

PUBLICATION

Common Ground

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Last summer, our Firm's Diversity and Inclusion Committee featured a special interview, titled "Common Ground" between Baltimore Shareholder Alison Schurick and Baltimore Associate Stefanie Doyle in an issue of our Firm's "Diversity Matters" newsletter.

In the article, Stefanie interviews Alison to spotlight her contributions as a mentor at the Firm and as a member of the Firm's Women's Initiative Leadership Team.

Therefore, we thought it was a perfect interview to "flip" for our mentorship issue. Now, read where Alison interviews Stefanie Doyle to highlight the associate and mentee perspectives.

Do you have mentors at the Firm? Why did you become involved with the WI?

Stefanie: I have several mentors at the Firm who have helped me mature as a lawyer and as a professional, in general. They have given me encouragement, support, direction...and at times, some much-needed backup! I became involved with the Firm's Women's Initiative group (now Baker Women) because I feel that it is important to seek out mentors with different life experiences, both similar to and different from your own. You can learn so much from mentors from a wide variety of backgrounds.

What is the most valuable lesson that you've learned, both in being a mentee and a mentor?

Stefanie: As a mentee, I've learned that a mentor doesn't have to be someone "above" you in the professional hierarchy. A mentor can be a peer who has handled their professional and/or personal life in a manner you respect and admire. I've also learned as a mentee that a good mentor won't always tell you that you are doing things perfectly. Part of a mentor's role is to tell you when you need to course correct; and as a mentee, you must be willing to receive that honest feedback. As a mentor, I've learned that you must be willing to give your time to mentoring, not just have good intentions. We are all busy, but if you commit to the role of mentor, you must give that time, even when it's inconvenient.

What are some qualities that you believe make a successful mentor? What about a successful mentee?

Stefanie: I think that a successful mentor is one who enjoys being a true partner in their mentee's development. Effective mentors will empower and encourage their mentees to find the path to do and be better, even when the mentee thinks they've already done their best. A good mentor sees something valuable and unique in their mentee that is worth fostering. A successful mentee is one who remembers that they also have something valuable to contribute to the relationship. A good mentor-mentee relationship is built on mutual respect and mutual benefit – we can learn from each other no matter what stage of life or career we may find ourselves in.

Have you ever had a mentor/mentee relationship not work out? If so, how did you handle it?

Stefanie: I've had some mentor/mentee relationships that were less effective than others. I believe you can learn from any mentoring relationship, especially if someone is willing to help you. Therefore, I make sure I have a good relationship with those former mentors/mentees but choose to invest my time in building other more engaged relationships.

If you could be your own mentor to your younger self, what advice would you give?

Stefanie: "Have patience with yourself and with the world. Slow down and give yourself time to grow."