

Oregon District LWML Guidelines for Mentoring

Mentorship refers to a personal development relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. The receiver of mentorship was traditionally referred to as a protégé, or apprentice but with the institutionalization of mentoring the more neutral word "mentee" was invented and is widely used today.

There are several definitions of mentoring in the literature. Foremost, mentoring involves communication and is relationship based. In the organizational setting, mentoring can take many forms. One definition of the many that has been proposed, is "Mentoring is a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé).

It is important to appreciate the differences between instructing, coaching and mentoring. Instructing deals largely with the dissemination of knowledge. Coaching deals primarily with skill building, whereas a mentor is one who helps shape the outlook or attitude of the individual. Alternately, an instructor would typically help out with the job at hand or the work. A coach would help out with work and career related issues. A mentor on the other hand would focus on issues pertaining to career and life. Mentoring is an activity that can potentially promote spiritual development.

Historical

The roots of the practice are lost in antiquity. The word itself was inspired by the character of Mentor in Homer's *Odyssey*. Though the actual Mentor in the story is a somewhat ineffective old man, the goddess Athena takes on his appearance in order to guide young Telemachus in his time of difficulty.

Historically significant systems of mentorship include traditional Greek pederasty, the guru - disciple tradition practiced in Hinduism and Buddhism, Elders, the discipleship system practiced by Rabbinical Judaism and the Christian church, and apprenticing under the medieval guild system.

In 2 Timothy 1:5 Paul states "I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother, Lois, and in your mother, Eunice, and I am persuaded, now lives in you also." And again in 2 Timothy 3:14-15 "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." What beautiful examples of Christian mentors were Lois and Eunice.

Mentoring Techniques

Since the focus of mentoring is to develop the whole person, the techniques are broad and require wisdom in order to be used appropriately.

Most commonly used mentoring techniques:

1. Accompanying: This means making a commitment in a caring way. Accompanying involves taking part in the learning process by taking the path with the learner. (Throughout the book of Acts Luke reveals through his writings that he accompanied Paul on his travels and encouraged him in his ministry.)

2. Sowing: Mentors are often confronted with the difficulty of preparing the learner before he or she is ready to change. Sowing is necessary when you know that what you say may not be understood or even acceptable to learners at first but will make sense and have value to the mentee when the situation requires it. (Both widowed Naomi was Ruth's mother-in-law. In this case the younger became the mentor to the older, showed her many things, and the Lord truly blessed both of them.)

3. Catalyzing: When change reaches a critical level of pressure, learning can jump. Here the mentor chooses to plunge the learner right into change, provoking a different way of thinking, a change in identity or a re-ordering of values. (Jesus and his involvement with Peter walking on water.)

4. Showing: This is making something understandable or using your own example to demonstrate a skill or activity. You show what you are talking about, you show by your own behavior. (Paul was a mentor to Timothy and in both 1 and 2 Timothy Paul's words reveals how he was an example and encouraged Timothy as Paul's end was close at hand.)

5. Harvesting: Here the mentor focuses on "picking the ripe fruit" –it is usually learned to create awareness of what was learned by experience and to draw conclusions. The key questions here are: "What have you learned?" "How useful is it?" (Jesus as mentor to his disciples and us knew which "fruit to pick" and use in his ministry, Lazarus, the woman at the well, the bleeding woman, etc. He constantly worked with his disciples to prepare them as His Word prepares us.)

Different techniques may be used by mentors according to the situation and the psychological mindset of the mentee. Look for "teachable moments" in order to "expand or realize the potentialities of the people you lead" and underline that personal credibility is as essential to quality mentoring as skill.

EXPECTATIONS

SUGGESTIONS:

- 1) Interact on a regular basis.
- 2) Take the time to get know each other on a personal level. Where does she attend school? What are her interests, hobbies, goals, etc.?
- 3) Meet for coffee, lunch, or dinner.
- 4) Sent an e-mail or text just to say you are thinking of or praying for her.
- 5) Remember with a card on a special day.
- 6) Attend church together (yours and/or hers).
- 7) Get to know her family.
- 8) Attend LWML district, zone, or society meetings, rallies, or events together. Pick her up if necessary.
- 9) Encourage her often.
- 10) Let her know you care.
- 11) Share your joy of being part of the LWML.