



LEADING *the* JOURNEY

An E-newsletter on *EXCELLENCE* in Leadership

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MENTORS

NAD Principals' Handbook

WHO CAN BE MY MENTOR?

Principals, particularly those who are new or in a new assignment, can benefit by entering into a mentoring relationship with an experienced administrator. In collaboration with the conference superintendent of schools, identify quality and experienced principals who will be willing to work with you.

Not only is it important to build a relationship with an experienced school principal, but it is also important to build a team of local people who know your community and can help you navigate some of the challenges.

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Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the *OUTCOME* of their way of life and *IMITATE* their faith.

Hebrews 13:7



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MENTORSHIP

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On my quest to better understand the role of principal, the idea of mentorship crossed my mind. Many successful individuals point back to the influence of a mentor in their lives. I believe what creates this influence is explained in a quote attributed to Benjamin Disraeli.

“The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him his own.”

The Wealth of Mentorship

“Sharing your riches,” covers a lot of territory. The experience that a mentor has comes from knowing the path ahead and the possible pitfalls as well. The best mentorships are relational and natural, because there is an admiration or respect for the mentor. When a person cares enough to take time to teach someone else about specific issues, or to coach particular skills, there is vulnerability. It is easier to facilitate growth in an individual by sharing resources, networks, and support. The mentor’s riches increased because of the hard path they travelled already.

The next part of Disraeli’s quote is “reveal to him his own.” The uncovering of riches that a mentored individual has is the other side of mentorship. Moving beyond his or her comfort zone is a challenge, yet a mentor is there to support this necessary step in growth. “Risk appetite” is a catch phrase that explains that we all take measured risks according to our appetites. A mentor creates a learning environment that increases the risk appetite, because there is a “spotter” to support the task.

Total development of an individual is the focus of mentorship. Teachers mentoring new teachers, administrators mentoring new administrators, and the teacher that remembers the struggle of being a learner are necessary for success.

The Heart of Mentorship

It is not difficult to see the value of mentorship, but why share the wealth? It comes down to the heart of mentorship. The heart of mentorship is

service. *“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many”* (Mark 10:45). I believe true leaders create leaders and true mentors create mentors. Perhaps this is why the assignment of mentors to individuals often fails to be effective. If you were mentored, you are more likely to be a mentor yourself. According to Tom Dungy in, *The Mentor Leader: Secrets to building people & teams that win consistently*, his life of mentoring came into focus when someone said to him *“Your only job is to make others better.”*

Dungy continues, *“Engage, educate, equip, encourage, empower, energize, and elevate. Those are the methods for maximizing the potential of any individual, team, organization, or institution for ultimate success and significance. Those are the methods of a mentor leader.”* I have experienced this mentor leader in two individuals in my life as a principal. The first one was also a teacher of mine, before she was a mentor. Yet, the role of the teacher is not that different from the role of a mentor. Her willingness to equip me, not just encourage me, has likely been the most valuable part of her mentorship in my life. She was not afraid to do the right thing, not the easy thing, and she was willing to show up even when it looked like all were against her standard of accountability. My second mentorship was different in that she pursued the mentorship to me. She empowered me by explaining the dynamics of common-held experiences. She took the time to include me in processes as she worked in visioning and chairing boards. It seemed to be more about mentorship than teaching. I will be forever grateful for the few years she engaged with me as my mentor.

Unfortunately, many individuals could not name a mentor in their professional life. I challenge you to look for ways to be the heart of mentorship, not to be afraid to share your experiences with someone who has the role, potential, and responsibility that you have had as well. Remember to *“Engage, educate, equip, encourage, empower, energize, and elevate”*. ☺

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10 TIPS FOR GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR MENTOR

Both parties need to take an active role for this relationship to pay off.

1. **Be clear on why you want a mentor and why you are meeting.**

Define what type of help you're looking for in a mentor. Are you looking for someone with similar skills or someone with a very different skill set who can coach you? Are you looking for someone who has gone up the corporate ladder and can advise you on the ins and outs of corporate politics?

2. **Establish goals for the relationship.**

Discuss and agree upon the goals of the relationship and what you, personally, are doing to make it a successful venture. Review these goals from time to time to be sure the relationship is working; if not, adjust and refocus.

3. **Network, network and network to find a suitable mentor.**

Once you decide on the type of mentor you need, participate in functions and professional associations where you might find this type of person. For example, scour your chamber of commerce events, alumni and professional associations or even your own company. If you do choose someone from your own firm, it's best to select someone other than your direct supervisor.

4. **Don't limit yourself to one mentor.**

You can establish multiple mentoring relationships with individuals who can help you grow in different aspects of your life. Think of it as building your own personal board of directors. Also, don't underestimate the value of a 'peer mentor' or someone at your level who has complimentary skills and experiences — even if you think you're on the same level, you can learn a lot from their previous experiences.

5. **Establish communication methods and frequency of contact from the**

beginning.

Talk with your mentor to determine the lines of communication that will work for both of you. Will you meet face to face or communicate mainly through e-mail and the telephone? Make sure you meet/talk enough to suit both of you.

6. **Manage expectations and build trust.**

Mentoring takes time and implies sacrifices for both the person being mentored and the mentor. Be respectful of your mentor's time and the other priorities in her life, such as family, travel and community activities. Avoid any trust-breaking behaviors such as canceling appointments or not following through on leads and contacts given to you by your mentor.

7. **Acquire mentoring skills and competencies.**

Pay attention to great skills that you notice in your mentors; these skills include listening, guidance, recommendations and wisdom. When you receive corrective feedback from your mentor, don't be defensive. Listen, digest and take immediate steps to apply what you have learned.

8. **Be respectful of your mentor's time.**

Do not overburden him by demanding too much time or too many contacts. Understand that the moment you decide you need information might not be the best time for him, so be patient.

9. **Express your gratitude.**

Your mentor is likely to give a lot more than you do in the relationship in terms of time and contacts. Be sure to express regularly that you value and appreciate your mentor's guidance.

10. **Vary the activities you do together.**

There are numerous activities you can do with your mentor, such as talking about your past experiences, goals, plans, and skill development and attending meetings, conferences, and other events. You can also shadow your mentor at work or exchange and discuss written materials like your resume or an article one of you has written. ☸

(Retrieved from <https://www.theladders.com/p/2889/10-tips-getting-most-from-mentor>)

*Mentoring is a **BRAIN** to pick, an **EAR** to listen, and a **PUSH** in the right direction.*

- John C. Crosby

MENTORS

HOW CAN A MENTOR HELP?

A mentor, with experience, expertise and who is respected by others in the field of educational leadership will be particularly helpful as you:

- Brainstorm on all aspects of the school program.
- Build a faculty team.
- Deal with day-to-day stress.
- Delegate responsibilities.
- Desire a nonjudgmental listening ear.
- Develop and implement a budget.
- Evaluate forms and procedures.
- Foster relationships with constituent churches and pastors.
- Generate professional development ideas.
- Grow as a spiritual leader on campus.
- Implement conference and union policy.
- Interact with difficult parents.
- Need to be held accountable for maintaining balance in your life.
- Provide instructional leadership including teacher evaluation.
- Process sensitive disciplinary situations.
- Work through the accreditation process. ☸

<http://adventisteducation.org/principals-handbook/>

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