



Athena Rising: How and Why Men Should Mentor Women

W. Brad Johnson, David Smith

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Increasingly, new employees and junior members of any profession are encouraged—sometimes stridently—to “find a mentor!” Four decades of research reveals that the effects of mentorship can be profound and enduring; strong mentoring relationships have the capacity to transform individuals and entire organizations. Organizations that retain and promote top talent—both female and male—are more likely to thrive.

But the mentoring landscape is unequal. Evidence consistently shows that women face more barriers in securing mentorships than men, and when they do find a mentor, they may reap a narrower range of both career and psychological benefits. *Athena Rising* is a book for men about how to mentor women deliberately and effectively. It is a straightforward, no-nonsense manual for helping men of all institutions, organizations, and businesses to become excellent mentors to women.

Co-authors W. Brad Johnson, PhD and David Smith, PhD draw from extensive research and years of experience as experts in mentoring relationships and gender workplace issues. When a man mentors a woman, they explain, the relationship is often complicated by conventional gender roles and at times hostile external perceptions. Traditional notions of mentoring are often modeled on male-to-male relationships—the sort that begin on the golf course, involve a nearly exclusive focus on career achievement, and include more than a few slaps on the back over drinks after work. But women often report a desire for mentoring that integrates career and family aspects of life. Women want a mentor who not only “gets” this, but truly honors it.

Men need to fully appreciate just how crucial their support of promising junior women can be in helping them to persist, promote, and thrive in their vocations and organizations. As women succeed, lean in, and assume leading roles in any organization or work context, that culture will become more egalitarian, effective, and prone to retaining top talent.

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