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# Finding a Mentor

When leaders need  
someone to follow



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# Finding a Mentor

When leaders need someone to follow

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Introduction

# Will You Be My Mentor?

by Marian V. Liautaud



**G**rowing up I always considered my Great Aunt Ruth my mentor. She modeled grace, love, and compassion in a way that made me say, "I want to be like that."

In college, I had the privilege of being taught by Dominican nuns. Dominicans are known for scholarship and travel, and these sisters infused in me a love of learning and seeing the world. Their faith permeated everything they did. Even my future husband, who I met in college, would say with me, "We want what they have." Their faith and lifestyle were *that* inspiring.





## Finding a Mentor

### Will You Be My Mentor?

Now, no longer surrounded by these godly women, but no less hungry for role models to emulate personally and professionally, I am in search of a mentor. Last year, the person I considered my professional mentor left to pursue ministry work at a nearby church. For months I felt adrift, a woman without a compass—or, at the very least, a woman without coordinates to aim for.

As a ministry leader, you know the feeling. You try to discern God's call on your life and then, as best you know how, obey his specific directions for carrying out this call. Sometimes it's hard to make sense of it all. You need perspective; you need a guide. You need a mentor.

This download was created with you in mind. Inside you'll find articles on why leaders need mentors, what you can expect from a mentoring relationship, how to make the most of a mentor in your life, and more. Sometimes even the most capable leaders need the perspective of someone older, or at least wiser, who is willing to wrestle through tough questions, shine a light in a dark place, help reveal truth, and encourage you to become all God intended you to be.

Recently, I had lunch with a ministry colleague for the first time, a woman who is close in age to me but who is miles ahead of me professionally. In the course of our conversation, she mentioned how much she enjoys mentoring women. Back at the office that day, a light went on: *Maybe she would mentor me!* I hadn't even realized how badly I needed one until the thought took shape.





## Finding a Mentor Will You Be My Mentor?

The next day when I saw her, I went out on a limb and asked, "Would you be willing to mentor me?"

Since then, we have been meeting monthly for lunch. Our time together is unstructured but, invariably, our conversations are rich and leave me with much to chew on.

Leadership can be a lonely, tiring journey, and mentors can be heaven-sent guides along the way. Let the articles that follow help clarify how a mentor might be useful for you.

Blessings,

*Marian V. Liautaud*

Managing Editor, [GiftedforLeadership.com](http://GiftedforLeadership.com),  
Christianity Today International



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Think About It

# Sage Advice

Why leaders need a mentor  
by Fred Smith Sr.



*Fred Smith, Sr. was a longtime friend and editorial advisor to LEADERSHIP JOURNAL, a Christianity Today International publication. Smith was an accomplished businessman, church leader, and mentor at the time LEADERSHIP JOURNAL was launched in 1980. He was featured in the first issue, and his sage advice was featured in the journal's pages many times until his death in August, 2007. When his health prevented him from leaving home for lectures and group meetings, Fred began inviting young leaders to his house for a weekly breakfast. That led to a website, [BreakfastwithFred.com](http://BreakfastwithFred.com), and new interaction with a new generation of leaders through his "Ask Fred" e-mails. Even at his advanced age, Fred was learning what's really important in life and ministry. Following is an excerpt from Fred's last LEADERSHIP article in 2005, the distillation of Fred's final years as a mentor.*



It must be awfully safe to write to a 90-year-old, because I get lots of questions. Most of them deal with hard issues of character, spiritual growth, and suffering. I suspect many think of me as playing in my second overtime, so they assume that the answers may be coming from a little closer to heaven.

They tell me they believe I will give them an honest answer and that at my age I should have more answers than they do. I do my best to thoughtfully respond. But sometimes I just have to say, "I have been struggling with that same issue for all of my adult life, and I will be praying for you."

Pastors write anonymously of painful experiences with staff, boards, and members: "How do I know when it's time to move on? How do I know that God is speaking and not just some board members who want me to leave?"

Business executives ask about ethics and passion: "I am a key executive with a Fortune 500 company and hate what I do. My family depends on my income, and I feel locked into a life that I dread." They want to know how a Christian approaches such decision-making.

What do the "Ask Fred" questions teach me? I've come to five conclusions.

***1. People need encouragement.*** Truett Cathey says, "How do you identify someone who needs encouragement? Answer: That person is breathing."

There is breakdown in the church, in the family, and in the meaningfulness of work. All three arenas were given to us as



blessings, but our culture has turned them into sources of hurt. Some pastors lead like CEOs instead of shepherds. But people long for shepherds.

Even though he headed a large institution, Pope John Paul II came across as a shepherd. He had character and love. The character appealed to young people—he was the rock. The love was the generous spirit he displayed.

When our politicians wave, it's in a way that says, "I hope you like me." John Paul didn't wave; he gave a blessing. People felt that they were being blessed by seeing him, that the encounter wasn't for him, but for them. That's encouragement.

And when he died, the occasion attracted five million people to the largest voluntary gathering in history.

***2. Truth telling and wisdom are in short supply.*** Dr. Phil is a runaway hit because he "tells it like it is." He listens, quickly diagnoses, and then lets them have it. They line up hours ahead of the taping to have an opportunity to be confronted by him. What they define as truth telling is actually a mixture of psychology and entertainment. Scripture commands us to "tell the truth, in love." Television ratings aren't mentioned.

As a parent, I noticed the striking transition in my role from power figure to wisdom figure. I was no longer "the boss" but "the consultant." In the "Ask Fred" questions, I clearly see men and women searching for trustworthy wisdom that comes without strings and without a hidden agenda.

"My dad is dying from lung cancer. What should I be saying to him and what should I be asking him to say to me?" I replied that



if I were he, I'd want my children to remind me of specific incidents where I influenced them positively. I'd want to hear from them that my life has counted and that I am a child of God who is loved and eagerly awaited by those who have gone before me. I'd want to tell them that they are my significance. I'd want them to know that I love them. And I'd want them to know that knowing God is a worthy passion.

**3. People are hungry for spiritual direction.** "I find myself focusing on unsuitable amusements. What do you think that I should do?" The questioner mentioned that he had been toying with these "amusements" for nearly 10 years, but thinks it may have become a problem.

Run, man, run! I look at so many young men and women who are making junkyards of their old age by the foolish choices they're making today. Many are in biblically based churches but living like pagans. There is a serious disconnect between what they know and how they live.

In striving to grow churches, we sometimes create an infrastructure of specialists who "deal" with the problems of the congregation. We are supposed to be a living organism that is to minister to one another. We are to bear one another's burdens, yet we are afraid to admit that the smile is the result of artificial whitening.

They write to me because they want someone to point them to God's Word.

**4. Getting old doesn't mean getting more spiritual.** Who I am now is just more of Fred. Being sick doesn't make you saintly.





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You might expect me to tell of a major shift in spiritual perspective, or of deep scriptural revelations as I get near the finish line. Not so. I still struggle to make that connection between head and heart. I still seek to know Christ as my friend Ben Haden does. I still want the freedom and grace that faithful friend Steve Brown preaches about.

But I have learned that this is a period of spiritual confirmation, not necessarily spiritual transformation. God is real. He is interested in my maturity. He is not interested in my convenience, or even my comfort. He is teaching me to be patient in my suffering and positive in my attitude.

The writings of the ancient mystics teach me to see these times as "God's Gymnasium." The Bible verses that I learned as a child in the King James Version come back to me in the night, encouraging, disciplining, and quieting.

**5. Decide to be helpful.** That sounds simple, perhaps. But it isn't easy. Too many of my friends have grown old, not just older, by becoming grumpy old men. They discounted their contribution by writing a sloppy final chapter.

There is joy in this journey. Seeing the man turn from his prodigality and return to faith, family, and friends brings deep abiding gratitude. Hearing of gifts being used to impact and influence leads me to give thanks to God. Knowing that my uniqueness is from him, and not from me, keeps me humble and appreciative.

My mother who raised five sons in the mill district of Nashville repeatedly told us to "never grow weary in well-doing." In this last stage, my body may tire, but I pray for the





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strength to never grow spiritually weary. As physical vitality wanes, I pray that my inner man is being built up.

Even as heaven grows nearer, I still feel the excitement of doing the work that I am gifted and called to do.

When I was told that death was hours away, I wasn't afraid. Just curious. While death didn't occur at that moment, I know that it is inevitable. I want my life to be seen as a blessing. I want to leave a legacy, not just an estate. I want to be found faithful. Bless.

*Fred Smith was a long-time consulting editor of LEADERSHIP JOURNAL. This article appeared in LEADERSHIP JOURNAL, 2007.*

## Reflect

- *If you could submit a question to "Ask Fred," what would you ask?*
- *Where are you in need of spiritual direction?*
- *In what areas of leadership do you most need truth-telling from someone who will be honest with you?*



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Practically Speaking

# Three Kinds of Mentoring

Different types of relationships  
cultivate different kinds of growth  
*by Fred Smith, Sr.*



**M**entoring is back in favor again, like a wonderful old story that hasn't been told for so long it sounds new. Mentoring is an updated version of one of the oldest and best methods of learning. In times before academic degrees were mandatory for many careers, mentoring was the accepted system for training people for everything from manual skills to professions, such as medicine and law. Today there are several types of mentoring. I will discuss three: role model, lifestyle, and skills-art mentoring.





## Finding a Mentor

### Three Kinds of Mentoring

#### Role model

Role models personify who we would like to become. My wife, Mary Alice, had three women in her life who laid out the path she wanted to walk. The first was her high school teacher, Miss Brown, who was stately, dignified—totally ladylike. Mary Alice saw in her what she felt a southern lady should be. Even today Mary Alice will refer to her as the perfect lady.

Next was her Bible teacher, Mrs. Keen, who taught a group of young mothers to understand the Scripture. Her cup overflowed with love and grace from the Lord. Mary Alice would say of her, "She is what a Christian should be."

Then there was Miss Gordon—a tiny, immaculate, white-haired woman in her eighties. She was raised in culture and wealth but spent a great deal of her time reaching prisoners. She personified the quiet power of victory. When she passed away, it was a short step from here to heaven.

Mary Alice found in these three women role models who mentored her adult life and vectored her lifestyle. They influenced her not by what they had but by who they were.

Observation and identification are the important elements in role-model mentoring. Often the role model is not conscious of his or her effect on another person. Sometimes there is little personal contact between the two. For example, a role model might be a character from the Bible. Some say, "I'm like Peter," or "I resonate with Paul." In other words, role-model mentoring is largely unintentional on the mentor's part.





## Finding a Mentor

### Three Kinds of Mentoring

#### **Lifestyle mentoring**

Another form of mentoring defines the principles of living. I recently heard a young man say, "My grandfather was everything to me. He loved me and taught me how to live." What a blessing.

As we look at Scripture for lifestyle mentoring, we immediately think of the relationship between Paul and Timothy. We don't know how much technical skill as a missionary Paul gave Timothy, but we do know Paul was an excellent sponsor. We know he was a father in the faith. He let Timothy observe him at work. Paul promoted him to the churches. In the broad sense, we could call Paul a lifestyle mentor to Timothy.

This type of mentoring is a kind of parenting without the typical parental responsibilities. The real responsibility falls on the young person to absorb and to observe correctly.

The responsibility of the lifestyle mentor is to be open and real and to consistently personify who he is so that the young person receives a clear signal. The mentor must provide a comfortable atmosphere in which the student feels free to ask any question he or she needs answered.

A good mentor never ridicules a question. He may choose not to answer it, but he is careful never to ridicule, for questions are the pump that makes the answers flow.

#### **Skills-art mentoring**

Skills-art mentoring is a one-on-one relation between a mentor and mentee for the specific and definable development of a skill or an art.





## Finding a Mentor

### Three Kinds of Mentoring

One of my favorite mentoring stories is of the young pianist who came to Leonard Bernstein and asked to be mentored by him. Bernstein said, "Tell me what you want to do, and I will tell you whether or not you're doing it." Bernstein had a deep understanding of mentoring. The young man initiated the contact, had a specific request, and made the request of an authority. Bernstein essentially said to the young man, "You're responsible for your playing and practice. The one thing you can't do is hear yourself as a great pianist hears you. That I can do and will do for you."

In a church, skills-art mentoring might be used to prepare a young person for a particular ministry either inside or outside the church.

Effective mentoring has no set formula. It's a living relationship and progresses in fits and starts. Even so, identifying which type of mentoring you are seeking is the beginning of success.

*Adapted from **The Pastor's Soul, Vol. 5: Leading with Integrity**, 1999.*

## Reflect

• *Can you name a role model in your life? Why was this person influential in your life?*

*Who have you looked to for lifestyle mentorship?*

*If you were to seek a skills-art mentor, what specific skills would you want to learn?*



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Practically Speaking

# How to Find Your Mentor

And what to do once you find  
her by *Erik Johnson*



**W**hy do the trades have apprenticeships and medical professions require internships? Because personal attention from experienced practitioners helps learners master essential skills, attitudes, and knowledge. This, of course, is no surprise to Christians familiar with the mentoring relationships of Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Naomi and Ruth, Paul and Timothy, and Jesus and the disciples.







## Finding a Mentor

### How to Find Your Mentor

What is a mentor, really?

A mentor is "a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction," according to The Uncommon Individual Foundation, an organization devoted to mentoring research and training. It reports that mentoring is the third most powerful relationship for influencing human behavior, after marriage and the extended family.

Randy MacFarland, who helped train mentors as vice president of training and mentoring at Denver Seminary from 2001 to 2008, says, "When we consider the fragmentation of the family, the speed of change demanding the constant learning of new skills, and our mobile society separating extended family members, the need for mentoring increases."

The Uncommon Individual Foundation identifies three things people need to succeed: a dream, someone who believes in them, and determination. MacFarland says, "Now, we certainly add the whole matter of God's call and empowerment. But we often forget how powerful it is when someone believes in us." That's what mentors do, and it shapes lives.

### **In the beginning**

Here are some details to work through with your mentor at the beginning of your relationship:

***1. Set the tone.*** Once contact is made between a mentor and mentee, it is up to the mentor to create an environment where trust blossoms. One way to deepen that trust is simply to share your stories. (See Lisa Engenthaler's article, "**Getting Below the Surface.**") This opens doors and generates





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discussion. Sharing some of your struggles has a way of taking the relationship to a deeper level.

The setting is usually informal. Some mentees become like another member of the mentor's family. They spend time at their home playing with their kids and eating meals. Other times a mentor will simply invite a mentee along on ministry occasions.

"One of my mentors took me on pastoral visits," says Randy MacFarland. "I learned important things just by going along. "Another mentor was a model of servant leadership. As I was church planting, I could call him any time I was facing a new challenge. Whether it was asking him where to stand when officiating a funeral or seeing him pray through the church directory, by watching his life I experienced whole new dimensions of ministry.

**2. Clarify expectations.** A safe place for this kind of learning requires three things: openness, hospitality, and boundaries.

Expecting too much or too little can be avoided by discussing details openly. Everything from "Is there homework?" to "Who pays for coffee?" should be agreed upon ahead of time so there will be mutual understanding. Unrealistic or unexplored expectations can come back to haunt you later.

Then agree on meeting length, frequency, time, place, purpose, and level of accountability. Pray together and commit to praying for the relationship between meetings.

You may expect your mentor to be empathetic and offer a shoulder to cry on whenever you feel the need, says Don





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Payne, mentor trainer for suburban and rural churches, but that may not be your mentor's best contribution. "Or your mentor may expect something that you are unwilling or unable to give. In the beginning, both need to say, 'This is what I think I can give, this is my gift mix, this is my experience range. My life is like a box—there's a lot of stuff that's outside this box, but you're welcome to whatever is inside.'"

### Sharpening iron

Once the relationship is established, here's what you should expect from a mentor:

**1. Maintain trust.** After trust is established, it must be maintained. This means being honest, open, and transparent. It also means appropriate confidentiality; private information stays private. You and your mentor should discuss the kinds of information that would be appropriate to share (1) with anyone, (2) with other mentors, and (3) with each other only.

In addition, mentors learn as well as teach. Mentoring relationships are not one-way, hierarchical relationships. While it's true that one has more experience than the other, the "life sharing" goes both ways. This too builds trust.

**2. Have an agenda.** Be prepared with questions for your mentor, but be flexible enough to let your agenda change. Jesus engaged his mentees in hours of "debriefing" after healings and miracles and public debates. If you embark on risk-taking, faith-stretching, kingdom-building adventures, there will be plenty to talk about!

**3. Share resources.** Much of effective ministry is not what you know but who you know. If the mentee asks, "Who knows





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something about this?" and you don't, then your assignment is "Who knows somebody who knows something about that?"

**4. Offer perspective.** By virtue of their extra years, mentors have something mentees do not: experience. A mentor should therefore offer mentees the gift of perspective.

A student once told Janet McCormack, chaplaincy training center director, "What I really like about you, Chaplain Janet, is that you focus on the purpose of ministry when I get lost in the details."

That's what mentors do—keep things focused on why we're doing what we do and who we're doing it for.

#### Other benefits of a mentoring relationship

**Ask good questions.** A good mentor asks the right questions. A mentor is not "the answer person," but rather, "the one who gets the mentee to do helpful self-reflection."

"Let's say the mentee works in a hospital emergency room, and a woman comes in who has been terribly battered," says Janet McCormack. "If the mentee comes back and says, 'I just choked. I couldn't even talk to this person,' well, that would be most people's normal response.

"Ask why. There are many possible reasons. I'd ask, 'What was going on inside of you when that happened? What were you thinking about?'

"You may hear, 'I remember when my mother was beaten,' or 'I can't imagine a human being doing that to another human being,' or 'I wanted to beat him.' Your answers will suggest to your mentor how to lead, how to teach."





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It is beneficial if you also ask questions. Payne says, "We encourage students to come with a fairly clear idea of what they need, and to come to each session with a well-prepared question or two to ask the mentor."

***Push in the right direction.*** Mentors often nudge their charges in directions that at first feel uncomfortable.

For example, youth ministry interns sometimes chafe when scheduled to work in the nursery, attend board meetings, or write reports. They want to do the "teen things" they're already good at. Why make them work with babies or boards? To stretch them. Wise mentors suggest, "Let's see what else you're good at."

McCormack trains her chaplain mentees that way. She tells them, "You may be inexperienced here. You may prefer one-on-one counseling, but if you've never organized a social event for singles, now's the time to try. You may not like it, and that's okay. You need to stretch. I won't let you fail. If things fall apart, I'm here to catch you."

As MacFarland says, "One of the life-long lessons in the Christian life is learning dependence upon God. Taking risks and working outside of our previous experience promotes growth and dependence upon God."

***Confront with compassion.*** Mentors are like mirrors helping mentees see what's preventing them from being all that God wants them to be. "I'm not going to attack their character," says Burns. "I just want to hold up the mirror and say, 'Do you see this?'"





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If you and your mentor have built a relationship of trust and safety, you will be more inclined to accept correction. On one level, all Christians are accountable to follow Christ with integrity. But in a mentoring relationship, we have an even greater platform for accountability. If your actions or work habits are inconsistent with your stated goals and commitment, your mentor needs to mention it.

***Be patient with the process.*** Mentoring is not for the impatient. While it is one of the most effective means of developing effective Christians, it is also time-consuming.

"In a culture that presses for instant results by following a few key principles," says MacFarland, "the mentoring process can seem slow. But there is no short cut for equipping people to become theologically astute, godly in character, and competent in ministry."

And since no one ever outgrows the need for increased character and competency, the need for mentoring continues. We all need a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction.

*Erik Johnson serves as a family counselor in private practice in Washington State. This article appeared in our sister publication LEADERSHIP JOURNAL, 2000.*





## Finding a Mentor

### How to Find Your Mentor

## Reflect

- *What expectations do you have for a mentoring relationship?*
- *How frequently do you hope to meet with a mentor, and how long will each meeting be?*
- *How receptive are you to being held accountable by a mentor after you've shared your life goals with her?*



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Think About It

# Who's Your Hero?

How our role models become  
our mentors  
*by Chad Hall*

Since 2000, I've asked hundreds of leaders from all over North America, "Who are your heroes?" In fact, I begin every coaching relationship with the question because the responses are so revealing. Heroes are found in likely and unlikely places: family trees and family Bibles, history books and summer novels, mythic stories and first-hand encounters.







## Finding a Mentor

### Who's Your Hero?

Before reading further, spend a few minutes taking this Personal Heroes Inventory:

1. Who are your heroes?
2. Can you name two, three, or even four persons you admire and want to emulate? Make a list.
3. What heroic qualities do you admire?
4. What is it about each of these persons that makes them a hero for you? Jot down those qualities.

When it comes to naming one's heroes, I've noticed a distinct pattern: the progress a leader makes in moving toward his goals is directly correlated with the degree of speed and certainty with which he can name his heroes. The pattern is most obvious in the negative: I've never coached a leader who is unable to name a hero and who also makes substantial progress toward real goals.

Jesse is a leader of a small enterprise on the coast of North Carolina. When I asked about his heroes, he was speechless. After a while, he pushed back on the question, saying he thought it improper to grant someone hero status.

I allowed that if he found the word *hero* problematic, he could simply share the names of persons he admired and modeled his life after. He still resisted. Finally, he shared that there was nobody he sought to emulate and that he led his life according to what seemed right at the time, not some set of admirable qualities or role models.





## Finding a Mentor Who's Your Hero?

I've known Jesse for almost five years now and his leadership journey is marked by inconsistency, fits and starts, and quite a bit of struggle. He fits the pattern of leaders who lack heroes and struggle to make real progress.

There could be a host of reasons for this pattern, but my chief theory is that having heroes demonstrates a mature level of self-reflection and self-awareness. Heroes don't fuel the leadership journey; they are evidence that the leader has fuel. In simple terms, leaders with heroes have thought about what kind of person they want to be, while those who don't have heroes lack a certain degree of self-awareness. Such awareness is necessary for a person to fully engage the leadership role and stay committed to the leadership journey.

### **Locomotive powered**

The second observation I've made about heroes has to do with the source and impact. There are four basic categories of heroes: Familiar, Famous, Faith, and Fictional (see sidebar).

Look back at your Personal Heroes Inventory. Think about the category in which each hero fits best. If you struggled with coming up with your heroes, you may want to use the categories to jumpstart your thinking.

Recently I talked with a successful pastor in Manhattan who shared that his two biggest heroes are his grandfather and Winston Churchill. His example underscores the importance of balance in hero types. I have noticed that leaders who have heroes from two or more categories seem to avoid many of the perils associated with those types, while leaders whose heroes all come from a single category typically suffer the peril associated with that category.





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### Who's Your Hero?

Multiple types of heroes seem to balance out one another and provide a fuller spectrum of what it means to be a leader, thus having a stronger, more positive impact in the leader's life. The pastor from Manhattan, with Family and Famous types represented in his hero mix, has the best of both worlds: an intimate portrait of a well-lived life (grandfather) and a "reach for the stars" hero who reminds him of the seismic impact a leader can have. The result is a leader with a sense of destiny who lives each day with determination.

### Why we need heroes

So what good are heroes? And, more specifically, what do they give those of us who are on the leadership journey? First, a hero often embodies a quality or ability the leader doesn't possess (yet). For instance, Carl is a vice president in the petroleum industry. He often backs down from confrontation and avoids conflicts he ought to engage.

One of Carl's heroes is William Wallace, the Scottish rebel made famous by Mel Gibson in the movie *Braveheart*. Wallace's courage of conviction and willingness to fight with passion inspire Carl to do the same. Carl's sentiment is "Wallace is my hero because I want to be more like him. I think if I were, I'd be more successful."

Look at your personal heroes list again. Do your heroes embody traits you already have and want to make work better in your life? Or are you drawn to your heroes because they possess what you lack? Knowing what draws you to admire a hero can help increase the impact the hero has in your leadership journey.

A second function of a hero is to demonstrate a successful expression of a quality or ability the leader already possesses





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to some degree. For instance, Jill is a manager who naturally leans toward a style of leadership that is inclusive and collaborative. She's found a lot of success with this style and is proud that she doesn't have to be "pushy" in order to get what she wants.

She names as one of her heroes Juror #8, Henry Fonda's character in *12 Angry Men*, a person who demonstrated the ability to influence through nuance and indirect persuasion and who is not in a formal leadership role. In Jill's case, she is not looking to initiate a heroic trait, but to heighten that expression in her life.

## The Fantastic Four

### *Types of Heroes We All Should Have*

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Power</b>	<b>Peril</b>
Familiar	Parent, mentor, teacher, coach, great-grandfather you never met but have heard stories about.	Real-life heroes are the most intimate. Offer close-up examples of how to live and what the impact is. They are inspiring and bring a sense of accountability to the journey. The leader does not wish to disappoint these heroes.	Can sometimes inspire a sense of guilt or shame, causing the admirer to live a version of himself that's not really a fit. Can also be just a "bigger and better" version of the fan.
Famous	Historical figure (Churchill, Lincoln, Joan of Arc). An accomplished person from a particular field (Jack Welch, Bill Gates, Colin Powell, Dean Smith). Popular culture (Bono, Oprah).	Lots of data on these persons and their stories are well told. Usually tied to significant accomplishment and well-known impact, otherwise they wouldn't be famous!	The admirer can become mesmerized by what the hero accomplished and miss how they lived. This results in leaders who desire a particular outcome but don't model the hero's character or behavioral example.





## Finding a Mentor

### Who's Your Hero?

Categories	Type	Power	Peril
Faith	Biblical figures (Abraham, Paul, David). "Saints" old and new (Augustine, Martin Luther, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Mother Teresa, Billy Graham).	Heroes of the faith have passed the test of time. Their hero status is rarely disputed, and their positive impact is well-attested.	Can sometimes be "default" heroes, especially for clergy or committed lay persons. As behavioral examples, they are sometimes dismissed as too perfect.
Fictional	Movie or literary characters (Andy Dufresne, Atticus Finch) From folklore or legend (William Wallace, Paul Bunyan, Merlin).	Their stories are well-told and designed to be engaging, powerful, and inspiring. Even in bad situations, they often live and lead heroically.	Can be hyperbolic, one-dimensional or unrealistic. The leader may want circumstances (the script) to change in order to lead like the hero.

### Join the Justice League

Now that you've considered your heroes and noticed three ways your heroes impact your leadership journey, here are four common actions for getting the most from your heroes.

1. Share your heroes with someone. Talk with your mentor. Share who your heroes are and what you admire about them.
2. Spend some time with your heroes. Keep your heroes in front of you in order to remind you to follow their example. Depending on the type of heroes in your life, this might involve a phone call, going through some old photos, adding a new screensaver to your desktop, or moving *Braveheart* to the top of your Netflix queue.
3. Conduct a hero audit on your leadership. List the qualities and characteristics you most admire in your heroes and then give yourself a grade for each of these qualities in your own life. Do you demonstrate the





## Finding a Mentor

### Who's Your Hero?

boldness of Patton and the courage of Joan of Arc in your career? How Honest-Abe are you with your coworkers? How much Job-like patience are you demonstrating with your children?

4. Consider your own hero status. For someone, somewhere, at sometime you will be a hero. Or will you? Will your grandkids be inspired by the stories they hear about you? Live and lead well today and you leave a heroic gift for those who follow.

*Chad Hall, an author and church planter, is an executive coach and trainer with SAS Institute Inc. in Cary, North Carolina. This article appeared in LEADERSHIP JOURNAL, 2008.*

## Reflect

- *What do you learn about yourself as you reflect on the people you admire and want to emulate?*
- *After doing a "hero audit" on yourself, how do you feel about the results? What traits are maturing in you, and which ones need more attention?*



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Biblical Perspective

# Anti Hero

Why my list is short  
*by Angie Ward*



A few years ago I attended a large ministry conference that included breakout sessions featuring a variety of speakers and "experts" on all things related to ministry and leadership. At one point during the conference, I was waiting in the lobby when one of the speakers (we'll call him Mr. Jensen) walked by, surrounded by at least 25 groupies who hung on this man's every word, nodding their agreement. I actually like this man's writing and philosophy, but was struck by the groupie mentality. A friend who was with me observed, "You know, I like what Jensen says, but God save us from the Jensenites."





## Finding a Mentor

### Anti Hero

Sadly, I've seen that "Jensenites" are becoming the rule rather than the exception. I've heard dozens of pastors speak breathlessly and reverently about their ministerial and spiritual heroes, reading their books and their blogs, listening to their podcasts, following them at conferences, hoping just to get a glimpse of them or to touch their robe so they can receive some magical leadership or teaching power that will result in overwhelming ministry success and their own fame.

It's like comedian Steve Martin said long ago in a standup routine: "Repeat after me: 'I will be different. I will be unique.'"

It's no different today than it was in the first century, when Paul noted in his first letter to the Corinthians that the Christ-followers there were dividing themselves over who they followed. "I follow Paul," said some, while others countered, "I follow Apollos."

Today it's the same story, just a different millennium: "I am of Hybels." "I am of Warren." "I am of Maxwell." "I am of Stanley." "I am of Moore." "I am of Groeschel." "I am of McLaren." "I am of Driscoll."

Others play the same game, but go back a few centuries, as if attaching themselves to an older (or dead) personality is somehow more spiritual: "I am of Calvin." "I am of Arminius." "I am of Augustine." Or impress others with their intellect: "I am of Irenaeus." "I am of Tertullian." "I am of Clement of Rome."

"Stop it!" Paul says, in essence, in 1 Corinthians 3:5. "What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe – as the Lord has assigned to each his task."







## Finding a Mentor

### Anti Hero

I have nothing against any of the leaders I mentioned above. They are doing what God has called and gifted and assigned them to do, and they have all made a significant impact for the kingdom. Many of them are worthy mentors and models. But they are also just servants, just like each of us who follows Christ. My problem is not with the celebrities, but with the groupies who have made them such.

These groupies try to become clones of their heroes, instead of becoming who God has made them and ministering in a uniquely personal way that no celebrity could ever attain. Instead of claiming their standing in Christ and asking what he wants of their leadership in their unique situation, they settle for a trinkety-bracelet approach to ministry: "What Would Hybels Do?"

I have a friend who goes to an Anglican church because, as she put it, "I kinda like the personality taken out of my church experience." What a contrast to the celebrity mindset so prevalent in our culture.

Believe it or not, ministry celebrities do not hold mystical powers or keys to success. All of them stumbled repeatedly in their journeys, and continue to struggle with the temptations common to every man and woman, except that now, they also have to deal with the trappings of celebrity and cult followings. Each was assigned by God to till the soil in one corner of the kingdom and faithfully invest the talents entrusted to him or her. Are we doing the same? Or are we so busy mining tips for success in the latest book by our favorite author that we ignore our own calling?





## Finding a Mentor

### Anti Hero

Who do you follow? Is it Paul, or Apollos, or some other megachurch pastor or missional prophet? This may come as a surprise, but I believe that it is actually much easier to imitate your hero than to be yourself: to claim your own identity and calling; to wrestle with your own brokenness; and to struggle minute-by-minute with God to figure out what is the best way to lead in your context.

For just one season, forget the celebrities. Get in touch with God's unique design for your life and ministry. In the words of Fernando Ortega and Anne Graham Lotz: "Just give me Jesus."

*Angie Ward is a church leader and ministry coach in Durham, North Carolina. This article appeared in LEADERSHIP JOURNAL, 2008.*

## Reflect

- *Have you ever fallen into the "groupie" syndrome? If so, who captured your attention and why?*
- *As you reflect on the life of Christ, what traits and habits of his are you currently trying to emulate?*



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Practically Speaking

# Getting Below the Surface

How sharing life stories leads to deeper fellowship

*by Lisa Engenthaler*



Telling your life story is an effective way for mentoring partners to get "below the surface" in their conversations. There are many benefits to telling life stories: healing, deeper fellowship, and authenticity. And yet, the risks are enormous: vulnerability, rejection, failure. It's easy to decide it's just not worth it. But if we do this, we'll miss seeing our lives from God's perspective. Psalm 139 tells us that even before we were born, God knew every minute of our lives. We have not been alone. He is present even in the moments that we don't understand and can't explain.





## Finding a Mentor

### Getting Below the Surface

Reflect on the four influences below. Ask your mentor if you could spend some time discussing each of these together:

**Heroes.** Who are people in your life who have positively influenced you? What made them a hero? How are you different because of them?

**Hard Times.** What experiences left you wounded and, perhaps, still walking with a "limp"? These are moments that immediately come to mind, moments that have significantly charted the course of your life or how you've responded to it.

**High Places.** What moments in your life thrilled you? When did life seem to "come together"?

**Hand of God.** How has God guided you, protected you, and drawn you to himself? As you look back, reflect on God's presence in your life. How has God been there for you?

In reflecting on those heroes, hard times, and high places, we see the hand of God. And it's in remembering that God redeems all our life experiences for his glory that we can be willing to share our story with others. We can be honest and courageous as we seek to understand how God is still at work in our lives.

*Lesa Engelthaler is a writer and a mentor in Garland, Texas. This article is adapted from its original, which ran in LEADERSHIP JOURNAL, 2006.*



## Reflect

- *If you struggle to recall the high places and hard times in your life, try sketching out a timeline of your life. Include the events and incidents that were turning points, whether good or bad. This approach may provide a helpful visual as you reflect on God's hand in your life.*
- *As you hear your mentor's life story, what aspects inspire you?*



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Leadership Tools

# Questions to Explore with a Mentor

But only if you're prepared to grow!  
by Janet McCormack



*(Editor's note: Following is a list of questions you may wish to explore with a mentor. Allowing a mentor to search out answers with you may provide the insight and clarity you need to move forward in your life and ministry. One word of caution: These questions will not lead to easy answers. Be prepared to stretch and grow!)*

- How is your ministry affecting your own relationship with God?
- How is your sense of God's call being clarified?
- Where are your skills being tested?
- Where is your character being tested?
- What are your hopes and dreams for your future ministry?





## Finding a Mentor

### Questions to Explore with a Mentor

- How can my mentor help me?
- What evidence can you point to of the presence and power of God in your ministry?
- How is your relationship/communication style impacting your ministry?
- As you assess your growth, where do you see areas you need to work on? What are your felt deficiencies?
- What are some new things you could try?
- What are some things we could do that would help you to be more a person of integrity?
- What pain have you experienced and what were some of the effects of that pain?
- How has that shaped who you are?
- How might God use your past to prepare you for ministry in the future?
- Let's imagine that God knows what he's doing in your life, even though things haven't worked out as you'd hoped. What might he be teaching you through that?

*Janet McCormack is a chaplaincy training director. This article is adapted from LEADERSHIP JOURNAL, 2000.*



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# Additional Resources

Where to go to learn more

## Online

**BuildingChurchLeaders.com:** Leadership training resources from Christianity Today International.

- **“Mentoring” Assessment Pack**
- **“Mentoring” Training Theme & PowerPoint**
- **“Spiritual Formation” Training Theme & PowerPoint**

**ChristianBibleStudies.com:** Provides valuable content for spiritual formation.

**LeadershipJournal.net:** Practical advice and articles for church leaders.

**SmallGroups.com:** Guidance for your small group ministry.





## Books

### **Authentic Spiritual Mentoring: Nurturing Believers Toward Spiritual Maturity** By Larry Kreider (Gospel Light, 2008)

Whether you are looking for a mentor or want to become one, this practical handbook offers proven biblical keys that will open the door to thriving mentoring relationships. You will learn the Jesus Model of mentoring—initiate, build and release—and how to apply as you encourage growth in younger believers.

### **Becoming a Woman of Influence** by Carol Kent (NavPress, 2006)

Jesus' twelve disciples changed the world forever. Would you like to have a similar impact? Learn seven simple, life-changing principles Jesus used to influence others—like asking questions, telling stories, and offering unconditional love to others. Through practical examples, see how your struggles and triumphs can inspire others. This book also includes a nine-week Bible study for personal reflection or group reflection.

### **Mentoring Leaders: Wisdom for Developing Character, Calling, and Competency** by Carson Pue (Baker Books, 2005).

Who are tomorrow's leaders? And who will prepare them? Focusing keenly on spiritual growth, Pue addresses the various phases of leadership development, and points out essential personal traits and characteristics. Emerging ministry professionals will learn to sharpen their vision, shape their values, and find renewed strength to follow their calling.

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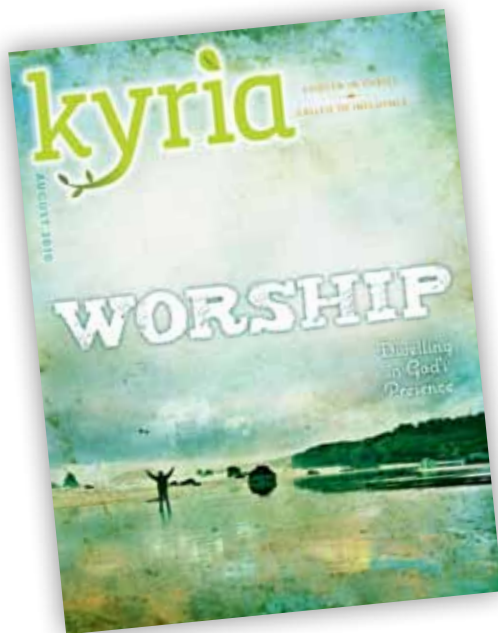
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