

Making the Most of Mentoring

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WHY MENTOR?

Life-on-Life mentoring is foundational to help people mature, to reach their God-given potential spiritually and professionally. It's essential to becoming a redemptive influence in culture for Christ and His Kingdom. We see in scripture the call to growth and maturity, often via relationships. "Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness." (Colossians 2:7 NLT) "He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me." (Colossians 1:28-29 NIV)

"The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:2) All Believers are called to raise up others. "Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:18-20) "...being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1:6 (NIV)

WHAT IS MENTORSHIP?

"Mentoring is a relational experience through which one person empowers another by sharing God-given resources... A mentor is a people grower." Tim Elmore, Life Giving Mentors.

A mentor is an experienced person who supports, guides, and develops another, a mentee, helping them to develop skills, knowledge, and understanding in an area that the mentor is comparatively a subject matter expert. A mentor provides constructive feedback and helps the mentee to set, prioritize, and achieve goals. They are a sounding board for ideas and challenges. The purpose of Baton Exchange mentoring is to help Christian young professionals grow spiritually and professionally. It's intentional, for a set period, with specific goals in mind. Though it may develop into a friendship, keep it professional.

Sometimes mentoring is used interchangeably with other terms associated with growing people. It can be helpful to clarify some terms so that we understand what we are referring to. Sometimes, mentoring may utilize some of the other approaches to growing people.

Consulting – a consultant is an expert who is called on for professional or technical advice or opinions. They are relied on to understand the problem and present solutions.

Coaching – according to the International Coach Federation coaching is defined as "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential."

The coach is the subject matter expert at coaching, not necessarily the subject matter expert of the client's coaching topic.

Counseling –In general, counselors are trained to diagnose and help client with emotional problems, the past or dysfunction while coaches are not. The coach's domain is future oriented – what does the client want? And then coaching the client to get there.

Types Of Mentorships

Traditional One-on-One Mentorship: A single mentor and mentee relationship.

Group Mentorship: One mentor working with multiple mentees.

Peer Mentorship: Colleagues or peers mentoring each other.

Reverse Mentorship: Younger or less experienced individuals mentoring older or more experienced colleagues.

Characteristics Of Effective Mentorship

1. Guidance: Provides advice and sharing experiences.
2. Support: Offers encouragement and moral support.
3. Development: Focuses on the mentee's personal and professional growth.
4. Mutual Respect: Both mentor and mentee value each other's time and efforts.
5. Long-term Relationship: Builds a sustained and evolving relationship.

What Mentorship Is Not: Common Misconceptions

Not a One-Way Street: It's a mutually beneficial relationship, not just the mentor giving advice.

Not a Formal Training Program: It's more personalized and flexible than structured training sessions.

Not a Quick Fix: It's a long-term relationship, not a short-term solution.

Not Just for Career Advancement: It also supports personal development and well-being.

Not a Friendship: While a good rapport is important, and a friendship may develop over time, the focus remains on growth.

7 BENEFITS OF HAVING A MENTOR

1. Develop and hone skills for professional success and leadership influence.
2. Get clarity amid overwhelming cultural chaos.
3. Access wisdom and advice for faith-work life situations from their bigger perspective.
4. Expand your connections and networks.
5. An advocate, ally, encourager, and intercessor for you.
6. Experience more successes and fewer failures.
7. Experience an enriching cross-generational relationship.

What's In It For The Mentor?

So what are some reasons why a person would want to volunteer their time to invest in another? There could be many, but here are a few:

1. Personal satisfaction from helping others.
2. Improved leadership and communication skills.
3. Fresh perspectives and new ideas.
4. Strengthened professional relationships.
5. Sense a responsibility to grow others.

“Leaders cannot be mass produced but are developed through life on life mentoring. There is no life-change without life-exchange. Mentoring is the best means for life change.” Tim Elmore, Life Giving Mentors

MENTEES DEMONSTRATE F.A.I.T.H. (Adapted from Tim Elmore's writings.)

F-Faithful to commitments they've made. Show persistence. Don't give up. Your mentor needs to know they aren't wasting their time.

A-Availability to meet is prioritized.

I-Initiative and intentionality is shown by being proactive in the relationship.

T-Teachable positive attitude, invite constructive feedback, willing to learn, open to change.

H-Hungry to grow and reach their potential, demonstrated by coming prepared with topic for discussion and applying what they are learning.

MORE PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES OF MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

1. Establish Clear Objectives: Both parties should set clear and achievable goals.
2. Regular Communication: Schedule consistent meetings and check-ins.
3. Active Listening: Both mentor and mentee should listen actively and empathetically.
4. Eliminate Distractions during the meeting. Phone, emails, projects, browser, tabs.
5. Understand the culture of the other person and move toward them, rather than expecting them to move toward you.
6. Because a mentor is in your inner circle doesn't mean that you're in theirs. It's ok.
7. Show appreciation and respect for the mentor's time and effort.
8. Think about questions ahead of time. Also, make a habit of asking questions, such as "What questions would you be asking if you were me?" "What do you think I should be focusing on regarding this issue?" "What do you think a biblical perspective is on this issue?"
9. You get out of it what you put into it. You are a contributor to the excellence you receive from the experience.
10. Mentors are fallible. Always filter their advice through scripture. (E.g. 2 Timothy 4:3, Colossians 2:8, Titus 2:1, James 3:13-18)

Personal Brand & the Mentoring Relationship

A good reputation is better than expensive perfume. Ecclesiastes 7:1

Even a child makes himself known by his acts, by whether his conduct is pure and upright. Proverbs 20:11

You are known...and shared about...by your behavior. Your behavior builds your brand. Good branding opens doors to the opportunities you desire. Mentors can become your connector to opportunities. You start building your brand with your mentor from your first meeting. Practicing successful mentorship practices and demonstrating FAITH with your mentor are things within your control. Establishing trust with your mentor lays the groundwork for endorsing, advocating, and connecting you to opportunities.

Late or Reschedule? Be proactive!

Call or text if you'll be late or unable to make it as far in advance as possible. Exercise: role play Pro Tips 1 & 2

Pro Tip: If you need to reschedule, work it out right then with your mentor. If possible, try to get scheduled no more than two weeks out from your originally scheduled meeting.

Pro Tip 2: Before you leave your meeting with your mentor, schedule your next meeting.

CHALLENGES IN MENTORSHIP

Misaligned expectations.

Lack of time and commitment.

Poor communication.

Incompatibility of personalities or working styles.

Top 4 Fails

1. No-show without communication.*
2. Not following through.
3. Frequent absences.
4. Not coming prepared.
5. Giving up early.

*No-show and no communication in the workplace don't mean "not interested." It means, "irresponsible."

IN SUM

Mentorship is a valuable and dynamic relationship that fosters growth for both the mentor and mentee. It takes time to develop the relationship; treat it with care. Like many things in life, you get out of it what you sow into it. Sow well!

ASK YOUR LAUNCH PREP MENTOR

1. Why do you want to invest in Christian young professionals through Baton Exchange?
2. What would motivate you to continue investing in a mentee?
3. Did you ever have a mentor? How did you benefit? What do you wish you would have known about mentoring in your 20s that you know now?
4. Re: FAITH and PRINCIPLES. What kind of carry-over, if any, do you see in the points of being a good mentee mentioned in this article with the character, attitudes, or practices of a successful employee?
5. What are your thoughts on the Personal Brand & the Mentoring Relationship section?

Go Do Ideas

Self-rate. Mentee- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1=never, 5=high consistency, rate your typical behavior.

__ F-Faithful to commitments I've made.

__ A-Available to meet for growth opportunities a priority.

__ I-Initiative is shown by being proactive.

__ T-Teachable attitude, willing to learn, and open to change.

__ H-Hungry to grow and reach my potential demonstrated by following through on what I learn.

Process your results with your Launch Prep Mentor. Ask them how they would try to cultivate these things in their own life. Thank God for the high ratings. Ask God what needs to change to improve the low ratings. Journal and make one action step.

Go Deeper: Optional Further Conversation & Study

Why do you think it's important to have different mentors during different life stages?

What role has accountability and constructive feedback played in your mentoring experiences?

Read 1 Kings 12:6-19 and reflect upon the contrast of advice given to King Rehoboam, his response, and the consequences.

Scripture: Read James 3:13-18 as a guide for filtering advice.

Sources & Resources

Book: Life Giving Mentors, Tim Elmore

Podcast: Let's Talk: Finding a Mentor and Being a Mentor - The Gospel Coalition,

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/podcasts/lets-talk-podcast/finding-mentor-being-mentor/>

Video: 10 Tips For Being A Good Mentee, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImYNfoaixNY>