

UF SAPA Scholarship
Experience giving advice to someone

And in Teaching You Will Learn

I am a strong believer in Ralph Waldo Emerson's famous motto, "Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." If there is anything that gives me comfort going into the extremely uncomfortable, unstable field of entertainment is that I know how important making connections is to being successful in this field! As much as I have cherished making connections with older, more experienced people in my field, in some ways I have gotten more out of being a theatre mentor to younger theatre artists by taking what I have learned and passing it on to them!

After having such a terrific Mentor-Mentee experience my freshman year with the UF performing arts student organization Florida Players, my expectations were very high going into my sophomore year. I was lucky enough to land Joshua Evangelista (UF BA '20) as my first mentee, and we have been extremely close ever since. What was great about our Mentor-Mentee relationship was that we are alike in our love for theatre and terrific work ethics, but very different in our specific theatrical tastes. This allowed us to get along while still being introduced to new theatrical perspectives.

Earlier this year, he was hitting the ground running (or really, sprinting) and was getting seriously overworked between his job, extracurriculars, and academics. Seeing this got me concerned, because I was afraid he'd burn out, so I decided to talk to him and give him some Mentor-ly advice. I told him about a concept that we discuss a lot in our theatre classes: The Power of "No". Actors and theatre artists often feel like they have to accept every opportunity presented to them, but often times we over-work ourselves. I reminded Josh that sometimes a closed door can be the best thing to ever happen to you because you never know what new doors it will open. I also reminded him of these classic lyrics from the musical *Crazy for You*: "No, no they can't take that away from me." I used this to remind him that no matter what curve balls are thrown his way, "they" (being his professors, landlord, the universe, etc.) could not "take away" his love for theatre, no matter how much these things were overwhelming him. These two concepts seemed to work for him, because, although he could not afford to quit his job, he did decide to take a small break from acting just to get his life back on track. Of course, he's still busy, but I believe my mentoring helped give him some much-needed perspective and peace of mind!