

MentorInk Newsletter™

the online monthly of the Mentoring Institute Vol14 Issue 3 May 2000

Welcome to *MentorInk Newsletter™* a publication of the Mentoring Institute since 1986. If you've read earlier editions, you'll know that past issues have carried everything from mentoring in history, tips, definitions, excerpts, research information and book reviews -- everything and anything mentoring-related to formal mentoring programs. With the advent of a revised website, items that were clickable buttons could well appear here in future editions. Let us know your interests and your reactions to *MentorInk Newsletter*. Happy reading to all. There will be no July, August or December issues.

"The proteges of today



are the mentors of tomorrow."

Inside MentorInk™

This issue: **Why Mentoring?**

Learn why attitude is everything.

If you have any other items of interest to you, please let us know. And, keep those questions coming. Email: mentor@uniserve.com or fax: 250/655-0324

If you wish to unsubscribe, send us an email with the subject line reading "unsubscribe" and your name and e-mail address in the text so we can find your entry and delete it.

Your editor: *Marilynne Miles Gray*



MENTORING
INSTITUTE
FOUNDERS

DR. W. A. GRAY
&
MARILYNNE
MILES GRAY

In a survey of learners, 94% said that they learned more from coaching than they did through the boss supervising them in their work.

Words that Matter™

Q: "Where does the word *mentee* come from?"

A: It's a very recent coinage meaning: "One who is mentored." The more common word used for hundreds of years is "protege" (or protegee to indicate a female). This term has two ideas behind it; first, the person being developed is protected from the jealousy of those around who can't understand why the mentor is helping the protege rather than them. This jealousy still exists in organizations today. At The Mentoring Institute, during our time spent onsite

(cont. next page)

Mentor Answers FAQs™

Coaching vs Mentoring?

Q: "What's the scoop on the difference between mentoring and coaching. If the two are different, can you give me some coaching tips? I want to do it right."

A: Yes, there are some very big differences. I could take all week, in a course, to talk about, illustrate and teach the differences. It's far more than mere semantics. However, let's make a start to set you in the correct direction.

People in a variety of fields use coaches to help meet organizational and life challenges – teachers, corporate executives, athletes, trainers, and club members, to name just a few, all use coaches. In a survey of learners, 94% said that they learned more from coaching than they did through the boss supervising them in their work. The role of the coach is an instructor or trainer for a skill.

Often it occurs when a new skill is about to be put into active, everyday use. But it doesn't have to be confined to that use alone. It can be used to help improve current practise.

Here's one instance. The coach knows the learner ...*strongly wanted to improve her public speaking skills...* As we talked, I realized that 90 percent of the problem came from the fact that because she had no idea what she looked like as she spoke in public. We jointly discussed the following possible skills to work on: *phrasing, pace, tone, wording, posture.* In the end, one of these was selected as the place to start at our next meeting.

Below are listed some commonly agreed-upon tips for coaching. What additional tips would you provide?

- 1 There has to be agreement that though those involved may be good at what they do, there is **always room for improvement**. This attitude is essential for personal effectiveness.
- 2 A coaching episode is normally **30-90 minutes in duration** – long enough to cover each step of the skill being acquired.
3. Take advantage of **learner strengths**—something he or she **can** do. Make sure the learner sets his or her own goals.
- 4 **Accentuate the positive**. Suggestions are phrased in a

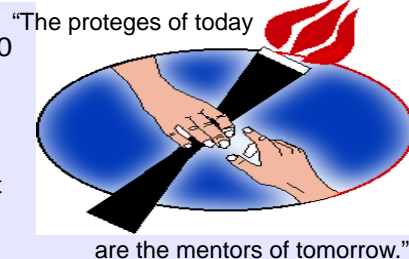
(cont. next page)

MentorInk Newsletter™

the online monthly of the Mentoring Institute Vol14 Issue 3 May 2000

Next issue

we will carry further items from The Virtual Mentoring Library™, Mentor Answers FAQs™, Words that Matter™. If you have any other items of interest to you such as answering your questions about mentoring and mentoring programs, please let us know. Email: mentor@uniserve.com or fax: 250/655-0324 ~ The Editors



Words that Matter™

(con't from page 1)

with clients, we are constantly asked about the challenge of how to deal with staff who aren't included in the pilot mentoring program.

To return to the origins of "protege". The role of the mentor is, in effect, to be a flack-catcher. To deflect the subversive activities of people who aren't quite capable of appreciating the potential of what the mentor does.

Second, the word "protege" also carries with it the idea that the mentor provides protected practice -- that is, the protege is not put on the stage prematurely. The wise mentor makes certain that the protege shines and, to be honest, gives a performance that reflects well on the mentor's many efforts.

For its part, the word "mentee" (or "mentoree") carries none of these rich overtones. The two roles, outlined preceding, are still useful. If we think otherwise, and short-sightedly reject the term "protege" because someone said they "didn't like the word", it would be similar to saying: "I don't want to use the word 'President' because some people who have held the position didn't fill it with dignity, wisdom and grace befitting the office." ~

Mentor Answers FAQs™

(cont)

positive way. Some coaches used the tried and true sandwich technique in which a comment which may be taken negatively is sandwiched between two positives.

At The Mentoring Institute, when we put on coaching sessions (which also involve active practise of a 9-step process) we provide a whole range of tips to guide coaches and learners during skill acquisition.

If you wonder where the 7- or 9-step process came from, decades ago, educators developed and tested out the process by which the learner took more control over and responsibility for the skill acquisition be it how to stand in front of a room and give a short presentation or how to operate a piece of equipment.

No, it isn't a matte of semantics that there are two different words: mentoring and coaching. And it is very useful to know the difference between each. ~

from The Virtual Mentoring Library™

Repeatedly, I hear the prescription: "You've got to be a large organization to have a mentoring program."

The most intriguing thing about this myth is that it tends to accompany the other myth -- that in order to have a mentoring program, the organization should start VERY small

(for instance only 2 or 3 pairs) and to have one poor soul carry the weight of the program on his or her shoulders and sometimes even be expected to be the mentor for all the proteges!

When people call to talk about the mentoring programs they want to start, words such as: "quality of experience", "good outcomes" for instance, are in short supply. Why? Because people have fallen for the old line it has to be cheap; it has to be super easy; it has to be quick... and so forth and so on.

Mentoring programs were started back in the late 1970s because informal efforts just weren't working. And if something wasn't working then, internet or not, it still won't work if the fundamentals are wrong.

Mentoring programs, in order to work, must be different than informal mentoring. Organizations aiming to do right by their people must resist the urges to (a) make the mentoring programs exclusive (incredibly small that nothing is achieved) and (b) creating an amorphous catch-all to include absolutely every person for every reason.

Small organizations: don't give up and settle for third best. Get the mentoring program you need by participating in a Mentoring Umbrella™ . Large organizations: think sanely and try not to shoehorn everyone into the mentoring program.

Provide every participant with a good experience which has concrete outcomes and you will succeed. ~



To the reader: Due to requests about the nature of formalized mentoring, this copyrighted article is excerpted. It is only a partial explanation of the place of attitude in being taught how to mentor. Excerpted from material supplied to participants in a Mentoring Institute training session, this article may not be used without permission of the author.



Why Mentoring?

Mentoring is one of the oldest and most successful means of passing the torch of wisdom from one to another.

Wisdom can neither be bought nor sold. It can, however, be shared. Modelled. Studied. Taught. Caught. It is yours to use for the betterment of humanity.

Fortunately, mentoring has never been the preserve of one social class, one gender or any one time, place or group of people. The ancients sensed this following eons of practical application -- for them it had a female (Athene) and male side (Mentor); it was for the young (Telemachus) and the mature (Mentor himself). It has endured as a collection of timeless, central Mentoring Principles through which one person can relate to another in an evolutionary fashion. That is, the connection shifts, reweaves and alters as each of the partners moves through time, meeting obstacles and experiencing triumphs.

It is a journey. Mentoring as a journey speaks to the reality of what happens, individual by individual: destinations vary, the routes change, the points of departure differ, neither the master nor the mode of travel is the same, our eyes, hearts and imaginations variously capture what transpires; thus the experience from the moment of setting out until the arrival is ours and ours alone.

Name a great person. Chances are high that that person has been on one or both sides of the mentoring equation -- either as mentor or as protege. Happily, they have added to the legacy and to our knowledge of what is required for ultimate success.



Mentoring is a process which unfolds over time. Mentoring will not boil down to just one factor, or only one behavior, though for the sake of convenience there are some who would wish it so. Mentoring has never been nor will it ever be something which is crammed into a box and shelved for the use of the next voyager with the expectation that one person is just like the next. Over time, the mentoring process is carried out uniquely by each mentor and each protege. Each person's perspective, goals, approaches, tasks, styles and skills will be different. Thus, the impact of mentoring and the power it can bestow will vary. No one ever leaves untouched

whether it is the new skills the mentor has learned to apply or the "eureka!" insights the protege gains and vice versa.

There are some who will not pause to consider wise advice about the nature of the relationship itself. Some would have you throw yourself into the flood and sink or swim for "*this is the way you will learn*". Others would advise you to set out before you have your compass and map in hand reckoning that "*enroute you might discover what your destination is*". Still others would lead you to believe that you need no preparation for "*you will know precisely what to do at each step on the road*." Beware. If this indeed were true, why ask the mentor to come along on the journey?

True mentors are never so vain that they believe there is nothing left to learn. Humility and openness to new horizons mark the master who reckons that every journey is into the future and is, therefore, a test. What treasures of self- and other-discovery lie ahead? What changes to the world have come about since the last voyage? What skills, old and new must be brought to bear? Only this next journey will tell.

During your time in this training session and in your subsequent time together, you will hear a multitude of terms which, when added up will be signals to direct your special path. It is to be hoped you will be alive to all the possibilities that mentoring can bring. With the passage of time, we have come to an understanding of the balance in mentoring relationships: the mentor equips; the mentor empowers. This necessary interplay between both forces ensures that the full power of mentoring is realized. One without the other slows the journey down or halts it in mid path.

The wise person honors the step by step linkages which gradually shape the mentoring relationship. That person will say, "*While I cannot dictate what mentoring will mean to others, it is mine to live and explore. Let it inspire me to pass the torch on to the next. May it light their way.*"

~~ © Marilynne Miles Gray, Mentoring Institute, February 2000.

The value of mentoring lies in its power to transform information into power through proper application.

