

Leadership Link

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What Do I Have To Offer?

I got a call this weekend from a young lady asking if we could talk. She was going through a difficult decision and wanted to talk through the issues. We talked and cried together.

This week, I was told by one of my younger friends, "You better be my side when I have my baby!" And I was. We smiled as she and her husband held that precious young one.

Last week I read on Facebook where someone thanked me for having lunch with them one day. What a fun time we had! She referred to me as her mentor. Me her mentor? Made me think twice.

I met with a young man prior to an important interview. We talked over a "skinny latte" (coffee with fat free milk) and discussed possible interview questions and appropriate answers.

This month, in the Leadership Link, I want to continue along the line of last month's topic of "mentoring" or "coaching". As you read the above examples, you will see that informal mentoring really takes no education, no talent other than communication, and no overbearing schedule. In fact, the more I think about it, mentoring is not much more than being a good friend. However the benefits are immeasurable. The mentor gets as much as she/he give to the mentee.

Be aware that businesses often have formal mentoring programs that require a strict schedule of meetings, a timeline for completion and a list of goals to be accomplished. As a trainer and consultant, I can say that smart businesses have these programs. But in a community we need more informal mentoring opportunities. Informal mentoring includes:

- ♥ Nonspecific goals and more talking through issues as they occur
- ♥ Outcomes but they are not measured as in business
- ♥ Access to the mentor but it may be limited to times of convenience
- ♥ Self-selection in relationships based on personal chemistry
- ♥ No formal time for ending and it could last a life time

Sound like good friendships to me! In fact another word could be guide, supporter, teacher or tutor. Communities, neighborhoods, and other groups of people should examine the need for relationships that embrace one another, teach one another and are built on common interests.

Let's talk about you for a moment.

- ♥ What are your strengths? Name three.
- ♥ What are your experiences? Name the top three.
- ♥ What/Where are your priorities? Look at your time, your energy and your finances.
- ♥ Who is someone that is, perhaps, younger or less experienced than you who can use help in one of your positive areas. Name three or ask a local association if they know someone whom you could assist.
- ♥ Out of those three, who is compatible with your personality? Who would you easily get along with and enjoy assisting them with life's issues.

There you have it! A plan for mentoring doesn't have to be time consuming or structured. Now, pick up the phone and schedule a time to meet, share a meal or coffee, take a walk or just hang out with your new "mentee."

When we have been through something difficult, it is often a sign that we were brought to that place to help others. When a friend had a child with multiple disabilities, I did not know how to help. Would you? When a neighbor had a spouse pass away, I did not know what to say. Would you? When an acquaintance lost their job, I did not know what was needed. Do you? When a friend with a child with learning disabilities needed to understand the educational process in schools, I did not know. Do you?

People need our help and support just like we call on others for support. Yet you possess something unique that not everyone has – a special gift, experience, strength, or talent. It saddens me at times to see a culture of people that seem self-absorbed, not caring for the welfare of others, and preoccupied with their "own wants." Friends, do you not see that you may be the key to someone else's needs. When this life is over, will anyone testify as to how you changed their life? Will anyone stand up and share what you have done for him/her?

This is your chance to start something big!

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