



In this issue

Mentor Answers FAQs[©]: Seventh in the series - How the Mentor Might Contribute.

In the February-March 2004 issue of *MentorInk*, we introduced the “How a Mentor Might Contribute” series and have from time to time, picked up on the subject. Our various episodes have had a case study, strategies, a review of sources for mentors, “Murphy’s Law of Combat”, the search for a cure to negativity and types of learning.

So, you ask, are there any more perspectives on how the mentor might contribute? (See page 6 for more answers)

Mentoring Timeline[©] We don’t often get to read about proteges who left behind fabulous jewels and social connections most of us could only imagine .. but here’s a classic. See what you think (see page 2)

The Mentoring Interest Profiler (see page 4)

Workbooks & tools In the 1980s, we invented the first paper & pencil mentoring tools. These are still available. Even online clients sometimes opt to use these in conjunction with Colaboro... (see page 3)

Making yourself want to learn - Part 3 When we learn (or are working with others to help them learn), how do we decide what’s relevant? Before I began this part of the series, I leafed through a (page 2)



Pages from The Virtual Mentoring Library[©] Ever thought about the connection between chaos theory and mentoring? Here’s some unpredictable cogitation on the subject. (See page 4)

Upcoming:

- Insightful reading
- Mentoring Timeline
- and more

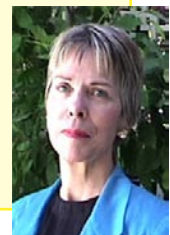
From the Editor:

Past issues have carried everything and anything on knowledge sharing using mentoring and coaching to support blended learning.

Happy reading for another year.

Your editor:

Marilynne Miles Gray





Mentoring Timeline: 2005

Fulco Santostefano della Cerda, Duke de Verdura was born in Palermo in 1898. Considered by many to be one of the most talented jewellers of the twentieth century, he left behind an array of creations that inspired interior decorators.



The only down side reported to an otherwise pampered childhood filled with the promise of a life of never-ending luxury and leisure were the “*sometimes tiresome obligations to an extended family that included virtually all the Sicilian entries in the Almanac de Gotha*” (a who’s who book for European royalty.)

Verdura’s beloved grandmother passed away in 1912, leaving behind an unsettled estate. The entire family went to court, and young Verdura soon saw himself squeezed out of most of his inheritance. As a teenager Fulco was called up to serve in World War I as one of the Boys of ‘99, 17-year old boys used as canon-fodder against the Austro-German forces during a catastrophic defeat at Caporetto. Verdura (an officer, of course) was wounded, and shipped back home.

When WWI ended in 1918, Sicily’s nobility quickly settled back into an indulgent lifestyle, supported by regular visits by

*“Not everything that can be counted counts,
and not everything that counts
can be counted.”
- Albert Einstein*

kings and queens. Young Verdura enjoyed it to the hilt, later describing himself as “*a real bum*”. Once home, he came to realize his artistic leanings were better suited to European capitals than Sicily. Gaining the title of Duke of Verdura after his father’s death he inherited a chain of crumbling palazzi from his father but that didn’t stop him from heading to Paris by the mid 1920s. He had established many enduring friendships, which helped him tremendously later on in his professional life.

As a royal, he moved in very exotic circles. He began to design costume jewellery and textiles and eventually came to the attention of the legendary Coco Chanel -- “a creature of fire and ice”. A commoner, Chanel loved titles; as a business woman, she valued talent. Fulco had both. It’s said this meeting was his turning point yet others claim he would have found his way with or without Chanel. It became a 15-year collaboration. He became Chanel’s **protege**.

Fulco’s fanciful and over-the-top creations went against the

Making yourself want to learn

number of books in my **mentoring** library to see what they said about relevance. I had a hunch I knew what I’d find -- nada (as Ernest Hemingway would say). In our company (Mentoring Solutions) we are known for constantly using a related term: appropriateness. Look back at past issues if you doubt how frequently we say this is a prime consideration in **mentoring** and **mentoring relationships**. All too often we act inappropriately -- we give advice as **mentors** when it isn’t asked for or when the protege just isn’t ready to hear the message. So it is with regard to relevance.

Decisions about relevance:

Do we look at the learner’s values? The learner’s experience? That person’s goals? Let’s hope the answer is “Yes.”

1. It has been pointed out often that reducing life’s frustrations is always relevant. That’s why a comparison of how something is being done now (messy, time consuming, inexact, etc.) and the way we dream it can be (elegant, speedy, precise, etc.) is a great motivator.

We ask ourselves lots of questions: Did I ever try to ---? What was the process and how bad was I at it (awkward, clumsy, dangerous)? What exactly happened? We try to see ourselves in slow motion, review our interior thoughts and motives, dispassionately weigh the outcomes.

Now let’s consider the same thing all over again: How am I going to do it differently? Who can help? Do I want that person’s advice? teaching? insights? feedback? or what?

2. Another relevant factor for many is that of cost. Is it possible to put a price tag on the goal and on the current skill level? This is often a powerful way to persuade a learner. And it’s not always a matter of dollars and cents as the cost of improvement is, quite naturally, the time saving involved.

3. The promise of moving to greater heights of professional is a standard means by which someone can see the relevance of learning. Even something as simple as a list of skills, and insights (the much-to-be-coveted wisdom of the original myth) can add to the relevance of learning. It’s so easy to see this as an oversimplification of what is being tackled yet too commonly it’s not done because the learner assumes they have the proverbial handle on this aspect. This are the tangibles that move learning from mere talk towards action. The learner at this point begins to analyze just what it is that requires the knowledge they will gain.

To the reader: now it’s your turn to spend a few minutes (or more, ideally) and decide what’s relevant to you? It’s simply too easy to accept the status quo as “relevant” but maybe it’s not.

Next issue: Confidence

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...the online publication of Mentoring Solutions Inc. Year 19 Issue 7 November 2005



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- *Mentoring 6-Step PocketCard* – Useful summary of key mentoring concepts/skills – The 6-Step Mentoring Process & The NEW Mentoring Paradigm. Accompanies MFR video & Workbooks. Diagram: Gray's Mentor-Protégé Relationship Model.
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- *Build Better Teams* – Workbook activities teach, in one day seminar, how 4 Personal Styles hinder or contribute to the 4 Stages of Team Building & Transformational teamwork. Best used to build better teams from the outset, but can also enhance existing teams. (Personal Style Indicator supplies scores).

MentorInk Newsletter

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Pages from The Virtual mentoring Library

Chaos theory first outlined by meteorologist Edward Lorenz posits that a distant small alteration can have catastrophic impacts elsewhere. His most famous image is that of the butterfly in the Amazon rainforest that causes monumental storms across the globe.

Those involved in career development **mentoring** programs can readily appreciate that a war in Iraq, a hurricane in New Orleans, the release of a new product by a competitor can have a major impact on the job, the company, the economy.

Chaos theory is used to explain how a system achieves stability and balance until humans interfere. It offers a larger, holistic vision of what's happening rather than focusing on smaller pieces.

As Donne said hundreds of years ago: "No man is an island." While it's claimed there is nothing new under the sun -- witness Donne's truism -- chaos theoreticians have added

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*"Everyone is entitled to be stupid, but some abuse the privilege."
- Unknown*



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Mentoring Timeline: 2005 (from page 2)

grain -- cold, impersonal, hard-edged. His work was unpretentious, and chic. He later met and worked with Salvador Dali who encouraged his whimsy. His clientele is a who's who of celebrity both in Europe and North America. The prestigious Robb Report calls him The King of Pearls. He founded the House of Verdura which still operates days, decades after Fulco's death in 1978. And in his honour, there is a museum filled with his treasures.

Fulco was not the only one Chanel is reputed to have **mentored**. Jackie Rogers, one of "Chanel's girls" (runway models) bought her first Chanel suit ("around \$600") and as she stood for the first fitting found herself thinking, "*It would be*

*"It was the greatest experiences of my life.
I never realized what an effect
she had on me."*

nice to work here." Upon hearing that Chanel needed models she interviewed for the job: "*Chanel liked me, hired me on the spot and paid me top dollar.*" At the end of a one year contract, Chanel insisted that she remain. Rogers was desperate to work with "Mademoiselle" on the next collection and was surprised when Chanel agreed. Rogers remained at the House of Chanel, absorbing the style and techniques of her **mentor**.

Like many proteges involved in an informal **mentoring** relationship she, after the fact, understood: "It was the greatest experience of my life. I never realized what an effect she had on me." The effect was to prove lasting. Against Chanel's protestations, she returned to New York looking for an idea. "One day I was getting my hair cut at Vidal Sassoon when my hairdresser informed me he was cutting the hair of 250 guys a week at night! Great! I suggested, we get together and work out of my apartment. He'd cut hair, I'd sell Ken Scott's incredible men's shirts"...they were all the rage there in the Sixties."

It was the beginning of a revolutionary concept in merchandising, a boutique which mushroomed into a Madison Avenue shop. The first of-its-kind, it created a whirlwind of publicity and attracted some of the most stellar names of the day: Peter O'Toole, Winthrop Rockefeller, Jack Nicholson, Michael Douglas and Woody Allen.

Funny what having a mentor can do.

[Source: bestofsicily.com, jackierogers.com; solitaire.com; Verdura: The Life and Work of a Master Jeweler by author Patricia Corbett.]



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Mentor Answers FAQs

A: Absolutely.

This issue we consider the mysteries behind “doing good.” In the past we looked at the physiology of good deeds and the associated changes in blood chemistry. What a far out “take” on mentoring, you say!

Except for the most cynical, many would simply classify the time, and effort of mentors as “doing good”. Now we’re about to see how evolutionary psychologists (and yes, there are such people) explain it away.

In essence, the theory claims human behaviour is a product of habits forced on us by natural selection. Selfless acts carried out primarily to benefit others is termed: “collective selfishness”. Society is bettered and prospers with a modicum of cooperation. While we might understand why a mentor would volunteer to help those within the organization (fellow tribe members), why bother with complete strangers? How to explain this?

Also, how to explain “the free ride syndrome”? Simple cooperation requires effort. Why help those in the tribe who are all take and no give? If such attitudes become the norm, then what happens to the tribe? It eventually fails, one would think.

In 2002, political scientists came up with an explanation called “altruistic punishment” which was further developed by James Fowler of University of California, Davis in 2005. The original study described a mathematical experiment conducted in an investment club. A long way from mentoring, you may be saying -- but have patience, some fascinating conjecturing is about to follow.

Fowler noted that previous models of behavior may have accounted for the way natural selection favours cooperative groups but not cooperative individuals. Fowler thought it was important to distinguish between those who live by taking the free ride (living off the efforts of others) and those who act on their own, don’t share and also don’t live off the efforts of others. He used a model based on hunters and decided that those who contribute fall into one of two categories -- those who punish and those who don’t. The punishers ensure that free riders don’t and that (as a result) society “becomes more lucrative ... in the end, non participants became participants because [the free ride] problem is solved.” Justice prevails.

On one hand, the explanation may be that the rules of behavior are inbuilt based on millions of years of evolution. Cooperate or die. On the other hand, it still may not (to some) explain why we do nice, inexplicable favours for perfect strangers, people we’ll never see again. Is it simply because it makes us feel better?

Future issues: More about the mystery of why we do good.

from the pages of the Virtual Mentoring Library®

a new focus on understanding how complex systems effect us. Complex systems have a universal tendency to create order within themselves. Thus, when the office seems a seething mass of uncertainty -- down sizing, new CEO, more deadlines than ever -- it’s time to stand back and think about insights to be gained by this perspective.

No one asks to be in the eye of the hurricane but it just might happen and if we haven’t thought about it and done some pre-planning, we could well find ourselves stranded.

Rolling with the punches:

All things being equal, there are some guidelines that can help.

1. expect change; understand your tolerance for risk
2. know that if you analyse what’s happening, there’s a pattern to be seen (behaviour of people, priorities, opportunities)
3. think about how specific skills can be appreciated and applied under such circumstances

*“If you do the little jobs well,
the big ones will tend to take care
of themselves.
Dale Carnegie*

4. re-consider life goals; some will be quite happy to step back from the turmoil (and possibly get “run over” in the ensuing melee) while others will jump right in unprepared
5. ambiguous situations and ever-shifting roles / goals will mean that the more intuitive side to your nature could be called into play; some people swear by the idea that instead of fretting over a major situation, they rely on having the unconscious mind working on solutions as they sleep -- that’s why they keep a note pad and pencil by the side of the bed to jot down insights
6. be grounded; know who you really are and what you’re willing to do;
7. what’s your flexibility quotient? Remember, it’s the brittle branch that breaks; are you willing to learn under stress if need be? How open to experiment are you? Ask yourself this: “what have I got to lose?”
8. know how to transfer skills quickly and efficiently
9. maintain a sense of humour and perspective
10. what are all the positive terms you can use about the situation? The Chinese call a crisis, a turning point; it’s an opportunity to do something differently; it’s never all good or all bad. Perhaps the terms “innovation”, “expansion”, “adaptation”, “exploration” and “opportunity” are good ones to apply to the chaos you think is going on -- and it may well be.

Future issues: more from our Virtual Mentoring Library