

# Listening for Red Flags in a Mentee Relationship

## 1. Watch for Shifts in Tone or Energy

### What to look for:

- Sudden lack of enthusiasm
- Flat or negative tone
- Vague or overly brief responses

**Mentor Prompt:** "How are you feeling about your current role and workload?"

## 2. Listen for Repeated Patterns or Excuses

### What to look for:

- Frequent cancellations or delays
- Constant overwhelm without resolution
- Repeating the same issues without change

**Mentor Prompt:** "I've noticed some recurring themes - would it help to talk through your challenges more strategically?"

## 3. Tune into How They Talk About Others

### What to look for:

- Complaints about coworkers or leadership
- Words like "toxic," "unfair," "left out"
- Repeated conflict references

**Mentor Prompt:** "I hear some tension in how you describe your team - what's been your experience?"

## 4. Note What They're Not Saying

### What to look for:

- Avoidance of goals, performance, or feedback
- Lack of future-oriented conversation
- Silence on growth or development

**Mentor Prompt:** "We haven't revisited your long-term goals in a while - has your vision shifted?"

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## 5. Monitor Progress and Initiative

### What to look for:

- Incomplete action steps
- Cancelled meetings or missed follow-through
- Uncertainty about objectives

**Mentor Prompt:** "What's getting in the way of moving forward? Let's work through that together."

## 6. Listen for Emotional Cues

### What to look for:

- Expressions of anxiety, doubt, or frustration
- Defensive or withdrawn behavior
- Uncharacteristic silence

**Mentor Prompt:** "You seem a bit off today - is there anything you'd like to talk through?"

## 7. Create Safe Space for Honesty

### What to do:

- Reinforce confidentiality and support
- Normalize talking about challenges
- Follow up when a concern is mentioned

**Mentor Prompt:** "This space is just for you - is there anything you're holding back that you wish you could say?"

## Pro Tip

Build trust over time. A mentee will only reveal red flags if they feel safe, heard, and respected.