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## Remembering Your Mentors



**Lance Dean and I holding Ben Cornett.**

Continually thank and praise your mentors in life, throughout your life. Give credit where credit is due. This helps you remember that you have had a fortunate and blessed life. Your mentors invested in you like a great stock, the dividend they should get back is your long-lasting appreciation and thankfulness toward them.

My two biggest mentors are Lance Dean and Ben Cornett. I thank these guys often, but here we go again. My life wouldn't be as wonderful as I feel it is without all the knowledge and lessons they both have taught me over the last 28 years. Thank you Lance and Ben for taking a chance on a young hard-working kid who didn't know a thing about sales. I naively thought that to be good in sales you had to talk a lot. There's an old saying that goes something like, "You have two ears, and one mouth as a salesman; use them in that correct ratio, listen twice as much as you talk". Funny story; and I still do it to this day. Lance taught me to listen by literally putting my hand over my mouth when visiting with a customer. I was so very excited about what I was selling that I couldn't wait to talk about it! Thank you Lance and Ben! Find mentors; when you see someone doing what you want to do, make them your friend. Ask about what they learned and how they learned it.

I chuckle over this childhood story. My dad, Charlie Shiner, was a general manager of a facility that made bottle caps. The company was called Kerr Glass (same Kerr as the home canning jars). This was around 1975, and the owner of a steel company that sold Kerr their steel took our family to Brunch in a very affluent Chicago north shore country club. We were living in a home that was less than a 2100 square feet and normal food at best, so brunch for a 10-year-old kid was an amazing event! Always a car nut, I walked around the country club admiring Mercedes, Cadillacs, Porsches, etc.

Halfway through this amazing event, I couldn't take it anymore! I looked the very well dressed successful man in the eye and asked, "Sir, how did you make your money?" I immediately got kicked underneath the table by my parents, I could tell the man

wasn't offended and quickly answered, "You need to own something." I had no clue what that meant, but he had some of the answers to the questions I had in life. I would love to be mentored by him at a young age of 10, but I had zero value to give him in return. Moving forward, if I was a young kid again and saw someone with knowledge I wanted to gain, I would wash their car, work for free, anything! They have some of the answers I'm searching for – I have to bring value for them to allow me to linger around.

Mark Cuban was under some criticism recently for saying that interns shouldn't expect to be paid because what the intern was receiving was knowledge and that was far greater than money. Critics were saying Mark is rich so why not pay the interns? People were complaining that the rich guy was getting richer by using the interns. I totally disagree and I 100% agree with Mr. Cuban. What you can learn from him is priceless. Truth be told when I was a young salesperson learning from Ben and Lance, I should have been paying them! By far, I got more knowledge from them that has made me millions than they got from me selling some widgets for them. Seek and find mentors, but realize they are doing you a favor—so take out their garbage, mow their lawn, whatever—because the advice you are learning applied over a lifetime is truly priceless!

It was and is in my case. My new friend Jeff Costello ([www.corebrands.com](http://www.corebrands.com)) has college age daughters, and he says that your 20s are for learning and networking. You probably aren't going to make that much difference monetarily between two jobs so focus on mentors, learning and meeting as many people as you can. Jeff and I are saying the same thing – focus on what you can learn, the dollars will follow.