

Making The Most Of A Mentoring Relationship

by alicia britt chole

H. Kenyon offered this concise definition of mentoring: “Teaching in the context of relationship.” The two non-negotiables of Biblical mentoring are relationship and learning. Apart from those core components though, mentoring relationships take on many different forms.

- some sit in parks and read the Bible openly...while others share prayer requests in code
- some have previous relationship with their mentors...while others work on pronouncing their mentor’s name
- some work in the same building and live in same neighborhood...while others have drastically differently lives an ocean apart
- some experience an immediate connection thanks to shared seasons of life...while others work to bridge a generation gap
- some choose their mentors...while others were chosen by a mentor or church assignment

Though there are many different forms, the same substance can fill each relationship with life-transforming potential! Below I offer some suggestions for those being mentored.

1. Discuss mutual expectations with your mentor.

- Share your personal definitions of mentoring and create new expectations together
- Identify how often you plan to meet, the duration of your commitment.
- Give your mentor some insight into how do you learn best and ask them how they teach best.

2. Prioritize your commitment

- Remember and be prepared for your mentoring times.
- Treasure your opportunity well. Though I dream of a day when mentoring is normative normative, having a mentor is still often a rare gift.

3. Personally identify areas of needed change.

- Spend time in prayer asking the Father to reveal areas He wants you to focus on through this mentoring relationship
- Share those areas with your mentor and give them permission to teach you and to hold you accountable.

4. Combine this relational opportunity with disciplined solitude.

- Wait on God not for answers but because He is worthy of waiting upon.
- Start with five minutes a day of soaking in silence as you rest with God alone.

5. Remember that you are a human being mentored by a human.

- Release your mentor from what you thought they should be and appreciate them for who they actually are.

6. Identify where your mentor shines and focus on gleaning from that strength.

7. Keep a journal of questions, wisdom, advice, and your pilgrimage.

8. Be a learner, not a leach.

- Develop the discipline of going to Jesus first.
- Respect their personal and family boundaries

9. Intercede for your mentor knowing that your prayers are a powerful gift to them.

10. Beware of mentoring myths.

Myth one:

My mentor will become my best friend.

Possibly, but the sign of success in a mentoring relationship is not naming your children after each other. The goal is to influence each other toward Christ and that can be done without becoming best friends.

Myth two:

**My mentor should be stronger than all of my strengths
and strong in all of my weaknesses.**

Yes, and His name is Jesus! Intellectuals especially snag on this myth. Some feel they can only learn from others with a higher IQ. There is another word for that: arrogance. Be careful—knowledge can become a substitute for intimacy. We can learn from everyone who follows Jesus if we take the road of humility.

Myth three:

**It is the mentor's responsibility to take the initiative
to connect, study, or hold me accountable.**

If you were four years old I would say yes. But this is an adult mentoring relationship and your mentor's role is coach, not parent. Since ESP is not listed in Corinthians as one of the spiritual gifts, you need to *talk to them*. Mentors are not mind readers.

Myth four:

This relationship is the key I've been waiting for.

Not "the" but definitely "a." God grows us in symphony, not in single notes. He choreographs many voices from many places to guide us in His Truth.