

What is Mentoring?



EPIC Mentoring

E = Experiential

The healthiest mentoring relationship is not a one-way lecture, but a relational and growing journey for both parties.

P = Participatory

Both the mentor and mentee participate in the outcomes of the meeting. In doing so, they share similar experiences and offer one another a reciprocal relationship.

I = Image Driven

Human beings understand reality through metaphors and symbols. Being aware of how the mentee receives and shares information and learning is critical while reflecting the image in whom all are formed and shaped.

C = Connected

Part of healthy mentoring is helping the mentee understand their connection to others as well as connecting the mentee's experience to the Christian experience.

Adapted from Leonard Sweet's EPIC model of doing church as outlined in Post-Modern Pilgrims: First Century Passion for the 21st Century World (2000)

“Mentoring is listening with wisdom.”

– Jean Vanier, Canadian Catholic theologian, and founder of L'Arche

MENTOR TASKS

- 1 Establish the boundaries of the relationship
- 2 Discover strengths (see I-C-N-U sidebar)
- 3 Develop character
- 4 Determine focus
- 5 Discern blind spots
- 6 Close the gap between potential and performance
- 7 Offer accountability
- 8 Speak value into the other's life

IS MENTORING RIGHT FOR ME? Questions to Ask

- **Am I enthusiastic in my ministry role?**
- **Am I effective in my ministry role?**
- **Do I have a desire to develop and help others?** A good mentor is sincerely interested in helping someone else without any “official” reward. Good mentors do it because they genuinely want to see someone else succeed.
- **Do I have the ability and availability to commit real time and energy to the mentoring relationship?** Good intentions aren’t enough. Mentoring takes time.
- **Do I have a willingness to share failures and personal experiences?** Mentors need to share both their “how I did it right” and their “how I did it wrong” stories. Both experiences provide valuable opportunities for learning.
- **Do I have a growth mindset and learning attitude?** The best teachers have always been and always will be those who remain curious learners themselves.
- **Do I have skill in developing others?** This includes the very real skills of active listening, asking powerful, open-ended questions, self-reflection, providing feedback and being able to share stories that include personal anecdotes, case examples, and honest insight.

Adapted from an article by Mary Abbajay, Forbes Magazine

I-C-N-U: Initiating a Mentoring Conversation



1. Pray that God might identify people around you with passion for Christ and gifts for ministry.
2. Invite those persons to join you for a coffee or lunch to talk.
3. Offer the person a I-C-N-U invitation by saying: “Joe, I see in you a really passionate guy who’s faith is an inspiration to the rest of us (or whatever it is that you see, e.g., you’re great with kids, love working with your hands in mission, etc.). Would you be willing to get together some and share with me what God is doing in your life, and where that might lead you someday?”
4. Invite them to future discipling conversations and say: “Joe, I can see that God is doing something in your life. You’re demonstrating your faith in some new ways. If you’re ever interested in visiting about how to keep growing in your faith, I’d love to visit about that. I can imagine some short conversations over coffee would be all the time commitment it would take.”
5. Share about the “5 Cups of Coffee” conversation starter guide by saying: “I found this “5 Cups of Coffee” conversation starter. It’s about figuring out what God wants us to do and it uses conversations between friends to help each other out. Would you be willing to work through this with me?”

Guidelines for Safe and Honest Mentoring Conversations

The term “boundaries” refers to the rules, guidelines, limits and standards that are expected in the mentoring relationship.

Mentor Boundary Considerations

- What kind of access does the mentee have to you? What is the limit?
- Does communicating require an appointment? What forms of communication are acceptable? What times of day are acceptable?
- Know when to refer, i.e., debt/financial issues, or personal problems that crop up; only discuss those issues you are comfortable with and refer to the appropriate professionals like a therapist.
- If you are mentoring a minor (under 18 years of age), follow Safe Sanctuaries/Safe Gatherings protocols related to meeting with the minor including only meeting in a public space with others present.

Mentee Boundary Considerations

- Avoid unhealthy dependence. For example, mentors are not expected to have definitive answers or be available 24/7.
- Consider “what would I do if...” in assessing your own boundaries.
- Prioritize how you might best utilize your mentor’s time and wisdom.

Set Expectations Together

- Agree on frequency, duration and intervals of meetings/communications and how this will occur (e.g., face-to-face, voice or video calls).
- Beyond agreeing to confidentiality, discuss what confidentiality means to each of you in the context of the mentoring relationship.
- Set 2-3 goals that are the focus of the mentoring relationship.
- Practice active listening. Commit to not interrupting, not repeatedly looking at devices, resisting the urge to “fix” the other, listening intently without judgment, seeking to understand others’ points of view, realizing that other views can enlighten and challenge both parties on the journey.

MENTEE QUALITIES: Faithful + Gifted

What makes a good mentee?

F = Faithful:

Will they remain committed?

A = Available:

Will they make mentoring a priority?

I = Initiative:

Do they show a desire to grow?

T = Teachable:

Are they willing to learn new truths and change?

H = Hungry:

Do they have passion to reach new potential?

G = Gifted:

Do they exhibit leadership gifts? Do they have growing communication and organization skills?

I = Influential:

Are they already influencing peers and leaving their mark on others?

F = Fruitful:

Do they get results? Do they need an official position to produce fruit?

T = Trustworthy:

Do they seem credible within their life?

S = Serving:

Are they already serving in some area?

Could I be a Mentor?

How do potential mentees identify strong mentors?



- Be the kind of person who is enjoyable to mentor. Are you open, flexible, resilient, respectful? Are you eager to learn, and committed to modifying how you're interacting in the world so you can have even more success, reward and happiness?
- Are you already inspiring people you're interacting and working with now? Have you already demonstrated your potential and have lived experience to share with others? Do you engender trust, likeability and belief in others?
- Are you currently being mentored by someone? Those who mentor others should be in a mentoring relationship as well.