LOIS J. ZACHARY

THE MENTOR'S GUIDE

Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships

SECOND EDITION

Contents

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Lois J. Zachary

Foreword by Laurent A. Parks Daloz

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EXERCISES, EXAMPLES, TABLES, AND FIGURES

EXERCISES

EXAMPLES

TABLES

FIGURE

Years ago, a friend sent me a drawing by artist Brian Andreas with a quote sketched into it: "Most people don't know that there are angels whose only job is to make sure you don't get too comfortable and fall asleep and miss your life." Since the publication of the first edition of The Mentor's Guide, these words have resonated in my ears, and a few more angels have been added. I dedicate this edition to my "angels," Ed, Bruce, Lisa, David, Talia, Emily, and Lory, whom I can always count on to make sure I don't get too comfortable, fall asleep, and miss my life.

Foreword

ECOLOGISTS TELL US that a tree planted in a clearing of an old forest will grow more successfully than one planted in an open field. The reason, it seems, is that the roots of the forest tree are able to follow the intricate pathways created by former trees and thus embed themselves more deeply. Indeed, over time, the roots of many trees may actually graft themselves to one another, creating an interdependent mat of life hidden beneath the earth's surface. This literally enables the stronger trees to share resources with the weaker so the whole forest becomes healthier.

Similarly, we human beings thrive best when we grow in the presence of those who have gone before. Our roots may not follow every available pathway, but we are able to become more fully ourselves because of the presence of others. "I am who I am because we are," goes the saying, and mentors are a vital part of the often invisible mat of our lives.

There have, of course, always been mentors, but our ability to name them as such is relatively recent. Psychologists discovered them only a generation ago; educators and the business world were not far behind. Since then, mentors have become a hot item, appearing in best-sellers, on television specials, and on film. Generally they are viewed as people who help us find a jewel of wisdom or a promotion at work. At bottom, however, mentors are more than that. As Zalman Schachter-Shalomi says, they "impart lessons in the art of living." Great mentors extend the human activity of care beyond the bounds of the family. They see us in ways that we have not been seen before. And at their best they

inspire us to reach beyond ourselves; they show us how to make a positive difference in a wider world.

Lois Zachary knows a lot about that. Coming from a background in human development, she has spent years of direct experience in organizational change, leadership education, and mentoring. In *The Mentor's Guide*, she brings her experience, together with an impressive range of resources, to create a trove of practical knowledge and concrete exercises for all of us who seek to serve as mentors in more adequate and humane ways. True to the essence of mentoring, the activities here are artfully designed not to preach about one right way to be a mentor but rather to help readers see their own mentoring style and preferences more clearly and thus learn from direct experience and observation.

Yet this is no chocolate box of platitudes. Zachary knows that good mentoring is tough, and she peppers her numerous examples with instances of inadequate or failed mentoring. The journey of mentor and protégé runs along narrow and daunting ledges as well as high outlooks and is not for the faint-hearted or indifferent. She bluntly warns of dangers along the way even while offering priceless assistance in the form of savvy observations and solid advice. Chapter Seven alone, on feedback, is worth the price of the book, as is the annotated list of resources in Chapter Nine.

Moving beneath the superficiality and formulas that too often mark the literature on mentoring, Zachary reminds us that it is the particularity of each relationship that really matters, that human development always takes place in a larger context that mentors ignore at their peril. The exercises in the chapters invite us to explore more profoundly our own capacities for establishing genuine trust with others, listening with real respect and compassion, examining clear-eyed our own inflations and

convenient delusions. Again and again, Zachary reminds us that the central skill of an effective mentor is no less than the capacity for self-awareness—a willingness to keep a relentless, if forgiving, eye on our own journey, as well as that of our companion.

There is much here for all of us to learn from. One of the speakers in the book plaintively remarks that what she really needs is "a mentor to mentor me about mentoring." With this second edition of *The Mentor's Guide*, Lois Zachary has stepped forward to start us on our way toward becoming more adept in this vital, nourishing, and profoundly human role as we open the way for those coming after us to sink their roots deeper, to grow fuller, to participate more richly in the interdependent mat of life.

Laurent A. Parks Daloz

Clinton, Washington

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

AN OLD AFRICAN PROVERB SAYS, "If you want to travel fast, travel alone; if you want to travel far, travel together." At its core, that is what mentoring is: traveling far, together, in a relationship of mutual learning.

New mentors may be caught off guard, thrust into the role by professional obligations or a chance meeting, but with no maps to show them where the journey might go. A mentor who has traveled this road finds that the need for guidance never ends; every new mentoring relationship comes with its own set of fresh challenges. To both of these mentors, and to you—whatever your mentoring experience—I offer this book as a guide and companion. I hope it will allow you to understand your role as a mentor more deeply and make mentoring the priority it should be.

In that spirit, this book is a practical guide that lays out the processes from beginning to end and provides tools for creating an effective learning relationship. It will ground you in the predictable phases of mentoring and give you strategies and techniques to help you understand how to manage intentional mentoring relationships in a cycle that fully engages both mentoring partners—mentor and mentee.

Mentoring at its very core is a learning relationship, and the phases I discuss and explore in this book are structures and processes that contribute to learning. These phases—preparing, negotiating, enabling growth, and coming to closure—are present in both formal and informal mentoring relationships, and they are in motion even when you are not aware of them. Being able to anticipate and work with them is the key to mentoring partnership success.

WHY ADULT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IS KEY TO MENTORING

The Mentor's Guide draws much inspiration from Laurent Daloz's *Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners*.[1] I find his learner-centered focus compelling. By intimately focusing on the learner, the learning connection, and the learning process, Daloz reaches into the very core of mentoring.

Since the first edition of *The Mentor's Guide* appeared in 2000, interest in and knowledge about adult learning and development have grown exponentially. Many major publications on the topic have been revised and updated,[2] some several times over.[3] The breadth of knowledge has expanded, and practitioner research and field practice have added depth and nuance to theories put forth by thought leaders like Daloz, Jack Mezirow, Stephen Brookfield, and Sharan Merriam.

We now recognize that adult learning is more than a cognitive process; it is a multidimensional phenomenon.[4] Social networking and virtual platforms continue to accelerate the pace of learning and the dissemination of knowledge and to create cyberspace learning communities among diverse learners. Along with increasing globalization, these changes have focused more attention on the importance of context and difference. The uniqueness of the adult learner has been accentuated over the past decade as we continue to learn more about the complexities of the brain, multiple types of intelligence, and our emotional selves.

All of this has meant fundamental changes for mentoring. As the learning process has shifted from mentor directed to self-directed, the focus of the

mentoring partnership has shifted from knowledge transfer and acquisition to critical reflection and application. The mentee is no longer a passive receiver but an active learner; the mentor is no longer an authority figure but a facilitator of learning.

According to Stephen Brookfield, effective facilitation is characterized by the conditions of voluntary engagement of both partners, mutual respect for the mentee's individuality, collaboration, critical reflection, and empowerment of the learner.[5] Over and over in my work, I have found this approach to be fruitful and compelling for both mentor and mentee: in such a relationship, everyone shares in the learning.

WHAT'S NEW IN THIS EDITION

The practice of mentoring, and knowledge about it, are always evolving—like the mentoring relationship itself. The changes in this new edition of *The Mentor's Guide* reflect that understanding. The chapter on learning has been updated, and a full two chapters are devoted to context—the context of difference and the context of how people come together to connect with one another in the relationship.

In response to new understandings, the names of the four phases of the mentoring cycle have gotten more explicit and descriptive. I've renamed the enabling phase based on feedback that I've received. And I've divided the chapter on enabling growth into two full chapters; the first explores the components of support, challenge, and vision, and the second deals with engaging in feedback and working with obstacles. Almost all of the chapters offer new exercises, as well as fresh examples of mentors and mentees drawn from actual mentoring experiences in

a variety of situations in business, government, nonprofit, and higher education.

How you use this book is up to you. You can use it as a self-help book, a compendium of resources for helping to facilitate mentee learning, an introduction to mentoring, or a workbook to refer to again and again in specific instances. However you use it, remember that *The Mentor's Guide* offers a framework for informed mentoring practice. It is designed to provide insight into the nature and focus of the mentoring process so that you can facilitate learning in ways that enrich, enable, enliven, and engage the learning of the mentee.

Not all mentoring arises from an institutional base. In fact, many mentoring relationships do not. Because this book concentrates on facilitating learning relationships, you can use it independent of organizational affiliation or by community groups. Its perspective has no institutional walls.

If *The Mentor's Guide* is the extent of your mentoring preparation, it will give you a solid grounding from which to proceed. It is not, however, a comprehensive reference about everything there is to know about mentoring. Rather, it presents an array of practical options, steps, and strategies for action and reflection and is useful in a variety of settings to help facilitate the mentee's learning.

The Mentor's Guide combines discussion and workbook-like elements to support those who are in the process of facilitating learning in mentoring relationships, formal and informal. You can use these exercises and reflections to prepare in advance of your mentoring sessions or use them as they are or modify them. Use the exhibits and exercises as discussion points for mentoring conversations. These resources are meant to be helpful

reminders for you to keep the focus on the learning and the learners.

I invite you to begin the journey by starting wherever you are right now.

There are several approaches you might follow:

- *Start with your questions*. Use this book as a reference when you have a question. Frame your question first, and consult the index for where you might find the answer.
- *Start at the beginning*. Proceed step by step, and work your way through the entire book from start to finish. Complete the exercises in logical sequence.
- *Start at the Contents*. Scan the Contents page. Consider the topics that interest you the most, and start with those.
- *Start with your stumbling blocks*. Identify what is getting in the way of your mentoring relationship. What do you need help with first?
- *Start where you are right now*. Locate yourself in relation to the four phases of the mentoring relationship: at the beginning (preparing, negotiating), the middle (enabling growth), or near the end (coming to closure).

We all learn in different ways, so honor your particular learning style as you make your way through the book. Some exercises will mesh with your style and situation; others will not. Choose what is appropriate to your way of learning and your needs. You may find that you need time to reflect before taking action. If you prefer to focus on the concrete and practical, you might be more likely to work through the exercises yourself, as well as with your mentee. If you prefer hands-on experience, try experimenting with a variety of the options presented.

A FEW THOUGHTS BEFORE YOU BEGIN

For me, mentoring is a way of life: it's my job, my passion, and the way I perceive the world. For you, mentoring may be a smaller part of your life, something that you pursue out of interest or curiosity or an urge to give back, or something you agreed to take on as part of your job. However you have come to mentoring, my advice is the same: if you are going to do it, do it right.

My goal is to help you make excellence in your mentoring relationship a personal priority and be more reflective about your own role as a mentor. I hope you will accept my invitation to delve more deeply into understanding your role in a mentoring relationship and how you can more effectively facilitate the learning of your mentee. Before you embark on your journey through the mentoring process, I leave you with these thoughts about the nature of mentoring work:

- Mentoring can be a powerful growth experience for both mentor and mentee. Mentors will learn new things about their mentee, themselves, and their organizations.
- Mentoring is a process of engagement. No one can mentor without connection. In fact, mentoring is most successful when it is done collaboratively. Commitment by and engagement of mentoring partners is a key element in establishing, maintaining, and experiencing successful mentoring relationships.
- Facilitating successful mentoring is a reflective practice that takes preparation and dedication. It begins with self-learning. Taking the time to prepare for the relationship adds value to it.

- Mentoring with staying power focuses on the learners, the learning process, and the learning. *The Mentor's Guide* models that approach by providing exercises to stimulate more informed mentoring practice.
- When mentoring is consciously and conscientiously grounded in principles of learning, the likelihood that the mentoring relationship will become a satisfactory learning relationship for both partners dramatically improves.

Mentoring can be a joy, and it is always a privilege. I hope that this book will inspire you to make it a priority, learn as much as you can, commit time and attention to each of your mentoring relationships, and continue to learn and grow as a mentor.

1. Daloz (1999).
2. Daloz (1999); Mezirow, Taylor, and Associates (2009); Caffarella (2002).
3. Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007).
4. Merriam et al. (2007, p. 97).
5. Brookfield (1986).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

LOIS J. ZACHARY is an internationally recognized expert on mentoring excellence and has been cited as "one of the top 100 minds in leadership" today. Since *The Mentor's Guide* was first published in 2000, it has become the primary resource for organizations interested in promoting mentoring for leadership and learning and for mentors seeking to deepen their mentoring practices. With her best-selling books *Creating a Mentoring Culture* (2005) and *The Mentee's Guide* (2009), Zachary has created a comprehensive set of resources for promoting organizational mentoring sustainability.

   Zachary is president of Leadership Development Services, LLC, a Phoenix-based consulting firm that specializes in leadership and mentoring, and director of its Center for Mentoring Excellence. Her innovative mentoring approaches and expertise in coaching leaders and their organizations in designing, implementing, and evaluating learner-centered mentoring programs have been used by her wide array of clients, including Fortune 500 companies, government organizations, and educational, profit, and nonprofit institutions. Zachary received her doctorate in adult and continuing education from Columbia University. She holds a master of arts degree from Columbia University and a master of science degree in education from Southern Illinois University.

CHAPTER 1

Learning

Grounding the Work of Mentoring

LEARNING ON THE PART of both mentor and mentee grounds the work of mentoring. It is the reason we do it, the process we engage in during a mentoring relationship, and the outcome that both mentor and mentee seek. Genuine learning evolves through a process of exploration and discovery. It requires collaboration between the mentoring partners and a safe environment that honors the mentee's integrity and learning style. In this paradigm, mentor and mentee travel a parallel journey.

LEARNING

Mentoring relationships that are not grounded in learning, especially those based on the traditional model of wisdom transmitted from "master" to "apprentice," are not very successful. Let's begin by looking at how these two very different styles of mentoring operate:

Randy and Pat

Randy, a manager in a multinational corporation, had been assigned to mentor Pat, a new employee. Pat was bright, energetic, highly motivated, and eager to make his mark. Their mentoring relationship started out on a positive note, and they developed

rapport easily. Anxious to please this high-level executive, Pat worked on Randy's projects and researched whatever topics he assigned; he even carried Randy's briefcase to meetings.

Before long, however, the level of interaction dramatically shifted. Over the weeks and months, Randy's responsibilities increased, and he had less and less time for Pat. Soon they drifted away from two-way information sharing and discussion to transaction and information giving. There was no time available for raising or answering questions, and their e-mails were brusque and matter of fact.

Pat soon became frustrated. He had learned a great deal by shadowing Randy, but he needed more. What was missing was the opportunity for Pat and Randy to discuss and process the learning that was taking place.

This mentoring model is not unique to the corporate world. There are similar examples in academia, where the mentee is so eager to get ahead that the exposure that comes with "carrying a professor's briefcase" makes the experience worthwhile. In Pat's case, however, that benefit was short term.

Jocelyn, too, had high ambitions and realized that she needed some specific skills to get ahead. She approached Carmon, a high performer and much-admired manager in her organization, to be her mentor. Jocelyn and Carmon's mentoring relationship, collaborative from the beginning, was much more successful.

Carmon and Jocelyn

At their first meeting, Carmon worked with Jocelyn to crystallize her amorphous learning goals. They set ground rules for the relationship and agreed that it would be Jocelyn's responsibility to initiate the contact between them.

Each time they met, Carmon and Jocelyn reviewed the progress they were making toward Jocelyn's learning goals. They also set aside regular time to talk about their levels of satisfaction with their interaction and how each felt things were going.

They had to work through one potential rough spot: Jocelyn was eager to do as much as possible, and she wanted more of Carmon's time than Carmon felt she could spare. Because they had

intentionally built time to reflect into their regular meetings, they were able to talk openly and honestly about Jocelyn's concerns. They also identified other areas Jocelyn could explore for learning on her own, including several projects, client meetings, and strategic internal meetings. This gave Jocelyn more ways to approach her goals, and freed Carmon to do her own work.

What made the difference in these two very different examples? Randy and Pat's more traditional mentoring relationship is one-way, with knowledge transmitted from mentor to mentee. Jocelyn's more successful relationship with Carmon was a collaborative learning partnership in which learning was allowed to flow freely in both directions.

At a deeper level, these two examples illustrate the difference between the old and new paradigms of mentoring. In the more traditional authoritarian teacher–dependent student–supplicant paradigm, a passive mentee is expected to receive and absorb knowledge.

Today mentoring has become collaborative; it is now a mutual discovery process in which both the mentor and mentee have something to bring to the relationship ("the give") and something to gain that broadens each of their perspectives ("the get"). Wisdom is not passed down but discovered and nurtured. This shift frees both partners to learn together.

Creating a Learning Partnership

The collaborative mentoring paradigm you will learn about in this book is rooted in principles and practices of adult learning. Mentor and mentee work together to achieve specific, mutually defined goals that focus on developing the mentee's skills, abilities, knowledge, and thinking; it is in every way a learning partnership.

The learner—in this case, the mentee—plays an active role in the learning, sharing responsibility for the

priorities, learning, and resources, and becoming increasingly self-directed in the process. The mentor nurtures and develops the mentee's capacity for self-direction (from dependence to independence to interdependence) over the course of the relationship. Throughout the learning relationship, both mentoring partners share accountability and responsibility for achieving the mentee's learning goals.

Today's mentoring relationships are usually short term: when the learning goals have been accomplished, the relationship comes to closure. If goals have not been achieved by a prearranged deadline or the partners agree on more goals, the mentoring partners are free to review, assess, and renegotiate their relationship.

Elements of the Learning-Centered Mentoring Paradigm

The learning-centered mentoring paradigm has seven critical elements: reciprocity, learning, relationship, partnership, collaboration, mutually defined goals, and development:

1. *Reciprocity*. The presence of reciprocity and mutuality in a mentoring relationship frequently surprises first-time mentors. Each partner has specific responsibilities, contributes to the relationship, and learns from the other. Both partners say that as a result, their perspectives have expanded and they have gained new knowledge; mentoring is a value-added relationship for them.

2. *Learning*. Without the presence of learning, mentoring doesn't exist. It is the purpose, the process, and the product of a mentoring relationship. That's why it is essential that you understand your mentees as learners and yourself as a learning facilitator. As a

mentor, you will need to know how to engage and guide your mentee appropriately and create a climate that supports learning. And you must also be open to learning yourself.

3. *Relationship*. Strong relationships motivate, inspire, and support learning and development. But good mentoring relationships take time to develop and grow. From the beginning, both mentor and mentee must be open and trusting and honor each other's uniqueness. Both partners need to work at establishing, maintaining, and strengthening the relationship through their mentoring time.

4. *Partnership*. A good relationship forms the basis for a strong mentoring partnership. You and your mentee respect one another and are attuned to each other's needs. This will help you establish agreements that are anchored in trust. With a strong partnership, you will both feel secure enough to work at building and strengthening the relationship and to hold yourself and each other accountable for results.

5. *Collaboration*. Partnership is, by definition, collaborative. Together you and your mentee build the relationship, share knowledge, and come to consensus about the focus of the mentee's desired learning; then you actively work together to achieve it.

6. *Mutually defined goals*. Mentoring must flow in the direction of defined goals—otherwise, like a river without a clear channel, your relationship will meander until it dries up. It is vital to clarify and articulate learning goals at the beginning and to review them throughout the mentoring relationship. This means asking questions, listening to answers, and engaging in ongoing conversation to ensure that you select meaningful goals that will guide the work of the relationship.

7. *Development.* Mentoring needs to promote the mentee's development and growth. When development is future directed, it creates its own momentum. As a skilled mentor, you can consciously facilitate movement forward by providing appropriate support, challenge, and "help in anchoring the vision of the potential self."[1] This means helping mentees to develop the skills, knowledge, abilities, and thinking necessary to achieve their success.

MENTORING BASED ON PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING

The shift in mentoring practice aligns with basic principles of adult learning first laid out by Malcolm Knowles:[2]

- Adults learn best when they are involved in diagnosing, planning, implementing, and evaluating their own learning.
- The role of the facilitator is to create and maintain a supportive climate that promotes conditions necessary for learning to take place.
- Adult learners have a need to be self-directing.
- Readiness for learning increases when there is a specific need to know.
- Life's reservoir of experience is a primary learning resource; the life experiences of others enrich the learning process.
- Adult learners have an inherent need for immediacy of application.
- Adults respond best to learning when they are internally motivated to learn.