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MENTORING: *Link to Completeness*

By Randall Bach

“**M**ost leaders confess to a deep sense of loneliness, although most of us work hard at wallpapering over the cracks caused by the loneliness.” — Carson Pue

Leaders may be able to identify with a sense of loneliness, even while in the midst of crowds. Perhaps the anonymity present in a mass of people accentuates a realization that we seldom move beyond superficiality or minimal self-disclosure with individuals. We may be skilled at speaking to crowds while failing to connect with individuals. H.B. London, of Focus on the Family, states that 70 percent of pastors do not have someone they consider a close friend.

Corporations, small businesses, universities, and volunteer organizations are coming to the realization that you train people in a group, but you save them one by one (Shirley Peddy in *The Art of Mentoring: Lead, Follow, and Get Out of the Way*). J. Robert Clinton and Paul Stanley discovered that few leaders finish well, but their relationship to another person significantly enhances their development. Mentoring is a relationship experience through which one person empowers another by sharing God-given resources (*Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life*).

Mentoring Is Not New

Mentoring is as old as civilization itself. Eli and Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, Barnabas and Paul, and Paul and Timothy are all biblical examples of mentoring. However, something has happened in our modern age. Stanley and Clinton note that the learning process has shifted. It now relies primarily on computers, classrooms, books, and videos. “Thus, today the relational connection between the knowledge-and-experience giver and the receiver has weakened or is nonexistent.” However, the “self-made” man or woman does not exist. That is a prescription for narrow,

relational dysfunction. People need to be mentored and, at the appropriate season of experience and maturity, need to become mentors.

Peddy encourages fostering a mentoring culture in which people are respected and rewarded for helping each other succeed. However, as Carson Pue, in *Mentoring Leaders* observes, “Jesus didn’t do it in a weekend.” Getting a mentor or becoming a mentor is a developmental process, one benefit of which is lifting a sense of loneliness. Stanley and Clinton point out that there is a range of mentoring relationships, from passive modeling to intensive discipleship.

God May Be Shaking Us

David Ferguson, founder and director of Intimate Life

Ministries, writes, “As the Body of Christ continually fails to be relevant to the needy world around us, God may be shaking us in order to bring us back to the very foundation upon which the first-century Church was built. The Spirit of God seems to be shaking His individual followers as well, in order that they might obtain clarity about their life purpose and direction. Perhaps God is shaking those that follow Him in order to draw His people back into deep, loving relationships with

Him and with those He loves” (*Relational Foundations: Experiencing Relevance in Life and Ministry*).

Bobb Biehl, author of *Mentoring: Confidence in Finding a Mentor and Becoming One*, poses these questions:

“Do you long for someone to guide you as you grow into your full potential? If so, you are looking for a mentor!

“Do you want to experience the satisfaction of significantly influencing the next generation? Do you desire to help others in life? If so, you have the heart of a mentor!”

Life is too short to spend it wallpapering over cracks of loneliness and inadequacy. Be a leader who finishes well, someone who receives and learns from people and who invests into others what God has given to you.



Randall Bach serves as Eastern Region Superintendent for Open Bible Churches.

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF MENTORING

- 1) ESTABLISH THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP
- 2) JOINTLY AGREE ON THE PURPOSE OF THE RELATIONSHIP
- 3) DETERMINE THE REGULARITY OF INTERACTION
- 4) DETERMINE THE TYPE OF ACCOUNTABILITY
- 5) SET UP COMMUNICATION MECHANISMS
- 6) CLARIFY THE LEVEL OF CONFIDENTIALITY
- 7) SET THE LIFE CYCLE OF THE RELATIONSHIP
- 8) EVALUATE THE RELATIONSHIP FROM TIME TO TIME
- 9) MODIFY EXPECTATIONS TO FIT THE REAL LIFE MENTORING SITUATION
- 10) BRING CLOSURE TO THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

— STANLEY AND COMBS

Mentoring Resources:

Biehl, Bobb. *Mentoring: Confidence in Finding a Mentor and Becoming One*, (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996).

Ferguson, David. *Relational Foundations: Experiencing Relevance in Life and Ministry*, (Relationship Press, 2004).

Peddy, Shirley. *The Art of Mentoring: Lead, Follow, and Get Out of the Way*, (Bullion Books, 2001).

Pue, Carson. *Mentoring Leaders: Wisdom for Developing Character, Calling, and Competency*, (Baker Books, 2005).

Stanley, Paul D. and Clinton, Robert J. *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships that You Need to Succeed in Life*, (NavPress, 1992).



Mentoring

The Link to Completeness



By Randall A. Bach

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“Most leaders confess to a deep sense of loneliness, although most of us work hard at wallpapering over the cracks caused by the loneliness” Carson Pue.

Leaders, particularly pastors, may be able to identify with a sense of loneliness, even while in the midst of crowds. Perhaps the anonymity of masses of people accentuates a realization that we seldom move beyond superficiality or minimal self-disclosure with individuals. We may be skilled at speaking to crowds while failing to connect with individuals. H. B. London, of Focus on the Family, states that 70% of pastors do not have someone they consider a close friend. As Jay Kesler, president of Taylor University so hauntingly asks, “Who will attend your funeral and not look at their watch?”

It’s Lonely at the Top

“It’s lonely at the top,” goes the saying. John Maxwell, in his *Leadership Wired* e-newsletter, retorts, “Well, I want to go to the top, but I have no desire to go alone. If you’re alone at the top, you’re probably not a leader anyway. Who are you leading other than yourself? Leaders take people on the journey with them. They help take others to the top. Relationships are important, and mutually beneficial decisions strengthen relationships. When you have the heart and desire to add value to people and you long as a leader to pour into other people’s lives first, then you begin to add value to them and you begin to lift them to a higher level. The benefits are compounded and relationships are strengthened. When that happens, the score really doesn’t matter. Everybody wins!”

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Mentoring Isn't New

Mentoring is as old as civilization itself. Eli and Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, Barnabas and Paul, and Paul and Timothy are all biblical examples of mentoring. However, something has happened in our modern age. Stanley and Clinton note that the learning process has shifted. It now relies primarily on computers, classrooms, books, and videos. “Thus, today *the relational connection between the knowledge-and-experience giver and the receiver has weakened or is nonexistent.*” However, the “self-made” man or woman does not really exist. That is a prescription for narrow, relational dysfunction. People need to be mentored and, at the appropriate season of experience and maturity, need to become mentors.

Peddy encourages that we foster a mentoring culture in which people are respected and rewarded for helping each other succeed. However, as Carson Pue, in *Mentoring Leaders* observes, “Jesus didn’t do it in a weekend.” Getting a mentor or becoming a mentor is a developmental process, one benefit of which is lifting a sense of loneliness.

How Does Mentoring Work?

How does mentoring work? Stanley and Clinton point out that there is a range of mentoring relationships, from passive modeling to intensive discipleship. They also identify what they call the Ten Commandments of Mentoring:

1. Establish the mentoring
2. Jointly agree on the purpose of the relationship
3. Determine the regularity of interaction
4. Determine the type of accountability
5. Set up communication mechanisms
6. Clarify the level of confidentiality
7. Set the life cycle of the relationship
8. Evaluate the relationship from time to time
9. Modify expectations to fit the real life mentoring situation
10. Bring closure to the mentoring relationship

Most mentoring relationships are in transition, developing and migrating in nature over time, as with the two following mentoring dyads. I invited the mentors and mentorees to discuss the dynamics of mentoring and the nature of their relationships:

Mentor Sought Relationship



Dr. David Ferguson is the founder and director of Intimate Life Ministries, in Austin, Texas. Dr. Lewis Alexander is Ferguson's associate and directs the Center



for Relational Leadership, also in Austin. The foundation for their mentoring relationship began when Ferguson and his wife, Teresa, were directing a college-age ministry in Austin and became acquainted with Alexander and his wife, Lacey. A friendship blossomed between these two couples, from different generations. Later, when Alexander was on the ministry staff at the church where Ferguson attended, he sought out Ferguson for assistance and counsel. That encounter opened the door to a mentoring relationship that has now existed for over twelve years and continues as Ferguson and Alexander now work together.

Mentor Assigned Relationship



Nancy Rupli's husband, Tom, is the pastor of New Life Tabernacle, in Petersburg, Michigan. Nancy has the important role of serving as mentor to women staff members and wives of men who are on the ministry staff. That brought her into a



mentoring relationship three years ago with Sarah Ellis. She is worship leader at the church and, along with her husband Josh, leads the church's college age ministry. Assigned mentoring relationships sometimes do not work because respect and bonding cannot be artificially induced. Rupli and Ellis discovered that time was necessary to move beyond an assigned to a truly mentoring relationship.

What are the qualities or characteristics of a good mentor?

Ferguson: Humility, vulnerability, approachability, people oriented instead of task focused.

Alexander: Integrity is huge, living the truth. Enthusiasm and the ability to cast vision and impart hope are important. The mentor also has to have courage to confront and also be vulnerable about his or her own growth.

Rupli: Availability, consistency, respect, and humility instead of a condescending, “arrived” attitude. The mentor has to believe in the mentee and serve as a resource as the mentee’s gifts, calling, and abilities are recognized. The mentor must be full of love and care.

Ellis: Christ-like life style, humble (always pointing people to Jesus), trustworthy, quick to listen, and a non-controlling person. A mentor needs to be a real person, vulnerable, willing to admit struggles and failures while proclaiming Christ’s victory. And, the mentor must be able to speak the truth in love.

What are the qualities or characteristics of a good mentee?

Ferguson: Humility, teachable, searching, inquisitive, hungry to learn, hearkening to wise counsel and, learning to also listen for the mentor’s needs.

Alexander: Teachable, approachable, humble, open to growth.

Rupli: Teachable, receptive to correction, hunger, respect, willing to apply and practice what is learned. Genuine love is also necessary.

Ellis: A submitted heart, open to conviction, allowing God to use His chosen vessel (mentor).

Do you have any mentoring ground rules?

Ferguson: I was directing the Minirth Meier counseling center in Austin at the time when our mentoring relationship began, so there was a fee-based dilemma for me. Was this fee-oriented counsel or God-directed mentoring? I realized it was the latter. And, because Lewis and I knew the same people, confidentiality was an understood ground rule.

Alexander: David provides clarifications and assurances by reviewing my work and providing feedback. And, we have an understanding that I will validate my dependability by giving updates.

Rupli: They are understood without articulation. I recognize that I am Sarah's covering, her protector if there is ministry conflict, and the person who will let her know if she is missing something. And, Sarah must trust that she can submit her heart to input without control from me. We also focus on personal life mentoring; relationships, marriage, children, etc., and not on ministry skills. That is for someone else.

Ellis: I believe the #1 ground rule is that we must know all of our conversations are kept in the strictest confidence. We both live in the pastoral glass house.

How has the mentoring relationship changed or developed?

Ferguson: It has become more mutual, with more breadth regarding several life areas. It has become multi-generational because we each have our own mentees and celebrate with each other. When Lewis and Lacey began to have children our relationship incorporated the parenting journey. And, Lewis has a relationship with my son and speaks into his life. It has become life on life.

Alexander: There was definitely a high learning curve at the beginning. Our relationship has developed now to the point that David will sometimes seek my counsel and will even say to me, "Lewis, hold me accountable for..." A mutual accountability has developed.

Rupli: It was more structured and intentional at the beginning. As our personal and ministry lives became so intense (with church growth) and when Sarah gave birth to a baby, our interaction became less planned but more natural and deeper. We are closer now than when it was a more intentional and scheduled relationship.

Ellis: I am much more at ease now. I feel free to be me. My husband and I served in an abusive leadership situation before coming here, so I had my guard up. I have had to grow, moving forward in open communication. I now know I can trust. There is such a wonderful freedom in our mutually respectful friendship.

Who sets the agenda?

Ferguson: I tend to think, initially, it is set by the mentee and where he is. The mentor then begins to gain an awareness of where you think the mentee might need to go.

Alexander: The mentee comes with an agenda and the mentor adds to it.

Rupli: It was awkward at first because Sarah came with some seasoning. And, I was her assigned mentor. So, we had to find our way. It has transitioned along with our relationship. The agenda is evened out, a give and take. We have evolved to where I may ask a question like, “Would you like me to go over...?”

Ellis: Nancy primarily set the agenda but we are now partners who just pick up on things. We spark each other.

What have been the benefits of this mentoring relationship?

Ferguson: Three come to mind: The first is the blessing of not being alone. We minister to each other’s needs. Second, the iron-sharpening-iron dynamic, from journeying together, is very meaningful. And, there is such increased joy that comes as a result of multiplication into other lives.

Alexander: Sanctification from real growth. You can’t grow by yourself. I was previously stuck and didn’t know that I needed to grow. My mentor, David, helped me to stretch my thinking and outlook and helped me to move beyond just a task orientation to a people-serving orientation. It has been very rewarding.

Rupli: I think the mentor probably grows the most. When you are speaking into someone's life you also have to stretch and strengthen. The mentor is fine-tuned because you can't be sloppy; you have to be accountable. It has been an encouraging experience. It is such a delight to witness Sarah's call and place affirmed by God. To see a mentee succeed, and feel that you have had some role in that, is a joy.

Ellis: I believe I have achieved honesty with myself. This has been such a self-discovery process, of looking into my own heart and desires. I have learned that I need to be real with others and how to do so. I long to be a model of consistency.

The Link to Completeness

Stanley and Clinton discovered characteristics that were common to those who finished well as leaders:

1. They had perspective which enabled them to focus.
2. They enjoyed intimacy with Christ and experienced repeated times of inner renewal.
3. They were disciplined in important areas of life.
4. They maintained a positive learning attitude all of their lives.
5. They had a network of meaningful relationships and several important mentors during their lifetime.

David Ferguson writes, "As the body of Christ continually fails to be relevant to the needy world around us, God may be shaking us in order to bring us back to the very foundation upon which the first-century church was built. The Spirit of God seems to be shaking His individual followers as well, in order that they might obtain clarity about their life purpose and direction. Perhaps God is shaking those that follow Him in order to draw His people back into

deep, loving relationships with Him and with those He loves” (*Relational Foundations: Experiencing Relevance in Life and Ministry*).

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“Do you long for someone to guide you as you grow into your full potential? If so, you are looking for a mentor!

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Life is too short to spend it wallpapering over cracks of loneliness and inadequacy. Be a leader who finishes well, someone who receives and learns from people and who invests into others what God has given to you.

“Freely you have received, freely give” Matthew 10:18 NIV.

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Mentoring Resources:

Books

Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships that You Need to Succeed in Life

Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton (NavPress, 1992)

Mentoring: Confidence in Finding a Mentor and Becoming One

Bobb Biehl (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996).

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