Mentoring, Part 1

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Mentoring is an ongoing process in which individuals in an organization provide support and guidance to others who can become effective contributors to the goals of the organization.—John C. Daresh, *Leaders Helping Leaders,* 2nd ed.

Being a mentor implies the responsibility of not only sharing but also listening and learning.—NMRT Conference Mentoring Guidelines

A mentor is an experienced and trusted advisor . . . an experienced person who provides guidance and support to a developing professional.—Nadine Klasen and David Clutterbuck, *Implementing Mentoring Schemes: A Practical Guide to Successful Programs*

These definitions are a useful place to begin to explore the important relationship between mentor and mentee. In literature we can take the role of mentor back to Homer's *The Odyssey,* in which Mentor (Athena) guides the fatherless Telemachus until Odysseus returns from his long absence. In popular culture we have many examples of mentors, not all of them as inspirational. These include Gibbs of *NCIS,* who is prone to whacking his mentees on the head and referring to them as probies (probationers); Dr. Cox from *Scrubs,* who calls his residents all types of names, the kindest of which is newbie; and Dr. House of *House,* whose behavior with his diagnostic colleagues is simply rude. These fictional mentors are actually excellent teachers, training their people in correct procedures, making them think critically, and forcing them to excel. Ironically, all of the mentees actually seem to like these mentors, regardless of the treatment. Of course, it is also television, not real life.

In fiction, it can be funny to see these interactions, and no real careers or psyches are hurt in the process. However, when we leave this unreal world, it is real careers, feelings, and core values that can be affected—in some cases seriously. Not everyone can be a good mentor, nor should everyone be expected to mentor. And there may be some people who just can't be mentored. In the next two columns the important mentor/mentee process and relationship will be explored.

Provide Positive Role Models

Implementing Mentoring Schemes is an excellent introduction to the subject.[1] It is more scholarly than many of the titles reviewed, but it isn't a difficult-to-read tome. The first chapter provides some of the clearest definitions and background information of any book reviewed. Klassen and Clutterbuck use charts, diagrams, and bulleted lists to great advantage, providing clear, succinct illustrations to reinforce their points. The chapter topics include the benefits of mentoring; mentoring objectives; techniques, characteristics, and behaviors of both mentors and mentees; how to implement a program; training; problems; tips; and the very important evaluation of mentoring and mentoring programs. More than a dozen case studies are included to help illustrate the major points of the book. In addition, there are bibliographies at the end of each chapter. Highly recommended for all. If only one book is read, this would be the one for its thoroughness, clarity of vision and presentation, and ease of reading.

The foreword of *Mentoring: A Henley Review of Best Practice* states, "Mentors are people who help others to reach their potential."[2] This definition gets right to the heart of the topic—mentoring is a people skill that is other-oriented. The Henley Learning partnership at the Henley Management College in the United Kingdom believes that mentoring should be at the core, not the periphery, of an organization. To advance this idea, the book begins with a look at the role of mentoring from a business perspective, then defines and describes mentoring, introduces ideas on how to devise and participate in a mentoring program, and concludes with a chapter on evaluation of mentoring. An excellent layout with charts, clear definitions, bulleted points, sidebars, case studies, and chapter summaries help the reader to navigate the subject easily and enjoy the journey. The book is a treasure trove of applicable information. A must book for the bookshelf.

One in The Manager As series, the *Manager as Mentor* is a how-to-book with practical advice geared for the

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corporate world.[3] As with most books on mentoring, the layout provides bolded subheadings that allow easy navigation to topics of interest as well as tables, checklists, and bulleted lists to reinforce important information. The text is clear and easy to understand. The format and directness of information make this a standout book on the subject. The chapter "Developing an Action Plan," with its tables of skills (listening, questioning, setting goals, managing differences, building relationships, problem solving, managing change, commitment to learning, facilitation, analytical/systems thinking, reflection/feedback, advocacy), provides a quick summary of important information. Tips, worksheets, case studies, and some references round out an excellent book.

Zachary defines mentoring as "a reciprocal and collaborative learning relationship between two (or more) individuals who share mutual responsibility and accountability for helping a mentee work toward achievement of clear and mutually defined learning goals."[4] She sets a clear vision of what is important to keep in mind during the planning of a program and the mentoring process—collaboration, learning, accountability, and mutually defined goals. The role of the mentoring culture is at the center of the book. A mentoring culture is one that promotes both individual and organizational learning, growth, and development. "The relationship skills learned through mentoring strengthen relationships throughout the organization; as these relationships deepen, people feel more connected to the organization. Ultimately, a mentoring culture enriches the vibrancy and productivity of an organization and the people within it."[5] In the first chapter, Zachary points out the importance of the mentoring culture, which fosters a sense of ownership and shared responsibility. Subsequent chapters discuss implementation, infrastructure needs (leadership support, time, financial and technological support), alignment ("maintaining, balancing, and meshing multiple components in order to operate reliably, seamlessly, and efficiently"), accountability, communication, demand, training, and tips.[6] The book has a number of worksheets, exercises, charts, and references. The writing style is clear and interesting. This is a book that should be read in its entirety. It is extremely informative, encouraging, and fun to read. If time is an issue, you may want to scan most chapters, but take time to look at the mentoring culture audit in the appendix. A CD-ROM is included with additional forms that supplement the print text.

Share Expertise

Looking at mentoring as a process, *The Mentoring Advantage* addresses a very important topic—can anyone be a mentor?[7] There are many books on mentoring, but not all share this focus. A sidebar describes some negative traits that can doom the mentoring relationship from the start—a dictatorial personality, being control oriented or judgmental, poor communication skills, apathy, and so on. These seem self-evident, but some who aspire to mentorship show clear evidence of these traits and need to be sidelined for the success of the mentee. Examples of mentoring agreements are included. Even in a more informal mentorship arrangement, the guidance provided in the agreement is useful planning advice for the mentor. It covers the types of information that the mentor and the mentee should agree to, such as goals, meetings, and ground rules concerning confidentiality and feedback. Useful, easy to read.

Only thirty pages in length, *Creating Successful Mentoring Programs* "outlines the success factors and challenges in developing a formal mentoring program and provides best practices throughout the report that highlight a range of organizational approaches."[8] Not necessary, but short; it provides a fast overview of mentoring for those with little time or wanting a quick exploration before committing to a program.

For the person who has become a mentor, there are few books as useful as *The Elements of Mentoring*.[9] Well-referenced, this short book leads the mentor through the process with chapters on the skills of the mentor (cognitive), traits of the mentor (affective), actions, assessment and correction of mentoring, and how to end the mentoring relationship. Very brief examples illustrate points discussed in the chapters. The book is very practical and written almost as if the author is speaking to the reader. It might not be as detailed as many of the others, so it best serves as a supplement that encourages, inspires, and redirects the mentor during the mentoring process. An enjoyable and worthwhile book.

AMACOM books tend to follow a certain look and style, and are very useful, enjoyable, and easy-to-read books; *The Portable Mentor* follows that trend.[10] Charney states that, "An effective mentoring program matches the needs and expectations of the protégé with an expertise of a mentor. Both require training, encouragement, incentives, and tools. *The Portable Manager* is designed to be one of those tools of development."[11] The book is directed at those who could use, but don't have a mentor. It is "a collection of conventional wisdom that I [Charney], as a mentor to many people over the last quarter century, have been asked to provide. It will enable you to take more responsibility for your own growth and career—and success."[12] The book is an alphabetical list of issues that could concern employees, many of which they may not want to ask about or do not know who to ask. These include such topics as communication, dealing with difficult people, and self-confidence. Some answers are very short, others several pages long. While the book probably serves the purpose stated by the author, it could also be an excellent reminder to mentors of issues that might concern their mentee. Definitely not necessary, but may be worth a look for some mentors.

Develop Leaders

"There is nothing wrong with having a system where the norm is for leaders to help other leaders. . . . All of the different forms of help that can be made available to these key actors should be promoted."[13] *Leaders Helping Leaders* covers planning, implementing, and evaluating mentor programs. There are quizzes, fill-in questions, outlines, and case studies. The book features an arrangement similar to a workbook. Several sections that are especially important include "What are Some Characteristics of Effective Mentors?" and "Danger Signs," which include being heavily involved with internal politics, being marginally effective, new to a position, or exhibiting know-it-all behavior. The list of mentor responsibilities (give time, listen and sympathize without condoning, have a sense of humor, be willing to advise, communicate, counsel, guide, model, protect, and develop skills) is useful. Especially important is the chapter "Preparing People to Serve As Mentors" and the section titled "Assessing Your Program." Although meant for school administrators, the practical advice transfers well to librarians.

The educational environment is the focus in Mullen's *Mentorship Primer*.[14] Three major aspects are explored: the basics of mentoring ("a personal and professional relationship between two people—a knowing, experienced professional and a protégé or mentee—who commit to an advisory and non-evaluative relationship that often involves a long-term goal"); technical mentoring ("hierarchically transmitting authoritative knowledge within organizational and relational systems"); and alternative mentoring ("engaging in shared learning, inquiry, and power across status, racial, gender, and other differences with a vision of empowerment and equality").[15]

There are a number of organizational features that warrant recommendation of this book. Definitions are given in the margin when a new term is introduced as well as being included in chapter glossaries. There are questions for discussions and a very good bibliography. Some of the topics that are mentioned in the book include cross-cultural mentoring, feminist issues, and others that may be overlooked in some books. While the sections are all very short, there are references that can be consulted for more information. A very interesting and useful, but not essential, work.

Enhance Careers and Expand Professional Networking Opportunities

"*Connecting with Success* is about how to be an unrelenting mentee. It goes to the heart of what it means to be a successful learner in today's time's-up, learn-on-the-run world. . . . Today, what we know and can do becomes obsolete almost overnight."[16]

Breezy writing, mini-case studies, and a workbook-like layout provide an easy-to-understand introduction to the process of informal mentoring. Barton describes informal mentoring as being relatively unstructured, occurring more naturally and mutually agreed upon than formal mentoring. Even though this might not be officially recognized as mentoring, she notes that the process is beneficial to both parties. Networking also is introduced as a mutually beneficial linking of people with information in a spirit of cooperation. It is an important part of the employment process that can advance careers and opportunities. She defines it as "a lifelong process of meeting people, making contacts, and building mutually beneficial professional relationships."[17] Chapters cover finding mentors, building on the relationship with your mentor, working through challenges, and becoming a mentor. Each chapter ends with a summary and worksheet that allows reader self-examination within the framework of the information covered in that chapter. Fast reading with practical advice.

Power Mentoring "includes traditional mentoring but also expands and in some cases radically departs from" what is routinely thought of as mentoring. It includes networks of groups of mentors ("relationships between people who are dissimilar but who have complementary skills and needs").[18] Protégés usually select mentors and can form relationships outside of the organization. The book defines this slightly different mentoring perspective, describes the process, and discusses what benefits it offers participants. Different chapters look at the topic from both the mentor's and the protégé's points of view. The premise of the book is that the environment has sufficiently changed to require changes in the mentoring relationship as well. Ensher and Murphy describe traditional mentoring as a method in which an "older, wiser, top executive would choose a young person who may have reminded him of himself when he was younger, or perhaps had attended the same college or university. He would groom that person in his own image, passing along the wisdom of his profession, and, more important, the secrets of the organization."[19] This kind of mentor offers career guidance, provides emotional support, and serves as a role model. Power mentoring differs in how it looks at the development of a pool of talent. The mentoring process can be started by the protégé, has documented testing and reciprocity of benefits, and involves the mentor giving advice throughout a career, rather than only during late career stages. There are a number of interviews in the book as well as very useful charts that provide clear descriptions of some of the book's ideas. The book is much more detailed reading than some of the other titles and seems more business-focused and less easily adapted to the academic environment than most of the others. It might also be argued that some of the distinctions between power mentoring and the other works on mentoring aren't as readily evident to most readers. However, the book is appealing and of interest to those who are seriously reviewing the topic. Especially useful are some of the charts and the worksheets provided on such topics as inventorying mentor candidates, interview questions, benefits reviews, social skills inventory, and so on.

For the academic librarian, especially in a tenure environment, *The Chicago Guide to Your Academic Career* provides some useful information.[20] While it is targeted more for graduate students and those on the teaching faculty track, it still provides some honest observations and advice from long-term academics. The book directly addresses the issue of mentoring in a chapter on finding a mentor; in a sense the book itself provides three mentors in print with the expert advice given by the authors. Worth a look for those in or contemplating the academic environment, especially those without a mentor.

The Situational Mentor is an international collection of scholarly writings on various aspects of mentoring.[21] Much of the information here is not found in any of the other books, and it is definitely not a how-to-do-it work in the normal sense of the word. There are tables, figures, and self-evaluation lists that are helpful to a mentor, but topics tend to be less about application and more about understanding some of the more complex aspects of mentoring. Chapters cover mentoring, morality and the business world, competencies of the mentor and the mentee, personality factors, and relationship development as well as the more traditional evaluation of mentoring success. There is a very good bibliography. This is a very interesting and intriguing book that bridges the more theoretical with the practical. Highly recommended for those interested in exploring mentoring issues more deeply.

In the preface of *Mentoring for Social Inclusion,* Colley states, "I have written this book to bear witness to the complexity of real-life mentor relationships, and to the fact that they are not always happy. I have tried to explain the roots of the unhappiness I have observed in a number of cases . . . [and] also tried to show how happier outcomes can be achieved, or at least made more possible."[22] The book follows the typical structure of discussion of mentoring, research, examples and case studies, theory, and recommendations. What makes this book very different is the focus on mentoring of youth, so it has no direct application to the library professional. However, the book is included as some might find it very useful when working with student workers, especially those with an interest in joining the library profession.

Increase Specialty-area Skills

The preface of the revised edition of *Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring* states, "The hierarchical organization is disappearing as more people work in communities, or on project or engagement teams. Rather than looking to a mentoring process to groom people for upward movement or greater responsibility, many organizations today want to have a mentoring process as visible evidence of concern and caring for their employees . . . these workers want to be recognized as people and for their contributions."[23] These sentences have a great deal of application to the library

world. Many librarians are working in teams, are very happy with their jobs, and not necessarily desirous of moving up as much as doing a better job in their current position. Related to this is the fact that things are constantly changing in the information world, so there is a strong need to keep up, maybe even get ahead of the learning curve and set some trends. To do this requires collegiality, constant learning, and the assistance of others, sometimes within the framework of the mentoring process. Murray's book is a very honest look at both the benefits and the process of mentoring as well as the pitfalls and problems. Two important chapters are "Payoffs and Penalties for the Protégé" and "The Mentor's Motivation and Concerns." The chapter on mentoring models has a number of very useful flow charts that succinctly and clearly illustrate the processes. The importance of competent coordination is stressed and training and responsibilities of the coordination team has its own chapter. Another standout is "Evaluating Mentoring Process Effectiveness." This is an important and very useful book. Descriptions of actual programs, lists, checklists, forms, and a good bibliography provide valuable, straightforward information. Easy reading, this book is a must addition to the manager's shelf.

For a mentally stimulating and emotionally fulfilling experience, read *Giving Much/Gaining More*.[24] Written by Emily Wadsworth, retired administrator of Purdue's engineering mentoring programs, the book has twelve chapters, each with a title comprised of two words with opposite intents, such as Welcoming/Excluding, Gracing/Alienating, and Focusing/Blurring. This book will take fewer than two hours to read, but the time is more than worth it. This personal account is informative, touching, thought-provoking, and encouraging. The benefits of observing how a long, distinguished career has affected lives are distilled for the readers' edification. Putting this book down after reading it will inspire most people to believe they, too, can make a difference.

The wealth of resources available on this topic supports its importance. The books reviewed range from basic primers to some very specific work environments, yet they represent only a few of the titles that are of value to the manager. The next column will look at additional titles and some library-focused examples. In the meantime, careful observation of people, interactions, and opportunities to develop supportive and career-changing mentoring situations can begin.

Headers are paraphrases from Interface *27 no. 3 (Fall 2005), www.ala.org/ala/ascla/asclapubs/interface/ archives/contentlistingby/volume27/mentoringmoves forward/mentoringforward.htm.*

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