

Mentor Me's Top 10 (+1) Mentoring Movies Of All Time

1. Yoda & Luke Skywalker – Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back (1980 / PG)

“Do. Or do not. There is no try.” This quote, like his many other quotes, shows Yoda’s wisdom and efforts to teach Luke to focus on the present, and essentially, to grow up. Yoda demonstrates, as a great mentor does, how to give support, how to offer challenges that permit one to learn and grow, and how to provide vision so that the mentee gains confidence and, eventually, independence.

2. Professor Dumbledore & Harry Potter, Harry Potter Series (1997-2007 / PG-13)

Professor Dumbledore provides Harry with wisdom, guiding advice, and many life lessons, including the importance of love and friendship. Even though he keeps a close eye on Harry, Professor Dumbledore allows him to discover things himself and confront challenges head on and constantly offers words of wisdom, including, “It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.”

3. Mr. Miyagi & The Karate Kid The Karate Kid, (1982 / PG)

In the beginning of the film, Daniel, the karate kid, is being bullied by classmates. His neighbor, Mr. Miyagi, offers to train Daniel in karate. The training goes far beyond karate with Mr. Miyagi teaching Daniel many important life lessons. And much of his teaching comes in the form of philosophical quips, such as, “First learn stand, then learn fly.”

4. Genie of the Lamp & Aladdin, Aladdin (1992 & 2019 / G)

When Aladdin finds an unassuming lamp and rubs it, he is surprised by its magic properties and resident Genie. Genie becomes Aladdin’s mentor, answering all his questions, helping him obtain what he wants through three wishes, but also giving practical advice about being himself. He encourages Aladdin to remember where he came from and not succumb to society’s pressures for what is deemed worthy. Genie and Aladdin form a meaningful relationship, leading to lifelong friendship and mutual growth.

5. Mushu the Dragon & Mulan, Mulan (1998 / G)

Mushu, a small Chinese dragon, is awakened by the family’s Ancestors to help a young girl named Mulan on her journey to taking the place of her ill father in the national army. At times when Mulan feels like she can’t make it, Mushu cheers her on with his optimism and faith. Mushu shows Mulan how to be strong, gives her encouragement when all seems lost, and fights the bloody battles with her to the very end.

6. Chef Auguste Gusteau & Remy Ratatouille, (2007 / G)

Remy, a French rat with a dream of cooking, idolizes the renowned Chef Auguste Gusteau. After Gusteau dies, his ghost guides Remy and provides him with advice and wisdom that helps Remy to become a chef. He says to Remy, “Good food is like music you can taste, color you can smell. There is excellence all around you. You need only to be aware to stop and savor it.” In the end, Remy is able to achieve his dream and serve the delicious food Chef Gusteau inspired him to create.

7. Master Shifu & Master Po Kung Fu Panda, (2008 / G)

Master Po is mentored by Master Shifu, who teaches him kung fu and guides him on his way to becoming a kung fu hero. When Po has gone through a strict training regime but is still unable to grasp the basics of kung fu, Po despairingly admits that he has no chance of becoming a kung fu master. Shifu, however, motivates Po to follow his dreams by having confidence in himself. Shifu successfully trains Po to incorporate this positive thinking into an effective kung fu style.

8. Mary Poppins & Michael and Jane Banks, Mary Poppins (1964 / G)

“In every job that must be done, there is an element of fun. You find the fun, and -SNAP- the job’s a game!” Mary Poppins is a magical nanny who sweeps into the Banks home and takes charge of the Banks children. She never acknowledges her strange and magical powers, but without fail, brings new and fun ideas to the lives of the children. She flies in on an umbrella, and departs when the children have learned enough lessons, promising to return whenever they need her.

9. Coach Ken Carter & The Basketball Team, Coach Carter (2005 / PG-13)

Coach Ken Carter takes the job as a basketball coach at his former high school in a poor area. He sets about to change the negative attitudes of his players, and help them focus on the positive. The coach teaches the players discipline and helps them reach their potential because he believes in them. He tells team, “I came to coach basketball players, and you became students. I came to teach boys, and you became men.”.

10. Coach Herman Boone & The Football Team, Remember the Titans (2000 / PG)

Taking place during desegregation, this film focuses on the integration of a Black high school and a white high school. Coach Herman Boone, the head coach of the Black school in suburban Virginia, is placed over another highly successful from the white school. Faced with tremendous pressure as he tries to unify the two football teams, Coach Boone uses his wisdom and charisma to influence the players on both sides, and the team eventually becomes the unifying symbol for the community as the boys and adults learn to depend on and trust each other.

11. Frankie Dunn & Margaret “Maggie” Fitzgerald, Million Dollar Baby (2004 / PG-13)

Maggie Fitzgerald, a poor waitress, decides to change her circumstances by becoming a competitive boxer. She convinces the hardened boxing trainer Frankie Dunn to coach her and be her manager, who sees her potential as a winner. Frankie has a problematic relationship with his daughter and as a subconscious way to make up for that becomes a surrogate to Maggie as he helps her with her career. Their trusting mentoring relationship ultimately helps Maggie to come over her insecurities and fears, and at the same time gives Frankie the courage to face his broken relationship with his daughter.