

Mentoring: How to Invest Your Life in Others

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Mentoring is a hot topic. People are interested in it from both sides: Those who are looking for a mentor and those with age/experience who want to pass on what they know. Mentoring match ups can lead to an effective disciple-making process that multiplies for generations.

For nearly two millenniums, the Christian church has known about Jesus' command to make disciples. For almost an equal amount of time, the Church has followed a "watered down" methodology for doing it...if we even tried at all. Jesus' method for making disciples was *mentoring*. We have diluted this great commission into a series of meetings, until most clergy don't even really know what a disciple should look like!

TWO LEARNING MODELS...

Just a few short generations after Jesus mentored His twelve disciples—the Church became lazy and institutional. It relied on professional clergy to do the work. In short, the Church began to embrace a radically different model for making disciples. Instead of mentoring individuals (in small groups or one-to-one relationships), Christians began to adopt the "Greek" model of learning. Slowly, the Hebrew model began to fade...as did our hopes of "making disciples of all nations." Note the differences between these two models below:

GREEK	HEBREW
"Classroom Model"	"Coach Model"
◆ <u>ACADEMIC</u>	◆ <u>RELATIONAL</u>
◆ <u>PASSIVE</u>	◆ <u>EXPERIENTIAL</u>
◆ <u>THEORETICAL</u>	◆ <u>ON-THE JOB TRAINING</u>

We must return to the mentoring model Jesus gave us if the church growth movement is actually going to expand the Kingdom. We must commit ourselves to reproduce and multiply.

Remember:

SUCCESS WITHOUT A SUCCESSOR...IS A FAILURE

A DEFINITION FOR MENTORING...

Since the term “mentoring” has become such a popular “buzzword,” it has accumulated various definitions on its road to fame. It will serve us well, then, to offer a working definition at the beginning of this session. This definition was first developed by Paul Stanley and Robert Clinton. It reads as follows:

**MENTORING IS A RELATIONAL EXPERIENCE WHERE ONE PERSON
EMPOWERS ANOTHER BY SHARING GOD-GIVEN RESOURCES**

Some would say that mentoring is just a fad. It’s just a buzzword that happens to be popular in our generation, and within our culture.

I disagree. I am obviously elated about the current trend toward mentors connecting with protégés. But I believe it’s much more than a trend. The fact of the matter is, every great movement of God in history has been sustained through two vehicles: 1) the truths were committed to paper, and 2) the initial leaders mentored a second generation of leaders. John Wesley, for example, employed both of these vehicles as the great Methodist movement took root, over two hundred years ago. He was committed to mentoring young preachers and setting up “class meetings” (accountability groups) to nurture spiritual growth in his followers. It is my belief that this is what gave permanence to his movement, as opposed to George Whitefield’s, who was actually a more sought after public speaker. John Wesley determined to mentor young men.

THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF MENTORS

After researching much of what’s been taught and written on the subject, I’ve concluded that “one perfect mentor” does not exist. Often, we feel guilty because we don’t minister to people like someone we admire—and we give up before we’ve even begun.

There are likely at least seven different kinds of mentor-roles for you to examine, before you conclude you could never do it well. There are two reasons you should recognize these seven kinds of mentors:

- 1. To understand which kind you need at different stages of your life.*
- 2. To understand which kind you could be for someone else.*

THE SEVEN KINDS OF MENTORS...

1. THE MENTOR DISCIPLER
Helping with the basics of following Christ.
2. THE MENTOR SPIRITUAL GUIDE
Accountability, direction/insight for maturation.
3. THE MENTOR COACH
Motivation, skills needed to meet a task or challenge.
4. THE MENTOR COUNSELOR
Timely advice, perspective on self, others, ministry.
5. THE MENTOR TEACHER
Knowledge, understanding on a specific subject.
6. THE MENTOR SPONSOR
Career guidance, protection; network with contacts.
7. THE MENTOR MODEL
A living personal example for life, ministry and career.

YOU AND YOUR COMMITMENT

As we consider the commitment of a mentor, we must reckon that this big commitment must be viewed from three angles:

1. WE MUST BE COMMITTED TO A PERSON.
Our mentees must sense our commitment to them, as a person, not a project. Not a duty! We must love them and have their best interests in mind. We must be loyal.
2. WE MUST BE COMMITTED TO A PROCESS.
There will be ups and downs through the season you meet with your mentee. You must step back and see the process they are in and the steps required, understanding the big picture of their life. We must be discerning.
3. WE MUST BE COMMITTED TO A PURPOSE.
Our final commitment must be to the end result. We must determine that we will see them from point A to point B, or the goal that has been mutually set. In the same way that God will complete the work He has begun in us (*Phil. 1:6*), we, as mentors, must see the “finished product” inside our mentee and fulfill our commitment to them. We must be diligent.

SPEAKING WITH AUTHORITY

Now that we’ve defined what it means to mentor someone, let’s examine how we can do all of this with authority. Gaining authority in someone’s life doesn’t come easily or naturally, today, unless you are their parent. (Even then, sometimes parents find it difficult as well!!) To have authority means to carry “influence” with a mentee. Strong leadership equals deep influence.

So, how do we earn deep influence in a mentee's life? Good question. The best way to answer it may be for you to think of the influential people in YOUR past. Perhaps it was a teacher, or a parent; a coach or a youth pastor. Can you think of someone? Now, ask yourself: How did they gain influence in my life? Your answer may tell you what you must do with your mentee.

HOW HAVE OTHERS GAINED "AUTHORITY" IN YOUR LIFE?

To summarize, I have taken the word INFLUENCE, and used each letter to remind you of what good leaders have done to gain influence in the life of individuals. If you'll practice these nine elements, you'll be influential.

HOW TO GAIN INFLUENCE WITH PEOPLE

- I- INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE
- N- NATURAL WITH PEOPLE
- F- FAITH IN PEOPLE
- L- LISTENING TO PEOPLE
- U- UNDERSTANDING OF PEOPLE
- E- ENCOURAGEMENT TO PEOPLE
- N- NAVIGATE FOR PEOPLE
- C- CONCERN FOR PEOPLE
- E- ENTHUSIASM OVER PEOPLE

WHAT DOES A MENTOR DO?

If all of this is new to you, the following list may be of great benefit. When I think of the greatest mentors I've known, each of them has been good at providing the following "tools" for their mentee. I have given them simple titles, so that you can not only memorize them, but begin to practice them, as well.

A GOOD MENTOR PROVIDES...

1. HANDLES
Everyone possesses some knowledge of truth. Most people, however, are hard pressed to own it in such a way as to use it in everyday life. Simply put, "handles" are things we can grab on to. We give people handles when we summarize truths into a "user friendly" fashion. Truth then becomes a principle they can live by. When someone has a "handle"

on something it means they “own it” and can practice it, as well as communicate it to others. A good mentor can distill or crystallize truth so that the complex becomes simple.

2. **ROAD MAPS**

Road maps are items that help give us both direction on our journey, as well as the “big picture.” When we give someone a “road map” we are passing on a life compass to them. In the same way that map helps us travel on roads we’ve never been on, these spiritual road maps help people not only see the right road, but to see that road in relation to all other roads. They provide perspective on the whole picture. This generally happens only when we communicate *intentionally*, not *accidentally*.

3. **LABORATORIES**

When we provide “laboratories” for our mentees, we are giving them a place to practice the truth we’ve discussed with them. Do you remember science class in college? They always included a lecture *and a lab!* By definition, laboratories are safe places in which to experiment. We all need a “lab” to accompany all the “lectures” we get in the church. In these labs, we learn the right questions to ask; the appropriate exercises to practice; an understanding of the issues, and experiential knowledge of what our agenda should be in life. Good laboratories are measurable and can be evaluated together.

4. **ROOTS**

One of the most crucial goals a mentor ought to have for their mentee is to give them “roots and wings.” This popular phrase describes everyone’s need for foundations to be laid, as well as the freedom to soar and broaden their horizons. The foundation we must help to lay in our mentee involves the construction of a “character based life” versus an “emotion based life.” They should leave us possessing strong convictions they can live by, as well as the self-esteem to stand behind those convictions. The deeper the roots, the taller the tree can grow, and the more durable that tree is during the storm.

5. **WINGS**

The final word picture that describes what a mentor provides for a mentee is “wings.” We give someone wings when we enable them to think big, and expect big things from God and themselves. When someone possesses wings, they are free to explore and to plum the depths of their own potential. When mentors give wings, they help mentees to soar to new heights in their life. Consequently, it’s as important to teach those mentees how to ask the questions as much as how to obtain the answers.

RESOURCES YOU CAN GIVE AWAY

In short, I’ve listed below the God-given resources that I believe every good mentor should impart to their mentee, over time. If you are just beginning this process, this list should be especially helpful to you. The following list represents seven categories that will provide a guideline, as you think through what “gifts” or resources could and should be exchanged on a regular basis.

SEVEN GIFTS A MENTOR GIVES...

1. **ACCOUNTABILITY:** This involves holding a person to their commitments to God. It may involve bringing a list of tough questions to the meeting and asking them to respond honestly to them.
2. **AFFIRMATION:** This involves speaking words of encouragement, love and support to someone else; affirming their strengths, their thoughts, their ministry and their obedience.
3. **ASSESSMENT:** This involves evaluating their present state, objectively, and giving them an assessment on what you see. It enables them to gain perspective from an outside viewpoint.
4. **ADVICE:** This involves speaking words of wise counsel and giving them options for their decisions. It means providing direction and navigation for their life.
5. **ADMONITION:** This involves lending them words of caution and warning to enable them to avoid pitfalls they may not foresee as well as you do. It may mean you provide correction.
6. **ASSETS:** This involves giving them tangible resources—whether it’s a book, a tape, a ministry tool or a personal contact that you can introduce to them.
7. **APPLICATION:** This involves pointing them in the right direction to find places where they can apply the truth they’ve learned; you help them find a “laboratory” where they can practice.

GETTING STARTED...

As you recommit yourself to obedience to Jesus’ strategy, consider the following sequence of steps:

1. Pray for **CONVICTION** and **VISION**.
2. Select a **PERSON** or group from your circle of relationships to mentor.
3. Spend two **INITIAL MEETINGS** to discuss expectations and goals.
4. Cast **VISION** to them for spiritual **REPRODUCTION** (They will mentor someday).
5. Ask for **COMMITMENT**.
6. Determine what **TOOLS** or **RESOURCES** you will go through together.
7. Be prepared and **SET GOALS** (Lesson Plans).
8. Meet **REGULARLY** for a set time.
9. **DISCUSS** and **APPLY** the lessons together.
10. Invest yourself in the **PERSON** and **PROCESS**.
11. Help them find a potential **MENTEE**.
12. **EVALUATE** and **LAUNCH** them to try it themselves.