

IBM Women in Technology: Audrey Helffrich
Transcript of oral history video clip - 2003

“I actually do quite a bit of mentoring. Where I saw somebody I thought was doing something good and something I couldn’t do, I would spend time and talk with them, and so I would say that there are a lot of folks who act as mentors for me. And its really important to me to know and be able to get advice from people who I respect and people who have accomplished a lot, who have accomplished things that I would like to accomplish and I go after those folks. I now think that it is important to mentor women for me because anytime you have a group of folks who are different, who have a different view on how to look at things and how to accomplish things, who’s in the minority, it can get very lonely. One of the important things to do if you want to be successful is to have results and in order to have results you have to understand what your actions, what effect your actions have on others. If your scope is small enough, you can just do your own work and you’ll be fine, but if you’re looking for anything larger you’re inevitably working with other people. And there really is a difference between what ... there are characteristics of how women deal with situations and men, I mean it’s not one hundred percent, but it’s definitely different. And you may not want to take on the characteristics of the majority view, but you definitely want to understand why things are happening the way they are. And I think that’s one of the values that a mentor can bring to a mentee, and the other way around. You know you forget what you’ve learned, and you forget how hard it is sometimes, and so keeping in contact with folks who are just starting, it’s really a fun thing to do.”