

LAW SOCIETY MENTORSHIP GUIDELINES

Contents

I.	INTRODUCTION	3
II.	BENEFITS OF A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP	4
	(A) FOR JUNIOR CATEGORY LAWYERS	4
	(B) FOR MIDDLE CATEGORY LAWYERS	5
	(C) FOR SENIOR CATEGORY LAWYERS	6
III.	GUIDANCE ON DEVELOPING MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS	7
	(A) EXPECTATIONS OF A MENTOR	7
	(B) COURTESY AND RESPECT	7
	(C) CONFIDENTIALITY	9
	(D) DO'S AND DON'TS IN A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP	10
IV.	FEEDBACK CHANNELS	12
	(A) MATTERS CONCERNING THE MENTOR/MENTEE RELATIONSHIP ..	13
	(B) REQUEST FOR CHANGE OR TERMINATION	13
V.	ANNEX A: ETHICAL REMINDERS.....	16
	(A) MENTOR ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS AND GUIDELINES	16
	(B) HELPLINE FOR MENTORS.....	16
VI.	ANNEX B: EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING TIPS.....	18
	(A) EXPLORATORY QUESTIONS – TO ASSESS THE REAL ISSUES AND GAIN GREATER UNDERSTANDING:	18
	(B) EMPOWERING QUESTIONS – TO ASSIST THE MENTEE IN THINKING FOR THEMSELVES:.....	19
VII.	A MENTORSHIP STORY	20
	(A) JASMINE TOH, MENTOR.....	20
	(B) WONG PEI YEE, MENTEE	22

INTRODUCTION

Dear Participant

Thank you for participating in the Law Society Mentorship Scheme.

The Law Society Mentorship Scheme aims to support the growth of lawyer competencies through deep conversations, goal setting, and execution of growth plans. We thank you for your participation in the Scheme, which serves a critical role in achieving the Law Society's objective of a more cohesive and sustainable profession.

We understand through feedback from past participants that developing a mentoring relationship is no straightforward task. Law school, after all, does not necessarily equip us with mentoring skills that we can readily utilise in our day-to-day work.

It is in this spirit that we have crafted these Guidelines, which we hope forms a good starting point for your mentoring journey, whether you are a mentor or mentee. It is our hope that the Guidelines will form a useful framework for you to participate in the Scheme.

We would love nothing more than to hear that you have benefitted from participating in it, and come out a better lawyer and human being.

We wish you all the best in your journey. If at any point in time you would need to contact us, please do not hesitate to do so. Our contact details have been provided in these Guidelines.

Good luck, and have fun!

Yours,

The Mentorship Working Group

BENEFITS OF A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

THE LEGAL PROFESSION thrives on healthy relationships between lawyer of all seniorities. Through such relationships, camaraderie is developed and careers are sustained.

It is in this spirit that a mentoring relationship is beneficial and essential for the professional and personal growth of lawyers at all levels of seniority. Relationships and conversations between members of the Bar often offer valuable opportunities for learning, development, and career progression.

There is something for Junior, Middle, and Senior Category lawyers from the process of mentoring.

“1968 was a year that I will never forget, and I often reflect on it, comparing what pupillage was then

and what it is now. The Bar was then small ... and the relatively leisurely pace of practice made for a more gracious atmosphere between lawyers, whatever the difference in seniority. I learnt about the unwritten customs of the Bar, such as lawyers not charging other lawyers for conveyancing work and being available to advise junior lawyers on points of law or practice or ethics without charge. The profession has come a long way since that time, but I sometimes wonder whether I would have had happier memories of my pupillage if I had done it now compared to then.”

– **Michael Hwang SC, “Pupillage, Then and Now”**

For Junior Category Lawyers

Guidance on Practice Areas:

Different practice areas come with their own set of challenges. Dive deep into specific areas of law and gain valuable insights from senior lawyers to understand the common challenges and how you can excel in your chosen field.

Guidance on Mental Wellness: The legal profession can be demanding, but mental wellness is key. Learn effective strategies for managing work-related stress, improving time management, and enhancing your interpersonal skills, so you can stay

healthy and productive in your legal career.

Guidance on Career Progression:

Your legal journey does not stop at the entry-level. Learn effective strategies for career development and navigating transitions. Whether you are looking for your next move or trying to sharpen your skills, the right guidance will help you succeed and progress in your legal career.

Guidance on Ethical Conundrums:

Facing ethical dilemmas in the workplace? Seek advice from senior lawyers on how to effectively navigate

these challenges while maintaining integrity and professionalism in your practice.

For Middle Category Lawyers

Guidance on Middle Management:

Middle management is tricky as lawyers have to manage both juniors and seniors. Hear from other learned friends on how they have navigated the challenges of middle management so you can gain perspective on how to manage from the middle.

Guidance on Business

Development: Business development can be a challenging exercise that daunts even the most technically gifted lawyers. Exchange ideas on how

business development strategies can be better executed.

Guidance on Partnership: The leap from salaried employee to equity partner can be a steep one. The process is often opaque to many. Learn about the challenges associated with making the transition from earning a salary to becoming an equity partner, or if not, the other options that are available as one gets more senior at the Bar.



For Senior Category Lawyers

Insights on Practice: What is it really like to be a Junior Lawyer? Share your experiences and offer valuable insights to help junior lawyers understand the challenges, motivations, and expectations of this stage in their careers.

Insights on Mental Wellness: Mental wellness plays a crucial role in a lawyer's success. Gain a deeper understanding of how mental well-being impacts your team, and learn

strategies to motivate and support Junior Lawyers, helping them thrive in this demanding profession.

Insights on Technology: The legal industry is evolving with technology. Stay ahead of the curve with the latest trends in legal tech, social media, and networking tools that are shaping the future of the profession. Equip yourself with the knowledge to embrace change and lead with innovation.



GUIDANCE ON DEVELOPING MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

Expectations of a Mentor

A mentor is expected to	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a supportive and trusting environment. ○ Ensure the mentee coordinates activities and learning plans with them and comes prepared for each session with well-articulated and directed questions. ○ Agree to and schedule uninterrupted time with the mentee. ○ Stay accessible, committed, and engaged during mentorship sessions. ○ Engage in active listening and questioning by being non-judgmental, giving undivided attention to the mentee, and using silence effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage the mentee by giving genuine positive reinforcement. ○ Serve as a positive influence. ○ Provide frank and constructive feedback if necessary. ○ Share open and honest “lessons learned” from their own experience in practice. ○ Regulate discussions in an appropriate manner (see Annex A for Tips on Mentorship). ○ Respect a mentee’s time and resources. ○ Give feedback to the mentee on their professional goals, situations, plans, and ideas.

Courtesy and Respect

As fellow members of the Bar, Mentors and Mentees are expected to build a relationship which is respectful and courteous. Practically, this means that both parties should:

BE COMMITTED

Be dedicated to participating fully and respect each other's time by being punctual for all mentorship sessions. If

rescheduling is necessary, please provide ample notice.

BE WELL-MANNERED

Communicate politely and ensure a respectful tone and manner in all interactions. Strive to reply to messages promptly, whenever possible. Unless related to Matters Concerning the Mentor/Mentee Relationship (see Section 7), both mentors and mentees should reach out at appropriate times for phone calls or messages, ensuring mutual consent for such communication.

BE APPROPRIATELY DRESSED

Always dress professionally and appropriately for all mentorship

meetings, maintaining the standards of decorum expected in our profession.

BE COURTEOUS

Never engage in rude, discourteous, or disrespectful behaviour. The foundation of this relationship is mutual respect and professionalism.



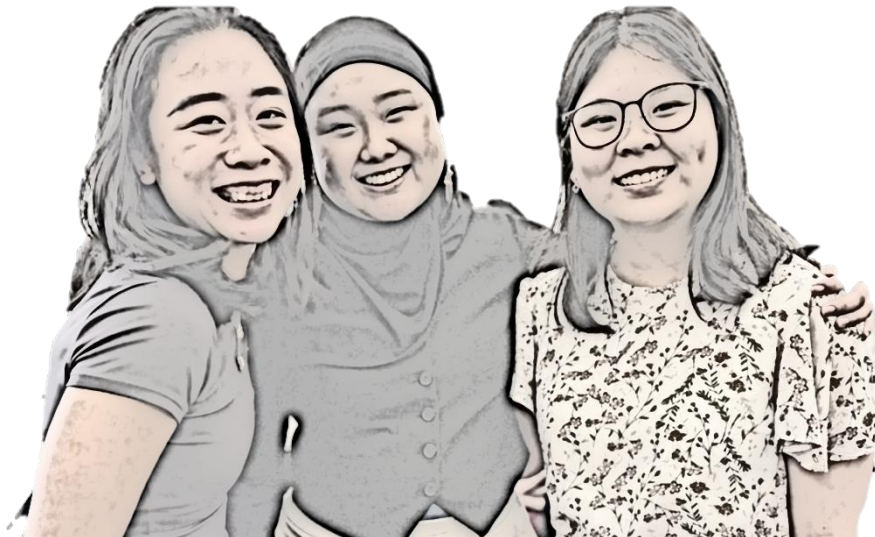
Confidentiality

COMMUNICATIONS

All communication between mentors and mentees is to be kept confidential, except when reporting illegal conduct or addressing Matters Concerning the Mentor/Mentee Relationship (see Section 7 below) to the Law Society. These discussions should not be disclosed to any third party unless required.

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Both mentors and mentees are expected to disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest. Full disclosure and consent must be obtained if such conflicts arise, ensuring transparency and trust in the relationship.



DO'S AND DON'TS IN A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

The mentoring relationship is a 2-way street. Typically, Mentors provide a listening ear, and if appropriate, render guidance, advice, views, and perspectives to Mentees. On the other hand, Mentees share their own expertise and perspectives with Mentors on areas such as the concerns, mind-sets, and mentality of younger lawyers, including the use of social media and technology for networking.

Both Mentors and Mentees therefore help each other to fill in knowledge gaps, and offer common sense and strategic insights based on their respective experiences.

To achieve the best outcomes from the mentoring relationship:

- Mentors and Mentees should strive to provide each other with constructive feedback and build a relationship of mutual trust.
- Mentees receiving guidance, advice, views, and/or perspectives should take these thoughts seriously and respect them.



To facilitate each mentorship session, both Mentors and Mentees may consider the following tips on body language:

DO USE	DO NOT USE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Eye contact – no scary stares • Interested/neutral facial expression • Nodding of head to show understanding or agreement • Calm tone of voice • Even voice volume • Sitting slightly forward • Relaxed arm & hand placement • Use “I” statements. Give examples from your experience • Ensure feedback is specific • Give the other person an opportunity to ask questions or share their viewpoint. • Listen carefully not only to the words but to the feelings and body language of the speaker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced eye contact, scowling, or narrowing of eyes • Tense or aggressive posture • Rocking, pen bouncing, hand wringing, and/or signs of nervousness/defensiveness • Hands on hips or tightly clenched • Arms tightly crossed across chest • A blank expression • Statements that describe someone instead of their actions • Language that may be perceived as defensive or argumentative.

To establish a healthy mentoring relationship with appropriate boundaries, Mentors and Mentees are encouraged to observe the following:

DO	DO NOT
Be a positive influence and encourage each other by giving genuine and positive reinforcement.	Be disparaging or unkind to each other.
Stay accessible, committed and engaged for the Programme.	Be uncontactable and/or unresponsive to questions.
Take responsibility and follow through on professional commitments made in relation to the Programme.	Attempt to control the other party's actions and/or persuade the other party to take a certain course of action.
Provide a safe learning space by ensuring that all mentorship sessions take place at a venue that is safe and comfortable for all parties.	Demand to meet at a venue that causes discomfort to either party and/or demand to continue with a conversation that the other party does not wish to engage in.
Keep discussions on track and in line with the agreed learning and/or discussion plan.	Veer off the agreed learning and/or discussion plan for a prolonged period.
Respect each other's commitments and set clear communication methods between meetings that are mutually acceptable (e.g. WhatsApp or email).	Contact each other outside reasonable hours.
Provide adequate notice in the event of a cancellation and/or delay. Postponed meetings are to be rescheduled as soon as possible.	Cancel and/or postpone meetings without good reason.
Choose a neutral and professional space with minimum distractions at a time that is convenient for both parties.	Conduct mentorship sessions at each other's personal residences and/or at late hours.

DO	DO NOT
Be receptive to suggestions offered and respectfully express needs, concerns, and questions to one another	Interrupt each other.
Create a supportive and trusting environment and show appreciation for each other's participation in the Programme.	Use offensive language and/or make remarks of a personal nature.
Keep a written record of discussions and ensure that such records are stored and securely disposed of at the end of the mentoring relationship.	Store your written records in an insecure location that may be accessed by third parties.
Be punctual and mindful of the time allocated for each meeting.	Exceed the allocated meeting time.

FEEDBACK CHANNELS

Mentors or Mentees may generally approach the Co-Heads of the Law Society's Membership and External Relations Department (the "MER-Co-Heads") or any member of the Working Group if they wish to give general feedback on the programme, or report on illegal conduct or on matters concerning the mentoring relationship to the Law Society. The contact details are as follows:

MER Head of Department	Email
Lee Wei Yan	weiyan@lawsoc.org.sg
Working Group Members	Email
Benjamin Foo Co-Chair of the Working Group	Benjamin.foo@aoshearman.com
Christine Low Co-Chair of the Working Group	christinelow@peterlowllc.com
Darryl Chew	darrylchew@chiawongchambers.com
Jonathan Muk	jonathanmuk@lvmlawchambers.com
Marc Teh	mteh@asiapractice.com.sg
Lim Shu Fen	shufen@jslaw.com.sg
Lim Wei Wei	weiwei.lim@drewnapier.com
Tan Xuan Qi Dorothy	dorothytan@pkwalaw.com
Vivienne Lim	vivienne.lim@genesislawcorp.com

Matters concerning the Mentor/Mentee relationship

Matters concerning the Mentor/Mentee relationship include any issues that may impact the effectiveness and health of the mentoring relationship as well as concerns regarding the safety or well-being of the mentee or potential warning signs of risky behaviour.

Note for Mentors

Mentors are encouraged to refer to Annex A for practical tips on mentorship, offering guidance on how to be effective in your role.

Note for Mentees

As a mentee, you will receive invaluable guidance on navigating the complexities of legal practice. This Scheme is designed to provide a safe and supportive environment for you to discuss any questions or concerns related to your professional practice. You will benefit from your mentor's wealth of experience, gaining insights that will help you develop and grow in your career.

Request for change or termination

Authenticity and Transparency in the Relationship

Sometimes, there may not be a good fit between mentor and mentee. Please have an open and transparent discussion about your expectations from the very first session, ensuring both parties are aligned moving forward. If after this initial exchange you feel that a change is necessary for any reason, please cease further meetings and immediately contact the MER Co-Heads or any member of the Working Group for support and further discussion.

Confidentiality of Requests for Change

Any reasons provided by the mentor or mentee regarding a request for a change will be kept confidential. These reasons will not be shared with the other party, ensuring that the process remains respectful and private.

Commitment to the Scheme

Both Mentors and Mentees must be committed to maintain the quality and continuity of the mentoring relationship. However, we understand that unforeseen circumstances may arise that affect your ability to fulfil your commitment. If such circumstances occur, please reach out to the MER Co-Heads or any member of the Working Group immediately for assistance and to discuss potential solutions.

ANNEX A: ETHICAL REMINDERS

Mentor Ethical Obligations and Guidelines

Please remember your ethical duties as outlined in the Legal Profession (Professional Conduct) Rules 2015 ("**PCR**") and should remind their mentees that the PCR applies to them as well. These obligations include those concerning confidentiality and managing conflicts of interest. To prevent breaches of these ethical responsibilities, mentors should be particularly attentive to the following.

Duty to Maintain Client Confidentiality

Mentors should remind mentees of Rule 6 of the PCR, which emphasizes confidentiality. Mentees must not disclose any information that is confidential to their clients or that they acquire during their engagement with a client. Additionally, Mentors should avoid intervening in or assisting with any of their Mentee's client matters.

Asking for Advice or Opinions on Specific Case Matters

Mentors are not expected to provide specific legal advice or assist with legal research for their mentees. If a mentee has substantive questions regarding their ethical obligations under the PCR (e.g., conflict of interest), mentors should act prudently by advising the mentee to contact the Advisory Committee Secretariat, which supports the Advisory Committee of the Professional Conduct Council at ethics_enquiry@lawsoc.org.sg.

Dealing with Financial Matters

Mentors should refrain from lending money or offering any form of financial assistance to their mentees. If a mentee requests financial assistance, it should be reported immediately to the HOD Co-Heads. Such a request will result in the mentee being removed from the Programme with immediate effect.

No Business Development Opportunities

While Mentors and Mentees may each have other professional interests; any activities that fall outside the purpose and nature of this Programme are inappropriate. Mentors should remind mentees to refrain from making unsolicited business development approaches. Any Mentee found to be making unsolicited approaches for business development purposes during the mentoring relationship will be removed immediately.

Helpline for Mentors

Mentors may provide guidance on workplace challenges (e.g.: workplace dilemmas, difficult clients, and professional disappointments) based on their own personal and past experiences.

In the event that the Mentor assesses the query from the Mentee to be beyond the scope of their experience, the Mentor should:

Situation beyond mentor's scope of professional experience	Action to be taken by mentor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the mentor's own observation or expressly disclosed by the mentee during the discussion. Where the mentor has information on a real and immediate threat to the safety or well-being of the mentee (e.g. mentee is in physical danger at the workplace). Where the mentee has displayed warning signs of risky behaviour (e.g. self-harm or suicidal tendencies). 	<p>The mentor should seek assistance from any member of the Working Group.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In relation to the PCR 	<p>The mentor should exercise prudence and advise the mentee to contact the Advisory Committee Secretariat which supports the Advisory Committee of the Professional Conduct Council at ethics_enquiry@lawsoc.org.sg.</p>

ANNEX B: EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING TIPS

Exploratory Questions – To Assess the Real Issues and Gain Greater Understanding:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What aspects of your job do you find most interesting? • Why did you choose to focus on this area of law? • What do you hope to gain from this experience? • What do you want to be known for professionally? • How do you understand the issue at hand? • How do you know your assessment is accurate? What do others think of this issue? • What assumptions are you making about the situation? • What other ideas or solutions do you have in mind? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long has this issue been a concern? • What did past experiences teach you that you did not expect? • What do you think are the underlying reasons for this issue? • Have you attempted to resolve this before? Why or why not? If yes, what was the outcome? • What options or choices do you feel you have in this situation? • What progress have you made so far? • How are you applying the ideas or concepts we have discussed? • What results are you hoping to achieve?
--	---

Empowering Questions – To Assist the Mentee in Thinking for Themselves:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills would you like to develop further? • When facing a challenge, what strategies come to mind? • What do you think are the possible solutions to this issue? • What are the desired outcomes in this situation, and are they realistic given the circumstances? • What resources can you tap into to help move forward? • Who are the key people you need help from? • What factors or forces might assist or hinder you in resolving this? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What additional information do you need to reach a solution? • What are the pros and cons of each potential solution? • What is the first step you need to take in achieving your preferred outcome? • What alternative strategies could you explore? • How will you measure your success in mastering or improving a competency? • How will you apply the new skills you have gained moving forward?
--	--

A MENTORSHIP STORY

Jasmine Toh and Wong Pei Yee are a mentor-mentee pair who participated in the Law Society's Mentorship Scheme. They share about their experiences as mentor and mentee, and how the process of mentoring can be mutually meaningful and enriching. Find out more about our Mentorship Scheme and how you can participate below.

Jasmine Toh, Mentor

Please tell us about yourself.

I was living the life of a corporate communications practitioner before I took a leap of faith to navigate legal labyrinths and the fascinating realms of intellectual property and technology law, litigation and mediation. More recently, I left private practice and joined a technology company as their in-house legal counsel. I am also married with a two year old who is now the master negotiator in the family.

Why did you decide to become a mentor?

I have been blessed with good seniors and mentors in my life. As clichéd as it sounds, I want to pay it forward and help the juniors navigate the challenges of legal practice and learn to succeed. Also for self-serving reasons, I do enjoy expanding my network as well as exchanging ideas and experiences with my mentees and learning from them. Mentorship can be a two-way street, if you allow it.

How did you prepare yourself to take on the role of mentor?

I pretty much learned on the job.

How did you go about engaging with your mentee and how did you nurture the mentor-mentee relationship?

Always follow up on issues discussed in the previous mentoring session(s). Create a safe environment for the mentees to share their concerns and views by (a) listening (and not just hearing); (b) not judging; and (c) not undermining. No issue is trivial and no question is stupid.

What does it take to be a good mentor?

Be humble – in sharing experiences and learning from the mentees. Be disciplined and deliberate in setting aside time and creating reminders to check in with the mentees. Be mindful – when arranging meetings with the mentees (their schedules matter too). Be curious about the mentees as unique individuals – check out their LinkedIn profiles and law firm profiles, or simply ask the mentees.

What are some of the issues that young lawyers commonly face in practice and what can a mentor do to help/support them?

Studying the law is not the same as practising the law. The transition may be daunting. A mentor can be more empathetic and less quick to judge. A mentor can try to give more practical and specific suggestions. Do not forget to offer the mentee choices and allow them to own their choices.

Any advice for lawyers who are considering being either a mentor or mentee?

Mentor – While we can impart and emphasise certain core values of our profession that do not change with time, we have to remember that every generation of lawyers practises differently and they have different priorities, needs and concerns. We are there to guide, not dictate.

Mentee – Be invested, be present, be prepared, be curious and be eager. You will learn as much as you want to (or not).

Wong Pei Yee, Mentee

Associate, Cairnhill Law LLC



Tell us about yourself.

Lawyering is my second career and I have pursued this calling at an unusual time in life as a mother to two amazing children under five years old. Law school was not a walk in the park but it was an insulated space with few real-world consequences. Trying to make good as a professional in a new career with a fairly steep learning curve, and holding yourself to the standards expected of you by several different stakeholders who are all important in different ways, is a serious challenge any day. I was not only in need of a listening ear but also sound advice.

How and why did you decide to participate in the Mentorship Scheme?

The email to sign up for the Law Society's Mentorship Scheme could not be more timely. When the email landed in my inbox about a month after getting called to the Bar, I was neck-deep in first-year associate work and acclimatising to office life (once again) whilst trying to maintain some semblance of work-life balance. I'm sure many can relate whether you are a fresh graduate or switching careers like me.

The Law Society Mentorship Scheme felt like a lifeline. It was more affordable than therapy (\$20 which probably went to catering the buffet at the welcome and closing events and I'm half-joking about therapy), and legal industry-specific. With a mentor, I wouldn't be confined to well-meaning advice from family and friends and risk trapping myself in an echo chamber, or potentially stay stuck in a sad loop of commiserating with colleagues and peers about how unforgiving the practice of law can be. The need for guidance and advice from a senior who knew better would also be met outside of

the workplace (where I feel it would be prudent to keep communications as professional as possible).

How was the process of being assigned a mentor?

I specifically requested for a lawyer who is also a mother and who would be in a position to give me realistic and practical advice. I sincerely believe that a lot of thought was put into assigning Ms Jasmine Toh as my mentor as she had a very good understanding of what stage of life I was at.

Jasmine set the pace for our time as mentor and mentee and organised three in-person meetings at the start, mid-point, and towards the end of the programme. She also made it clear I could reach her by email as and when I needed. This arrangement worked well for me. I did not have to worry about when and whether I should reach out to my mentor, and what was a good time to do so.

How did you prepare for your role as a mentee?

I prepared by clarifying on my own what issues or topics I hoped to receive advice and mentorship on, especially before the in-person meetings. These can include the broad topics of how to juggle a young family and work, and the many directions one's career can take; newly-minted lawyer dilemmas about how to deal with mistakes, billable hours, managing clients and colleagues, how to run a case, the ethics of practising law etc.; or very specific scenarios one faces at work. During the course of the programme, I also kept rough notes of what topics and/or scenarios I hoped to pick Jasmine's brain on at our next in-person meeting.

How was your overall experience?

Jasmine was an objective, kind and practical mentor. She sympathised but did not sugarcoat her advice. She understood my point of view but also offered her understanding of the matter from an experienced practitioner's perspective to help me "see the big picture". I felt seen, understood and heard by Jasmine and was armed with small practical tips to take on this thing called lawyering whilst grappling with life itself. Meeting a suitable mentor for the various areas of our lives and/or at different stages of life is quite often a matter of timing, luck and effort, and I am grateful to the Law Society for the thoughtful facilitation of the process, and to Jasmine for her time.