY**

Building ethical, productive mindsets  
and core employability skills

# **Mentorship Program Talking Points**

### **How to use this document**

This document is not meant to be read straight through. Before the first call, mentors should read “General Notes” and “Call 1.” Before subsequent calls, mentors should read the section for that call. Each section stands alone. Additional resources are available in the appropriate section to support the development of the mentors.

### **[General Notes](#)**

### **[About FEA](#)**

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# General Notes

## About FEA

Enabling transformation and providing tools for personal development and an expansion of what is possible.

FEA's mission is to **empower disadvantaged youth**. We do this through a network of branches located in poor, urban neighbourhoods in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. FEA provides a free year-long program that focuses on English, personality and non-cognitive skill development.

20,000+ students attend FEA classes every day. Most students are in the 15 to 22 year age group and are often first generation learners in their families.

## About Mentorship

The objective of FEA's Mentorship program is to help students better understand what professional paths are available to them, which of those might be appropriate to them, and what they need to do to get there. Concretely, by the last session of the mentorship program, every student in the class should be able to speak to what they want to do, why they want to do it, how they intend to go about it, and how they plan to overcome specific adversities they foresee.

Mentors do this mostly by providing a directed sounding board and an empathic ear. With one hour-long zoom call every month for 3-4 months (a total of 5 calls), mentors can make a significant impact on the lives of students by sharing their personal stories and life experiences. FEA supports mentors by providing suggested talking points and a structure for each call, in addition to facilitating the calls themselves. After every call, students will be expected to add relevant aspects to their personal career plan, which they will present at the last session.

Most students from low income backgrounds do not personally know educated successful adults, who would take the time to speak to them and guide them. This program aims to fill the gap by exposing students to 'role models' and discussion of real life experiences. Just one conversation per month through zoom may be generally adequate to motivate, help and move them along on their chosen path. The challenges of each student are unique and just being there for them makes them feel special. You will be making a real difference just by taking an interest in their life. The mentors and mentees learn about each other through questions and answers. Apart from scheduling and providing a brief introduction, no formal preparation is required on the part of the mentor.



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### **Connectivity and Background**

We operate our classrooms in low income neighborhoods because that is where the students we wish to serve, live.

These neighborhoods are frequently noisy and sometimes have poor internet connectivity.

We ask mentors to be patient because ambient noise and connectivity issues are out of our control.

The purpose of the mentorship call is to talk about general issues and life experiences. Mentees do not necessarily want to be in the same profession as the mentor.

FEA has dedicated Career counselling and guidance team to address career related questions. Our Career counsellors provide current admission information of all Indian colleges and entrance examinations. A mentor can direct the students to approach the FEA Career Counsellor. The contact numbers are provided at each branch.

E-Mail - [careerguidance@FEAIndia.org](mailto:careerguidance@FEAIndia.org)

### **Mentor Profile**

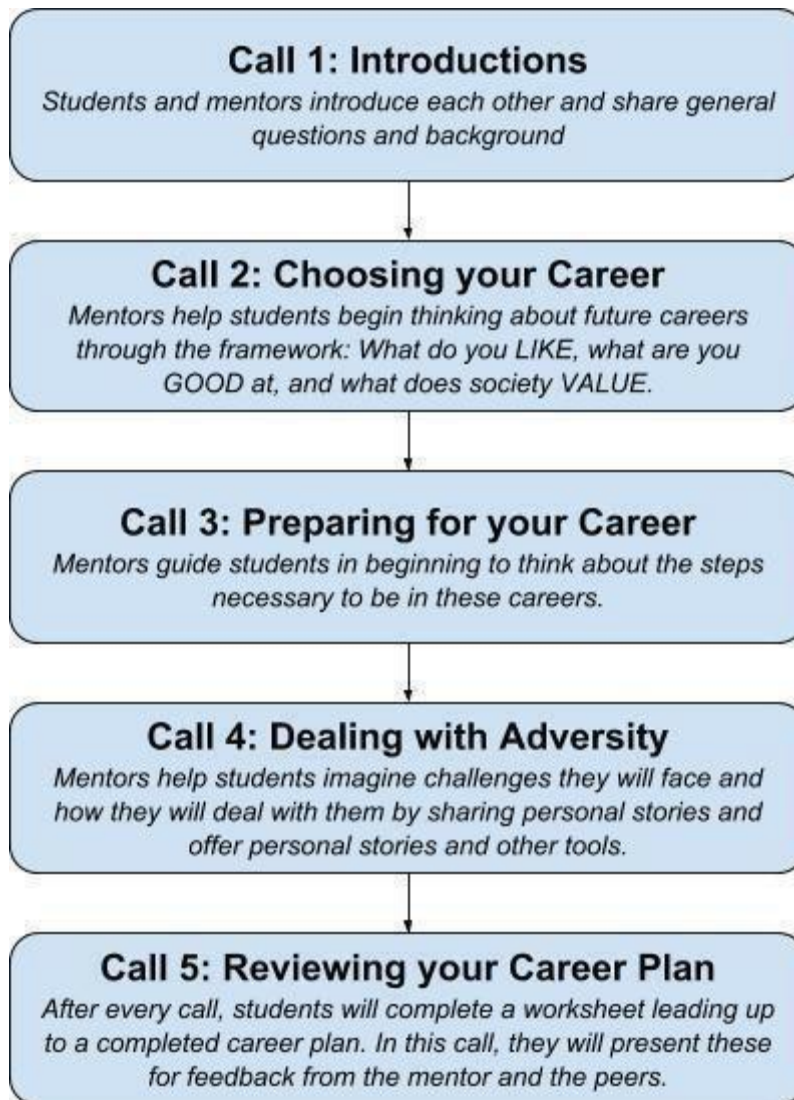
All mentor profiles are added in the [FEA webpage](#). Kindly email us at [mentor@FEAIndia.org](mailto:mentor@FEAIndia.org) if you wish to exclude your profile from the website.



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**The five monthly calls are organized as follows:**





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### **Call 1: Introductions**

The first session is composed of introductions between the mentor and the students. The students are given the profile of the mentor and with the help of the facilitators they come up with a series of questions for the mentors.

#### **Preparation**

To introduce the mentors to students in advance of the call we will provide the mentor's LinkedIn profile to students. It is helpful if you can either provide a profile of yourself like the example below or simply provide us the following information about yourself:

1. Where did you grow up and go to school and college?
2. What interests you?
3. How did you get into your current profession?

Since the students are especially interested in the process of how the mentor's reached where they are in life, it is useful to provide them with a background of your earlier life. The students will read and learn about the mentors and prepare appropriate questions for the zoom session.

Mentors will be provided with basic information about the class they are going to interact with. This will include average age of the group, level of English, percentage of the FEA curriculum they have completed and number of students likely to be present.

#### **On the call**

During the actual call, the mentor will introduce themselves, sharing how they got where they are. This gives the mentees an idea of the process involved in succeeding in a career. The mentors discuss real life stories and personal experiences to describe their journey in life.

The mentor can then ask about the student's short term goals, long term goals, aspirations and other interests, or some other open-ended questions for the students.

Students will have been prepared to introduce themselves describing what they are studying, their aspirations in life and their hobbies.



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The students are encouraged to ask questions and understand the value of group discussion. We encourage all students to participate in these discussions to enhance their skills to express themselves and converse in English

### ***Some suggested questions for the mentor:***

- What was your favourite moment at FEA?
- What are your short-term and long-term goals in life?
- What motivates you to come regularly to FEA?
- What qualities/skills have you learned at FEA? How did you learn these skills? How will/do these skills help you in their life?
- Why did they decide to learn English?
- As most of our students are either school-going or pursuing graduation, mentors can share their experience of going to school or college.

### ***Some of the questions students like to ask the mentors/guest speakers:***

- Why did they decide on their current profession?
- What were the influences in their life that motivated them?
- What is their daily routine?
- What challenges did they face in their life to get where they are. Share some of the life lessons they have learned to get where they are. Tips on effective communication.

### **Following Up**

The mentors can share their email ID and WhatsApp number, so interested students can connect with them and ask follow up questions. Mentors are welcome to mentor a few students personally to develop a longer-term mentor-mentee relationship to enrich their lives. Mentors, mentees, and facilitators will also receive feedback surveys to help FEA evaluate and improve the mentoring program.



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### Call 2: Discovering your Career

The goal of the second call is to expand students' sense of possible careers and get them to begin thinking about which of these careers might be good matches. Mentors will do this by providing a framework for mentees to think about their future careers, sharing about specific careers, and engaging in conversations about what students like and don't like about specific careers, seeking to abstract general principles they can use to evaluate other options.

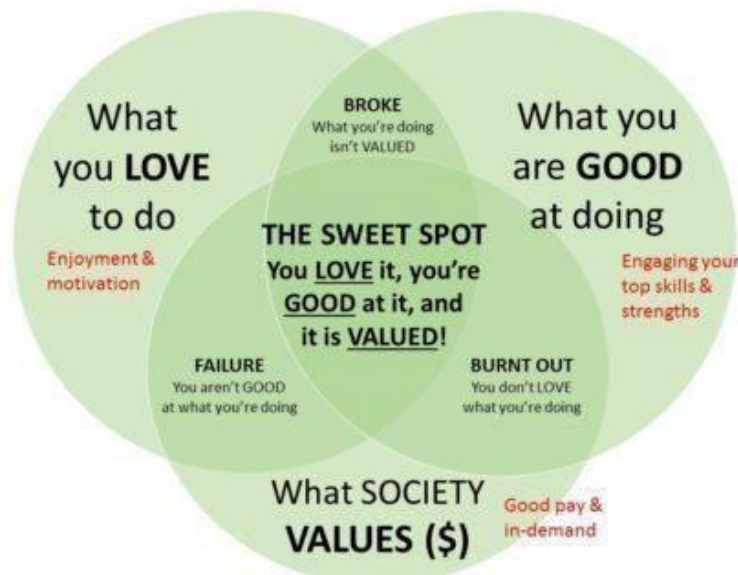
#### Preparation

Before the call, the mentors should familiarize themselves with the framework described below (in the "On the call" section) and select and prepare to share about specific careers (their own and others they understand well). A list of careers can be found in Appendix A for their convenience. Mentors should also review the suggested script for the call.

#### On the call

*Here are some suggested talking points for this call. Points in italics are notes for mentors. Note that the very last point (16) introduces homework for the students, preparing to present in front of the mentors at the beginning of Call 3.*

1. The majority of youth don't know what profession to pursue and what they should do in life. Even Buddha took many years to figure out what he was destined for, and many more striving to attain it.
2. Only a minority has a unique talent that drives them clearly in a specific direction and talent that breaks down barriers. e.g Mozart (a musical prodigy) or a Ramanujan (a math prodigy).
3. Selecting your career is an **exercise in understanding yourself and matching your talent and inclination with the requirements of a job**.<sup>4</sup> You want to find the intersection of what you LIKE to do, what you're GOOD at, and what society VALUES (and is willing to pay you for).  
*Note for mentors: The following diagram helps to illustrate this.*





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Diagram: <http://crossroadsindy.com/job-search-and-career-search-articles/difference-job-career-career-search-focus-tips>

5. Let's start by thinking about what you're good at. What are some of the things you're good at. **Note for mentors:** *At this point, the mentor should open the floor for contributions from the students*

6. Great. Hopefully that helped all of you think a little bit about things you're good at. Now let's move to the second circle in this diagram: What do you like doing? Do you have social skills and enjoy interacting with people? Do you like mathematics? Are you sociable or an introvert? Do some of you want to share the first things that come to mind? **Note for mentors:** *At this point, the mentor should open the floor for contributions from the students*

7. It is important to remember that this can be a very long process. Take the time to ask and answer these type of questions about yourself frequently. Your facilitator will provide a

8. worksheet to help you think about this as you begin to work on your career plan (See Appendix B).

9. Now we need to think about whether society values the intersection of what you like and what you're good at. Is there a job/profession that matches what you are good at and what you like doing? Can you think of any. **Note for mentors:** *At this point, the mentor should open the floor for contributions from the students*

10. Let me tell you a little bit about my own career and the things I like and am good at. **Note for mentors:** *At this point, the mentor should share about their career.*

11. What do you think? What seems exciting to you about this career? What not so much?

12. **Note for mentors:** At this point, the mentor should open the floor for contributions from the students. The goal of these conversations is to elicit generalizable principles, such as:

a. *A government job provides security and stability, and that's something I like.*

b. *Working as a scientist means always learning, and I really like learning.*

c. *Being a social worker demands that I work well with people, and I love listening to my friends' troubles.*





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13. **Note for mentors:** When the conversation about this career feels like it has become less productive, the mentor should introduce a different career and ask the same questions: What do you like about this career? What don't you like? This should be repeated for a few careers.
14. There are many more careers out there, but we don't have time to talk about all of them. You can find a list of more careers in your branch (*see Appendix A*). You can also talk to FEA's career counselors for more ideas.
15. Here are a couple more things worth thinking about with regards to choosing careers:
- a. Is there sufficient demand for that job? Or is it like trying to make a hit movie where many movies fail before you get a blockbuster (if you ever do). Can you afford to take a risk with your career choice given your personal circumstances?
  - b. Will you enjoy doing that job/profession for the rest of your life? Or should you view it as a stepping stone to your next job? Does the job develop your skills and give you mobility? People change jobs and some take time to understand and find a
  - c. job suited to them. You can change jobs relatively easily early in your career, but changes become more difficult the further you advance.
  - d. How important is money, job security, job satisfaction, personal and professional growth? This has a bearing on your choice of profession/job.
  - e. Is your choice of job/profession realistically achievable? We'll talk more about this on the next call, but if you want to be an astronaut or a famous actor, it's good to have a plan B.
16. It is important to understand that there are options for how to approach to the choice of job or profession, and there is no right or wrong answer. Whatever works best for you:
- a. **Do what you like:** suitable for the minority who have a particular talent or aptitude.
  - b. **Like what you do:** suitable for the majority, who could be a match for many types of jobs.
17. As we wrap up this call, I want to leave you with some questions for you to answer before next time. Your **facilitator** should have these on the board, and you can copy them and take your time to answer. Next time we talk, we'll start with you sharing a little bit about the careers you're looking into. So here are the big questions you should be thinking about after this call:



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- a. **What are you good at?** Write down in list form things you consider yourself to be good at. Ask your friends and family for additional ideas.
  
- b. **What do you like doing?** Think about your favourite subjects in school, your relationships with your friends, your hobbies -- how do you like to spend your time? Can you identify trends or commonalities?
  
- c. **What are other things you might need to consider in choosing a career?** These could be related to your financial situation, a need to be in a specific geographical location, needing to support your family, or continue in a family business, as well as many others.
  
- d. **What are some careers that might meet all of your criteria?** Write down at least 3. Draw from your conversation with the mentor, your previous knowledge, and the list provided in the branch. If you are struggling, talk to the FEA career counsellor.

### **Following up**

The students will begin to prepare their career plan by answering the four questions in Step 16 above. They will share answers at the beginning of the next call. **Their facilitator should have written them on the board and the students should have copied them down.**



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### Appendix A: List of careers

This list was compiled by one of our partner organizations in India, [NAME OF ORG?]

<b>Job</b>	<b>Median Annual Salary Rs. (Entry-Level) - India</b>
Accounting Professional	542,943.00
Administrative Professional	232,590.00
Agricultural Farm Worker	N/A
Analyst	592,796.00
Animal Trainer	N/A
Animator	295,396.00
Automotive Technician	176,217.00
Aviation Professional	1,215,030.00
Banking Professional	481,763.00
Beauty Services Professional	190,000.00
Biologist	N/A
Cartographer	N/A
Cashier	174,907.00
Chef	240,000.00
Chemical Engineer	397,928.00
Civil Engineer	291,344.00
Computer Science Engineer	404,138.00
Construction Worker	N/A
Content Developer	236,983.00
Corporate Sales Professional	451,951.00



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Counselor	248,677.00
Couriers and Messengers	N/A
Customer Service Representative	200,496.00
Data Processing Specialist	173,203.00
Dentist	264,010.00
Designer	339,781.00
Driver	190,120.00
Earth Science Professional	N/A
Economist	604,766.00
Editor	328,784.00
Electrician	182,560.00
Electronics Engineer	307,690.00
Environmental Specialist	363,333.00
Finance Professional	665,865.00
Artist - Fine Arts	366,133.00
Fire Protection Engineer	222,717.00
Fisheries Professional	N/A
Food and Beverage Service	N/A
Forensic Sciences Professional	N/A
Front Office Professional	180,522.00
General Management Professional	717,983.00
Health and Fitness Professional	231,434.00



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HeavyEquipment Operator	N/A
Housekeeping Professional	128,508.00
Human Resource Professional	388,063.00
Installation and Repair Technician	182,143.00
Insurance Professional	197,621.00
IT Infrastructure Engineer	299,389.00
Jewellery Manufacturing Professional	N/A
Journalist	300,777.00
Legal Professional	314,981.00
Life Sciences Professional	N/A
Logistics Worker	243,424.00
Machine Operator	236,589.00
Machinist	225,150.00
Marine Surveyor	884,372.00
Marketing Professional	465,624.00
Mathematician and Statistician	396,872.00
Mechanical Engineer	297,501.00
Media and Entertainment Professional	N/A
Medical Professional	555,787.00
Medical Technician	177,125.00
Model	N/A



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Nursing Professional	219,728.00
Operations Professional	422,271.00
Pharmaceutical Professional	196,141.00
Photographer	343,551.00
Physicist	713,380.00
Poet and Writer	305,194.00
Police Personnel	242,023.00
Psychiatrist	773,792.00
Public Administration Professional	295,592.00
Public Relations Personnel	412,117.00
Publishing Professional	N/A
Quality Assurance Professional	236,203.00
Real Estate Professional	420,000.00
Research Scientist	503,109.00
Retail Salesperson	145,262.00
Security Professional	139,842.00
Social Sciences Professional	N/A
Social Worker	231,601.00
Sportsperson	N/A
Tailor	N/A
Teacher	241,267.00
Translator and Interpreter	405,627.00



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### Call 3: Preparing for your Career

The goal of this call is to broaden students' understanding of career options by helping them understand the sorts of steps involved in getting such a job. Mentors should do this by sharing their career path and those of their friends and peers, providing illustrative (non-exhaustive) examples of how one builds a career.

#### Preparation

Before this call, the mentor should spend some time crafting a narrative of their career path and the steps they've taken to get where they are. Additionally, they should prepare to share about at least 3 other careers they are somewhat familiar with (based on the lives of their partners, siblings, parents, friends...). Students should prepare for this call by getting ready to share a career they are considering and how it incorporates at least one thing they are good at and one thing they like doing.

#### On the Call

The beginning of this call is a review of the last call, giving the students an opportunity to share where they're at in their career plan. The rest of the call is structured around major aspects of preparing for a career: **High School, Higher Education, First Job, Professionalism and Work Ethic**. The last portion of the call is a call to action, suggesting things the students can do right now to keep developing their career plan. In each of the sections, the mentor will share details of specific careers paths (the mentor's own and others that the mentor knows well) and ask students to reflect on this information. Mentors should highlight practical steps and skills they needed to reach where they are now, and also mention resources they used (mentors, teachers, programs, books, etc.).

#### 0. Review from last time

We ended the last call by leaving you with four questions. The questions were:

1. What are you good at?
2. What do you like doing?
3. What are other things you might have to consider in choosing a career path?
4. What are some careers that might meet all of your criteria?

Each of you now gets a minute to share one career you're thinking about, and how it combines one thing you're good at with one thing you like doing. Before you share, say your name again to help me remember!



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### 1. High School

- **To the mentors:** *What did you do in high school? What doors did graduating open? What skills and tools from this time have served you well in your career? What about others whose path you are familiar with?*
- **To the students:** Does this make you think differently about some of your high school experiences? What are some of the things you are learning/learned that you think might be useful for your career?

### 2. Higher Education

- **To the mentors:** *What did you do after high school with regards to your studies? Did you attend university? Some other training program? How did you get there (entrance exams, special practice, etc.)? What doors did this piece of paper open? What skills and tools from this time have served you well in your career? Did you pursue additional education, like a master's or a doctorate? Or other training? What about others whose path you are familiar with?*
- **To the students:** How many of you are planning to attend university or some other kind of post-high school educational institution? What are you thinking of studying? Why? How do you think it will help build your career? Does the career you are interested in demand even more education, like a doctorate (PhD)?

### 3. First Job

- **To the mentors:** *How did you get your first job? Did you submit resumes? Talk to people? Know someone? What skills and tools from this time have served you well in your career? What about others whose path you are familiar with?*
- **To the students:** Have you ever had a job? Did you like it? What did you learn there that you want to take into your career as you think about the future? What do you NOT want to take with you?

### 4. Work Ethic and Professionalism

- **To the mentors:** *What are some of the traits or behavior patterns you've found to be particularly important in your professional life? Here are some ideas:*
  - Punctuality
  - Following through with things you said you would do
  - Building a strong network of potential peers and employers





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- *Being kind*
- *Resilience/Grit (getting up every time you fall)*
- *Managing your time effectively*
- **To the students:** In your experience, what are traits or behaviours that are important in your professional or academic relationships?

### 5. Things you can do right now

- **To the students:** Hopefully this call has given you some things to think about in terms of what steps you'd actually need to take to build your career. But chances are you're not yet sure about what career you want to pursue. That's perfectly normal. Here are some things you can start doing right now to help you choose:
  - Simulate what your life would look like in this job.
  - Imagine yourself as an employer interviewing someone for a starting role you might want to have — what would you be looking for?
  - Find someone who has this profession — a family friend, neighbor, or someone else, and see if you can shadow them just to see what their days are actually like. Ask if you could have an internship (the worst thing that could possibly happen is that they'll say no and you won't have an internship — which is where you are right now!)
  - Read a book about someone who made it big in the career you're considering.
  - See [www.quora.com](http://www.quora.com) for answers to questions about specific careers and [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com) for encyclopedia articles about careers and fields.
  - Look for videos on YouTube related to this career. YouTube is also a great resource for motivational talks and training material to help you develop the skills you'll need.
  - Consider enrolling in a Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) to learn skills that might come in handy. See [www.edx.com](http://www.edx.com), [www.coursera.com](http://www.coursera.com), [www.udemy.com](http://www.udemy.com), [www.openclassrooms.com](http://www.openclassrooms.com)



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- **\*\*\*To the students (cont'd):** *For the next call, you should be prepared to share a couple important requirements for one of the careers you're investigating. What would your immediate next steps be if you wanted to pursue this profession? (We are not holding you to doing this for the rest of your life, but you should be thinking about it!)*

### **Following Up**

Students will be expected to share immediate next steps for one of the careers they're thinking about on the next call. They will be encouraged to do online research and talk to FEA's career counsellors to better understand the concrete steps required for their desired careers.



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### Call 4: Dealing with Adversity

The goal of this call is to help students preempt challenges they will face and think about what to do to overcome them.

#### Preparation

The mentors might want to spend some time thinking about challenges they have overcome and how they did so. Additionally, they may want to familiarizing themselves with some of the resources we've collected on this subject (See [“Additional Resources for Mentors”](#)). Students should prepare for this call by writing down one or two obstacles they foresee in their chosen career path that they would like to ask for advice on.

#### On the Call

1. The first part of this call should be taken up by the students each sharing one or two things they would need to do immediately in order to pursue a career of their choosing. They should take no more than 1 minute each. Staying within time-limits is an important skill to cultivate.
2. The bulk of this call should be composed of students asking questions to the mentor, ideally about obstacles they foresee in their career paths of choice, but also in general about how to best prepare for a career. The following is a list of questions the mentor could ask or topics they could broach if students are struggling to find questions, or if the mentor feels the conversation is unbalanced.
  - Coping with failure: most people see failure as a dead end, but really it's just an opportunity to learn and improve. Everyone falls. The question is how you get up afterwards: What can you learn from this difficulty? How can you avoid it in the future? Consider using the technique of the 5 why's → Describe what happened and ask “why” until you get to the bottom of things, not by trying to assign blame, but by trying to see how you can change the system to prevent this failure in the future.
  - Decision-making and judgement.
  - What challenges do you expect to face pursuing your desired career path?
  - Do you think you will be challenged because of your gender? This could come from your partners or in-laws, or even parents.
  - What adversities have you faced in life so far? How did you overcome them?



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- Do you have habits you've built to strengthen yourself and overcome difficulties? I.e. reading (biographies of successful people), meditating, exercising, keeping a journal, etc.
  - Have you ever had a mentor who helped you overcome your adversities?
  - Have you ever helped anyone else overcome their difficulties? What did you learn from that experience? Growing from mentoring.
3. The last 10 minutes or so of this call should be taken up explaining the career plan presentations students are expected to share on the final call. The students will have up to 3 minutes each to share, and their presentations should answer the following questions:
- What is the career you are hoping to pursue? What do people who do this job do?
  - What are you good at that will be highlighted by this career path?
  - What do you like doing that you would get to do in this career path?
  - What are the immediate next steps you need to take to pursue this career path?
  - What are three important challenges you expect to encounter on your way to your chosen career? How do you plan to overcome them?

**Facilitator to do:** These questions ought to be written down by the facilitator on the board and copied down by the students.

### Following Up

The students should prepare to present answers to the questions above. The presentations will make up the bulk of Call 5.



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### Call 5: Sharing Your Career Plan

This call is an opportunity for the students to share their career plans and receive some encouragement and feedback from the mentors.

#### Preparation

Mentors prepare a short closing statement to share with the students as the end of their formal relationship. This should include some words of encouragement and appreciation. Students should be prepared to answer the questions discussed in call 4. As a reminder, these questions are:

1. What is the career you are hoping to pursue? What is it called and what do people who do this job do?
2. What are you good at that will be highlighted by this career path?
3. What do you like doing that you would get to do in this career path?
4. What are the immediate next steps you need to take to pursue this career path?
5. What are three important challenges you expect to encounter in this path?  
How do you plan to overcome them?

#### On the call

Each student will have up to 3 minutes to present their career plans. **The Facilitator will be in charge of timekeeping and making sure the students are moving along so that everyone will have a chance to speak.**

After each student speaks, the mentor should offer one specific point of encouragement and one suggestion or question for the student to think about moving forward. The students should not answer these immediately -- they are meant as food for thought. Examples of such questions/comments could be:

- You mentioned that one thing you're concerned about is job stability. What might be some careers that allow you to have security that are not working for the government?
- You mentioned that one of the obstacles to your becoming a successful accountant is being a girl and the fact that your in-laws might not want you to work. You said you would just stand up to them, but what about your partner? Could he have a role to play, for either side?



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- You said you want to work with computers and that your immediate next step is to learn programming. Have you talked to people who work in places where you might want to work to see what kinds of languages they learned?

This should take the bulk of the class. If there is time left over, the mentor could open up for more questions or thoughts from the students, especially around whether they found the mentoring process helpful (and in what ways).

The mentor should end the call with words of appreciation and encouragement, since this is the last call and (hopefully) near their graduation.

### **Following Up**

After the call, students and mentors will fill out a feedback form meant to help FEA evaluate and improve the mentoring program.



## FREEDOM EMPLOYABILITY ACADEMY

Building ethical, productive mindsets  
and core employability skills

# Additional Resources for Mentors

## Videos

- Patrick Boland -- [Failure and the Importance of mentors](#) (TEDx, 2015)
  - This video helps appreciate the anatomy of success and failure. The speaker effectively explains how to overcome failure in different steps. The other thing this video does is emphasize the importance of practices/habits and mentorship to overcome your problems. The video explains the importance of self reflection and identifying the areas where you need feedback and mentorship
- Karen Russell -- [Modern Mentoring: The Good, the Bad, and the Better](#) (TEDx, 2011)

## Articles

- Scholastic -- [30 Tips for Student Teachers](#)
- National Mentoring Resource Center Research Board -- [Mentoring Model/Population Reviews](#)
  - Each Mentoring Model/Population Review is conducted by the [National Mentoring Resource Center Research Board](#) with the intention of examining the full body of rigorous evidence as it pertains to either mentoring for a specific population of youth (e.g., youth with disabilities, immigrant youth) or a specific model of mentoring (e.g., group mentoring, e-mentoring). Each review is built around a thorough literature review for the topic in an attempt to answer key questions about mentoring's effectiveness, participant characteristics and program processes that influence that effectiveness, and successful implementation of relevant programs to date.
- [Sample Handbook](#)
- [Ashit Jain -- A simple guide for mentoring \(Slideshare, 2009\)](#)
- [US Office of Personnel Training -- Best Practices: Mentoring \(2008\)](#) [PDF]