



1 Thou shalt attend scientific meetings and especially any networking events within scientific meetings.

There is no better place to find potential mentors or collaborators than scientific meetings. Networking and social events are a particularly good place to find mentors, as those who attend are self-selected to be highly likely to be interested in providing mentorship.

2 Thou shalt introduce thyself to the people with whom you'd like to speak, even if that brief introduction only leads to a conversation via e-mail.

Yes, they may be busy. But chances are they will be available to chat for a few moments even if it makes them a few moments late to the next session.

3 Thou shalt have a specific idea or question in mind when approaching a potential mentor.

Don't just say, "Hi." Come with an idea to discuss or a request to make.

4 Thou shalt manage expectations regarding what the mentor will do for you.

If you have a request, don't expect them to drop everything to look over a lengthy document. For example, if you'd like someone to look over a grant application, be sure to give them plenty of time to do so. You could say, however, that it would be especially helpful to get any feedback in the next two weeks so that you have time to incorporate their suggestions before the grant deadline.

5 Thou shalt join networking groups within your institution or with others outside your institution.

Don't be shy about joining networking groups and listservs in your institution and elsewhere.

6 Thou shalt remember that it is better to give than to receive.

Making yourself useful to the mentor/collaborator is the surest way to help them become invested in you. One idea that would be of benefit to both parties would be to offer a manuscript idea on which you could work together.

7 Thou shalt communicate clearly, effectively, and politely with potential mentors.

Many mentors will appreciate proper spelling, grammar, and syntax in your e-mails and other correspondence. Use a formal communication style, especially in e-mails, unless and until you are sure that the other party is okay with informal communication styles. Also, keep e-mails brief and to the point.

8 Thou shalt do what thou has promised and on time.

Nothing irritates a collaborator more than someone falling short on their duties. If you say you're going to provide some results within a certain time window, do it.

9 Thou shalt avoid promising more than thou can deliver.

Keeping Commandment 9 is important to keeping Commandment 8. Don't bite off more than you can chew. It's typically better to under-promise and over-deliver than to over-promise and under-deliver.

10 Thou shalt express gratitude to those who provide assistance or mentorship.

A phone call or an e-mail to express your gratitude will go a long way towards expressing your appreciation for someone's help. A handwritten thank-you note, when appropriate, would be even better.