



General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

youth ministries
department



5



Being a Mentor

Themes in This Series:

Book 1: Incorporating Mentoring in Your Youth Ministry

Introduction to the purpose and philosophy of this resource along with a guide for implementing an intentional mentoring program in your school, church, club, workplace or other organisation.

Book 2: The Need for Being Connected

An exploration of current statistics regarding the behaviour crisis facing today's youth and the answers presented to us through empirical evidence.

Book 3: Definitions and Types of Mentoring

An introduction to the history and use of the term "mentoring" and an examination of mentoring applications in today's culture.

Book 4: Benefits of Mentoring

An overview of compelling reasons for being involved in mentoring.

Book 5: Being a Mentor

Basic principles and practical tips for being a mentor. This is considered fundamental information for those involved in any mentoring situation.

Book 6: Being a Mentor Partner

A preparation presentation for those who want to find a mentor for themselves or for those who will be entering a mentoring relationship.

Book 7: Passing On Values

Guidelines and practical tips for assisting the mentor in passing on positive values to a mentor partner.

Book 8: Listening Skills

An interactive tutorial on developing crucial fundamental listening skills for all relationships with information on dealing with crisis situations and mandatory reporting.

The **Bsomebody2someone** Mentor Training Series was originally developed in connection with 'Getting Connected,' a project of ADRA Australia. It has been adopted and reshaped by the General Conference Youth Ministries Department to be implemented globally.

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Bsomebody2someone

Mentoring Training Series

A Note from the Director

The significance of mentoring in the context of intergenerational youth ministry has been one of the main topics of discussions in credible youth forums and literature recently. Youth professionals have long concluded that what has been characterized as the 'One ear mickey mouse' approach to ministry, where young people are isolated from the rest of the congregation and placed in an environment that is 'supposedly' conducive to their spiritual development, is a fallacy, in spite of all good intents and purposes.

While it is recognized that the 'isolationist' approach was a pragmatic reaction to the many challenges that youth leaders were encountering in an age of unprecedented change, its long-term effects have not proved to be beneficial for the body of Christ. There is a current call to a return to more family and intergenerational-based approach to youth ministry. It calls for the collaboration of youth professionals, volunteers, parents, pastors and the church at large. This might be the longer, more arduous road to travel, but it is the one prescribed in the Scriptures, the one that will prove to pay eternal dividends.

Bsomebody2someone is a valuable tool in your hands to assist in this paradigm shift in youth ministry.

Bsomebody2someone is a series of training presentations designed to enable individuals and groups to intentionally engage in mentoring, both to find a mentor for themselves and to be a mentor for others.

This resource package consists of seven presentations for use in groups to educate, inspire and equip mentors and mentor partners. Each presentation is a discreet topic on its own and is produced as a set of PowerPoint slides with notes for the presenter. Our intention is that anyone interested in mentoring can use this package. No previous training or special knowledge is required to present this material or lead a group in its exploration of mentoring. There are some activities written into the notes. These activities are optional, but they are given with the intention of applying the concepts presented and engaging the group in the learning process.

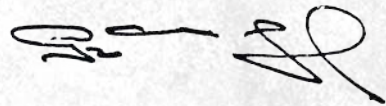
Being a Mentor

A Note from the Director (*continued*)

The topics in the series are listed in order of suggested presentation for a complete training package. However, not all topics will be required for all mentoring applications. Examine each presentation and use those that will be most useful to you.

The time required to move a group through each presentation will vary according to the group and the leader. If a presenter uses the activities provided and adds time for discussion and other activities, each program could stretch to one or more hours. Of course, the presentation could be as short as the time it takes to click through the slides. Remember, the more the group processes, discusses and absorbs the information on each slide, the more effective the material will be.

Sincerely,



Gilbert R. Cangy, Director
General Conference Youth Ministries Department

Note for leaders: *There is no required supplementary material. All that is required is the projection of the PowerPoint show, note taking paper and a pen.*

Topics

- **Being Authentic**
- **Privilege of Mentoring**
- **Principles of Effective Mentoring**



Thank you for choosing to learn
more about being a mentor

Regardless of how you became one...
(If you've been asked
If your intention is to be)

...allow yourself to be human

Learning About Mentoring

Thank you for choosing to learn more about being a mentor in another person's life.

If you've been asked by someone to be a mentor, you're like most of us who have had a similar experience — you may be feeling overwhelmed at the thought that someone would think so much of you as to make this request. You probably feel honoured. At the same time, you may feel overwhelmed at the sense of responsibility to 'say the right things' and live up to the high standard this person seems to have given you.

If you're a person who is determining to be a positive influence in the lives of those who may come your way, then you are to be congratulated for making a difference in the lives of people. Regardless of what relationships you enter, your commitment to serve others by offering yourself as a mentor will make a difference. You may also feel unsure as to whether you can live up to the standards that you or others might set.

Our guess is that those feelings are normal. Who is able to meet the expectations that could come with being a mentor? Probably very few of us are.

So although you've been given a great privilege and responsibility, realise that you are only a person, and you can only offer yourself as an authentic, real, fragile human being — the same as all the rest of us. Accept your weaknesses and share them with your mentor partner. Don't try to promote the myth that you are somehow 'superman or superwoman' — but rather promote the blessing of learning from mistakes, accepting failure as a step towards achievement, and being open and honest above all else.

In order to help you be the best mentor that you can or would like to be, please read through these practical aspects of mentoring. Take the principles involved and apply them to your own situation so that you can be the best helper to your mentor partner as possible.



Mentoring

is an intentional relationship where one
person encourages another to realise their
potential

It is a Mentor
with a Mentor Partner

Mentoring

We have said that mentoring is an intentional relationship where one person encourages another to realise their potential. Note some of these key phrases: 'intentional relationship' and 'one person encourages another'.

Mentoring is one person intentionally focusing on the welfare and development of another person. It is a life principle that the one who gives to another gains a benefit from the giving process.

For the purpose of this mentoring resource, we will use the terms 'mentor' and 'mentor partner' to denote the roles in the relationship.



“For it is in giving that we
receive.”

St Francis of Assisi

It Is in Giving That We Receive

This presentation gives some practical tips and some general principles that apply to being an effective mentor. These have been gleaned from several sources and each one is important to the mentoring process. If you are going to offer yourself as one who wants to help shape another person’s life, it could be argued that you have a responsibility to do it to the best of your ability.

Of course, no mentor is perfect at the job — any more than any person is perfect. So, realising that you can’t be everything, take some time to look at these principles and see which ones might challenge you to be the best that you can be.

ACTIVITY: *Divide into groups of 3 or 4 and consider this quotation from St Francis. Discuss: What do we receive? What is it in mentoring that you personally WANT to receive?*

Ask groups to try to be honest about the question and listen to any groups that will share the highlights of their discussion.



You Must Win the Right to be Heard

- Mentor Partners choose their mentors, not visa-versa
- Mentor has the choice of whether to say yes or no

You Must Win the Right to Be Heard

“You must win the right to be heard” is one of the basic premises of ‘Young Life’, a well known influential American youth group which talks about the need to win the confidence of the adolescent. This is not done through titles that the adults have but through the time that they give to these adolescents.

Young people are open to and looking for a significant adult who will have quite an impact on their lives. They are looking for people to answer life questions, not just in words but in actions. What is life all about? What is the true meaning of life? How well am I doing? People often will listen to another adult whom they admire when they will not listen to their parents (even if they are saying the same thing).

Although there are some situations where ‘forced pairing’ of mentor to partner is a part of the mentoring structure (sometimes in school or in the workplace), for the purposes of this training series, it is important that individuals choose their mentors. This is the natural life situation. A younger person may not be able to choose who is ‘available’ as a mentor, but will always choose whether or not they allow that available person to become important in their life.

In this way, it is the mentor partners who decide who will make an impact on their life because they decide (perhaps often subconsciously) who it is that holds value to them — who becomes important to them. When that happens, a mentor has earned the right to be heard and has an opportunity to help grow and develop the life of another person.

Realise also that the mentor can always choose not to be intentional about mentoring a person who values them. Sometimes a mentor will formally say ‘no’, but informally still take an interest in the other person.

In the end, mentoring is always a partnership. It is ideal if the mentor partner chooses a mentor who will gladly put time and effort into the growth of the younger person. But however the partnership happens, take advantage of the opportunity.



Believe in the Mentor Partner

- Mentoring means liking them regardless of what they do
- Unconditional positive regard doesn't mean unconditional approval
- If in doubt, encourage and affirm

Be Prepared to Give Time

- Your time is your greatest gift
- True giving comes from the heart, it is not something that can be forced or faked
- To be available is to be accessible
- Mentoring is an ongoing relationship. Earning trust takes time

Believe in the Mentor Partner

Unconditional Positive Regard

This term is used in counseling to denote that the mentor has a positive regard for a person without conditions. There should be nothing that a person could do to make a mentor dislike them. The mentor partner might make mistakes, poor decisions, or do 'bad' things, but the job of mentors is to like their mentor partner, encourage and support them.

Realise that unconditional positive regard does not mean accepting poor decisions or bad behaviour as being good, but rather confronting them in love and challenging them to consider the values and consequences of their decisions.

Be very careful not to 'judge' your mentor partner. Their decisions may sadden or disappoint you. Let them know that if it happens. But the only way a mentor can truly teach people is to allow them to decide for themselves, to set values and goals for themselves that they want to achieve and then to support them in their journey.

If in doubt, encourage and affirm. If your mentor partner has made a mistake or a bad decision, affirm them for the other right decisions they have made. Realise that your mentor partner will tend to remember one negative word more than hundreds of positive words. Leave no doubt about your belief and confidence that your partner is a worthwhile person who has you as a constant supporter.

Be Prepared to Give Time

Effective mentors must be prepared to give of themselves and their time. True giving comes from the heart, it is not something that can be forced or faked. Giving physical gifts is not always appropriate. Effective mentors do not need to purchase loyalty. Your time is your greatest gift.

A mentor makes him/herself available to the mentor partner. To be available is to be accessible. There is an implication here that the 'onus' for initiation of contact is on the mentor partner, but it is the responsibility of the mentor to *invite* that contact and *respond* positively to it. There is a sense that the mentor is interested and eagerly waiting for an invitation from the partner, much like a parent looks for an invitation to teach their child.

An Effective Mentor Does Not Give Up Easily

Today's rushed world does not allow time for relationships to develop. Youth are accustomed to living in an 'instant' society, commonly termed a "Microwave Society".

Mentoring, however, is not something that can be rushed. It is an ongoing relationship that cannot be forced or pressured if it is to develop effectively. It is a process that requires great perseverance as you take the time to earn trust and willingly wait for growth to occur. Mentoring is not a destination but a journey.



Be Prepared to Be Real

- Mentors open their own world to create a *safe environment* for openness and honesty
 - Don't walk behind me, I will not lead
 - Don't walk in front of me, I will not follow
 - Just walk beside me and be my friend
- Mentors must be prepared to allow access into their own lives
- Admitting where we struggle doesn't diminish our effectiveness; it enhances it

Be Prepared to Give Time *(continued)*

ACTIVITY: HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU REALLY HAVE?

Ask each person to think about how much they really have to offer to a mentor partner if they had one. (What if they had two people, or more — who wanted them as a mentor?) Write down the days of the week across the top of the page and list the times of each day that they might be available to meet with, write to, or speak on the phone with a person who would want to spend time with them.

Then have them write under those times for each day — what they might normally be doing during that time including who they might NOT be spending time with if they were spending time with a mentor partner.

Then ask them to get into groups of 2 or 3 and share their potential mentor timetable with their partner.

Group Discussion: How many hours do you have free for mentoring? What is the rough group average? Do we have time to be a mentor? If you don't have enough time now, is that the way you want it? What would you change?

Be Prepared to Be Real

A Mentor Must Be Prepared to Share

It is not enough to simply listen and observe the life of the one being mentored. Mentors must be prepared to allow access into their own lives. As mentors share their own world, they show trust and create an atmosphere of openness and honesty. The mentor and the one being mentored then become partners in a journey of discovery.

You open your own world, which creates a safe environment for openness and honesty.

Don't walk behind me, I will not lead;
Don't walk in front of me, I will not follow,
Just walk beside me and be my friend

However, mentors must know what appropriate disclosure is. There are certain areas of their private lives that should not be discussed, and some that should remain private until/unless the partner genuinely asks. It is a difficult balance to remain open and transparent, but not make mentoring all about you!



Be Prepared to Be Real (continued)

ACTIVITY: YOUR STORY

Divide into pairs and practice telling something personal about yourself. Choose one person as person 'A' and the other as person 'B'. This can be a scary activity, so it's ok if you need to do it with someone you already know well. BUT... it will be better if you can sit next to a stranger!

First, take 1 min of silence for the whole group to think of a personal story. Make it something that happened to you at some time that either hurt you, embarrassed you, or made you feel vulnerable. It will be best if it is the kind of story that you wouldn't normally tell to a group of people. Next, let's agree as a whole group that for this activity, we will adopt absolute confidentiality. Agree that you will tell NO ONE the story that you hear... not even your partner or closest friend. This story will exist only for this activity.

OK, now allow 2 or 3 min for person A to tell their story to person B. Person B will only listen. You can ask questions or reflect back to make sure you understand, but please don't comment or make a judgement about the story. Just listen.

When person A has finished, have another 30 sec of silence where person B will write down some new impression about the personality or character of person A that THEY DIDN'T KNOW BEFORE. Person B will be writing down something positive about person A that the telling of the story revealed.

Then repeat the process with person B telling the story, and afterwards — person A writing down impressions. If partners are comfortable with it, they may share their impressions with each other.

The purpose of this activity is to understand the difference that it can make to share something personal about yourself. When we let down some barriers, it can allow us to be more effective helpers of others. The danger is to be 'too open'... to flood the mentor partner with talk about us, and not listen to them. So, while talking about yourself is good, consider it to be like salt when you're cooking — just a little bit can make a big difference, but once you add too much it spoils the whole batch.

In his book *Executive EQ. Emotional Intelligence in Leadership and Organizations*, Robert K. Cooper makes this powerful observation:

"Unless I can come to know what is real about you — something of your life story, what you care about and stand for, what you feel as well as what you know — you do not actually exist for me beyond your name, job title, and appearance."

Later in the book, Cooper writes, "When we get inspired and motivated, it is by real people, the ones with a good head on their shoulders, of course, but always with a heart. No one expects a leader to be perfect — only genuine and honest. Such people possess, he points out, "the courage to find themselves, to tell the truth about who they are, the mistakes they have made, the dreams they hold, and what they're most concerned about, and excited about, in growing the business or in growing their life. This is the bedrock for open dialogue and trust."



Listen

- A Mentor Listens
- A Mentor Listens
- A Mentor Listens
- Be Confidential Unless:
 - There has been child abuse
 - A life is in danger
 - Otherwise ...ALWAYS!

Respect Their Agenda

- The agenda belongs to the mentor partner
- The mentor is not there to manipulate, control or desire to 'change' the partner
- Don't get offended – "It's not about you"

Listen

Effective Mentors Listen

We can't emphasize this enough. You will find a whole presentation on listening skills in this package and it is beneficial for us all to develop those skills. Listening is the single best thing a mentor can offer a partner. To have someone who will listen, be interested, strive to understand and focus full attention on you is one of life's greatest gifts and best luxuries.

Confidentiality

As a mentor, you are expected to remain confidential in your dealings with your mentor partner. Anything that a person says while you are acting as a mentor should be confidential. However there are some things that you must report, even if you've already promised that you wouldn't say anything. Basically you should report anytime a person's life is in danger or when a child is being abused. Here are the general guidelines used by professional helpers:

Suspected child abuse. If a person under the age of 17 is, or has been a victim of child abuse, and a responsible person becomes aware, or suspects it, then they must report.

Life endangerment. If a person has reason to believe that a life may be in danger in the near future, either through harm from another person or from self, then they must report.

For any other situations which may arise in which a responsible person feels unsure as to the need for mandatory reporting, that person should seek advice from a professional person such as a counselor, psychologist or police detective.

Remember that confidentiality includes both direct and indirect written or verbal reports. It also includes disclosing confidential information to your own friends or family.

A valuable asset to a mentor is to have a professional person who can act as a supervisor. This is a person you could contact to discuss and debrief with regarding how the mentor relationship is going and someone who could advise you should a difficult situation arise.

Respect Their Agenda

The agenda belongs to the partner, not the mentor. This can be a difficult concept to accept. Many of us want to be mentors because we want to give advice or fix up another person. But people don't change when they are forced or manipulated. They change when they choose to change. This can only happen within a relationship of trust and respect. Listening for THEIR agenda, not your own is one of the best things you can offer your mentor partner.

This relationship is about building the partner, not about your own needs.



Allow Your Partner to Take the Initiative

- Chase them or give them space?
- The mentor partner has the overall responsibility to take the initiative
- Invite contact

Allow Your Partner to Take the Initiative

Initiative

It is difficult to know when to contact your mentor partner and when to give them space. If you give them too much space — if too much time goes by without contact — they may think that you have lost interest in being a mentor. However, it is a worse scenario if you contact them too often — if you ‘push’ too hard and they feel like you’re intruding into their life. Then you can become either a nuisance, someone they try to avoid — or another stressor, someone who makes them feel guilty because they’re not seeing you often enough.

Discuss this issue when you first meet, and ask how often your mentor partner wants you to keep in contact. Remember, you have been asked to be a mentor, and it is important that the initiative remains with the mentor partner. As a mentor, you might be (and probably are) willing to remain a positive influence in your mentor partner’s life for as long as they desire it.

However, it is vital to realise that you have been invited into this relationship for a season in response to a felt need. Often when a person’s life situation changes, so does their need for a mentor — or they may need to get the input of other mentors. Be sure that you accept this as natural and healthy. Make every effort to help your mentor partner feel at ease with contacting you when you’re needed, and to help your mentor partner feel comfortable if more time goes by between contacts than they may have planned or promised.

Be willing to be humble and to be of service to this person who has valued you enough to invite you into their life. Remember, when in doubt, it is safer to let your partner initiate the contact.

An Anonymous Mentor Story

There was a time in high school when I found things quite hard socially — a period of a few years. But there was an older girl, a few years above me who once wrote me a letter asking how I was doing. There was no special occasion for the letter; I didn’t feel like I ‘needed’ it, but she wrote it nonetheless.

She and I continued to write letters (by hand) for the next four years. I would share my burdens and knew that she didn’t have the answers, but she always thought of options for me and took a special interest in my wellbeing. Eventually we stopped writing, not that anything had gone wrong; we just became busy with the next stages of our lives.

I had forgotten about those letters until very recently. I have been thinking a lot about mentoring and have decided that I need to write to her and let her know how much her letters and that initial question (in a letter so I wasn’t put on the spot for felt pressured) got me through lots of difficult times. It also makes me think that I should thank God. I prayed for help during that time and always felt my prayers were not answered because the problem was never fixed. Hindsight is fabulous... I am actually glad my problem was never ‘fixed’. Instead God gave me a friend who walked me through those trials and even today, knowing that I am loved gets me through anything.

DISCUSS: *What did this person ‘need’ from a mentor? Did she (the writer is female) know it? Does it sound like the person writing this story was a ‘troubled’ or ‘at risk’ young person? What did the older girl offer? How did the older girl ‘invite’ a mentoring relationship? What might have happened if the writer had not responded? How do you think the older girl may have responded to the letter this person intends to write?*



Model Character

- Character is what is *left after the fire*
- Effective mentors demonstrate the qualities they wish their partner to emulate
- You can’t teach above what you live

Model Character

An Effective Mentor Models Strong Character

Character is what is *left after the fire*. In other words, it’s the proof of who you really are as revealed after being tested and refined by life’s experiences, in good and bad times.

It is vital for an effective mentor to demonstrate all the qualities they wish their partner to emulate, such as honesty, authenticity, integrity, strength, compassion, humility, etc... The old saying is that ‘actions speak louder than words’. This is as true in mentoring as in every other area of life. A mentor can’t teach things that they are not living.

ACTIVITY: *If you were a mentor partner and could choose an ‘ideal’ mentor, what character traits would you want in your ‘dream mentor’? Get together in groups of 3 or 4 and brainstorm character traits together, and then ask each person to pick their 5 most desirable character traits for an “ideal” mentor. If you have time, share some of the lists with the rest of the group.*



Seek Humility

- Humility is a core quality of a good mentor
- Humility is a quality that is more caught than taught
- Rather than weakness, humility at its core is strength, power, and courage -all kept in control and balance, and used for the benefit of others, not for personal gain and advancement

Seek Humility

According to classic literature, pride is the core of all sin, and it’s opposite trait, humility seems to be a difficult character trait to attain. The fact is that when you consider yourself a humble person, it probably means that you’re bragging about having humility, which means that you don’t! C.S. Lewis said, “If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed.” So humility can be a hard term to speak about, but it is a wonderful trait to aspire to.

Of all the positive character traits, humility is especially important in mentoring. Without humility it is difficult to be challenged and accept change. A mentor who can model humility is not only building character, but also helping the mentoring process by encouraging both partners to be listening and open to change. David Stoddard says in his book *The Heart of Mentoring*, “You can’t teach above what you live!... Humility is a quality that is more caught than taught”. David Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring*, Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 2003, p. 151.

“...If we do that, we’re going to get run over, taken advantage of,” people often reply. They think humility runs counter to being competitive, assertive, determined to accomplish an objective, and other traits typically associated with success in our free-market society. The fact is, however, the best leaders can have those inner drives and also be people of great humility.



Guide the Search for Direction

- Mentors can assist their partners in discovering direction in their life by exploring passion and values
- Passion: “If you lived in a perfect world, and money was not an issue, what would you really love to give your life to?”
- Values: “What is important in your life? How does the way you prioritise your time reflect what really matters to you?”
- Passion + Value = Goals

Guide the Search for Direction

Mentors can pass on great amounts of information, which is often quickly forgotten, but it is their passion that is remembered. An important achievement in a mentoring relationship is to assist their partner in discovering their own passions and goals. These two terms, when understood and explored, can help a mentor partner find direction in their life.

Passion: At some stage most of us become dissatisfied with the work we do and search to find a deeper sense of meaning and fulfilment. A mentor can help by listening, learning who we are, what we are good at, and what we love — and reflecting that back. It is good to ask: “If you lived in a perfect world, and money was not an issue, what would you really love to give your life to?”

Values: We all have the same amount of time in life, yet we all use it just a little differently. How we use our time reflects the things we consider important in life. Our priorities reflect our values. Sometimes those two things (priorities and values) don’t match up; when that is the case our lives become ineffective, frustrating — even boring.

ACTIVITY: Take a piece of paper and make three columns: Time, Values, and Passion.

In the first column, write down the 5 things that take up the most of your time AFTER work, eating and sleeping. Let’s consider those as basic physical needs — we all need to do all three in our culture. So after those things, what takes up the most of your time?

In the second column, write down 5 things that are the most important to us. This should represent the core values — things that matter most in life to you. Is it Family? Success? Achievement? Etc. . .

In the third column, write down the 5 things that you love doing the most. Try to put these into somewhat general categories rather than detailed specifics (i.e. . . . write down playing sport instead of playing soccer as #1, playing tennis as #2, playing football as #3, etc. . .)

Then, after you have had a look at what you’ve put in the columns, somewhere on the page draw a box and write yourself a note. On it, describe the things that match up well and the things that don’t match up well — and if you would like to, challenge yourself to change something specific.

PASSION + VALUES = GOALS
Look at the paper you just worked on and the note you wrote to yourself. Is there a goal in there? Is there something to strive for? As a mentor, you can help a partner find direction by understanding that combining what you love to do with what is important to you can become a goal for life. A mentor can act as a sounding board during the process of discovering life direction.



Point to Support

A Mentor

- Does not undermine parental authority but is supportive of parents
- Becomes the parents' closest ally
- Seeks parental permission
- Points to other mentors and helpers

Keep Your Promises

- Consider the commitment
- Keep your promises
- Keep your mentor partner accountable

Point to Support

The role of the mentor is to be 'a' support, but not 'the' support for a mentor partner. It is important to keep the mentor partner focussed on building a network of support. This can be difficult when human nature tends to like the idea of us being 'the only one' a partner can relate to.

An effective mentor does not undermine parental authority. Regardless of their personal opinion of parental actions, it is not appropriate to undermine what a parent or guardian has set in place. Mentors must be supportive of parents as much as possible.

Become the parents' closest ally, rather than a competitor for the young person's affections. Even in circumstances where the partner may not want the parent and mentor to be communicating with each other (and sometimes 'especially' when that happens) the mentor should keep in touch with the parents of a partner under the age of 18. As the partner gets older, contact with parents becomes less necessary. However it is always good to know the parents in order to know your mentor partner better.

It is important to obtain parental permission when planning projects or events for an under 18 mentor partner. Always consult parents before making arrangements with young people and keep in mind the partner's family commitments.

Realise that even though keeping touch with parents is important, a mentor outside of the immediate family is still needed for young people. The individualisation process that all adolescents go through on the way to becoming a healthy young independent adult emphasises the need for parents to have a significant other adult who will guide their teenager when he/she will no longer listen to mum and dad's instructions.

A mentor must guard against the kind of hidden jealousy that stops us from encouraging our mentor partners to talk with and value other mentors in their lives. The other mentors may deal with other life areas — and occasionally they will have someone who talks to them about the same thing as you. Of course it is wise to listen closely to ensure the other mentor is listening well and not harming your partner. But after that, encourage connections with many people. You can't be the only one.

Keep Your Promises

An Effective Mentor Keeps His or Her Promises

Unfortunately too many young people have had incidents with adults who are inconsistent in their words and actions. It is important for you, as their mentor, to demonstrate that your words will become a reality.

Before you agree to be a mentor, carefully consider the commitment you are making. Are you really willing to be available to another person in this capacity? When you consider your schedule, do you really have enough time to offer? It is better to say no in the first place than to create an expectation that you are not prepared to meet.

Having said that, realise that most mentor partners are not asking for that much time and experience shows us that no matter how much time you might plan to spend together, the reality is that the 'busy-ness' of life in modern culture means that mentoring meetings invariably end up being less rather than more frequent. What is more important for most people is that their mentor is prepared to be available and is dependable so that when you do say you'll meet, you get there.

If you agree to meet your mentor partner and you don't show up or you arrive late, you are sending a strong message to your mentor partner about their importance in your life. You have agreed to make them a priority in your life, but if you miss an appointment or turn up late, you are letting them know that your words were empty promises. Don't let that happen.

By the same principle, keep your mentor partner accountable for meetings they make with you. You must consider your time valuable, and if they don't show up, or are late for an appointment, you should consider that unacceptable and discuss it openly with them.



Leave a Legacy

- Mentoring reproduction is seeing the people we mentor begin to mentor others
- Your mentor partner becomes your legacy
- But as for the best leaders, the people hardly notice their existence...

Leave a Legacy

LEGACY

At its essence, vision is a mental picture, a perception acquired through life experiences that says to our hearts, “This is what I want to give my life to.” It flows out of who we are — our passions, desires, and interests, our values and strengths.

The ultimate goal of mentoring is reproduction: seeing the people we mentor begin to reproduce themselves by mentoring others. As we invest in our mentoring partners, they learn how to invest in others as well. In that way, the impact we have on our mentoring partners starts to multiply. Over time, that impact can grow exponentially, touching the lives of more people than we could ever imagine.

Your legacy is the lasting, enduring impact that your life will have long after the black type in your obituary has faded. There is no more effective or more gratifying way for anyone to build a lasting legacy than through mentoring.

Mentoring is leadership — leading a mentoring partner to self-discovery, self-fulfilment, and paradoxically, selflessness.

The words of ancient Chinese philosopher Lao-Tzu apply here: “But as for the best leaders, the people hardly notice their existence, the next best the people honour and praise, the next the people fear, the next the people hate. But when the best leader’s work is done, the people say, ‘We did it ourselves’”. The most effective leaders labour in relative obscurity. They don’t perform for cheering crowds or adoring stockholders but simply carry out their responsibilities with humility and grace, propelling their followers to the next levels of achievement and excellence. That is essentially what a mentor does as well.



You Will Need a Mentor

- It is important for each mentor to have their own mentor, coach or supervisor to whom they are accountable
- Don’t be afraid to ask for help
- Accountability will help the mentor be aware of potential dangers

You Will Need a Mentor

Every Mentor Needs a Mentor

In the mentoring program it is important for each mentor to have their own coach to whom they are accountable. This is a safety mechanism to protect both the mentor and the partner. Accountability will help the mentor be aware of potential dangers to the partner, the mentor and the mentoring relationship.

Don’t be afraid to ask for help. Mentors are not required to know everything. Your job is not to have all the answers but to seek advice from professionals who can help. Join your partner in seeking for answers. You can find good professional help in counsellors, psychologists or through telephone help lines. It is always wise to get to know a professional that you can call on in any crisis situation. Along with that, find an experienced mentor who will remain confidential and provide you with accountability in your role.

This is especially true if your mentor partner is of the opposite gender. It is better for the mentor and partner to be the same sex to reduce the risk of complications, but if not — ensure that you have an opposite gender mentor/coach to guide you in helping your partner.



Know What to Ask

- Remember, let the Partner set the agenda
- Explore Life Topics:

Relationships	Family	Anger
Spiritual Issues	Exercise	Work
Time Management	Money	Stress
Self Control	Conflict	Friends

- Ask permission to challenge

Know What to Ask

Topics

Your mentor partner will have already worked out some areas that they would like to speak with you about. Sometimes those topics will remain issues for some time and you will need to revisit them often. However, it is also important to discuss what other areas might be of interest and ask permission of your partner to question them or discuss those issues.

When you do discuss the areas below, concentrate on asking your mentor partner to establish values, set goals and work toward those goals in all areas of life.

Some potential areas are: spending time with the family, work issues, harboring anger or resentment, exercise, dieting, understanding God, relationships, time management, professional development, use of money, sexual relationships, coping with stress, self control, resolving conflicts, relating well to people.

An important question to ask is how open or challenging they would like you to be. Probably one of the best things a mentor can do after being interested in them and providing a positive role model to them, is the willingness and ability to confront them in love. It is likely that your mentor partner will want you to point out mistakes or weaknesses and support them in dealing with them. Please do this with love and a gentle heart and tongue — and keep asking permission to do it. This is important not only for you to feel invited into that person's life but also for your mentor partner who will realise that they have 'asked for it'. It will help them accept that what you have to say comes from love (as opposed to a desire to punish or judge) and that your goal is to be a constructive influence in their lives.

Some Questions for Your First Meeting:

- How long will this relationship continue? (What are we contracting for?)
- How will we evaluate the journey?
- What will it look like if it is working?
- What will it look like if it is NOT working?
- How will we finish off?

Be Careful of the 'Other' Gender

- Not ideal, but sometimes good
- In a cross gender situation you will need to be more sensitive to issues such as:
 - appropriate places to meet
 - times of contact
 - the permission of your mentor's partner (and/or your own)
 - and the restriction of certain topics of conversation (such as sexual or some relationship issues)

Be Careful of the 'Other' Gender

Gender Issues

It is not ideal to have a mentor who is a different gender. However, your mentor partner may end up being someone of the opposite gender to you. A mentor partner who is a different gender than you can provide an enriching and challenging relationship. But be aware of the limitations and potential pitfalls and set up appropriate boundaries in your relationship from the beginning to show that you value and respect the mentor relationship. If that is the case, realise that there are some specific issues that you will need to deal with. Having an opposite gender mentor partner will limit your freedom in communication and contact with your mentor. This situation will create some specific accountability issues.

You will need to be more sensitive to issues such as meeting places and conversation topics. Avoid being in places where you cannot be seen or interrupted — be careful to guard not only your reputation but the reputation of your mentor partner as well.

Topics regarding sexual relationships, personal or intimate details about the mentor, or other topics that could potentially lead to inappropriate conversations should be avoided.

If you do have an opposite gender mentor partner, be sure to seek the permission of your mentor's partner (husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend) as well as that of your own partner.

Realise that in guarding those areas you are showing respect for some of the values that have attracted your mentor partner to you in the first place. If you enter a cross gender mentoring relationship, value it for there is much to be learned from opposite gender mentors. Just respect your mentor partner enough to not allow any situation that could bring a question as to his or her character.



Be Accountable

- Appropriate relationship
- Positive relationship
- Duty of Care to act with concern as a parent might
- Keep boundaries

Be Accountable

Accountable

A mentor is accountable for an *appropriate* and *positive* relationship with the mentor partner. The acceptance of the role of mentor includes an acceptance of *responsibility* toward the mentor partner. The best interest of the partner is paramount and trust builds as the relationship develops. There is a *duty of care* similar to that of a parent inherent in accepting a role where one is given a *position of influence* with another.

Boundaries

Occasionally a mentor partner may fall into a pattern of ‘dependence’ upon a mentor. The danger is that dependence can at first seem attractive to the mentor as well. Phrases like, ‘you are the only one I can trust,’ ‘I don’t know what I would do without you,’ or ‘I need to spend time with you to get me through’ are nice for a mentor to hear. However phrases like this should carry a warning for a mentor to check what is happening in the relationship.

The mentor should not be the ‘only one’ supporting a person. If that is the case, the first priority of the mentor is to challenge the partner to create more sources of support.

If as a mentor you begin to feel uncomfortable about the demands a partner is placing on you, if you feel that your mentor is calling at inconvenient times or ‘needing’ to speak to you more often than you feel comfortable with, address the issue as soon as possible. To allow a person to be dependent upon you is dangerous for your mentoring relationship and dangerous to your mentor partner as an individual. Often those who have been abused or manipulated in other relationships will continue those same relationship patterns even in a positive relationship such as mentoring.

If you or someone near you gets the sense that the relationship seems to be going in a poor direction, consult with your supervisor or a professional confidant immediately.

ACTIVITY: Divide into pairs (or groups of 3) and discuss what kind of a mentoring relationship might end up being an inappropriate relationship. Try to think of types of relationships that might not be obviously ‘wrong,’ but could end up being negative. Spend time reviewing some of the scenarios with the whole group and discuss ways of repairing or ending the relationship with minimal damage.



Don't Run Ahead

- Meet as long as the partner keeps coming back
- Only schedule one meeting at a time
- You can end before you start
- Initially meetings should become less frequent over time and be eventually governed by need

Don't Run Ahead

How Long Should We Meet?

There is no secret formula but here are some helpful ideas:

Meet as long as the partner keeps coming back. Ask if you still need to meet and discuss the issue with your partner. Only schedule one meeting at a time — so it can be terminated at any meeting.

Realise that mentoring can end before you start — if the partner has a hidden agenda eg make a sale, getting a job etc. — if the motive on either side is other than mentoring, then allow it to finish before it even gets going.

Meetings should become less frequent over time — because partners need to grow independently. However, they may have situational needs that require short term frequent contact.

If the relationship seems to be 'winding down' and you are meeting less frequently, search for a logical point when the relationship should end. Don't be afraid to bring up the subject and speak openly about how you will continue your relationship.

Finish Gracefully

- Recognise there can be seasons for mentoring
- Part of our duty is to release them to move on to the next stage in their lives when they need to
- Allow the relationship to end
 - Graciously
 - Thankfully

Finish Gracefully

Finishing Well

One of the realities of mentoring is that the relationship doesn't often remain the same for a long period of time. Mentoring most often takes place at various times in a person's development and for various reasons. Life is like that. There are seasons for all of life — end of school, marriage, moving away, new job, overcoming a crisis, etc.

Part of our duty is to release them to move on to the next stage in their life when they need to.

As a mentor, you need to accept that you have been asked to be available for this time in a person's life and it will probably be for a certain 'season', after which your relationship may change. This is normal and should be expected.

However, this change often produces a sense of guilt or loss in the relationship, especially if the meetings just end, or gradually become less frequent without discussion as to what is happening.

It is a wise idea to schedule a time period for the mentoring relationship and to review the relationship at the end of it. If there is a continued need for the relationship, keep it going. If either of your situations has changed and there isn't a need for the same type of relationship, let it end thankfully. If possible, remain open to contact as needed in the future.

Keep your relationship intervals reasonably short (a suggestion is never more than 6 months) and be grateful for the time you get to spend together. When you do end, do it as a celebration of a good period in both of your lives and remain open to continued contact if your mentor partner needs you in the future.



Acknowledgements

Adapted from:

Wayne French, *Creating Memories for Teens*,
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David Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring*, Colorado
Springs: Navpress, 2003

Finish Gracefully *(continued)*

Allow the relationship to end:

Graciously

- Let them know that this moving on is very acceptable, natural and healthy.
- Realise this may only be a chapter ending not a book ending. Sometimes when we think it is a book ending, it may only be a chapter ending but it is good to go through the process.

Thankfully

- The process of going back and reviewing what you have achieved together.
- Recap memories that you have created together.
- Verbalise what you have appreciated.
- Affirm them as a partner.
- Challenge them to be a mentor to someone else.
- Be grateful for the time you had together.

Acknowledgements



"The humblest individual exerts some influence,
either for good or evil, upon others."

Henry Ward Beecher

Summary

We've covered a lot of important points to consider as a mentor to another person. You won't remember them all, so hopefully you took some notes and will review those sometime. Let them challenge you and 'sharpen' you in your role as a mentor.

Realise that you can't be everything, but be something. Realise that in mentoring another, you are bettering yourself. You are becoming part of a legacy of another person's life. Accept the opportunity humbly and seriously and then enjoy the time you are given.

