

# Mentoring for Growth

thoughts and ideas on  
creating a Mentoring  
program for your  
organization



Go to the people,  
 Live among them.  
 Learn from them.  
 Love them.  
 Start with what they know,  
 Build on what they have.  
 But of the best leaders,  
 When their task is accomplished,  
 Their work is done,  
 The people will remark,  
 "We have done it ourselves."  
*from a Chinese Poem.*

This poem is a powerful definition of what a Mentor is. The perfect Mentor relationship will result in the Apprentice spreading his wings, leaving the nest, and taking flight. In the end he will believe that he did it himself, and in a very real way he will have.

This booklet is designed to assist you in understanding the principles behind Mentoring and the imperative reasons for creating, implementing and conducting a Mentoring program in your organization.

This booklet is divided into categories that examine the expectations of the Mentor and the Apprentice. A section on planning, a section on the progress of the Mentoring program and a section on the process of relationship development.

There are hundreds of excellent works that make the planning and creation of a Mentoring program much easier. Some of them are listed on the back cover, and others can be found on the web by searching for "Mentoring."

Mentoring has taken on a new urgency and need in the last several years. Every group it seems, from churches, to government agencies are creating Mentoring clubs and appointing new hires a "Mentor." Whether this is going to, in the end, be considered successful is anyone's guess, but the mere fact that so many organizations are embracing the concept prompts us to examine the effects and the

process in greater detail. It is important to remember that there are formal and informal Mentoring programs. In our discussions with those being Mentored and the Mentors themselves the informal Mentoring program is highly favored, when given a choice between these two formats. Mentoring in the context of the article is to be considered between adults. Specific rules that govern the conduct of adults and juveniles are not covered in this publication and more specific information than can be provided here is necessary for that Mentoring relationship. We mention this only to illustrate that in an adult, juvenile



Mentoring relationship a more formal approach is the preferred method of creating and implementing a Mentoring program, simply because of the exigencies of the age difference. In an adult context the more informal Mentoring program would probably be much more comfortable.

Class instruction always has and most certainly will continue to have its place. But the fact remains that much benefit is provided the Apprentice through a Mentoring program. In our world today we simply must understand that a significant number of young men have not had the benefit of a Mentoring relationship with someone who has the benefit of years, wisdom and experience. Just as those who for thousands of years passed on their knowledge from old to young, so must we again today learn to pass on to the next generation the wisdom, experiences and stories of our lives.

If your organization has a formal Mentoring program, you have our congratulations. We are sure that it is creating a significant benefit to your group. If your organization is considering the development of a Mentoring program we hope you will take the time to plan up front for its successful implementation.

The work you do in advance of the launch of the Mentoring program will make a tremendous impact on the success of the program.

# Mentoring Expectations

When we discuss the issues of “expectations” we use the phrase in its broadest possible description. The Mentor will have many expectations as will the Apprentice. And while some of those expectations may be similar there will of course be some that are very different. Only by thoroughly understanding the needs and expectations of each other can we begin a beneficial Mentoring program.

So lets ask the following questions:

**What are the needs of the Apprentice?**

**Will the Mentor have the skills necessary to meet these needs?**

The answers to these questions is where the Mentoring process needs to begin. The Mentor needs to know what the Apprentice needs. The Apprentice needs to know that the Mentor has the skills to fulfill those needs. This is where you start. Every Mentoring program has a certain end in mind. Once the Apprentice knows what this end is, he can then determine if he is capable, or even willing to do those things that will be required of him. By the same token the Mentor can determine if his skills match the need.

I cannot imagine a more painful and wasteful relationship than when the Mentor is unwilling or unable to conduct himself in a way that benefits the Apprentice.

The Mentor must be the more optimistic and positive force in the relationship. Without the positive power of the Mentor the relationship will never move beyond its most basic opening comments. But if the Mentor is positive that he has the skill, understands the process and is willing to give of himself then the relationship will grow and the end result will be successful. We need to ask ourselves if the Apprentice and the Mentor are compatible? Is there a mutual respect for each other and are they willing to work together toward a better common goal?

There needs to be an expectation of confidentiality and trust between both parties. This trust will grow over time. There also needs to be an ability to empathize with each other, to see each other through the others eyes is a crucial component of the Mentoring program.

Finally there must be an expectation of selfless giving. Only through a willingness to impart the stories of your life, and a willingness on the part of the Apprentice to absorb those life lessons and experiences can you move to the second level of the Mentoring process.



“A pint of example, is worth a gallon of advice”  
*unknown*

# Mentoring Planning



The planning process is the most important component in the Mentoring relationship. Here the Mentor and the Apprentice come together, the expectations of the Apprentice and the ability of the Mentor to effect a change or grow the Apprentice occurs here.

In this section we not only discuss the potential of the Apprentice but also the potential of the program. First of all we have to plan and provide our program with a structure. What are our guidelines? These would provide the parameters of who we are working with, and what we want to achieve. You want to make sure that the guidelines you establish match the potential of the Apprentice and the experience of the Mentor. If you try to “reel in” the Apprentice somewhere further in the program he will likely reject that attempt.

Programs need resources. It takes money

to run a Mentoring program, just as it takes resources to run any effective program. The good news is that it just doesn’t take that much money to run a very good Mentoring program, because the primary people are probably volunteers already.

It is a sad fact that many organizations take on too much too soon. The lack of experienced staff and the desire to move forward without thoroughly planning your program will lead to unfulfilled expectations, and quite possibly hurt individuals, both Mentors and Apprentices. It is absolutely necessary that you spend the time “up front” -planning, creating and making sure that implementation will move forward according to a pre determined strategy. Failure to do so could damage your Mentoring program.

In planning your program ask yourself what

# *What is your plan?*

population you want your program to serve. This is more important than you might imagine. If your program is primarily an education program wherein you wish to pass on some specific knowledge, that is a pretty straight forward program. This kind of program is also easily measured as to its success or lack thereof. However, if your desire is to improve social skills or provide organizational enrollment then the training program needs to be more fluid and the Mentor needs to have a higher level of knowledge.

After defining the group that you want to Mentor, you must determine the style of Mentoring that will meet the needs of that group. There are many different types of Mentoring programs. Some are one to one, others are group programs (similar to Apprentice programs). There are peer group Mentoring programs and so on.

In a career driven Mentoring program there is a more intentional effort on the part of the Mentor and the Apprentice to explore a career direction. This model is most frequently used with middle and high school students and others who are moving toward employment opportunities.

In an education driven program there is a more intentional effort to influence a young persons academic success. What distinguishes an academically focused Mentoring program from a reading or tutoring program is the extent to which the adult volunteer is expected to achieve specific academic objectives (tutoring) versus the emphasis on the relationship and the flexibility of the adult volunteer to spend time with the Apprentice.

The program that we will most likely devote most of our efforts on is the social development/organization enroll-

ing model. Here the power of Mentoring comes in the form of building relationships. The Mentor, will serve as a role model and life coach. In this model, the activities between the Mentor and Apprentice are mutually determined by them and focused primarily on just spending time together, talking, playing games and engaging in activities. Some of these activities may be academic in nature, however, there are no defined expectations regarding the acquisition of knowledge/sills. The real focus is on the relationship.

Finally you need to develop a method of measurement. It is only when this step is coupled to the other components of the model that it is completely "planned". Who Mentored who, when, and what benefit was produced for the Mentor, the Apprentice and the organization.

The success of your Mentoring program will be determined by the amount of "front end" preparation that you perform. Make sure and develop the program from the perspective that you are attempting to make a difference in the lives of others, and that you will do that by building relationships. That is the power of Mentoring, building relationships that improve the lives of both the Mentor and the Apprentice. Remember these questions:

- Who are we trying to Mentor?
- What are the expectations of the Apprentice and the Mentor?
- What program will achieve the goals the expectations?
- Who will be a Mentor?
- What will we measure our success against?

# Mentoring Progress



The progress of the Mentor and the Apprentice is a little more difficult to determine than something where we could for example take a test and receive either a passing or failing grade. So often we are not aware of the profound influence that Mentors have had on our lives until years later. This section is designed to build into your model a component to understand the complexities of the progress of a Mentoring program and how to determine the success of your Mentoring model.

Lets look at what your model should consist of and then we will help you create a process that makes sure these points are being accomplished.

Your models progress will be greatly enhanced by the following:

- Training for the Mentors
- Structured activities for Mentors and Apprentices
- High expectations for frequency of meetings
- Greater support from leadership
- Monitoring of overall program implementation.

## Item 1, Training for Mentors

The need to fully train your Mentor's to the place of comfort in their assigned duties is essential. The ability to achieve the benchmarks will determine your success or failure. The training program for your Mentors

# *How do we define Progress?*

should consist of the following; what to do, how to do it, and when and where to do it. This will fall in step with your groups expectations about the ultimate goal of the Mentoring program. Take a moment and write out what your goal is, how you want the Mentor to accomplish that goal and what you need to provide him with in order to make that happen.

## **Item 2, Structured Activities**

Structured activities will determine whether or not the Mentor and the Apprentice will move forward down a predetermined path or move randomly. Activities can be found at our web site [www.masonic-renewal.org](http://www.masonic-renewal.org).

What the Mentor and Apprentice do at those meetings can be formal, casual or somewhere in between. It can be determined through planning or left up to the individuals. Most organizations have some kind of “text” book that they want the team to study. This also makes a good benchmark of success. In the end this structure is determined by the leadership of the organization and becomes the standard by which the success of the program will be measured.

## **Item 3, Frequent Meetings**

You cannot allow the meetings between Mentor and Apprentice to happen by chance. The Mentor and Apprentice need to develop a calendar and stick to it.

The frequency of meetings will in all likelihood be determined by the Mentoring team, but an understanding that the more frequent and consistent those meetings are, the more successful the outcome.

## **Item 4, Support from Leadership**

The need to be able to depend on the leadership of the organization for support cannot be overestimated. With-

out that support the program has no chance of success, and that support must be consistently given over a pre-determined length of time.

The need for support from the leadership of the organization and a strong foundational support will make a tremendous difference in the outcome of the program. If the Mentors and especially the Apprentices do not feel that there is a commitment on the part of the leadership for their personal success, the opportunity to leave the program is in some cases too strong to resist. A knowledge on the part of the team that the leadership not only supports the Mentoring program but is also part of it will be the determining factor in the completion of the program.

## **Item 5, Monitoring of the program**

Every program big or small needs to be monitored. There is no other way to determine if it is meeting its objectives. What your benchmarks will be is up to the organization.

Finally the monitoring and measurement of the program needs to be built into the model before implementation. But remember, the ultimate success of the program will be determined by the quality of the relationships it creates. These are not necessarily something that can be measured in the short term. The possibility to get “lost” in the collection of data and the measurement of the programs success or lack thereof may in the end cause more problems than it solves. Measure what is important, the rest will follow naturally.

# The Mentoring Relationship



Mentoring is at its very core, a process of relationship building.

According to J.H. Boetcker, people divide themselves into four classes:.

1. Those who always do less than they are told.
2. Those who will do what they are told, but no more.
3. Those who will do things without being told.
4. Those who will inspire others to do things.

It is this fourth group that the best Mentors will come from. It is crucial for a Mentor to be able to inspire others. It is in this ability that a Mentoring relationship can really begin to fly. Read the following story, and see if you don't agree.

*"I've changed my life because Mr. Don is like the father I never had. He came into my life at the right time. I was going down the wrong road, and he helped turn me around. What I*

*think Mr. Don has learned from me is that second chances are important in life."*

*excerpted from Mentoring.org, a resource web site for all things related to Mentoring.*

The statement above demonstrates the power of Mentoring. I would also imagine that Mr. Don has received a great deal from the relationship with the young man that he was Mentoring.

This demonstrates however the relationship building capacity that is inherent in the Mentoring process. Without that relationship the process cannot move to its highest potential.

How do we go about building these kinds of relationships? First we understand that each of us, the Mentor and Apprentice are coming to the table with different needs and skills. In the first section we discussed the importance of understanding each others abilities and needs. But it is only by talking and more importantly, listening that we can apply those needs to a specific skill and begin to build the relationship process. I think that there are five basic needs that

# Mentoring Relationships...

Mentoring fulfills:

1. I need to know that people have expectations of me.
2. I want a chance to try new things.
3. I want to know if I am making a difference in the world.
4. I want to know there is someone to guide me.
5. I want to know that I will be rewarded for doing good.

A wonderful thing happens when we communicate our expectations about each other, to each other. We actually start to understand that we don't live in a vacuum. That our actions, or lack of them, have an impact on other people.

What are your expectations of yourself?

Of those close to you?

Of others in your personal world?

I cannot tell how good I am doing, if you don't tell me what your expectations are of me. That doesn't mean that I want unrealistic expectations, but I do hope that you care enough to expect from me, the best that I can be.

The ability to try new things is the essence of the human condition. It is what caused us to cross the oceans and explore space, it moves us to reach out to others across the planet and explore those parts of ourselves that make us uniquely who we are. All of us have a need to experience new dimensions and there are few better enabled to do that than a Mentor. Through the Mentors experiences the Apprentice can go where the Mentor went and

see what the Mentor has seen. It gives him the chance to see the world through the eyes of another. That is a very good thing.

"Is the world better because of my work in it today?" All of us need to ask this question of ourselves daily. To often we expect others to do our work for us. But in the end, the differences made, for better or worse, are because of us. I have the capacity to make the world a better place, or not. Becoming a Mentor is a way that the world is made better on a daily basis. Two lives are improved at the same time. The Apprentice and the Mentor. An old saying goes, because I teach, I learn. The teacher always learns more than the student, and in that vein the world is made better.

Did you have a Mentor growing up? Perhaps it was your Father, Mother or a Grandparent. Perhaps it was a scout leader or a favorite coach. If you did have a Mentor then you were very blessed. But, today far too many young men do not have the benefit of a male Mentor. They are forced through circumstances not of their own making to discover manhood themselves, without the benefit of those things that helped you become the man you are. His life is, left up to chance. You owe it to yourself and our future to help others along the way. Remember, the bridge built over the river wasn't built for the first across, but for those that followed.

When was the last time someone genuinely said thanks to you? When was the last time you got a note in the mail from a friend recognizing you for a small kindness? You have a right to be rewarded for doing good. We all do. Civility does not have a season, it needs to happen every day. When we speak about rewards derived from Mentoring, it is not in the context of monetary reward. Rather, it is in the context of an acknowledgement of good works. Something done well. A hearty congratulations, pat on the back, simply saying well done, these things bear wonderful fruit. They are owed to all, most especially those who seldom hear praise.





There are excellent resources available to assist your organization in developing a Mentoring Program. Some of them are listed here:

Mentoring

Gordon F. Shea, Shea, Debbie Woodbury (Editor)

Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships

Lois J. Zachary, Laurent A. Daloz

The above books are available at any online book store

[www.Mentoring.org](http://www.Mentoring.org) (The web site of the National Mentoring Partnership)



Compiled by Robert Conley  
Director of Member Services  
Grand Lodge of Michigan  
800-632-8764 x 112  
[www.michiganmasons.org](http://www.michiganmasons.org)