

## Leaders As Mentors

### The "Power 6" Precepts of an Actualizing Mentoring Relationship

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As you reflect on your personal encounters with a superior mentor, undoubtedly the characteristics that define outstanding mentorship are easily identifiable. The greatest mentors, those I regard as Actualizing Mentors, are those who forge relationships characterized by the "Power 6" precepts:

- 1 Investment** – A willingness and desire to give of their time, talent, and treasures is what differentiates the highly effective mentors from those just going through the motions. Mentoring is tough, even when done correctly. Mentoring represents an investment of the highest order to yield the greatest good. An Actualizing Mentor is willing to make such an investment and expects a significant investment on behalf of the mentee. Benjamin Franklin said, "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest."
- 2 Intimacy** – Intimacy is a must in mentoring. Intimacy in the context of mentoring refers to trust, honesty, and vulnerability. Mentor and mentee getting to know each other is essential if the specific and appropriate counsel is to be imparted. Mentoring becomes doubly difficult in an atmosphere of blind anonymity. Consider the fact that even Drill Sergeants develop a level of intimacy with their "cruits." In the workplace, it seems the more superficial the relationship between the mentor and the mentee, the less impacting and impressive the results. In the end, it takes more than a few success stories over a dinner to groom a new leader. Intimate relationships usually give birth to new possibilities.
- 3 Intuition** – According to Albert Einstein, "Intuition is all that really matters." We all have it - mentors use it. A mentor's intuition is a by-product of experience, expertise, and wisdom. The synergy of those elements allows the mentor to apply inductive and deductive reasoning in the analysis of trends and situations. In doing so, it appears the mentor has a sixth sense. Instead, they are actually weighing the odds based on all known factors. Actualizing Mentors use this skill to assist the mentee in problem solving and critical thinking.
- 4 Inspiration** – Wolfgang von Goethe once commented, "Treat a man as he is, he will remain so. Treat a man the way he can be and ought to be, and he will become as he should be." Mentors help mentees to see a bigger vision of themselves. Mentors teach the mentee to dream with a purpose. One of the interesting interpretations of the word inspiration is to "breathe life into." Actualizing Mentors do just that, they breathe life into the mentee's aspirations of success and significance.
- 5 Inquiry** – Long before it was called appreciative inquiry or any other such title, Actualizing Mentors were asking probing questions and facilitating learning via discovery. The asking of thought-provoking questions is a great tool to expand the mentee's perspective. A second benefit of in-depth inquiry is that it assists the mentor in assessing the needs and strengths of the mentee. The mentee may be confronting challenges that are completely unfamiliar to the mentor. The inquiry allows the mentor to tailor the process to the mentee's current issues and circumstances.

**6 Implementation** – The masters of mentoring know that true success is in the doing. That said, highly effective mentors push their mentees to “do” not merely discuss. Becoming committed to getting things done is a surefire way to become a high impact player. The difference between successful organizations and those who struggle often comes down to the leader’s IQ – implementation quotient. Implementation quotation is the applied knowledge of how to get things done within the structure of the organization, political climate, and bureaucracy in which one operates.

**Leadership Lesson:** Those leaders who embrace mentoring are embracing a more successful future for their organization. So much of what allows an individual to be successful within an organization isn’t written in technical journals and SOP’s. Instead, it resides in the lessons taught by Actualizing Mentors. Oh, there is one other advantage of mentoring – immortality is the gift given to those who inspire others.

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