

February 18, 2019
By Robert J. Tamasy

MAKING YOUR MARK THROUGH MENTORING, PART 1

“I want to make a difference.” Have you ever made this statement? It is a thought many of us have expressed, whether in public or at least to ourselves. Whether you are a Baby Boom generation member on the back end of your career, or a Millennial just getting a start in the workplace, this is a desire many of us share.

The question is, how do we make that difference? How can we succeed in making a mark that will endure long after our working days have ended?

There are many possible suggestions, but there is one I would highly recommend: Mentoring. I know, you might have an objection, saying something like, “I had a mentor once – a terrible experience!” That is not the kind of mentoring I’m talking about. Many of us have had a bad experience in which a mentor was assigned to us, had no genuine interest in us, and viewed being a mentor as an imposed assignment.

No, the kind of mentoring I mean involves a mutually beneficial relationship, two people on a journey together seeking to grow and build into one another’s lives. When David A. Stoddard and I co-authored *The Heart of Mentoring: Ten Proven Principles for Developing People to Their Fullest Potential*, we were drawing from Dave’s experience of having two wonderful mentors who invested much of themselves into him, listening and teaching and modeling what it meant to be successful in business – and in life.

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Dave went on to replicate that mentoring process in the lives of dozens of other men for more than 30 years. He passed away five years ago this month, but his impact – the mark he made through mentoring others – continues to this day through many of those individuals.

What does that kind of mentoring look like? Here are a few of the principles we cited in our book, along with biblical precepts that undergird those principles:

Living is about giving. Too often, mentoring is viewed through a “what’s in it for me” lens. The most effective mentoring is done focused on the best interests of the person being mentored, whom we termed the “mentoring partner.” We want to help him or her become all they can possibly be. *“...remembering the words of the Lord Jesus Himself: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35).*

Mentoring is a process that requires perseverance. Spending time with someone who needs our help at times can be frustrating or discouraging, especially when we fail to see the progress we had hoped for. That is why perseverance is necessary, pressing on and remaining committed to the mentor even when expectations are not met. *“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9).*

Effective mentors open their world to their mentoring partners. Nothing builds trust more than being transparent, even totally vulnerable, to the other person. As we are open to others, honest with our own struggles, that gives them confidence to become open with us. *“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well” (1 Thessalonians 2:8).*

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I will take a look at some of the other principles from *The Heart of Mentoring* in the next “Monday Manna.”

© 2019. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*; *Tufting Legacies*; coauthored with David A. Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring*, and edited numerous other books, including *Advancing Through Adversity* by Mike Landry. Bob's biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

Reflection/Discussion Question

1. Do you have a desire to make a difference in the world, at least in the world around you, your unique sphere of influence? If so, how well are you succeeding at doing that?
2. When you hear the term “mentoring,” what comes to your mind?
3. How might your thinking about mentoring change if it were presented not as a task, or an required assignment, but as a voluntary, “mutually beneficial relationship”?
4. In what ways can you envision the process of mentoring being one that emphasizes giving rather than receiving?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Isaiah 43:4; Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 2:6-9, 11-12

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