

Notes on Mentoring

From the book: "Leading With Integrity" by Fred Smith, Sr.

(Fred Smith, Sr. is an internationally noted author, speaker, and management consultant who has advised and mentored leaders for nearly sixty years.)

Definition of Mentoring – “a one-on-one relation between a mentor and a mentoree for the specific and definable development of a skill or an art.”

Quote: Leonard Bernstein had a young pianist come to him asking to be mentored. He said he would mentor him but said, *“You’re responsible for your playing and your practice. The one thing you can’t do is hear yourself as a great pianist hears you. This I can do and will do for you.”*

10 Principles of a Fruitful Relationship between the Mentor and the Mentoree according to Fred Smith, Sr.

1. All the cards need to be on the table – which involves trust between the two and confidentiality.
2. Mentoring cannot and does not improve character in adults – only through spiritual experience. Dishonesty, laziness, anger, greed, selfishness, uncooperativeness – are all character failures.
3. We progress by climbing, then plateauing for assimilation, then climbing again, plateauing again, etc.
4. Not everyone can be a mentor. Skill in performing and skill in coaching are very different.
5. Every good man should be good at something. Helping to develop this good is the mentor’s responsibility. Peter Drucker says when someone says of another, “He is a good man,” asks, “Good for what?”
6. A mentor has accomplished great good when he has taught the individual the joy of accomplishment.
7. As we progress in our relationship we should come to the place where we need no preface or qualification.
8. The mentor has the responsibility to create an atmosphere in which the learner can be honest and still respected. Never show shock. Never show curiosity.
9. Make the mentoree responsible for all contact. They must set up the appointments, make the calls, and so forth. The mentoree should know that he can break off the relationship any time he wants to simply by not contacting me.
10. Mutual respect is crucial. I have never had any success helping anyone I did not respect.