

# FORENSIC FORUM

NOVEMBER 1, 2007

## BEING A GOOD MENTEE BY GIANNI PIRELLI

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Mentors have a wealth of literature available to them addressing the components of being an effective mentor and information for students seeking a mentor is as prevalent; however, the mentoring relationship needs to be bidirectional and it is essential to know what it takes to be good mentees. The following suggestions are based on personal experiences and lessons I have learned over the years.

#### **Know your mentor's strengths and weaknesses and your own**

We all have something to offer one another. Your mentor may be more experienced than you in areas related to your field of study; however, she or he is human like you and will undoubtedly have shortcomings – professional and personal. The key is not to focus on either of your weaknesses, but rather to determine how your strengths can be complimentary. I have learned that learning how to contribute to the mentoring relationship takes time. It is reasonable to assume that early on in your academic career you will be able to make less substantive contributions to discourses and research development than you will later on. I have been guilty of trying to tackle too many problems in one study, but fortunately my great mentors kept me grounded. Stay pragmatic while your creative side wanders and eventually your abilities will catch up with your ideas.

#### **Go above and beyond**

Impress your mentor. Attend meetings prepared; attempt to answer questions before asking; finish work early; anticipate his or her needs; and put extra time (and

sometimes money) into the presentation of your and their work. Keep in mind that regardless of how much you develop professionally you can always learn from them. In sum, work hard, make your work sparkle, but maintain your humility throughout; there is nothing worse than a student clouded by his or her pomposity.

#### **Make your mentor proud**

You may not always be cognizant of it but your successes and failures reflect upon your mentor. This applies to both the way you present yourself and your/their work. Act professionally among colleagues and faculty, particularly at professional conferences. Be sure to mention your mentor to students you meet along the way and anytime you receive accolades for your work. Just as academicians highlight student authorship on their vitas, you too should make a concerted effort to underscore your mentor's efforts. You are now a part of the academic family tree of which your mentor is a limb. Never lose sight of that and always strive to do your best to maintain the integrity of your academic heritage.

#### **Stay loyal**

Expect that you may not agree with your mentor all the time - all relationships undergo such challenges. However, in most cases, this person will contribute to your academic and personal growth and prove to be an indispensable source of support as you move along your career path. At times we all

have complaints about our mentors; this is not only normal, but it is healthy. What is unhealthy, however, is speaking badly about your mentor to fellow students and faculty. It is good to have a few personal outlets to whom you vent your frustrations; but avoid overt public negativity at all costs. Again, normal venting in confidence to one or two close contacts is okay and even advisable, but otherwise, maintain your professionalism and stay loyal to your mentor.

#### **Maintain respect throughout**

Your mentor may be very amicable, but she or he is still your superior. It is imperative to never lose sight of the boundaries inherent to supervisory relationships. Graduate-level academic settings often present unique situations for students and faculty alike. Many students have both research and personal interests that are similar to those of their mentors. It is more common now than ever before for mentors and mentees to be close in age; while there may be various benefits to this, it can result in the blurring of personal and professional boundaries. *Let your mentor set the tone of the relationship.* Never act more casually than your mentor in the context of the relationship. While your mentor can be a tremendous support system and may eventually become a lifelong friend, the mentorship relationship is a fiduciary one and problems can arise if either member loses sight of that fact.

## STUDENT COLUMN: GRAD SCHOOL SURVIVAL TIPS

By Jen Tallon

As we reach the midpoint of the semester, things tend to really swing into high gear as midterms, conference deadlines, and grant proposals all seem to appear from out of nowhere. Understandably, you might be experiencing your fair share of sleepless nights and anxiety as you try to juggle everything. Here are a few tips to help you increase both your mental and physical wellbeing during these busy times.

### ■ *Treat it like a job*

The best piece of advice that I ever received when I started the program is that you just need to treat this experience as you would any other job. Depending on how you like to work, you may find it helpful to keep set working hours or to do certain types of work at different points in the day/week. Not only will this help you juggle your responsibilities, but it will also help you find the free time to treat yourself to a social life.

### ■ *Work as a group*

Do not be afraid to ask your fellow classmates for help. In studying for exams, it's quite useful to organize study groups throughout the semester. You may want to consider dividing up the class materials with other people and having everyone exchange notes. Additionally, group work will help you to remember that you're not alone in all of this and there are people who understand what you may be going through.

### ■ *Take a day off*

For those having to juggle families or relationships, it can be hard to find time to spend with loved ones. Not only will a day off give you a well deserved break, but it will alleviate a lot of stress that may stem from disgruntled significant others who may not fully understand all the responsibilities you have as a grad student. You also need to remember not to get frustrated if someone doesn't seem to grasp the importance of some of the work you have to do. It's not that they don't care, they may just not fully understand.

### ■ *Have a hobby*

The students in our program have a diverse range of hobbies including running, yoga, rock climbing, going to shows or movies, playing video-games, and collecting comic books. After months of training, Ginna Fineran recently completed a triathlon in which her team raised money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The point is that you need to find something that's both fun and important to you that it will provide an escape from work related stress.

### ■ *Put your health first*

There's nothing worse than getting sick at the end of the semester. One of the best ways to cope with stress is to make sure you're engaging in some sort of regular physical activity. Can't seem to clear your head in order to write that paper? Go for a quick

run around the neighborhood. Did you get some nasty feedback from a reviewer? Hit the heavy bag at the gym for 20 minutes. You also need to make sure that you're eating a balanced diet and keeping a regular sleep schedule.

For additional resources on maintaining wellness in grad school, see:

[apagsgradpsych.apa.org/](http://apagsgradpsych.apa.org/)

and

[psychgrad.org/succeed.html](http://psychgrad.org/succeed.html)

*Jen (experimental) is in her third year and is serving as Associate Editor of FF.*

“..group work will help you to remember that you're not alone in all of this and there are people who understand what you may be going through.”

-Jen Tallon



## PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

◆ We would like to sincerely thank Dr. Patricia Zapf for a wonderful job of remodeling the Forensic Psychology Doctoral Program website. It is up and running and all student resources (e.g. first & second doc forms) are available for download and the first issue of *FF* is also linked to the site. Thanks Patty, it looks great!

◆ Congratulations to Ginna Fineran for participating in a triathlon this summer for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Team In Training. Ginna surpassed both her goals: in time *and* donations (over \$3,000). We are very proud of you! Join Ginna, Erin, Steve, Tarika, and Tina—as they plan to train for next year.

◆ APA accreditation update: Completed self-study will be drafted by 2009; application for APA accreditation expected for Spring 2010.

◆ The first FPDSC general session was held on Oct 5. Thanks go out the students who attended and voiced their concerns – the officers are working diligently on addressing them!

◆ Upcoming FPDSC sponsored events include Experimental and Clinical Q&A sessions whereby senior students will answer questions. This will take place November 16th – stay tuned for location. Also look out for student-run workshops in various areas such as: statistical analyses and therapeutic interventions.

◆ A student “contact and other information” list is being put together. It will include student interests, publications, hobbies, contact info, etc. Stay tuned...

◆ Next Comprehensive Exam offering: January 2008.

◆ The Clinical Comprehensive Exam reading list has been revised based on student suggestions. The competency areas will be represented by one standard reference text which will each be supported by journal articles selected to highlight key areas of and to bring students up to date on the current research.

◆ The program has purchased umbrella insurance for externship placements; however, students are still responsible for buying their own insurance before going out on placement. Check out APA Trust Insurance for \$35/year: [www.apait.org/apait/](http://www.apait.org/apait/)

◆ There is a new standardized application process for NYS externship sites. The application deadline for all sites will be the first week in February. Keep your eyes and ears open for the exact date as February nears. Start thinking about where you want to apply and who you will ask for recommendation letters.

◆ Trial consultants Christina Studebaker and Julie Blackman will be visiting John Jay on November 9<sup>th</sup> at 3:15pm in Room 2200N (Multi-purpose Room). Reception to follow – all are welcome!



L to R: Tarika, Tina, Steve, Ginna, Mrs. Fineran, and Erin at Ginna's Triathlon

Clinical &  
Experimental  
Q&A Sessions:  
November 16th

Next  
Comprehensive  
Exam offering:  
January 2008



## BIRTHDAY WATCH

### NOVEMBER

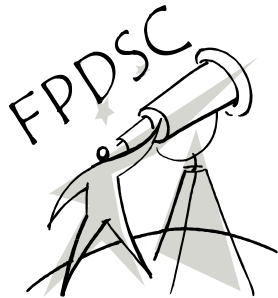
1 - Julia Busso  
15 - Tarika Daftary  
18 - Grazyna Kusmierska  
22 - Jenny Torkildson

### DECEMBER

3 - Katy Sothmann  
29 - Sarah Greathouse

### JANUARY

8 - Anna Rainey  
24 - Ryan Copple  
28 - Jisun Park



**' WORKING WITH EACH OTHER ,  
FOR EACH OTHER '**

*Forensic Forum* is a publication of the Forensic Psychology Doctoral Council (FPDSC) intended to provide the student body of the Forensic Psychology Doctoral Program with information relevant to the program and the field. The FPDSC was developed in 2004 and *Forensic Forum* followed in 2007.

*Forensic Forum's* mission is to provide the student body with the most updated and accurate information available to the FPDSC, while fostering a feeling of community and commitment to its members.

We are committed to the success of the Forensic Psychology Doctoral Program and its students.

## CONFERENCE & GRANT PLANNER

### Conference Calendar

Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers  
October 31-Nov 3, 2007 San Diego, CA  
[www.atsa.com](http://www.atsa.com)

American Society of Criminology (ASC)  
November 14-17, 2007 Atlanta, GA  
[www.asc41.com](http://www.asc41.com)

Society for Personality & Social Psychology (SPSP)  
February 7-9, 2008 Albuquerque, NM  
[www.spspmeeting.org](http://www.spspmeeting.org)

American Psychology—Law Society (AP-LS)  
March 5-9, 2008 Jacksonville, FL  
[www.ap-ls.org](http://www.ap-ls.org)

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS)  
March 11-15, 2008 Cincinnati, OH  
[www.acjs.org](http://www.acjs.org)

Society for Personality Assessment (SPA)  
March 26-30, 2008 New Orleans, LA  
[www.personality.org](http://www.personality.org)

Association for Psychological Science (APS)  
May 22-25, 2008 Chicago, IL  
**Deadline:** Opens October, 2007  
[www.psychologicalscience.org](http://www.psychologicalscience.org)

Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI)  
June 27-29, 2008 Chicago, IL  
**Deadline:** January 12, 2008  
[www.spssi.org](http://www.spssi.org)

American Psychological Association (APA)  
August 14 - 17, 2008 Boston, MA  
[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

American Society of Trial Consultants (ASTC)  
Various Conferences and Regional Meetings  
[www.astcweb.org](http://www.astcweb.org)

### Grant Calendar

NIJ Graduate Research Fellowship  
**Deadline:** November 28, 2007  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij)

NSF Law and Social Sciences Dissertation Grants  
**Deadline:** January 15th  
[www.nsf.gov](http://www.nsf.gov)

The Graduate Center, CUNY  
Various in-house awards available through The Graduate Center  
[http://web.gc.cuny.edu/orup/funding.html#For\\_Students](http://web.gc.cuny.edu/orup/funding.html#For_Students)

APA Student Awards  
Various awards compiled by APAGS  
[www.apa.org/apags/members/schawrds.html](http://www.apa.org/apags/members/schawrds.html)

