



"Life's most urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?'" *Martin Luther King, Jr.*



"Success has nothing to do with what you gain in life or accomplish for yourself. It's what you do for others." *Danny Thomas*

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Mentoring magic

ACCOUNTABILITY IS SERIOUS BUSINESS TODAY. STAKEHOLDERS EXACT INCREASING ACCOUNTABILITY AND DEMAND MORE AND MORE INFORMATION AND DATA FROM ALREADY EXHAUSTED EDUCATORS. A GOOD MENTOR CAN SHARE STRESS-SAVING TIPS.

Two very important roles for a mentor are "interpreter" and "historian." Each school or workplace has a unique vocabulary and history. For example, when one school refers to "the gravel pit," they simply mean the student lobby because once upon a time, the floor was paved with an odd mixture of gray, bumpy concrete. Mentors help mentees navigate the intricacies of daily life so that they do not become stressed out Teaching school is stressful enough!

School Leaders: Nimbleness Required

Nimbleness = Adaptability + Agility

Any role in education must include an ability to adjust to constant change. Articles about business and leadership call this being "nimble," which appears to be a different, higher degree of flexibility than many of us assert on a frequent basis. When we add people's natural reaction to resist change, we know we must bring a compelling reason and plan of action to implement improvements.

According to Patterson in **Coming Clean about Organizational Change** :

- Most people engage in change because of their own pain, not because of the merit of the change.
- Most people expect to be viewed as having good intentions, even though they view with suspicion the intentions of those initiating organizational change.
- Most people act in their own self-interest, not in the interests of the organization.

The leader who mentors another educator can keep these assertions in mind. At the same time, he or she can confidently point to professional experiences that were painful but necessary.

As educators, we especially understand that everything changes. Children grow up; colleagues transfer or retire; new leaders are selected; new curriculum is added to existing knowledge; research shows us how to teach in more effective ways. The list can go on and on.

A good mentor emphasizes goals as "interim points of celebration." It is the journey to excellence that is important. We never truly arrive, and change is always required.

The purpose of "Mentoring Magic" is to remind each leader to give a "hand up" to the next leader.

Robert Hargrove, Masterful Coaching

People generally fall into two groups during a change process.

First are the people involved in a mentoring process who are focused on what they want to create.

They tend to be learning oriented and reflective.

They will use the process as an opportunity to inquire about and reflect on the issues that they and the group are facing.

They also tend to look at things from the viewpoint of responsibility: "How am I the cause in the matter?"

The second category, which is most common, consists of people who are self-protective, reactive, and resistant to learning.

People in this category will tend to use the process as an opportunity to grind their axes, blame others, or justify counterproductive behavior.

Recognizing which category people fall into is important. One of the main purposes of any intervention is to transform people from an orientation of posturing to one of activity aligned to goals.

What is the mentor's role with these things in mind?

The mentor must "see" what others may not see through the high quality of his or her attention and listening.

The mentor is in the position to step back (or invite mentees to step back) from the situation so that they have enough distance from it to get perspective.

The mentor helps people see the difference between their intentions and their thinking or actions.

The mentor helps people cut through patterns of collective illusion and self-deceptions caused by defensive thinking and behavior.

Hargrove believes a mentor should assist the mentee in setting goals that challenge them beyond their comfort level. He calls these "stretch goals."

To Help Mentees Set "STRETCH GOALS"

1. Learn the principle of "**aspiration.**" Who do we want to be?
2. Apply the principle of "**lever.**" How do we apply our resources so they can make the biggest difference?
3. Work toward the principle of "**convergence.**" What can we create together?
4. Commit to the principle of "**concentration.**" What are our one or two goals on which we focus?



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