

## Mentoring

Baby boomers owe a lot to mentors of their own youth that instilled the values that brought them into the world. You might not think back on the wild days of the 50s and 60s as a time when mentored youth were expressing the values of their elders. But there is really no way that such a powerful explosion of culture change could happen without the influence of teachers and mentors on the youth of the time.

The mentors of the youth culture developed their values in the 40s and 50s. These were values that were outraged by the ravages of war and perceived injustice in society. The outcome of the civil rights movement, the women's rights advances and other society changing movements show that the teaching of a few principled individuals can literally change the world.

As baby boomers move toward late middle age, this is an outstanding time to consider mentoring a youth of the next generation to pass long some of the values that have held true for baby boomers over the decades. This is the real treasure of one generation passing their wisdom on to the next when they are able to share with the young what values really do mean something and which ones will pass with time.

A song from the youth days of the baby boomer generation that so perfectly demonstrates the importance of the old mentoring the young is "Father and Son" by the folk performer Cat Stevens. In this song, a father counsels his son who is consumed with the passion of his values and the explosive and impatient desire to make them a reality. Baby boomers can relate to that poetic song because they are a generation who have worked to retain their values but to put those values to the test to find the truths that truly are eternal and reject what is only of importance for a time.

For baby boomers, who are now the wise elderly citizens of society, mentoring youth is a wonderful time to not just teach values to youth in an instructional setting but to teach them in the most important way, by being part of their lives. Wonderful organizations such as the Big Brother program and many church groups love to use the good hearts of baby boomers who want to reach out to the next generation just as their own elders guided them to wise values that have lasted a lifetime.

But it isn't just the youth that benefit from a strong mentor that is working within the context of a well organized and administered program to help young people. There is something fulfilling for the aging baby boomer to share from the heart with a troubled youth who needs a friend and to give them the greatest gift possible, the gift of time and friendship. For many baby boomers who may have lost a child or experienced tragedy in this area of life, becoming a friend to a youth and seeing that youth blossom into a young man or woman who wants to get out there and change the world validates who they were as youth as well and gives them that feeling of connection to the young.

That feeling of making life better for one who is just starting out in life can

give a baby boomer that is moving toward retirement a sense of closure and satisfaction that the hard won knowledge and wisdom they obtained has been good for a young person. And that kind of satisfaction can lead to a happier and more peaceful retirement experience and prepare any who would give themselves to mentoring what he or she will need to prepare for that final adventure of passing on from this world to the next one.

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