

Direction: To Be a Mentor

By Michelle D. Lall, MD, MHS, FACEP

To be a practicing woman in EM is amazing; to be a mentor is priceless.

I have been fortunate to have had many mentors in my career, including a number of amazing women. Although I've thanked them all before, they deserve far more than my gratitude; they've influenced my life and career in more ways than I can ever express with words. But, most importantly – by following their lead – **I have developed the courage and skills to become a mentor myself.**

I can vividly recall how my earliest mentor, Dr. Gloria Kuhn, kindly taught me the proper way to auscultate a patient's lungs during my second year of medical school. Little did I know what a giant in emergency medicine she was. Approachable and available, she has continued to provide me with guidance and support for the past 14 years – a debt I cannot repay.

I'm also grateful to my contemporary peer mentors, with whom I continue to work and grow. **These parallel mentoring relationships may be informal and often go both ways, but their power cannot be underestimated.** My colleagues at Emory continue to push me out of my comfort zone, and – when doing so – offer me unwavering support.

To all the women of AAWEP and AWAEM, thank you for your courage, dedication and commitment to women in Emergency Medicine. **These groups are truly incredible and without them we will not bridge the gender gaps that still exist in medicine** and we need to ensure that these groups keep momentum and continue to grow. Networking, collaboration and mentorship often go hand in hand and are key components to these groups.

Connect!
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It has been my privilege to be a part of my mentees' lives, as well, and I strive to provide them with the guidance and encouragement that my mentors have given me. If you're early in your career, I challenge you to find a mentor – and thank one. And, when the time comes, **I ask you to become a mentor and pass the torch.** There is perhaps no better way to find or become a mentor than by connecting with AAWEP, AWAEM, and AAMC. Networking, collaboration, and mentorship, which often go hand in hand, give these groups momentum and play a huge role in their continued growth. The women in these organizations have raised the bar for all of us through their courage, dedication, and commitment to **bridging the gender gaps that still exist in emergency medicine.**