

Mentor GUIDE

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.

Table of Contents

1. General Notes
2. Structure of 5 calls
 - ✓ Talking points of Call 1
 - ✓ Talking points of Call 2
 - ✓ Talking points of Call 3
 - ✓ Talking points of Call 4
 - ✓ Talking points of Call 5
3. Resources of talking points
4. Additional Resources
5. About FEA
6. Mentorship FAQ
7. Career Guidance FAQ
8. Govt Job- Back up plan
9. Time Management Video



General Notes

About FEA

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

FEA's mission is to move **5 million people from low income to middle income**. We do this through a network of branches located in urban and rural neighbourhoods in Bihar, Delhi, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal. FEA provides a free year-long program that builds ethical, productive mindsets, and core employability skills including English language and digital literacy. Additionally we provide career guidance and mentorship.

90,000+ students attend FEA classes every day. Most students are in the 17 to 27 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 twice a month for 2-3 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 in the last second 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 two conversations 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.

Child Protection Policy: <https://shorturl.at/kcUxS>

As Per Indian law, we are required to have and notify all adults interacting with our students about the following Child Protection Policy. Please ensure to go through the child protection policy.

Structure of Mentorship Calls

Call #	Theme	Objectives	Outcomes
1	Introduction	● Build rapport and trust ● Share mutual expectations ● Discuss student's dreams and aspirations	Students feel comfortable, valued, and motivated to engage
2	Discovering Career	● Introduce 7 Habits of Highly Effective People- share real life success stories ● Introduce Ikigai (What I love, what I'm good at, what I can be paid for, what the world needs) ● Begin identifying potential careers aligned with Ikigai	Students feel inspired and start aligning values and strengths with purposeful careers
3	Preparing for career and interview	● Understand first-job expectations and career growth ● Learn from real career journeys ● Begin interview preparation	Students gain workplace insights and prepare for their first interview.
4	Preparing for career and interview	● Practice through a mock interview ● Receive feedback ● Reflect on challenges and learning	Students build interview confidence and recognize their strengths through life experiences.
5	Reflection, Gratitude & Looking Ahead	● Reflect on mentorship and growth ● Identify next career step ● Write a Future Self letter	Students feel confident, supported and ready to take their next step.

Call 1: Introduction

Objective:

Help mentees relate to the mentor, feel comfortable, and reflect on their aspirations.

Talking Points:

- Share your personal journey: background, struggles, turning points, and key lessons.
- Explain why mentorship matters and how mentors have helped you.
- Invite mentees to introduce themselves: name, what they are studying/doing, and one aspiration
- Mentors can ask students to share what they expect to learn from the mentorship program and share his/her own expectation.

Activity 1

Dream Wall:

Mentor asks students to write and share one aspiration and one fear. (Mentor gives one example of his/her own).

Note for Mentor:

Mentor to ask students to reflect on the dream wall during call-4 and 5.

Homework:

Mentors to ask students to watch a video on **“The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People”** before the next session and reflect on this question: “Think of a person you admire for being successful—what habits do you think helped them get there, and which of those habits can you start practicing today to move closer to your own goals?”

These habits will be discussed in Call 2 ([12 minute video watch from 45 sec mark. 7 Habits](#))

The mentor to share the expectation with the teacher to ensure students come prepared with the home work/assignment given.

Outcome:

Mentees feel seen, hopeful, and connected to the mentor and each other, building trust for the upcoming sessions.

Call 2: Discovering Career

Objective:

Help mentees discover their strengths, reflect on their Ikigai, and identify potential career directions aligned with their purpose and interests.

Talking Points:

- Ask students if they have watched the video **of 7 habits of highly effective people**. The mentor asks the following questions based on the video.
 1. Which of the 7 habits do you think you already follow to some extent?
 2. If you could master just one habit in the next 30 days to move closer to your goals, which one would it be and why?
 3. Think of a person you admire for being successful-what habits do you think helped them get there?

To introduce the concept of IKIGAI to the students, mentor to share 1–2 inspiring success stories from various fields and ask students- What did that person love? What were they good at? Etc. Mentors can share **their own success stories** to inspire them and show how setting goals and learning from failures helped you reach that success. (Note for mentors: [For success story refer to resources](#))

Introduction to Ikigai:

For Explanation: [Click Here](#)

Introduce the concept with the help of the diagram. Share that they would need to find the intersection of what they LIKE to do, what they're GOOD at, and what society VALUES (and is willing to pay you for).



The mentor explains this more by sharing his/her career and the things they like doing and what they are good at.

Video for mentor's reference

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/kmmQVZrymrQ>

Activity: Ask mentees to prepare their own Ikigai diagram, filling one item in each circle. After filling the diagram, students can think about possible careers that match their Ikigai. Mentors can ask 3-4 students to share what career they have selected after preparing their IKIGAI and why.

After they have identified their career, tell students- "Your Ikigai may change as you grow — and that's okay. But today, you have taken the first step to find what gives your life meaning."

Note for Teacher: Please ensure that students should bring their IKIGAI diagram in the next class._

Outcome: Mentees begin to recognise their strengths, discover their purpose using Ikigai, and identify career paths aligned with their interests and abilities.

Call 3: Preparing for Career & Interview

Objective:

Help mentees understand the realities of starting a career, learn from real career journeys, and prepare themselves for their first interview.

Talking Points:

- Share the mentor advice **"Your First Job Is a Beginning, Not the Destination"** and discuss why the first job should be seen as an opportunity to learn, gain experience, develop skills, and grow.
[Click here for the Mentor Advice document](#)
- Share your own career journey: how you started, your first opportunity, challenges you faced, what you learned, and what helped you grow.
- Ask mentees: **"If you get your first job tomorrow, what do you think your employer will expect from you?"** Discuss communication, discipline, responsibility, willingness to learn, teamwork, professional behaviour, and accepting feedback.
- Introduce the idea of learning from people who are already working. Encourage mentees to speak with professionals about how they started and grew in their careers.

Activity-1: Learn From a Working Professional

Mentors ask mentees to identify **2–3 working professionals** they can speak with personally or over the phone. They can be from their village/neighbourhood, family, friends, or someone they already know.

Ask mentees to choose 4–5 questions to ask them and write the responses in their notebook:

[For Sample Questions refer to the resources of call 3](#)

Note for Mentee:

If you are unable to meet or speak with a working professional, **research the career you want to pursue** and make brief notes to discuss in Call 4.

You may use AI tools to help with your research. You can ask questions such as:

- “What does a person in [career/job] do on a typical day?”
- “What qualifications and skills are required for [career/job]?”
- “How can a fresher start a career in [career/job]?”
- “What challenges do people commonly face when starting this career?”
- “What is the career growth path for [career/job]?”
- “What should I learn or practise before applying for my first job in [career/job]?”
- “What interview questions are commonly asked for a fresher applying for [career/job]?”

Activity-2: Preparing for an Interview

Explain that in the next session, mentees will participate in a **Mock Interview**. Discuss some common interview questions: [Click here for suggested Interview Questions](#)

Note for Mentor:

Encourage mentees to answer in their own words rather than memorising answers. Remind them that an interview is an opportunity to communicate clearly, demonstrate their strengths, and show their willingness to learn.

Homework:

Before Call 4, mentees should:

1. Speak with **2–3 working professionals** and learn about their career journeys.
2. **Prepare answers to the interview** questions discussed during the session. (Encourage students to practice their answers aloud.)

3. Think of **one challenge/adversity they have faced and what they learned from it**, as this may be discussed during the mock interview.

Note for the Mentor: Please remind students that Call 4 will be a **Mock Interview session**. Students should come prepared to participate in the interview.

Important Note:

After conducting the lesson, please ensure to have 5 minutes interaction with the class teacher and share the expectation to ensure students come well prepared for call 4 to make most out the session. Also, ask if the students have completed resume writing lesson, they should bring their resume with them for call 4. (If the lesson is not done, it can be optional).

Outcome:

Mentees understand that their first job is a starting point for learning and growth, gain insights from real career journeys, and feel better prepared and confident for their upcoming mock interview.

Mentor Reminder

You don't need to cover every question or point.

The purpose of Call 3 is to **start the conversation, create curiosity, and prepare students for Call 4** - not to teach everything about careers and interviews in one session.

Call 4: Mock Interview & Learning from Challenges

Objective:

Give mentees an opportunity to practice a realistic interview, receive constructive feedback, and reflect on how their life experiences and challenges have helped them develop qualities useful for their careers.

Talking Points:

- Begin by reminding mentees that the purpose of the mock interview is **practice, not perfection**. Encourage them to answer naturally rather than memorizing responses.

- Briefly remind students of the interview questions discussed in Call 3 and ask them to apply the preparation they have done. (Talking to professionals/prepare for sample questions)
- Conduct the **Mock Interview**, selecting 5–7 questions based on the students' career interests and level.
[Click here for Suggested Interview Questions](#)
- Mentor can ask students' experience about the assignment given in call 3 about talking to the working professional or doing a research on their chosen career.
- During the interview, the mentor should act as an **interviewer rather than a teacher** and observe communication, confidence, clarity, listening, and ability to structure answers.

Activity-1: Mock Interview & Feedback

After each student's interview, mentor shares:

1. **One strength:** What did the student do well?
2. **One area for improvement:** What can the student improve?/One Tip!
3. **One action:** What should the student practice before their next interview?

After interviewing all/most students, Mentor can ask students:

“What did you notice about yourself during the interview?” (Take few responses)

“What would you do differently if you had another interview today?” (Take few responses)

Activity-2: Learning from Challenges

Connect the discussion to the challenges students identified during **Call 1** and their preparation in **Call 3**.

Ask:

- What is one challenge you have faced in your life?
- How did you respond to it?
- What did you learn from the experience?
- Which quality did you develop because of it?
- How can this learning help you in your career?

Note for Mentor:

Students should not be pressured to share personal or sensitive experiences. They may choose any challenge they are comfortable discussing.

Activity-3: Turning Challenges into Interview Answers

Introduce the simple structure:

Challenge → Action → Learning

Ask 1–2 students to answer:

“Tell me about a challenge you faced and what you learned from it.” (Mentor can start with his own life example)

Help students understand that challenges can demonstrate qualities such as **resilience, responsibility, problem-solving, adaptability, and willingness to learn.**

[Click here for Challenge → Action → Learning examples](#)

Homework:

Before Call 5, mentees should:

- Practice the questions where they found it difficult to answer.
- Work on the feedback received from the mentor.
- Reflect on one challenge they faced and what they learned from it.
- Think about **one specific action** they will take towards their career goal.

Note for Mentor:

the mentors should emphasize to the students that preparing for interview questions requires consistent practice and multiple attempts. Therefore, students should not consider their preparation complete after just one or two attempts; they should continue practicing regularly to build confidence and improve their responses.

Remind students that Call 5 will be a relaxed session focused on **reflection, gratitude, learning, and looking ahead.**

Outcome: Mentees gain practical interview experience, understand their strengths and areas for improvement, and learn to recognize their challenges as experiences that can build valuable qualities for their personal and professional growth.

Call 5: Reflection, Gratitude & Looking Ahead

Objective:

Create a relaxed and meaningful space for mentees to reflect on their mentorship journey, recognise their growth, express gratitude, and identify their next step towards their career goals.

Talking Points:

- Briefly revisit the mentorship journey—from **dreams and aspirations, career exploration, workplace preparation, interview practice, to learning from challenges.**
- Invite mentees to reflect on what they have learned about themselves and their career during the mentorship.
- Encourage mentees to share how their thinking, confidence, or approach towards their future has changed.

Activity-1: Reflection Circle

Ask each student to share:

1. What is one thing you learned during the mentorship that changed the way you think?
2. What is one thing you discovered about yourself?
3. What is one thing you feel more confident about now?
4. What is one piece of advice from your mentor that you will remember?

Note for Mentor:

Let students do most of the talking. Allow them time to reflect rather than turning this into another teaching session.

Activity-2: My Next Step

Ask students:

“What is one action you will take after this mentorship to move closer to your career goal?”

Examples: speak to a professional, learn a new skill, prepare a resume, practice interviews, explore job opportunities, or improve communication.

Encourage each student to share **one realistic and specific next step.**

Activity-3: Letter to My Future Self

Future Self Activity: Mentors asks students to write a short **letter to their “Future Self”** with new goals, dreams and a message of belief that they would achieve success (Mentors can refer to the template: [Click here](#)) and share it.

Activity-4: Gratitude & Closure

Ask:

“What is one thing you are grateful for from this mentorship experience?”

Mentors can also share **one positive observation or quality** they noticed in each student and appreciate them for their participation and openness.

Mentors may share their email ID, if appropriate, and encourage students to reach out in the future for career-related guidance.

Final Mentor Message:

“You don't have to have your entire future figured out today. Keep learning, accept feedback, take initiative, and keep taking the next meaningful step. Your career journey is just beginning.”

Outcome: Mentees leave the mentorship feeling **heard, encouraged, confident, and supported**, with greater clarity about their growth and one clear next step towards their future.

Resources

Call 1: Resources

Homework to be given (after call 1)

Video 1: The 7 habits of highly effective people

12-minute video watch from 45 sec mark. 7 Habits

***Note:** This activity to be given after call 1 as homework and students should share their responses beforehand so that the mentor can refer to them in the next call.*

Two more related videos: Seven Habits of Highly Effective Individuals by Stephen Covey as each of them is very relevant for life. How to focus on what is important through the **story of a jar full of golf balls**. <https://www.facebook.com/pantiyari/videos/a-teachers-life-lessons-using-a-jar-and-some-golf-balls/646465275742722/>

To understand the concept of Synergy (6th Habit), the advantage of working as a team, I discuss the Hare and Tortoise story. I send the story to the students in advance and ask different students to share each story. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3s8rLxoDwoY>

Suggested video for time management

Time Management Video- How making **To do list** can help managing time (English):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ed4QQh7C3k>

Time Management Video- Find where my time goes
(Hindi): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ax4Tb5G1P4>

Suggestion: for a longer and slow paced video, the viewers can fasten the speed by playback speed as per their level of understanding if needed.

Call 2: Resources

Success Stories Sample (Activity of Call 2)

Real-life success stories teach students that resilience, focus, and adaptability outweigh initial talent or intelligence. Examples like Hima Das rising from a farming village to international champion, or Ramesh Babu turning a small inheritance into a luxury car business, demonstrate that passion and relentless hard work create opportunities.

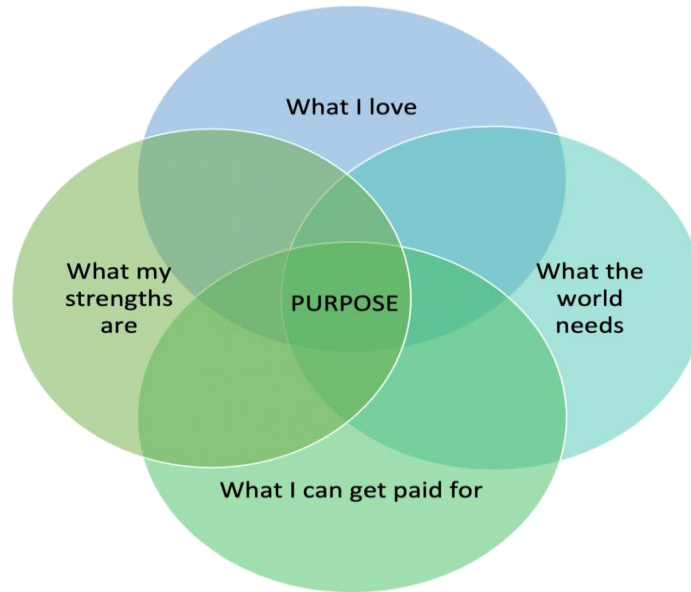
Relatable Success Stories for Students:

- **Hima Das (From Village to Gold):** Born in a small village in Assam to farmer parents, Hima had no special training. Her sheer love for running and immense hard work led her to become India's first athlete to win a gold medal in an international race.
 - *Lesson:* No dream is too big if you are willing to work for it, regardless of your background.
- **Ramesh Babu (Barber to Billionaire):** Born into a poor family in Karnataka, Ramesh had to take over his father's small barbershop. However, his ambition to do something big led him to start a car rental business, which eventually grew into a massive luxury car enterprise.
 - *Lesson:* No job is too small, and with the right mindset, anyone can achieve success.
- **The Power of Persistence (Colonel Sanders):** After facing over 1,000 rejections of his fried chicken recipe, Colonel Sanders persevered and founded Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), demonstrating that failure is just a step before success.
 - *Lesson:* Never give up on your ideas, even if people say no many times.

Key Takeaways for Students:

- **Never Give Up:** Even if you face challenges like the runner Hima Das, persistence pays off.
- **Focus Your Attention:** Similar to the story of the young man in the candle, train your mind to focus and avoid distractions to reach your goals.
- **Turn Obstacles into Opportunities:** Like the peasant who found gold under a boulder, treat obstacles as opportunities to learn and grow.
- **Face Your Problems:** Problems are part of life; facing them directly is the only way to move forward.

IKIGAI Concept:



What you LOVE to do:

means you not only enjoy it; you're **motivated** to do it.

On the opposite side of the diagram of what you LOVE to do:

- If you don't LOVE what you're doing, you're more likely to get burnt out.
- Burned-out employees tend to have poor work performance, so they have a hard time getting promoted.

What you are GOOD at doing—means you're ENGAGING your **tops skills and strengths**.

On the opposite side of the diagram from what you are GOOD at doing:

- If you aren't GOOD at what you're doing, you're likely to fail.
- Failure is a common reason to be passed up for promotions.
- You're likely to be fired as well.
- It is also difficult to maintain motivation when you're frustrated due to failure.

What society VALUES - means that if the career is valued, it's **more likely to pay well**, and it will be **in-demand**, this ALSO means you are **less likely to quit or to be downsized**.

Call 3: Resources

Your First Job Is a Beginning, Not the Destination

Dear Students,

I want to share something important with you about **jobs, salary and growth**.

Many of you are 10th or 12th pass, graduates, or have recently completed your studies. You may have big dreams—and you should. But remember one important thing:

Your first job is not supposed to give you everything. It is supposed to prepare you for something bigger.

Think about a farmer. When a farmer plants a seed, does he expect the plant to give him fruit the next day? No. He waters it, protects it, waits, and gives it time to grow.

Your first job is also a seed.

You may not get a very high salary in your first job. But you can gain something more valuable — **experience, confidence, communication skills, discipline, professional behaviour and knowledge of how the workplace works.**

If you leave a job after two or three months because the salary is less, the work is difficult, or a senior questioned you, ask yourself: **Am I leaving because the job is genuinely wrong for me, or because I am finding it difficult to adjust?**

Every workplace will have rules. A senior may correct you. You may have to do work you don't particularly enjoy. This does not mean someone is insulting you. **Learning to accept feedback and improve is part of becoming a professional.**

Freedom is important, but real freedom comes with **responsibility and skills.**

Also look around you. Many people have been working for years but their income has not changed much. Why? Because simply continuing in the same job is not always enough. **Growth requires learning, changing, taking risks and sometimes making sacrifices.**

If a better opportunity is available in another city, don't reject it only because it is away from home. Relocation can be difficult, but it can also open doors that may not exist in your village or nearby town.

So, don't ask only:

“How much salary will I get?”

Also ask:

“What will I learn? Where can this job take me? What skills will I gain in one year?”

Your first job may not be your dream job.

But if you take it seriously, it can become the first step towards your dream.

Sample questions to be asked from working professionals: (Call 3 Assignment)

Students can choose **5–7 questions** based on their interest:

About their career journey

1. How did you start your career?
2. What was your first job or opportunity?
3. What made you choose this career?
4. What was difficult when you were starting out?
5. What helped you get your first job?

About their work

6. What does your typical working day look like?
7. What do you enjoy most about your work?
8. What is the most challenging part of your job?
9. What skills do you use most in your work?
10. What skills do you think a fresher should develop before entering this field?

About growth

11. How has your career changed since your first job?
12. What helped you grow in your career?
13. What opportunities for growth are available in this field?
14. What did you learn from your first job that helped you later?

About getting started

15. What qualifications or skills are important to enter this field?
16. What can someone do today to prepare for this career?
17. What mistakes should a young person avoid when starting out?

Advice

18. What advice would you give someone who wants to enter this career?
19. If you were starting your career today, what would you do differently?
20. What is one thing you wish you had known before starting your career?

Sample Interview questions for mock interview

Most Common Interview Questions:

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Why should we hire you?
- Why do you want this job?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- Why did you choose this career?
- What do you know about our company?
- Are you a team player?
- How do you handle pressure?
- Tell me about a time you failed.
- What motivates you?
- How do you handle criticism?
- What are your hobbies?
- Describe yourself in 3 words.
- What is your biggest achievement?
- Are you willing to work in shifts?
- What are your salary expectations?
- How do you manage your time?
- What makes you unique?
- If you disagree with your manager, what will you do?
- Do you have any questions for us?
- Why did you leave your last job? (if applicable)
- What is your long-term career goal?

Call 4: Resources

Mentors can follow this structure and select questions based on the student's career interest:

About Me

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths?

Career

- What career are you interested in and why?
- What have you done to prepare for it?

Skills

- What skill are you currently developing?
- How can your strengths help you in this job?

Challenges

- Tell me about a challenge you faced.
- What did you learn from it?

Initiative

- Tell me about a time when you took initiative.
- What would you do if you were given a task you didn't know how to do?

Future

- What are your career goals?
- What would you like to learn from your first job?

Challenge → Action → Learning

This structure helps students answer interview questions about challenges, setbacks or difficult situations in a clear and positive way.

Simple Structure

Challenge: What happened?

Action: What did you do?

Learning: What did you learn from the experience?

Example 1: Financial Challenge

Challenge: "I faced financial difficulties while continuing my studies."

Action: "I looked for ways to manage my expenses and continued focusing on my studies."

Learning: "I learned to be responsible, manage my resources and stay focused despite difficulties."

Example 2: Lack of Confidence

Challenge:

“I was not confident speaking in front of others.”

Action:

“I started participating more in class and practising speaking with my friends.”

Learning:

“I became more comfortable expressing my thoughts and learned that regular practice can build confidence.”

Example 3: Academic Setback

Challenge:

“I did not perform well in an important examination.”

Action:

“I identified where I was struggling, changed my study routine and asked for help when needed.”

Learning:

“I learned not to give up after failure and to seek help and improve my approach.”

Example 4: Taking Responsibility

Challenge:

“I had responsibilities at home that made it difficult to manage my studies and other activities.”

Action:

“I planned my time more carefully and completed important tasks in advance.”

Learning:

“I learned the importance of time management, responsibility and planning.”

Example 5: Adapting to Change

Challenge:

“I had to adjust to a new environment where I did not know many people.”

Action:

“I made an effort to interact with people, understand the new environment and adapt to the changes.”

Learning:

“I became more adaptable and comfortable handling unfamiliar situations.”

Call 5: Resources

Letter to future self- Template (Activity of call 5)

Dear Future Me,

I am writing this letter to remind myself of my dreams and the person I want to become.

My big dream is to/I aspire to be _____

To achieve this, I will take these steps:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I know I may face challenges like _____

but I will overcome them by _____

I want my future self to remember that I am _____

(strong/brave/hardworking/etc.),

and I believe that one day I will _____

With hope and confidence,

[Your Name]

Additional Resources

Adversities which mostly rural students face:

- Students in rural areas lack access to quality study materials and academic support
- ✓ Free study resources: <https://www.ndl.gov.in/> (The website offers books, videos, question papers, courses, etc.)
- ✓ Free Exam Preparation: <https://www.magnetbrains.com/>
- ✓ Free Exam Notes: <https://www.studynama.com/>
- ✓ Free Short-Term Certification Course: <https://www.mindluster.com/>
- Girls facing societal and family pressure that stop them from continuing their education ([Click here to get suggestions](#))
- Students overlook private sector opportunities due to a strong focus on government jobs (An example can be shared that: (<https://www.thehindu.com/education/beyond-the-lure-of-govt-jobs/article16895826.ece1>)

"These numbers don't mean you should stop preparing. They mean you must prepare wisely—while also preparing for other opportunities. Because if lakhs are competing for a few thousand seats, then having a backup plan is not weakness, it is smartness."

- Many students want to work from home but lack the digital skills and resources to do so
- Financial challenges force students to drop out or limit their career options (Financial challenges can be dealt with the financial literacy (call 3)

Motivational Talk for Students: Government Jobs and Beyond

"I know many of you dream of a government job. And that's wonderful—it's a respected career, with stability, benefits, and prestige. But let me share a truth with you: for every single government vacancy today, there are often hundreds, sometimes even thousands, of applicants. The competition is tougher than ever. Does that mean you should give up? Not at all! It means you should prepare smartly."

"Think of your career as a journey on a highway. If you keep driving only on one lane, and that lane is blocked, what happens? You get stuck. But if you know there are side roads, alternative routes, you can still keep moving forward towards your destination. That's what a backup plan is—another route to your dreams."

"A government job can still be your dream lane. But while preparing, you can also: learn new skills, do internships, take part-time work, explore private sector opportunities, or even start small businesses. These give you experience, confidence, and financial independence. If you succeed in the government exam, great! If not, you still have a strong career path and a future."

"Remember, success is not about only one exam or one job. Success is about moving forward, growing, and not stopping because one door is closed. The world is full of opportunities—for those who keep learning and keep trying."

"So, chase your government job dream with full energy, but don't lock your entire future into that one box. Keep another door open. That way, no matter what happens, you will win."

Simple Activity for Students

- Ask them to write down:
 1. *Plan A*: Their government job aspiration.
 2. *Plan B*: An alternative career path (private job, freelancing, entrepreneurship, higher education, skill-based job).
- Tell them: *"If one plan doesn't work immediately, you can walk through another door while still preparing."*

This way, you don't *kill* their government job dream, but you open their eyes to reality and give them practical hope.

Why Government Vacancies Are Decreasing Despite Economic Growth

1. **Shift Towards Technology & Automation**
 - Many roles that needed thousands of clerks, typists, and support staff 20 years ago are now done by computers, online systems, and automation.
 - Example: Filing, data entry, railway ticket booking—all digitized → fewer staff needed.
2. **Privatization & Outsourcing**
 - Sectors once run mainly by the government (telecom, airlines, banking, etc.) are now largely private.
 - Instead of hiring permanent staff, many departments outsource work to private agencies or contract workers.
3. **Government's Focus on "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance"**
 - The policy in recent years is to reduce the size of the permanent government workforce, make departments leaner, and use technology + private partnerships for efficiency.
 - Result: fewer permanent jobs, more contract/temporary jobs.
4. **Budget Constraints & Pension Burden**

- Every new permanent government employee means not just salary, but lifelong pension and other benefits.
- To reduce long-term financial pressure, governments limit permanent hiring.

5. **Vacancies Exist, but Recruitment is Slower**

- Railways alone has 3+ lakh vacant posts. But recruitment drives are delayed or reduced because the system is shifting to efficiency, cost-cutting, and restructuring.
- So students see “vacant posts” but not regular recruitment.

6. **Economic Growth ≠ Government Job Growth**

- India’s economy is growing fast, but growth is happening mainly in **private sector, startups, IT, services, manufacturing, logistics, etc.**
- That’s where *new jobs* are being created—not as much in the government sector.

Simple Way to Tell Students

"30–40 years ago, government jobs were the biggest source of employment. Today, the private sector and startups are creating far more jobs than the government. The economy is growing, but the government is not expanding its workforce at the same speed—it is relying more on technology, outsourcing, and private companies. That is why vacancies are fewer. Which means, if you want to succeed in today’s India, you must prepare for both—government jobs and private opportunities."

This explanation makes students understand that the decline is not their fault, nor because government doesn’t care, but because the **job market itself has changed**.

Story of baby camel talking to her mother camel: This is to understand the importance of recognizing your talents and choosing a career where you can use your talents. [Click for Story of a baby Camel](#)

Girls facing societal and family pressure that stop them from continuing their education

When a girl faces family and societal pressure to stop her education, a mentor must navigate the situation with high empathy, cultural awareness, and strategy. The mentor's role is not to aggressively fight the family, but to empower the mentee, validate her choices, and tactfully build a bridge of communication.

Key Suggestions for Mentors

1. Create a "No-Judgment" Sanctuary

- **Action:** Before jumping into problem-solving, build absolute trust. Let her vent without judgment.

- **Why:** She might feel guilty for wanting to study when her family needs her for household chores or marriage. Reassure her that her aspirations are valid.

2. Think "With" Her, Not "For" Her

- **Action:** Do not tell her what to do or make demands that put her safety at risk at home. Use open-ended, reflective questions: *"What do you think is your family's biggest fear regarding your school?"* or *"How can we approach this step-by-step?"*.
- **Why:** Building agency empowers her to solve her own complex problems safely.

3. Map Out Root Causes & Practical Alternatives

- **Action:** Drill down to the *real* reason the family is stopping her education. Is it financial strain, safety concerns during commutes, or traditional gender norms?.
- **Strategy:** Help her research local solutions—like distance learning, vocational training, government scholarships, or safe carpooling.

4. Practice "Soft Advocacy" and Role-Playing

- **Action:** Help the mentee script and role-play respectful, persuasive conversations with her parents.
- **The Script Angle:** Frame the conversation around the family's economic benefits (e.g., *"If I finish high school, I can get a stable job and financially support the family"*), rather than purely "rebellion".

5. Leverage Local "Gender Champions" and Networks

- **Action:** Look for trusted local community leaders, relatives who value education, or localized NGOs to speak with the parents. Parents often listen to community insiders rather than "outsiders".

Inspiring Real-Life Stories & Resources

Sharing real stories gives a mentee the language and hope she needs to stand up for her dreams.

Real Stories of Change

- **Nidhi Kumari (India):** After her father passed away, Nidhi returned to her village in Bihar where girls' education was strictly opposed. Partnering with the NGO Educate Girls, she worked quietly within the community. She successfully persuaded 29 families to keep their daughters in school, stopped three child marriages, and even helped set up a local village girls' school.
- **Anita Deora's Mother (UPSC Success):** Coming from a deeply patriarchal village in Rajasthan, Anita faced severe skepticism regarding her studies. It was her mother who stood up to the community, declaring her daughter would study as long as she wanted. With that fierce family support, Anita went on to clear the highly competitive UPSC exams.
- **Kali's Red Scooter (Mona Foundation):** In a rural village, a young girl named Kali fought to stay in school and eventual entrepreneurship with the support of a mentorship network. Once

her small business began thriving and she bought a red scooter to commute easily, the entire community shifted. Her father proudly stated that every parent in the village now wanted their daughter to be just like Kali.

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

You may also refer to the FAQ document for career related queries: [Click here for FEA FAQs](#)

Mentor Profile

Mentor profiles are added in the [FEA webpage](#).

Kindly email us at mentor@FEAIndia.org if you wish to include or exclude your profile from the website. The criteria is to complete one mentoring batch.

Note: If mentors are interested to answer individual queries of students regarding the Profession they are in, please let us know your consent to add your profession details and email ID on the FEA portal: <https://feagraduate.org/Professionals.html>
