

MentorInk Newsletter

... the online publication of Mentoring Solutions Inc.

Year 18 Issue 3 June, 2004



In this issue

Emotional Intelligence A new book review series as usual with a focus on mentoring- and coaching-related references. For those of you who have just joined our readership, over the years, many different well-known books have been reviewed. You may want to dig into our archives for back issues. See page 3.

Mentoring Timeline With page 2, the clock turns to 1905 and a very stern taskmaster.

How A Mentor might Contribute We continue the series with a consideration of a provocative claim that "*conventional wisdom is wrong about what will happen when boomers retire.*" See page 2.

Press Release - Mentoring Solutions expands its service. For details, turn to page 3.

Getting it Right! see page 5.

The Apprentice - trumping Bill. see page 4.

Nine Suggestions to make mentoring work. Some time-tested insights on page 5.

UPCOMING:

Book Review series: Emotional Intelligence Part 2 • Mentoring Timeline • Knowledge Transfer in a featured profession • Mentoring Connections 2nd National Conference

Expressions of Interest (EOI) invited

July 1986, several hundred attendees from around the world attended The First International Conference on Mentoring in glorious Vancouver, B.C. It was a "who's who" of mentoring -- many "household names" in the field. As an event, it's still fondly remembered, in part due to the fact good friendships and co-projects were born out of that special gathering.

Did you miss out? Did you attend and have been waiting all this time for another invitation? Pine no more... we are giving consideration to another such event for 2006! The format could be similar to the first -- speakers, concurrent sessions, meet-the-expert-Walkabouts, roundtables, Plenaries, and more -- or something radically new.

Here's the catch -- we're asking you for input. For example, send us examples of (a) type(s) of activities, (b) presenter names, (c) themes (d) groups / companies / organizations who might consider collaborating with us.

Email your bright ideas to the MentorInk Newsletter Editor at mgray@mentoring-solutions.com

Deadline for EOI submission is September 30, 2004.

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How a Mentor might contribute

Study our corporate logo in the upper right hand corner of the masthead. Note we chose "Passing the Torch" as our phrase and the hands giving and receiving the baton to capture the essence of what we help others do.

In the past five to ten years, it's become clear the population is aging. We're always interested in the challenges posed by passing on knowledge using mentoring-coaching programs to help staunch the loss of human capital as boomers retire. That said, in the November issue of CIO Magazine, author Megan Santosus suggests that not only will this worker shortage not trigger "a hiring frenzy" but also that there will not be a labor shortage. Is this to be believed? Or do we challenge this new view of the shortage? Or do we take a closer look at some of the longer term realities? Let's stick with the latter.

Back to Santosus' declarations: The potential is there for many to retire but it seems "unlikely that everyone who turns 65 will be decamping for that gated community in Florida." Agreed. Quite possibly a number of us are hearing stories of folk who are choosing to stay on, or who are being rehired as consultants to their own former employers.

However, this movement towards staying on merely delays the inevitable by several years. It not only takes time to recruit and in some cases develop good mentors but also there is the time it will take to knowledge transfer (one-way) and knowledge share (two ways). Add to this notion the fact that staying on could be for the lively engaged few -- but how many does this represent and for how long?

To put an interesting spin on this world view, I've often thought it might be highly insightful for each of us, no matter where we are on the journey, to answer the following question:

If you were about to retire from the workforce in the next six months, what single "expertise" you would want to pass on to another person?

Already I'm hearing echoes of protest -- "just one expertise? That's not fair!"

And you're right. But at least I've got you thinking about it and looking down the road.

"WHENEVER YOU DO A THING,
ACT AS IF ALL THE WORLD WERE
WATCHING."

~ THOMAS JEFFERSON

Mentoring Timeline©

The year is 1905

I might well have named this episode of Mentoring Timeline: name-droppers delight. Read on to see what I mean. The subject of this issue is Alice de Rothschild.

Alice is known to have shouted at Edward VII when he visited her Waddeston estate: "*Please keep your hands off the furniture.*" Privately, Queen Victoria referred to her at "the All-Powerful." Those closer to her called her Miss Alice.

Such a woman must have made a remarkable mentor.

The youngest daughter of Baron Anselm de Rothschild, head of the Austrian branch of the family bank, Alice landed in England from Vienna in 1866 to keep house for widowed brother, Ferdinand at his estate Waddeston.

By 1874, she bought the Eythrope estate with money inherited from her father. Her was her opportunity to develop what became a celebrated garden of 60 acres. Alice used Eythrope only as a day-time retreat because it had no bedrooms so she commuted back and forth between two mansions.

Several years later, she inherited Waddeston. Her late brother's gardens in both style and maintenance were left to the head gardeners.

Apparently that wasn't Alice's style. Alice loved gardens and definite ideas about them. She summoned to her new cause a man who had first started working for the de Rothchild's at age 17 -- George Frederick Johnson. He had worked his way through and up all the gardening departments, learned German in his spare time, worked in the various family gardens in England, Alice's estate in Grasse and another brother's estate in Vienna.

George's letter of invitation from Alice in 1905 said: "I offer you the place of head gardener here -- a furnished house, coals, milk, potatoes, and vegetables, -- a horse and cart at your disposal; the doctor and medicine gratis for yourself and your household -- To begin with, I shall give you £100 a year. If you stay with me and give entire satisfaction, you will gradually be augmented up to 130 pounds a year." He was to supervise some 53 gardeners in two departments. Work began by 6:30am and continued until 5pm with a half hour break for breakfast and one hour for lunch.

Alice set the pace -- "She always carried a spud [tool] in her hand with which she removed any offending weed from the carefully kept paths." recalled her cousin, Lady Battersea.

George came and stayed for almost 50 years, retiring only two years before his death at age 79. The correspondence between them suggest why it appears she was his mentor: she advised 31-year old George on how to improve his handwriting

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Mentoring Timeline (cont.)

ing and his French. *“Go on learning as much as you can. You still have a great deal to learn, you are very young to be at the head of the Waddeston gardens.”*

During the First World War, again Alice modeled the requisite behavior as evidenced in one of her letters in 1918 to George: *“Grow as much food as possible; do not let people imagine that we waste labour on useless luxuries! Grow your tomatoes well in sight.”*

We gain a flavor of the mentor-protégé relationship through no less a person than novelist Virginia Woolf. Woolf’s brother-in-law (who became the agent for the estate after WW1) gave her a tour around the greenhouses. Virginia says she was struck by the tidiness, accuracy and organization evident... *“Mr. Johnson like a nectarine, hard, red, ripe. He was taught all he knew by Miss Alice, and accepted admiration as his income.”* Johnson told her that Lord Kitchener asked them how they blued the hydrangeas as his *“shot a bit pink”*. To which Johnson replied: *“Miss Alice wouldn’t have that. If there was a trace of pink there, it wouldn’t do.... He [Johnson] used to go there every evening, for she [Miss Alice] scarcely saw anyone, and they would talk for two hours about the plants and politics. How easy to go mad over the hydrangeas and think of nothing else.”*

Alice died in 1922 and bequeathed her property to her great-nephew, James who had little interest in gardening. By 1957, he turned it over to the National Trust along with funds to maintain it. In 1996, work by the family began to restore the property using a mere 11 full time gardeners plus volunteers, students from an exchange program overseas and others to bring the “staff” up to what it was decades before. (Source: Country Life, March 2002)

Press release

We’re on the GSA Schedule. GSA operates through the Office of Contract Management Federal Supply Service. Each vendor on the schedule is listed on the Central Contractor Registration database (CCR).

Some weeks back, with the help of Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC), an Ottawa-based organization, Mentoring Solutions was assigned a contractor number under the heading of “mentoring software”.

Senior Consultant, Bruce Fox, notes that Mentoring Solutions is the first company CCC had taken through the registration process. For more information on the process, Bruce can be contacted at (613) 995-5171.

View GSA information at: <http://www.ccr.gov>.

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Book Review: Working with Emotional Intelligence



In 1995, Daniel Goleman published his book on the his research about *“the new measure...[that] focuses on personal qualities, such as initiative and empathy, adaptability and persuasiveness.”* As he phrases it: Training isn’t the answer to success. *“Most training programs have embraced an academic model -- but this has been a drastic mistake [in business]... What’s needed is an entirely new way of thinking about what it takes to help people boost their emotional intelligence.”*

It’s his second, follow-up book written in 1998 that’s the focus of this and next month’s entries. Let’s see if it lives up to it’s pronounced agenda of offering us *“an entirely new way of thinking about...”*.

The five sections of Working with Emotional Intelligence: Beyond Expertise, Self-mastery, People Skills, New Model of Learning, and The Emotionally Intelligent Organization pinpoint ways in which *“IQ takes second position to emotional intelligence in determining outstanding job performance.”* While the book is not dull and dry, it is full of details to back his assertions. For example, about IQ he notes *“close to five hundred corporations, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations worldwide have arrived independently at remarkable similar conclusions....”*

Like those others who quickly want to source themes of interest (and find new learning focal points), I went to the index for phrases such as: knowledge transfer (one-way), knowledge-sharing (2-way), intellectual capital, mentoring, and coaching. [In case you don’t have this definition tattooed in your brain, the Dictionary of Occupational Titles points to mentoring as the most complex of human interactions with coaching being listed as a subset activity.]

That said, I was puzzled with what I regard as his simplistic “coaching-and-mentoring-are-the-same” notion. The other terms simply don’t appear in the index. Am I being picky? Let’s see. You be the judge.

Goleman places coaching and mentoring under a heading labelled umbrella: “Developing Others, sensing the developmental needs of others and bolstering their abilities. People with this competence (a) acknowledge and reward the strengths and accomplishments of others; (b) offer useful feedback and identify need for further growth and (c) mentor; give timely coaching, offer assignments that challenge and foster skills.”

He then offers a few lines to tell readers ways in which mentoring-coaching is supposed to work. Vignettes help in this regards but, disappointingly, is a meagre 5-sentences.

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Book Review: Working with Emotional Intelligence (cont.)

The lesson for the protege is four words long. So much for working with emotional intelligence.

The segment moves on to proclaim: *“That simple bit of advice [the four words] exemplifies coaching, which lies at the heart of developing others. Excellence in this competence is emerging as second only to team leadership among superior managers... a person-to-person art; the heart of coaching and developing is the act of counseling... [hinging] on empathy and the ability to focus on our own feelings and share them.”*

Reading this reminds me of the many times I’ve had to emphasize the distinction between professional counseling and more basic advice-giving behaviors in mentoring relationships. Would-be mentors over time have told me repeatedly they get nervous upon hearing the word ‘counseling’ as a role. And rightly so. At CMSI, the more precise term is advice-giver.

In my judgement, his phrase *“... the ability to focus on our own feelings”* contains the possible seeds for further confusion.

There are occasions mentoring calls for self-disclosure. This sharing clearly is not the only role mentors play. That aside, when it is an appropriate role, both emotions and cold, hard facts and details are shared -- between both partners.

Good mentoring calls for is an ability to look inward, pinpoint what is being felt in the moment and what creates this emotion. This is exceedingly difficult to do. Let me elaborate.

During the development of Gray’s 6-Step Mentoring Process© in the 1980’s, Dr. Gray made an important discovery about proteges as they disclosed complex problems, dilemmas or challenging opportunities to their mentors. This discovery was often true even of very sophisticated, experienced professionals.

What was the discovery? At an early step along the way, proteges would tend to offer a ‘presenting issue’ rather than the real issue. It was therefore the challenge of those wanting to be even better, more insightful mentors, to distinguish one type of issue from the other and to ensure the proteges also understood what was happening. To understand this was to take one step towards becoming a reflective practitioner no matter what the role -- mentor or protege.

Think of this activity as peeling apart layers of the proverbial onion. However, and this is important, both emotions and facts are involved and not for just the mentor.

Let’s wrap this month’s with a few more lines about “coaching or mentoring” from Goleman. If the book is to give readers deeper insights into working with this specific emotional intelligence, what comes out is a list: “a trusting relationship”, genuine interest in those they guide, empathy, giving good feedback, and so on. One phrase buried in the text is revealing: *“... people who are gifted at helping others can do so with anyone -- even superiors. Managing upward - helping a superior do a better job -- is part of this art.”*

I worry when words such as “art” and “managing” are applied to this context. It would be quite possible to conclude that mentoring-coaching is also managing -- which it isn’t. Or to conclude that mentoring is an “art” that isn’t honed through practise and deep consideration. Next issue: On Empathy.

Trump picks Bill
to be his apprentice

So says the headline for USA Today April 16th. Who hasn’t followed this tale of ups and downs for 16 contestants. If you haven’t followed the drama (often criticized for its compression of reality -- build a mini business in a day, run a major golf charity event in a day, and so forth), you may have heard echoes of what mogul The Donald was up to.

The program began in January 2004 with 12 men and 12 women vying for an opportunity to be Trump’s apprentice. In any episode aired on television, the closest most of them came to being within handshake distance of The Donald was across the boardroom table when he said: “You’re fired.”

It will be fascinating to follow this “apprentice” as this year progresses. For one thing, conditions leading up to his (Bill) winning this position were as unreal as possible: Trump revealed at the moment of the win, the apprenticeship salary would be \$250,000 US overseeing the construction of a 90-story building in Chicago or managing a new golf course in Los Angeles. Bill had three minutes to make his choice.

The show’s name was appealing -- The Apprentice. The drama-filled format and attachment of Trump’s name pulled in 20,000,000 viewers an episode. I wonder what real life apprentices must be thinking as they pick up their toolboxes? ”

“Experience is one
thing you can’t get for
nothing.”

~ Oscar Wilde

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Getting it right!

Back in May 2002, we were ready to replace “OMS”, the Online Mentoring System® (our original mentoring software) with a new concept. Needing a new name, we chose Colaboro® to convey the idea of “collaboration” for knowledge sharing and transfer.

Here’s a quick and easy way to remember what our tool stands for:

Think “co” as in together

“lab” as in laboratory - an apt description for the extensive testing we do to get it right

“oro” - as in gold - the high standard we strive to meet.

Colaboro comes in different versions based on target group, and goals, among other factors. Colaboro Core (on the market since 2002); Colaboro Networking (developed in association with Stanford University and due for beta-test in September); Colaboro e-NSites (one self-directed pilot project for this version started the Registration Component this past April for some 700+ participants) with another Pilot for a different client finished the Planning Component in April and due to move to the next component in July.

If you’d like more about Colaboro®, and the right version for your organization, call us today toll free at 1-877-955-1314

9 Suggestions to make mentoring work

Hundreds of innovations, projects and events have been tracked by many researchers. There’s a temptation to dismiss suggestions arising out of this research as “obvious”. Not so. For example, suggestion #1. Too many programs are overly-complex and actually work against their own best interests. They won’t and don’t last.

1. Pay attention to the logistics. This is a developmental program not a course to learn a specific skill. The best idea in the world (the mentoring initiative) won’t fly unless it’s doable.
2. Learn from mistakes. Do some research to find out what others have done. In an age of stretched resources and rapid change, do you have the luxury of taking 3 years to get a program up and running? Some people think they do. The reality is otherwise.
3. Don’t ignore stakeholders. In one very large and expensive project, the sponsor, a prominent company, had all sorts of people involved in the project and held a meeting to plan. Who was not invited? The program participants. No one bothered to ask them what they thought of the idea or of how it might best work for them.
4. Recruit for longer-term quality not quantity. A highly-desirable mentor might be very caring and say “Yes” to a request to participate in the program. Later, that also very busy mentor might not keep appointments or may drop out. Consider that quality mentors aren’t necessarily those with the highest profile in the organization.

Over time, recruitment becomes a key issue to the longevity and overall success of the mentoring initiative. Mentors are needed not only in the first cycle of the program but

also down the road.

5. Don’t assume -- for example -- that mentoring will “fix” a major problem endemic to the organization itself; that a 9-month program which worked in organization A (in another location, for people with different levels of experience, educational backgrounds and needs) will work in organization B. Make the wrong assumptions and the ripple effect will take over and undo your (and others) best efforts.
6. Be positive. Stress solutions, not problems. Establish consensus This can be a good way to get people to think creatively and work together.
7. At the same time, utilize critics. This offers excellent opportunities to view the concept from different perspectives. Some of the greatest critics can give useful insights and may convert to best supporters of the formal program.
8. Michelangelo said: “Perfection is made of ten thousand trifles and perfection is no trifle.” Another way of saying this is a quote from the quality merchants: “If it’s worth doing, it’s worth doing well. Otherwise, why do it?” Some programs operate on the proposition that “his is our “flagship” or “signature program”.
9. Work for informed decisions. Initial research helps in the decision to proceed (or not) and why. A sound information session helps prospective participants decide to be in the program (or not) and why. Appropriate tools give participants choices as to which important issues or skills to work on (or not) and why.

Want to tap into the extensive expertise staff at Mentoring Solutions will bring to bear on knowledge transfer and sharing? Give us a call at (877) 955-0314.