

# To the Editor: Mentor Mindset

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Reading the recent article<sup>1</sup> on being “ghosted” hit a nerve, not as a mentor, but as a mentee. The balance between humor and emotion is exceptional. I’ve never ghosted a mentor, but it got me thinking about the other side of the equation. What really struck me was the raw care the author pours into their trainees, the way they genuinely *feel* the weight of a stalled collaboration. That kind of frustration? That’s not about missed deadlines or unfinished projects. That’s about someone who *cares*.

Here’s the thing: good mentors are rare. Great ones? Nearly mythical. They don’t just give you their knowledge, they give you their time, their energy, their faith. And sometimes, they give you a little piece of themselves. They take the risk of believing in you, even when you don’t believe in yourself. That’s not easy. And when things fall apart, when the project falters or the mentee goes radio silent, it stings.

A great mentor doesn’t see you as just a name on their roster or a means to more publications. They see *you*—your growth, your potential, your triumphs. They see the future you’re trying to build, even if you’re squinting to see it yourself. They don’t just teach you how to do the work; they show you how to be someone who *does* the work. They turn what could have been a checklist of transactions into a relationship—one that changes you.

I’ve been lucky enough to know the kind of mentors who push, pull, and sometimes drag you to your better self, the ones who won’t let you settle, who make you believe you can do the thing, even if the thing is terrifying. And here’s what I know: great mentors leave a mark. They don’t just make better researchers, better doctors, or scholars—they make better people. And if you’re paying attention, you realize that it’s worth more than any paper, any project, or any milestone you’ll ever hit.

So, to the author of that piece: Your frustration, your heartbreak over a stagnant project—it matters. It shows how deeply you care. Even when communication fades or projects linger in limbo, that level of care leaves a lasting impact—one that may not be recognized immediately, but inevitably will be.

## Reference

1. Langan ML. Ghosted. *J Grad Med Educ*. 2024;16(2): 229-230. doi:10.4300/JGME-D-24-00126.1



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