

SOUTHWESTERN ASSEMBLIES OF GOD UNIVERSITY

HARRISON SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

MOTIVATION, TEAMS, COACHING, & MENTORING

LDR 5283-531

INSTRUCTOR:

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ASSIGNMENT: Book Interaction: "Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need
to Succeed in Life." by Stanley, P., & Clinton, J. R.

STUDENT DATA:

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Point 1: The ideal mentor does not exist.

Interaction to point #1. The idea of having a mentor who can serve as an example in every area of life does not correlate with reality. Stanley and Clinton state that few such mentors exist (1992, p. 28). However, that fact should not impede looking for mentors for every area of life. Since "there aren't enough ideal mentors who can do it all" (Stanley & Clinton, 1992, p. 41), mentees must proactively look for a variety of individuals to supplement coaching and mentoring in the different facets of their lives.

As we have discussed in previous interactions, mentor relationships bring light into areas of life where we may not see clearly. Whether we need help with issues in our family, personal lives, business endeavors, or we struggle with growth in our Christian walk, and we can look to people further ahead of us in life. Mentors are people who have gained insights through their personal experiences. Although not one ideal mentor can guide you through *every* area of life, "someone will always know more than you do (in a specific domain) and may be eager to pass it on" (Stanley & Clinton, 1992, p. 104).

Point 2: Mentoring is a relational experience.

Interaction to point #2. The authors define mentoring as "a relational experience in which one person empowers another by sharing God-given resources" (Stanley & Clinton, 1992, p. 33), but we struggle with self-sufficiency. Our society encourages people to seek individualism, but unchecked individualism becomes a heavy burden to carry (Stanley & Clinton, 1992, p. 36). Sustainable growth happens in the confines of relationships; it does not exist in a vacuum. As godly leaders, we must seek

interdependence over self-sufficiency. As a result, leaders should not do life alone (Stanley & Clinton, 1992, p. 37).

Though challenging, I agree with this point. The realities of raising a family, working a full-time job, and other daily commitments, make it nearly impossible to have meaningful relationships with other people. However, mentoring requires commitment. Both people need to commit to forming a healthy mentor-mentee relationship willingly. If commitment exists, these four elements will characterize healthy mentoring relationships: "safety, focus, sincerity, and follow-through until growth takes place" (Stanley & Clinton, 1992, p. 44).

Point 3: The constellation mentor/mentee.

Interaction to point #3. Apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, a perfect role model does not exist (Stanley & Clinton, 1992, p. 135). We cannot deposit all our expectations for a mentor in one human, so the authors showcase the "constellation model." Upward mentoring, downward mentoring, and peer mentoring form the "constellation model," allowing leaders to give and receive well-rounded mentoring.

Upward mentoring exists to establish relationships with mature followers of Christ, and it provides "perspective, accountability, and the stimulus to persevere" (Stanley & Clinton, 1992, ps. 162-163). Downward mentoring focuses on mentoring others. Stanley and Clinton state that "there's a mutual blessing in mentoring others. Both the mentor and mentoree are developed through the experience" (1992, p. 165). Finally, peer mentoring exists when two colleagues decide to invest in each other. In peer mentoring, we share God-given resources with people at the same level as us (Stanley & Clinton, 1992, p. 166).

Leaders who only pour into one of these relationships tend to lack a three-hundred-and-sixty-degree view of their abilities and character. We need to cultivate these three types of relationships at the same time because "leaders need to be responsible to others" (Stanley & Clinton, 1992, p. 158). Recognizing their need for others and developing a network of these relationships will help leaders deal with their vulnerabilities (Stanley & Clinton, 1992, p. 160).

In my opinion, cultivating peer relationships demands more of me. The reciprocity of peer mentoring poses a more significant challenge to me than upward or downward mentoring; it requires more vulnerability on my part. I find it extremely difficult to cultivate these relationships because of complacency and the excuse of a busy schedule. However, I recognize that I must embrace vulnerability and make the best of it to make the best of me.

Point 4: Few leaders finish well.

Interaction to point #4. Stanley and Clinton make the authoritative statement that "few leaders finish well" (1992, p. 193). Although I wish more leaders finished well, this reality haunts me. Stanley and Clinton mention a lack of discipline as one of the causes for too few to end well. They argue that discipline helps us channel our focus (1992, p. 220). To this list, I will also add cynicism.

Carey Nieuwhof, in his book, *Didn't see it coming*, talks about cynicism and its effects. Cynicism causes people to lose hope. He says, "Cynicism is not always a conscious decision, but it's a decision nonetheless. It's the decision you make to stop hoping, trusting, and believing" (Nieuwhof, 2018, p. 22). Stanley and Clinton observed

that "most people cease learning by the age of forty" (1992, p. 222). With age, you decide where to incline. Will you lean towards cynicism? Or will you lean towards hope?

I agree with this point. I know adults of advanced age with the happiest personalities, the type of person who always exudes joy. But, unfortunately, I also know mean and crotchety older adults; I love them, but they will never invest in others. Their focus is themselves. So instead, I hope to maintain a teachable spirit, remain hopeful, keep believing and trusting in God for the purpose he has for my life.

Point 5: Define the relationship.

Interaction to point #5. The mentor and mentee need to find practical guidelines (Stanley & Clinton, 1992, p. 197); this will help define their relationship and improve it as they progress. Stanley and Clinton suggest that "the key is good communication and spelling out the expectations from both sides" (1992, p. 212). Next, the mentor and mentee must determine how they will accomplish success through their relationship.

I agree with this point. A mentor-mentee connection needs to have a specific purpose and modus operandi. For example, in what area will the mentor help bring clarity? How often will they meet? For how long? How will they keep each other accountable? Defining these aspects of their relationship will produce focus, and focus will bring clarity to the priorities of their association (Stanley & Clinton, 1992, p. 217). Lastly, we often overlook the length of the relationship. In other words, when will the mentoring relationship end? Not having an end date could ruin a mentoring relationship.

Point 6: Needs change.

Interaction to point #6. Stanley and Clinton state, "your need for the mentoring function of spiritual guidance will ebb and flow" (1992, p. 72). They also state, "a coach

is particularly important when you step into a new responsibility or try to do something you have never done before (Stanley & Clinton, 1992, p. 73). As our needs evolve, so should the specific areas on which we focus. More change might occur regarding the types of relationships we need in a particular season.

Some seasons require more intense coaching, while we can learn from a contemporary or historical coaching model in other seasons. In any case, the responsibility lies on the person looking for mentoring (Stanley & Clinton, 1992, p. 98). Though starting with a specific purpose will often guide your relationship to the desired outcome, our needs will often change in the journey.

Interaction with the video on the subject of connecting.

In the video, Dr. Blakney dives further into the concept of connecting. He states that "if you want to connect with someone, they need to sense that you care." He notes that to relate with others, we must establish eye-to-eye contact in conversations. Eye-to-eye contact speaks to a distraction-free connection, letting the interlocutor know you see them and value their time.

When we speak, we often begin to formulate a response to the following remark the speaker will make instead of listening. However, to show people that we care, we must focus on their conversations. To understand, we must grasp what the other person communicates. Doing so can help alleviate confusion, but more importantly, it shows the other person that we care about what they have to say.

Lastly, to develop better conversational skills, Dr. Blakney invites us to talk slowly for two reasons. Firstly, talking slowly helps our brain to catch up to our mouth; we tend to say less confusing things and have a more thoughtful dialogue. Secondly, it allows

the other person to understand better what we communicate. We live in a time when people talk for others to hear them and not understand others. Therefore, possessing excellent communications skills that keep the other speaker in mind can set a person apart from others.

Reading statement

I, Daniel De los Reyes, have read 100% of the book.

References

- Nieuwhof, C. (2018). *Didn't See It Coming: Overcoming the Seven Greatest Challenges That No One Expects and Everyone Experiences*. WaterBrook.
- Stanley, P., & Clinton, J. R. (1992). *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life*. NavPress.