

VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY
MENTORSHIP OUTREACH PROGRAM
CURRICULUM

Section One: ROLE OF THE MENTOR

Program Objectives:

- To provide support and information for new students and those considering returning to school, both directly and by supporting existing initiatives.
- To reach out to the community by providing information regarding opportunities at Malaspina University-College and/or by sharing your story.
- To provide an opportunity for current students to share their success and to develop interpersonal and leadership skills through assisting others.

Training Objectives:

To provide training for mentors to develop and enhance their interpersonal skills and leadership abilities in the following areas:

- Understanding of mentorship and leadership
- Exploration of personal values and mission
- Understanding the dynamics and models of self awareness and self esteem
- Communication skills, with an emphasis on listening and “storytelling”
- Knowledge of campus and community resources

Program expectations

- Commitment for one term, minimum
- Attend core training
- Devote a total of 30 hours, including core training, to the project. Additional hours will come from: additional workshop training, one to one mentoring, assistance with activities on campus and in the community

Meeting these requirements will result in a Certificate of Completion

What is mentorship?

The term “mentor” comes from Greek Mythology. In Homer’s *Odyssey* Odysseus was preparing to leave for the siege of Troy and entrusted the care and guidance of his son to his older and wiser friend, Mentor. The Craft Guilds of the Middle Ages were founded on mentoring; young men were apprenticed to master craftsmen working in specific professions such as merchandising or law or the arts.

This tradition continues both in our modern myths (Star Wars) and in reality (Trades Apprenticeships). Today mentoring relationships have become popular in educational, business and social services settings. Human Resources departments use mentorship

as a way to enhance employee orientation and on the job training; Big Brothers/Big Sisters is mentorship that promotes opportunities for personal development of youth. Many Colleges and Universities use peer mentorship to enhance recruitment and retention of students.

As societies become more and more complex and impersonal, the need for person-to-person connections becomes vital, and personal connections through mentoring are proven to have a real and positive impact. Mentoring brings about a culture of continuous learning and one that is open to differences, to sharing and to dealing positively with change.

Definitions

There are as many definitions of mentoring as there are contexts within which it takes place. However these definitions are useful because they point out the nature of the relationship and some of the skills and behaviours involved.

“Mentoring is essentially a learning relationship between two people. It requires trust, commitment and emotional engagement. It involves listening, challenge and support.” Bob Garvey, University of Durham, Business School

“Mentoring is a freely given/chosen relationship. It is an intentional and reflective process based on a mutual investment of time, energy, trust, knowledge transference and learning. It is a reciprocal and experiential relationship that has an enduring impact, both formally and informally, on the expectations of those giving and choosing the relationship.” Linda Mollenhauer, report for Big Brothers and Sisters

“A one-to-one, non-judgemental relationship in which an individual mentor voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another. This relationship is typically developed at a time of transition in the mentee’s life, and lasts for a significant and sustained period of time.” L. Carrad

“The kindness of strangers.” M. Freedman

“The art of encouragement.” Marsha Sinetar

The definitions make clear a number of things:

- mentoring is a two-way process. The mentor will often benefit as much as the mentee from the relationship.
- mentoring is a relationship between an experienced person who shares knowledge, experience and insights with a less experienced person or group.
- it is always based on mutual trust and respect. Confidentiality is a key requirement.
- it is a relationship of free choice and voluntary commitment.
- the nature of the mentoring relationship varies according to the personal style of both participants

- mentors are seeking to transfer values and behaviours as well as knowledge and experience, but they should be forward-looking, not rooted in the past, and should be addressing the mentee's agenda rather than their own.
- mentors are role models. They know the ropes. Mentors can offer a gateway to the people and resources that others need to succeed.
- mentoring also helps build networks through which people assist each other by sharing information and contacts...and simple hellos.
- mentoring **is not** a private lesson or a tutoring session; it **is not** advising or counselling; it **is not** (necessarily) a friendship...although it could become one.
- Mentorship is interactive. Both partners contribute, change and grow.

Self Understanding

1. Why do you want to be a peer mentor?
2. What do you want to get out of this program?
3. What do you feel you bring to the program?

“LEADING FROM WITHIN”

“A man should first direct himself in the way he should go. Only then should he instruct others.” Buddha

“Leading from Within”, a phrase coined by US writer Parker Palmer¹, or “values-based” leadership is the concept that sets the tone for the sort of leadership that we encourage in this mentorship training.

Our contention is that only through self- exploration and self-awareness and the resulting confidence and self-esteem, can we truly start to define our personal values. Once we gain an understanding of who we are and what we stand for we can, with confidence, communicate that to the outside – to the people we mentor and encourage. In other words, leadership begins with self-awareness guided by what is right – clarity of core values - and the confidence to share and model the benefits of those values with commitment and consistency. By knowing who you are, what you stand for and by presenting this to the outside world clearly and confidently, you will lead those on the same quest, with the same vision.

Clemmer contends that leadership is action that starts “right here”, inside, at the heart. At the core is knowing who we are, why we are doing what we do, why it is important. In short, we need to understand and articulate our personal vision.²

“We should take care not to make the intellect our god. It has, of course, powerful muscles, but no personality. It cannot lead, it can only serve.” Albert Einstein

To summarize, our objectives for this training are:

- to explore the concept of “leading from within”,
- to enhance our self-awareness, to develop ways to continually enhance our confidence, and
- to clarify, articulate and commit to our core values and our personal vision.

We believe that this is the first set of tools you need to an effective mentor and leader. We will see how self-awareness and confidence are necessary for clear communication, for “telling our stories” and for encouraging others to do the same.

¹ Boyer, J. Patrick, editor, *Leading in an Upside-down World: New Canadian Perspectives on Leadership*, Dundurn Press, Toronto, ON, 2003

² Clemmer, Jim, *The Leader's Digest: Timeless principles for team and organization success*, TCG Press, Toronto, ON, 2003

In other terms we can call self-awareness self study, self-assessment, self discovery, but in all cases the operative word is self. There are some negative connotations attached to "self work" - that we are being selfish, that we are being passive (not doing anything), that it is simply navel gazing, that we can't do anything about it anyway.

Are these myths?

Do we have an understanding of why we are going here?

It is likely that the majority of people who rise to status positions have a tendency toward Extraversion, which may mean a tendency to ignore the internal. They operate competently and effectively in the external world – it works for them – at the expense of self-awareness. In fact, many have such confidence in the external world that they consider inner life as illusory, a waste of time. But the link between leadership and self-awareness and even spirituality calls us to re-examine that denial of what is inside.

Defining Our Personal Values

Stephen R. Covey, best known for *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* uses slightly different terminology, but the message is reinforced: the most effective leaders are models of "principle centered" leadership³.

So what are these values, principles? Covey says that they are as basic as fairness, justice, service, equity, integrity, honesty, and trust - that these are the values or principles that provide direction, that give us answers to the tough questions. Leaders who model these and have the courage and humility to constantly learn and grow will have enduring influence. Humility, because we have to let go of the power, we have to say "the principles are in control....not me". Courage, to be able to align with new ideas, new paradigms, and to take risks. Covey says that born out of humility and courage is integrity, "integrating ourselves with principles". All of this allows us to grow and learn and share, and it leaves time and energy for service and contribution because there is no longer a need to play power or political games - the power comes from the principles and the security comes from within. Covey says that we all have the capacity to choose this way of leading, that it can be applied to all areas of our lives, and that there will most likely be a defining moment, a moment of truth that will put it to a test.

Marsha Sinetar, best known for "Do What you Want and the Money Will Follow" states that true leadership is based on ethical, morally based decisions – a "law beyond the law"⁴. What she calls "productive freedom" includes clear standards of conduct, self-discipline, honesty, and a well-schooled honourable conscience that reminds us of our noble goals. She encourages us to listen to our inner voice and to the voices of our mentors. When faced with a tough decision, Wayne Gretzky says that he asks himself

³ Hesselbein, Frances; Goldsmith, Marshall; Beckhard, Richard, editors for The Drucker Foundation, *Leader of the Future: new visions, strategies and practices for the new era*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, CA 1996

⁴ Sinetar, Marsha, *The Mentor's Spirit: Life Lessons on Leadership and the Art of Encouragement*, St. Martin's Press, New York, NY, 1998

whether he would be okay having his Dad read about his actions in the morning news. And while we may not all have Wayne Gretzky's dad on our shoulder, Sinetar suggests that we can all have encouragers in our lives – those who are trusting and trustworthy, who love people and love life, who are empathetic and non-judgmental and most of all, those who are authentic – who are themselves. Beyond these mentors and guides, we can also count on a “mentor's spirit” – almost anything that deepens our understanding of life and of ourselves. She suggests that we discover the “spirit of our life's story” by asking ourselves these questions:

- What brings me to life?
- What's worth doing?
- What deep meanings fuel my enthusiasm?
- What (or who) drains my energy and optimism?
- What (or who) renews my hope, drive, and vision of possibilities?
- What might I do – what must I do – to honour the life I've been given?

These questions, asked earnestly and consistently will bring us closer to some core values if we walk with them and work with them - not knowing all the answers, but continuing to ask.

Charles E. Pascal, in his essay: “Where Have All The Leaders Gone?”⁵ illuminates some of the issues in the ongoing search for leaders worth following. He asks how many tax dollars spent on inquiries would have been saved if, working from core values, politicians and bureaucrats could simply say: “I was wrong. It's my fault. I don't know how this happened but I take responsibility. I am sorry. I will try to fix it. I shouldn't have done that.” It is almost laughable to think of high profile CEOs or politicians or criminals making such statements. But making them would demonstrate the conviction of the person's core values. From an educational perspective, those statements and what they represent - basic honesty, truthfulness, willingness to take responsibility - are what we expect from students every day at VIU. Why not, then, expect the same from those at the top? Why not demand that from those at the top?

Commitment to Values

Even those who do espouse noble core values will sometimes lack the understanding of what it takes to totally commit to them. Pascal: “I remember a number of years ago a very fine person, a corporate head, gave a speech on how important it is for corporations to give back to their communities to assist the growing number of disadvantaged people. The speech was so eloquent that it landed him a spot on CBC's “The National Magazine”. After he made his opening remarks about the importance of giving back to the community, he was asked, ‘So now that governments have completely starved social service agencies because your lobbyists have been successful in arguing for less government and more tax cuts, does your speech

⁵ Boyer, J. Patrick, editor, *Leading in an Upside-down World: New Canadian Perspectives on Leadership*, Dundurn Press, Toronto, ON, 2003

represent an apology or a cover up?” Here is an example of disconnect. This CEO’s speech was from the heart - he did care. Yet like so many others, he was not acting on those values with consistency, with true commitment. In his heart he cared for his community and what was happening to it, but he had not connected his day-to-day business activities with their effect on the community. If one identifies, for example, “serving community” as a core value then as a leader one must ensure that his or her actions are consistently in support of that value. In our example, profit cannot be separated from community contributions. So, commitment means consistency. Effective leaders maintain commitment to their core values in making decisions and in how they treat people - they live the values, they “walk the talk” and therein lays the consistency.

Commitment also means taking responsibility. It means not blaming others - the unions, the government, the customers, the funders, the suppliers, the competition. If we continue to blame others, we give them the power. So while committed leaders will often have to work in circumstances not of their making, using core values to guide them will allow them to take action that they can proudly defend and take responsibility for.

“Don’t curse the darkness, light a candle.” Chinese proverb

Laurence Boldt goes on to help us clarify our values by looking at:

1. universal values – experienced, not comprehended, they reveal and inform the essence of the human condition. Not the exclusive domain of the poet or the artist, universal values are present in our myths and legends, in our bible stories and our nursery rhymes. They can be experienced as life, joy, brotherhood, love, peace, unity, sacrifice, service, eternity, bliss.
2. cultural values – generally agreed upon social values, particular to a time and place. They are concerned with ethics, right and wrong, good and bad, with manners and customs, and they are constantly changing. Cultural values are reflected in ideas and behaviours that society rewards – or punishes. And we see them at work in government and business, education and law, philosophy and aesthetics and in every sort of social institution. While necessary, they should never be mistaken for universal values.
3. individual values – our private meanings, our innate way of being, influenced by our nurturing. These can be a source of individual strength, or weakness. They are reflected in our individual goals, humour, relationships, commitments and even our personal objects. They are reflected in our “preferences”.

All three types of values overlap and work with and against each other. How?

More Questions: Putting Values into Action

We have talked about values and committing to values, but how does this lead us to a “vision” that we can lead our followers to?

Does the leader have the vision first, then recruit to match it or encourage others to change toward it? Does the leader work toward others “buying in” and following? Or, does the vision emerge as leaders work on and share their self awareness and values, and encourage others to do the same? Can the vision come out of a group of leaders - “leaders among leaders”- discussing their core values and agreeing to commit together? This training, being values-based and community focused, relies on this. How do we put these defined values and vision to work? How do we act? What do we do?

There is a range of opinions on values and vision, but a common theme emerges from a wide variety of sources: knowing your “self” first, defining your values, and living them – walking the talk – with commitment. Again and again we hear that this is the key to leadership.

Limiting leadership

Many of us fall into patterns that limit our capacity to act. We may exaggerate our own importance, thinking that things will simply happen for us, the way will be shown, somehow, without the work. Or we may deny that there is any purpose or message to what we do - that our actions are not based on values or vision. We simply work, do as we are told, get paid. This behaviour is, of course, based on values anyway - perhaps unanalyzed values. And still others of us will minimize our importance, claiming that one person cannot do much, cannot make a difference.

A leader will learn to challenge all three of these assumptions, these blocks to action – challenge them in oneself and challenge them in others.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Informal or Natural Mentoring

Mentors are not picked for any superhuman qualities. Most are experienced, well-balanced individuals who have already demonstrated that they have a keen interest in assisting others. Most of us have probably been mentored in our past even though the role may not have been formalised, and it is useful to use our own experience to reflect on the qualities of the particular person or people who played a crucial role in our lives and our times of transition.

Who has served as a mentor for you?

What qualities did they possess?

We may also have an informal role as a mentor now; we may help, informally, friends, family others in our peer group. It is helpful to look at what we bring to these relationships.

What qualities do you bring to this informal mentoring?

Personal traits of a mentor include:

- Friendly and caring
- Honest
- Open and non-judgemental
- Dependable
- Respects Confidentiality
- Welcoming and friendly
- Understanding and supportive
- Good listener

In summary, then, **the ideal mentor** for this project is one who:

- Has a genuine interest in other people and a desire to help
- Can relate to others' problems because they are self aware
- Has up to date knowledge and information to pass on
- Has a good understanding of the college and how it works
- Has a positive perspective on education – and on life in general
- Combines patience with good interpersonal and communication skills
- Has sufficient time and energy to devote to the program
- Can act as a role model

Giving Becomes Receiving

The benefits of becoming a mentor include:

- the pleasure of sharing experience and expertise with a person from a different environment
- the opportunity to improve self awareness and leadership skills
- the opportunity to “live” your values
- Resume and portfolio building
- Certificate of Completion
- the great satisfaction of giving

What can a mentor do?

- Welcome potential students at Monday Information Sessions
- Visit community resources with the coordinator
- Volunteer on campus or in community with mentorship as a goal
- Offer to escort or find an escort to the Information Session and/or to Assessment
- Connect with students on campus:
 - Meet for coffee
 - Send an email

- Attend campus events
- Take in a free film or concert
- Meet for a break during studying
- **Ideas???**

“Small things mean so much!” Jai

Starting Out...one to one mentoring

It is important that there be a discussion about what it is the mentee wants...what are the expectations regarding the kind of assistance they need, time spent, preferred way of being in contact?. And it is just as important for the mentor to set out what they can provide; to set boundaries around their time, their availability, what they can offer. A first step may be to simply set up a time for coffee. At that time a second meeting, or perhaps a weekly meeting time, can be set. For some, a quick weekly check-in by phone or email may be all that is required.

For some mentors, being available at any time is not a problem, others may want to ask the mentee to hold questions, concerns, issues until a pre-arranged meeting.

Ideas for Conversation

Why did you decide to come to school? Why Malaspina?

What do you think will be most challenging?

What classes are you taking? Who is your instructor?

Have you lived in Nanaimo long?

What part of town do you live in?

Where did you go to school?

Do you like movies? Books? TV? Sports?

What kind of music do you like?

Is your family here? Do you have brothers and sisters? Children?

* Note that these questions are “open” not “closed”.

Any personal questions you ask, you should also be prepared to answer.

What if it's not working?

Don't try to problem solve on your own...listen, get as much information as you need, but at the first sign of difficulty call or email the coordinator and/or refer the student to someone who can help.

Examples:

- inappropriate requests, gestures, conversation
- unwanted expressions of interest
- disclosure of serious problems; for example, discussion of suicide or harming others

http://www.onsp.umich.edu/current_students/mentorship/resources.html

Resources and References

Mentoring – uk.org.uk http://www.mentoring-uk.org.uk/guide_mentoring_hints_and_tips.asp

Canterbury Christ Church University College, <http://pgclt.cant.ac.uk/skills.htm>

Student Connections Mentorship Project: Training Manual, Malaspina University-College, Student Services

Mentoring Citizenship and the Community, L.Carrad, 2002

Mentoring Students and Young People, Andrew Miller, 2002

The Kindness of Strangers, Reflections on the Mentoring Movement, 1992

University of Western Ontario, London, ON, University Student's Council

University of Michigan, Office of New Student Programs, Peer Mentoring Training Manual

University of Toronto, Engineering Science
NSight Mentorship, Mentor Training
http://www.onsp.umich.edu/current_students/mentorship/resources.html

Jo Acampora, ASPECT's Values-based Leadership Series, 1st edition, 2006

Session Two: Self Awareness and Self Esteem

Objectives:

- to enhance self-awareness
- to develop ways to continually enhance confidence
- to clarify, articulate and commit to core values and personal vision

Johari Window

The Johari window is a method of learning more about yourself and becoming comfortable with sharing who you are. This training emphasizes that strong leaders share – who they are, what they believe, their visions and dreams. And leaders encourage those around them to do the same, thereby creating an environment where values and vision can come to the forefront. The Johari Window, not quite as mystical as the name implies, was developed by Joe Luft and Harry Ingham to assist them in their work on group processes and behaviour. It can help us understand the social significance of knowing who we are and sharing that knowledge with others. The Johari is based on two concepts: feedback - getting information from others, and self-disclosure - telling others about yourself.

Arena: the public self - things I know about myself and that I let others see. As the arena becomes larger a more creative, expressive relationship with others develops; this will help create – and depend on – a safe, trusting environment.

Façade or mask: the private self - things I know about myself but don't let others know. The goal is to decrease this area through self-disclosure. In the case of a leader, this façade can be diminished for themselves and others through initiating and modelling self-disclosure, through problem solving and through processing issues as a group.

Blind Spot: things others see but that I am not aware of. Being open to feedback from others can diminish the blind spot. A leader's role is to assist others by providing a safe environment for feedback, by seeking information from others, by involving and encouraging others, and by listening.

The Unknown: things I am not aware of and others do not see either. By becoming aware that it is there, we learn: "the more I know, the more I don't know" and look for something deeper. The leader will partake in and encourage learning – on the job, off-site, life-long, professional and personal development – to tap into this area of "potential creativity".

CONFIDENCE

The ability to define and voice our values and the optimism to commit to them and to take on a leadership role, are inextricably linked to self-esteem and confidence. We will look at a holistic model of self-esteem¹ and some practical ways to enhance our own confidence and that of those around us.

"Keep your thoughts positive, because your thoughts become your words and because your words become your behaviour. Keep your behaviour positive, because your behaviour becomes your habit. Keep your habits positive, because your habits become your values. Keep your values positive, because your values become your destiny."

Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi believed that life is based on three principles: respect, understanding, acceptance and appreciation – and that respect enables each of us to see our interdependence with everything and everyone else. In this module we consider self respect as the very first step.

"Self-esteem can be defined as the value we place on ourselves. The extent to which we value ourselves is a product of our past experiences, our successes and failures, and the support and recognition (or lack of it) that we received previously that influences how we feel about ourselves today. Most often we

¹ Acampora, Jo, *Employability Skills Curriculum*, ASPECT, Victoria, BC, 2000

love ourselves to the extent that we have been loved. And we are able to love others to the extent that we love ourselves.

Our sense of self-esteem is directly and intimately related to our ability to experience satisfaction in life. When our self-esteem is low, we may become depressed and passive, or angry and violent. As our self-esteem rises, so does our enthusiasm, creativity, energy and effectiveness." ²

CHARACTERISTICS OF LOW SELF-ESTEEM

People with low self-esteem tend to:

- aspire to less in life -or may pretend to aspire to high level only to sabotage themselves and be shot down
- seek safety and are less willing to take risks
- do more to avoid pain than to find joy
- lack resilience and staying power
- allow negatives to have more power than positives
- need to either prove oneself constantly or to forget oneself entirely
- don't ask for what they need or want
- constantly compare themselves to others
- boast, brag, are arrogant
- lack clarity in communicating ideas, values and vision to others

Are there any surprises here? Anything to add to the list? It is interesting to note that many of these characteristics are the very opposite of the traits or competencies that we have used to define leadership. Most of us have experienced extreme feelings about ourselves - very low and very high - but it is where we settle most of the time that we want to look at and raise to a point where we can be most effective.

² Ibid.

ONION THEORY

One way that Developmental Psychology helps us understand how and why we are the way we are, is by looking at the various and inevitable stages we go through in life – this is called Stage Development Theory. We are going to look at a very simple example of this in trying to understand where our self-esteem, high or low, comes from. It may also provide us with clues as to how we can develop more confidence.

This onion starts at the core self, the centre of each person, what we are born with. Each layer that is added to it – from birth on – contributes to who we become. Positive Input creates layers of positive feelings moving outward toward a final layer of love and loving behaviour toward self and others. Negative Input creates uncertainty, insecurity and fear – leading to hate and rage. The longer the negative feelings are left to grow the harder it is to recognize them. Until we recognize and own these negative feelings, we cannot change.

WITH POSITIVE INPUT we feel:	WITH NEGATIVE INPUT we feel:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- secure and valued- safe- happy- enthusiastic- fearless- peaceful- generous- loving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- worthless- insecure- hurt- threatened- afraid- frustrated- angry- hate and rage

As we move on in life and deal with difficult or painful situations our “self”, our “core being”, tries to protect us by masking our true feelings – positive or

negative. When these feelings are layered upon each other it is hard to get to the core. For example, someone may only know they hate and that under that is anger and maybe frustration – but they may not be able to see under this to the feelings of being threatened or hurt.

We do not open an onion simply to cry – although this may happen, or to wallow in the past and say “poor me”. We do not look at these things to blame others or feel guilt or shame over past decisions. We do this as part of our self-study and our self-awareness because only by becoming aware can we work on change. And we model this behaviour to those who follow us, to encourage them to have the courage to do the same.

ONION

Adapted from Curriculum for Life Management Skills Instructor Program,
Deborah Joyce, Camosun College, Victoria, 1995

Components of Self-Esteem, Holistic Model

Thought

Thought is sometimes described as "feelings put into words", and so it seems quite logical that the words we use in our thinking, aloud or silently, affect the way we feel. Muscle testing is a good example of this connection between mind and body, between thought and action. The power of what we say to ourselves has been proven to have a great effect on how we feel and how we behave. This is often called self-talk. Many of us engage in negative self-talk in an almost automatic way. For example: I can't do this, I blew it again, I can't draw, I can't sing, I'm so stupid – I forgot my notes, I'll never be able to learn this, It's my fault. Often these are mouthed as throw away comments, or may be in seemingly trivial contexts, but they still hold power. And so do the opposite, positive statements we call affirmations.

AFFIRMATIONS FOR SELF-ESTEEM

I RESPECT MYSELF AS A VALUABLE ASSET TO THIS GROUP.

I TAKE JOY IN MY UNIQUENESS AND IN EXPRESSING WHO I AM.

WITH A SMILE, I LOVE MYSELF JUST THE WAY I AM.

I AM COMFORTABLE BEING KIND AND GENTLE WITH MYSELF.

I AM ENJOYING THE SUCCESS OF REALLY TRYING.

PEACEFULLY, I LIKE MYSELF MORE AND MORE EACH DAY.

I CONFIDENTLY EXERCISE MY RIGHT TO STAND UP FOR MY BELIEFS.

STRONG AND FEARLESS, I PURSUE ALL MY DREAMS.

I AM UNDERSTANDING THAT THE MORE I LOVE MYSELF, THE MORE LOVE I HAVE TO GIVE OTHERS.

I BOLDLY ASSERT MY VALUES AND DEFEND MY GOALS.

UNAFRAID, I VOICE MY DREAMS AND MY VISION FOR BETTER WAYS,
FOR A BETTER WORLD FOR ALL.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT I AM CAPABLE OF HELPING OTHERS.

Intuition

Intuition is sometimes described as "gut feeling", sometimes as "inner voice", the feeling that we simply know something - what we need, or what is right, for example. If we believe that people are always doing their best and moving toward health, then we can try to increase our self-esteem by accessing what we know is true. We must always be aware of the danger of "faulty thinking" and negative self talk and not confuse this with intuition. One can get in touch with intuition in a variety of ways - stillness, quiet, meditation and sometimes by simply asking ourselves very basic questions. For example:

If I had just 5% more self esteem I would_____.

If I wanted to raise my self-esteem just 5% today I could_____.

By asking yourself these questions regularly, and coming up with as many answers as possible, you will begin to access, in this case, what you already know about self-esteem. Marsha Sinetar, best known for "Do What You Love and the Money Will Follow", encourages us to listen to our inner voice, to our intuition and to be true to who we are, to our "being" And to also listen to our mentors' voices, to the "encouragers" in our lives, whether they be friends and family or coworkers, or the poets and writers and artists who inspire us – listening to the messages is key. Sinetar asks us to go one further and look at our "Spiritual Intelligence", that of being multifaceted, intuitive in both body and feeling – "just knowing". Others call this intuition, gut feeling, vitality, life impulse, healthy instinct, love of life – but the concept is the same – accessing what we know inside to be right and true.

Sinetar gives us further questions to ask ourselves, to ponder, to meditate on:

- When have I lived "full-out" and what does that phrase mean to me?
- Looking back, what has been worth doing?
- In the past, what choices or thoughts have renewed my hope and energy?
- What actions have I taken to live "true to myself"? How did that feel?
- How often have I felt like saying no to an opportunity, but done the opposite?

What does this tell me?

Imagination

"As you enter positions of trust and power, dream a little before you think." Toni Morrison, American novelist

Imagination can be an even more powerful tool than our thoughts in working on our self-esteem. It is used by athletic coaches and Olympic athletes, by film makers and actors, by great chefs and architects and master gardeners. And imagination, being the key to "vision" is used by leaders. The problem is, we often imagine the worst - the "what ifs" and that is very powerful indeed.

"I have suffered a great many catastrophes in my life. Most of them have never happened." Mark Twain

Body

The power of positive self-talk, accessing our intuition and using our imagination is diminished if our body is giving us incongruent messages. Because how we feel about our bodies is a constant - conscious or unconscious - contributor to our self esteem.

Most of us have had, at some point in our lives, trouble accepting and loving our bodies, the way we look, our physical selves. The recent obsession with "makeovers" and corrective surgeries and staying young looking at all cost indicates that for many of us our body and our sense of "self" is inextricably entwined.

Just as we can learn and practice what to say to ourselves and what to imagine for ourselves, we can also practice letting our bodies give us confidence enhancing messages. But first it helps to know and accept our bodies for what they are. Some will say that once we accept ourselves as is, we will not be

motivated to change, but others argue that acceptance is the necessary prerequisite to change; it is denial that keeps us stuck.

If we want our bodies to help enhance our self-esteem it is important for us to befriend them. So another part of building our self-esteem is to begin taking care of, nurturing and knowing our bodies. Just a few things we can do: feed our bodies nutritious food, exercise, touch and be touched often, give and accept hugs, practice relaxation, get a massage, deal with stressors, luxuriate your body in ways that honour you.

It is interesting to note that some descriptions of leadership traits include a healthy body, energy, and vitality. Certainly a leader who takes care of his or her physical health will have the stamina necessary to go that extra bit when followers or circumstance require it.

Emotions

Emotions can be defined as attachment of a thought to a feeling. Emotions run very deep and often we have to use a system or technique to define them and to get through the layers of feeling. When we look at Communication in Module Five, we will see the importance of leaders being able to share their feelings, especially in talking about values .

One way of working through the layers of emotion that may be getting in the way of discovering what is true about oneself is strategy called The Total Truth Process.

TOTAL TRUTH PROCESS

Anger

What is the situation that makes me angry?

Hurt

Is there hurt involved? What hurts?

Fear

What does this make me afraid of?

Remorse, Regret, Responsibility

Do I feel responsible in some way? Could I have prevented this by choosing or doing something different?

Wants

What do I want to be different? What do I need?

Love, Compassion

Does what I want include love, understanding or compassion for the other?

Forgiveness, Appreciation

Can I forgive or let go of mine or another's action and appreciate that the anger has brought me closer to awareness, to the truth?

Will (Centre Of Circle)

All of the techniques that we have looked at are only as good as our willingness to take personal responsibility for raising our own level of confidence. It all boils down to willingness to change. To change our self-esteem we must be willing to take the risk of changing familiar patterns, old behaviour.

E + R = O

Event - something happens

Response - we respond to the event

Outcome - our response added to the event creates something

The only thing we have real control over in this equation is the Response, and that is where the personal power lies. We try and try to change the event – we can't. Unless we change our response, we will never change the outcome. In a new place, with new people, with different words, the same old response is still going to create the same old outcome.

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be useful in looking at the conditions needed for self-motivation. To simplify, Maslow theorizes that life-long personal development is based on a pyramid, or hierarchy of needs, and that as each level of need is satisfied, the individual moves up to satisfy the next level.

Although some levels will never be completely or perfectly satisfied, a substantially met need will be enough to move the individual to strive for more, for higher needs. First, one must meet the physiological needs of food, drink, shelter and other bodily requirements by, perhaps, a pay cheque. When this basic level of needs is met one begins to strive to meet safety needs – protection from physical and emotional harm, perhaps, in a workplace example, through some sort of job security. After safety, one begins to seek satisfaction of social needs – a sense of belonging, acceptance, affection and friendship. Next to be satisfied are the esteem needs of self-respect, autonomy, achievement, status, recognition, and attention. And finally, Maslow says, we strive for self-

actualization - growth, self-fulfillment, and the drive to reach one's full potential. Maslow assumed that "everyone prefers to be a prime mover rather than a passive helper, a cork tossed about on the waves" And he believed that self-actualized individuals assimilated their work into their identities, that work became a part of their definition of self. We can see how Maslow's model gives us clues as to how to ensure that follower's more primary needs are met, so that they can aspire to meet higher needs. In other words, strong leaders will meet their follower's needs for achievement, belonging, recognition, self-esteem and living up to one's ideals. Can we also see the relevance of this model of motivation to a "values- based" leadership style?

self-actualization
growth,
self-fulfillment, and the
drive to reach one's full potential

esteem
self-respect,
autonomy, achievement,
status, recognition, and attention

social
a sense of belonging,
acceptance, affection and friendship

safety
protection from
physical and emotional harm

physiological
food, drink, shelter and other bodily requirements

Session Three: Communication

Objectives:

- To review the basics of effective communication, including:
 - Levels of Communication
 - Barriers and Blocks to Communication
 - Listening
 - Non-Verbal Communication
 - Feedback and Criticism
- To understand communication specifically relevant to mentorship, including:
 - Public Speaking
 - Conflict Management

“Half the world is composed of people who have something to say and can’t, the other half who have nothing to say and keep saying it.”

Robert Frost

COMMUNICATION: THE BASICS

What is communication? Dictionary references give us some clues: to make known, to transfer, to transmit, to pass news; social dealings, to succeed in conveying information; to make known, to join, to connect.

What do we need in order to have communication? In the most basic sense, we need: a message sender, a message receiver and a way of sending and receiving the message (the medium). In order for communication to be effective, the message must be understood. It is the sender’s responsibility to ensure that the receiver has understood the message and it is the receiver’s responsibility to ensure that they have understood the message.

While this sounds very simple, we all know how ambiguous messages can be. Sometimes the easiest, most natural and common communication can lead to great misunderstandings. For example, what do the following statements mean?

I'll be there in a minute.

This shouldn't take you long.

It isn't very far.

I need this done quickly.

That will cost a lot of money.

Yes, I understand.

It is important that all of us take responsibility for clear communication, for sending and receiving messages and for understanding both fact and feeling. To this end and staying aware of how they apply to leadership we will review some communication basics:

- Levels of Communication
- Barriers and Blocks to Communication
- Listening
- Non-Verbal Communication
- Feedback and Criticism

We will also look at topics more specific to this program, such as Public Speaking and Conflict Management.

LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

When we look at the diagram of levels of self-disclosure it becomes clear that mentorship requires open and honest communication at all levels. All four levels of communication are equally important and they are all needed in various settings and various situations.

Clichés These everyday greetings may be a prelude to further engagement or simply a verbal acknowledgement of others. Either way, they indicate the desire for social connection and will often set the tone for what that connection will be. Although they may be viewed as superficial if they are not heartfelt and well intended, when they are absent a message of indifference, being anti-social or even cold will come across.

Examples: “How are you?” “Fine thanks.” “Good morning.”

Facts Moving a little closer to the centre, this level is based on communication about things and people, it can include instructions, questions, and stories.

Examples: “This is how you log on to your email account...” “Let me tell you about the free film I just heard about.” “What time will your class be over?”

Opinions This level involves taking a little more risk, putting yourself out there a little more. It includes ideas, judgements, and values and often requires some sort of rationale, back-up or defence.

Examples: “I really believe that daycare should be provided for anyone returning to school.” “I don’t think that his style of teaching works in this environment.”

“My first priority is my marks.”

Feelings This “gut level”, open and honest level of disclosure can be very risky, and therefore frightens some. But putting your feelings, passions and dreams out there for others is part of what role modelling and mentorship are all about. And it is worth the risk because it is where power and inspiration come from.

Examples: “I am very worried about how these tuition hikes will affect me over the next few years.” “I am so pleased with my English mark.” “It really saddens

me to lose one of our best advocates.” “I am excited – and a little nervous – about taking on this new challenge.”

BARRIERS AND BLOCKS TO COMMUNICATION

There are basically three types of blocks to communication:

- Physical: the environment, “things” (traffic noise, sunglasses, a wall)
- Physiological: biological, the person (deafness, speech impediment)
- Psychological: mind sets (what we are thinking)

For the first two types of barriers there are specific and clear ways to solve a communication problem: leave the noisy place, take off the sunglasses, go around the wall, learn sign language or depend on writing. But with psychological barriers, we are often not even aware that there is a communication problem, which makes it very hard to solve. The challenge is to be aware of our biases, prejudices and assumptions and how this gets in the way of communication.

Positive assumptions often lead to false expectations and therefore disappointment. For example, if we believe that women are nurturing (positive) we may put false expectations on the women in our lives, and be disappointed to find that some don’t want to care for children.

Negative assumptions can lead to pre judgements, close mindedness and dismissive behaviour toward others. For example, if we believe that women are weak (negative) we may treat very strong women in a demeaning way.

In either case we allow biases and assumptions to block our thinking. Yet we all have them. So how do we challenge our thinking? How do we see the other side? The whole truth? .

Some ideas:

- stay open; really try to be objective
- look longer, harder, and from a different perspective
- say, "I don't know"
- ask for help in seeing another side
- get the facts

- ask others for feedback

It is worth remembering that ASSUME makes an ASS of U and ME.

EFFECTIVE LISTENING

“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.” Winston Churchill

As mentors, if we could develop only one communication skill it would have to be empathetic listening. It is the key to being an effective mentor – the key to being listened to and to being understood. Just as we emphasized sharing feelings, values, dreams and passions, we must likewise focus on being able to hear and understand those same messages from others.

KEYS TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING

First, decide to listen.

- Be honest – if you cannot listen right now, don’t pretend. But if you agree to listen, make it your priority and get rid of any distractions. Stay tuned in.
- Limit your own talking. Contrary to popular belief, you cannot talk and listen at the same time.
- Don’t interrupt. A pause – even a long one – does not necessarily mean the person has finished speaking.
- Practice active listening skills: Face the speaker, make eye contact, lean toward the speaker, display an open body and face.

Second, listen to understand

- Ask questions. If you are not sure you understand everything or if you think you missed an important point, ask the speaker to repeat him or herself. If you just don’t get it, ask for examples or definitions. This may be especially important if acronyms, jargon or technical terms are being used.
- Don’t jump to conclusions or make assumptions. Remember to be careful of biases and prejudices that can get in the way of you really hearing someone.

- Don't argue mentally. If irritation or disagreement arises, just listen. Don't start planning your argument while the speaker is still talking – you'll miss something.
- Take notes. When it is important that you remember details or key points, don't be afraid to take notes.
- Prepare in advance. If you know you are going to be getting information or details, jot down anything you may want to say or ask later, freeing your mind for attentive listening.

Third, let the speaker know you understand

- Use listening responses. An occasional “yes” or “I see” shows the speaker that you are paying attention, still with them and invites the speaker to continue.
- Use reflecting paraphrasing and summaries. This indicates that you have been listening and assures the speaker that you understand.
- “Listen” to body language and behaviour and feed back the message to the speaker.

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

The last point we made in discussing effective listening was about nonverbal communication, or body language. An important aspect of communication, we will look at it briefly and with the purpose of enhancing an understanding of the language of feelings.

It is easier to transmit feelings and attitudes using non-verbal communication – and we often do this without even being aware of it. It is more difficult to communicate facts with non-verbals, even though we often try. To demonstrate, think of ways that you can communicate the following statements without words.

- You're tired
- You're in favour of capital punishment
- You're angry with the instructor
- You think all daycare should be paid for by the government
- You feel sick

- You think this town needs more shopping centres
- You really like a particular group member
- You think this training will be valuable

For complete communication then, and for more clarity around communicating feelings, non-verbal communication is vital.

Personal Space

We all have different physical comfort or safety zones - our “territory” that we are loath to having invaded. What determines this individual, invisible zone? There are a number of contributing factors, from gender to ethnicity, from specific situations to personality type. In general, in North American society there tends to be four distinct zones:

Intimate zones: Very close, lots of touching, skin to arm’s length. Reserved for lovers, children, family, and very close friends. This is usually, but not always, private rather than public.

Personal zones: Arm’s length , or two to four feet, with some formalized touching. Allows for friends, family, dance partners and may be in public or private situations, but always by choice.

Social zones: Four to twelve 12 feet, this is the zone we prefer to use with co-workers, classmates, sales clerks, and in business dealings. We often have to get closer, for example, in a crowded workplace, but this is not by choice.

Public zone: Twelve feet or more, this is the zone we prefer for public speaking, in a park, on a beach or in situations where we are surrounded by strangers. We often are forced into closer proximity, for example in a line-up, on a crowded bus or in an elevator. In those cases we find other ways to close off our personal space – avoiding eye contact, sheltering our body, facing away.

One example of how our physical comfort zone can be affected by cultural differences: South American business etiquette includes the personal and intimate zones - frequent touching and moving in close to make a point, whereas North American etiquette doubles the space with no touching beyond the

formalized handshake. This tends to create a bizarre dance between the “cold” and the “pushy”. There are many other examples of cultural differences: the French male who kisses in meeting acquaintances, the subtleties of the Japanese bow of respect, the reverence of the top of a Thai boy’s head. Variables also include personality types – Extraverts naturally prefer closer physical interaction than Introverts. And prior relationships will also have bearing. For example, people who have been on friendly terms for a long time may allow closer proximity. On the other hand, ex lovers may prefer more than the usual distance.

Gender differences

Both men and women like to be closer to members of the opposite sex, but women get closer in general. Studies show that women also allow closer approaches from the side, and often use side by side seating arrangements for conversation. Men tend to be less comfortable with this. Men allow female supervisors to get closer than male supervisors, while for women there is no difference based on gender for how close they let supervisors get.

Table space

- When two people are sitting at a table, corner to corner seating is often preferred.
- A side by side arrangement may be preferred for cooperative tasks.
- Face to face seating may be used for friendly, casual conversations - as in a restaurant - and it is always used in competitive or confrontational situations.
- In a group, for example at a meeting, a leader will sometimes presume a position at the end of the table. What often happens is that others will tend to “bunch” at the other end, in an unconscious attempt to balance the power.

Instead of getting into these power plays, a leader may try a round table or a “democratic” seating arrangement.

What works best for you? How does it affect communication as mentors?

The key is being aware of others’ preferences, feelings, and comfort level. And it is important to remember that feelings, emotions and even attitudes are often

expressed nonverbally, rather than directly. If we want to encourage open and honest communication with those we mentor, we would be wise to pick up on the cues they are giving us.

FEEDBACK AND CRITICISM

In the last session we discussed the Johari Window and the need for self disclosure and feedback to get more open, to get more “real” - to form relationships with others. Praise and recognition are forms of feedback – and most of us are okay with giving it. But feedback is also necessary to clarify misunderstandings and to provide constructive criticism. Feedback promotes self-awareness by opening up our blindspots. It creates healthy relationships by keeping both parties open and honest.

GUIDELINES FOR FEEDBACK

Giving Feedback:

1. Ask yourself what you are trying to accomplish. Will a change in behaviour benefit the other person or your relationship? Is the behaviour changeable?
2. Ask permission to talk to the person; ask if they want feedback.
3. Make sure that the time is right. It doesn't have to be given immediately, but give feedback as soon after the event or example as possible.
4. Make sure that the place is right. Keep it private; feedback should not be given in front of others.
5. Feedback should be given to the person directly, not hinted at or through a third party.
6. Talk about behaviour you can see and make your comments specific. “When you gave out details about my family without asking me...”
7. Don't try to analyze or guess why. Avoid “You always...” or “You never...”
8. The way we feel in relationship to someone else's behaviour is real. Say how you feel without blaming. “...I felt angry and betrayed.”

9. Make sure that the feedback is helpful. What do you want? What can they do? Request: “What I would like is for us to come to an understanding of confidentiality.”
10. Do not deal with excuses – insist that people are responsible for their own actions.
11. Don’t nag or hound someone to change, unless they have asked for that kind of help.
12. Avoid being judgmental or calling “rights” and “wrongs”.
13. Avoid sarcasm and talking down to someone.
14. Try to understand and acknowledge the other’s feelings. Feedback is not about trying to hurt someone – that is just an attack. Above all, give feedback caringly.

Before Receiving Feedback:

- Remember that criticism is necessary for self-awareness, change and growth.
- Remind yourself that no one is perfect and that you will try to understand the feedback fully and respond to it appropriately. You may choose to simply listen now and respond after you have had time to reflect.
- Feedback is directed at behaviour, something you can change if you choose to. It is not directed at you as a person, and does not take away your value or your worth.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

About Conflict

Conflict exists when one person or group wants, needs or believes something quite different from another person or group. When these differences emerge the results can range from a friendly disagreement to violence. It is helpful to keep in mind that a clash of perceptions, goals or values indicates that people really care. And that is good. And while conflict has the potential to cause a complete breakdown in a relationship, it also can be a part of productive growth if properly managed and resolved in an environment of open and honest communication. Left under the surface, conflict can become lethal; brought out

into the air it can bring people together. Open communication is the means by which conflict can be managed, prevented or resolved and lack of communication drives it underground and creates misunderstanding and hostility. Conflict is inevitable, because we do not perceive or think in the same way as others all the time. Conflict can lead to feelings of stress, tension, frustration, fear, confusion and anger.

People are frequently in conflict over:

- resources (things),
- perceptions (how we see a situation)
- values (what we believe).

Conflict over values and perceptions are often more difficult to resolve – perhaps because this is closer to our core, and we have to deal with the feelings involved in order to get to the root of the problem. People who are unable or unwilling to talk about their feelings are less likely to resolve conflict. A mentor can model and support behaviour that enhances the potential for resolution.

Not all conflict can be resolved. In such cases we can still work toward knowing and understanding the other's point of view or values.

How a dispute is resolved is determined by the attitudes and styles of the involved parties. No style is more right than another. Most of us use different styles of resolution for different situations and with different people - but we do tend to fall into general areas of behaviour. Strong emotions, expectations, assumptions, and of course, our personality types will sometimes limit our ability to identify mutually acceptable alternatives.

THE NO-LOSE METHOD OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

This method requires that both parties view resolution of their issue as open-ended. That is, no one knows what the solution will be – it emerges as a result of the process. A mentor can assist by leading someone th

Step 1: Identify and Define the Conflict

- Select a good place and time for discussion.
- State clearly that there is a problem to be solved.
- Express your feelings using “I” messages.
- Be clear that you would like the other person to join you in coming up with a solution that you can both accept.
- Use active listening to understand the other’s point of view.

Step 2: Generate Possible Solutions

- List all possible solutions without evaluating or judging.
- Encourage participation from all parties.

Step 3: Evaluate the Alternative Solutions

- Are any solutions better (more acceptable to all) than others?
- This is a good place to put Problem Solving methods to use

Step 4: Decide on the Best Solution

- Are both sides satisfied with the solution
- Will this solve the problem?
- Once a solution has been agreed upon, both parties commit to it.

Step 5: Implement the Decision

- Work out who will do what, how and by when.
- Do it and plan for a time (one week, one month) to evaluate.

Step 6: Evaluate (Follow-Up)

- How is the situation working out? Is everyone satisfied with the solution?
- What did we learn?

Adapted from Thomas Gordon, Parent Effectiveness Training

PUBLIC SPEAKING

One of the greatest fears, some say greater even, than dying, is getting up in front of a group, to speak. As a mentor you may chose to challenge yourself to speak to community organizations or special interest groups.

There is a wealth of information and help available if this is a challenge for you. Perhaps one of the most recognized is Toastmasters, a non-profit organization that assists individuals in developing public speaking, communication and leadership skills through practice and feedback.

While joining a group or taking a class may be a long-term project, here are some basic guidelines that will help you in the meantime.

- Prepare. Know what you are going to say. Make notes – index cards work well, so does writing with a felt marker.
- Practice. In front of friends, into a recorder or in front of a mirror.
- If you are nervous or have stage fright, admit it - out loud, to your audience.
- Take a bottle of water if you know your mouth will be dry.
- Avoid distracting props if they can become a problem for you.
- Sit and put your hands flat on the table if you know you are shaky.
- Know who your audience is in advance and ask why they are there, what they need, what issues they face.
- Use examples, illustrations, stories, and analogies for interest.
- Relax. Remember to breathe out.
- Be yourself – and let your audience know who that is. Share your values, your passion, your vision.

Session Four: Resources & Closure

Objectives:

- To ensure that all participants are aware of all resources both on and off campus
- To give an opportunity for feedback and discussion in the training
- Closure exercises and celebration

The first half of this session is spent handing out brochures and information and sharing experience of the various services and resources on and off campus. Mentors have been encouraged to bring information they have in, and to share their experiences of the services used.

Suggestions for resources to include:

On campus:	Off campus:

Students are given resource lists, plastic page covers to put brochures in and access to a large community resource binder to be kept in coordinator's office.

Evaluation

- Participants are asked to complete standardized CCS evaluation
- As a group we discuss what could be done differently, better, more or less to improve the program
- Participants give suggestions for future workshops and ongoing support

Closure and Celebration

Celebration can include invited guests, campus faculty, participants' family etc.

- Mentor's welcome guests and stand to read their "Personal Mission Statements"
- Facilitator closes training with an encouraging and esteem building exercise such as "stickies" or "the gift" or reading "I have the courage..." (see next page) in the round. Can include both mentors and guests.
- Sharing of food
- Certificates and t-shirts are presented

I have the courage to:

Embrace my strengths – Get excited about life – Say: “I don’t know, but I will find out” – Face and transform my fears – Ask for help and support when I need it – Trust myself – Make my own decisions and choices – Befriend myself – Complete unfinished business – Communicate lovingly with understanding my goal – Honour my own needs – Give myself credit for my accomplishments – Grant myself permission to play – Nurture others because I want to, not because I have to – Say yes only when I mean it – Have realistic expectations – Take risks and grow through challenges – Be totally honest with myself – Heal old and current wounds – Savour the mystery of the unknown – Wave good-bye to guilt – Treat myself with respect and teach others to do the same – Fill my own cup first, then nourish others from the overflow – Plan for the future but live in the present – Value my intuition and share my wisdom – Know that I am lovable – Celebrate, and encourage, the differences between us – Develop healthy, supportive relationships – Make forgiveness a priority – Motivate myself, make decisions and take action – Accept change – Explore the values that make me – Honour the life I have been given – Stay quiet enough to hear my inner voice – Dream – Imagine a better way, a better world

– Accept myself just as I am right now

Personal Mission Statement

In writing **mission statements**, you are creating a brief description of what you want to focus on and what you want to accomplish in a particular area of your life over a period of time.

In this case you are talking about mentorship:

- 1) what you want to do as a mentor,
- 2) what values and qualities you bring to your mentorship
- 3) how you will continue to grow as a mentor

Writing a personal mission statement is a way to focus your energy, actions, behaviors and decisions – what motivates you– towards the things that are important to you.

Noted author Stephen Covey refers to writing mission statements as “connecting with your own unique purpose and the profound satisfaction that comes in fulfilling it.”

Covey says writing a personal mission statement is an important principle to success. The idea is that if you live by a personal mission statement of what’s really important to you, you can make better decisions and focus efforts towards a specific objective.

Writing mission statements may be valuable, but how in the world do you go about crafting one?

Writing Mission Statements

In writing a personal mission statement contains three basic elements:

The first is what you want to do – what you want to accomplish, what contributions you want to make.

The second is what you bring– what character strengths you have, what qualities you want to share.

The third is what you want in terms of your own learning, growth, personal development.

While there is no unique format or formula for writing a personal mission statement, the following guidelines may be helpful:

- Keep it simple. It should be clear and brief. The best mission statements tend to be 3 to 5 sentences long. It should touch upon what you want to focus on and what kind of person (character) you want to become over the next 1-4 years.

- Your mission statement should say what you want to do or become instead of saying what you don't want to do or don't want to be. Use positive statements.
- Your mission statement should be specific in actions, behaviours, habits and qualities that would have a positive impact over the period. Include positive behaviours, character traits and values that you consider important and want to develop further.
- Think about how your actions, habits, and character traits in this area affect the mentor relationships and activities.
- A mission statement can guide you in your day-to-day actions and decisions. Make it a part of your everyday life by repeating it to yourself 10 times every morning when you awake and 10 times before you go to bed at night.
- Your mission statement should be in keeping with your purpose in life. Will it conflict with or contradict something else? Is it balanced?
- Make it emotional. Including an emotional payoff in your mission statement infuses it with passion and will make it even more compelling, inspiring and energizing.

You shouldn't consider your mission statement to be cast in stone. As you continue to change and evolve as you gain insights about yourself your mission statement should be updated as you progress. Periodic review and evaluation can help you keep in touch with your own progress and keep your statement in harmony with your life purpose. It's more like plotting a sailing course. Just like you'd make allowances for current and wind if you were captain of a ship, you want to update your position - your mission statement as you move along the journey of life.

Personal Mission Statement Sentence Templates

Here are some sample personal mission statement sentence templates to get you started. Check out the values list on the last page for ideas. Use these templates as seeds to get your creative juices flowing.

"To ... [what you want to achieve, do or become] ... so that ... [reasons why it is important]. I will do this by ... [specific behaviors or actions you can use to get there] and by using... [values and qualities that you already possess]. This action will assist me in becoming....[something you want to be.]

"I value ...[choose one to three values]... because ...[reasons why these values are important to you]. Accordingly, I will ...[what you can do to live by these values]."

"To develop and cultivate the qualities of ...[two to three values/character traits]... that I admire in ...[an influential person in your life]... so that ...[why you want to develop these qualities/what you want to become]."

"To live each day with ...[choose one to three values or principles]... so that ...[what living by these values will give you]. I will do this by ...[specific behaviors you will use to live by these values]."

"To appreciate and enjoy ...[things you want to appreciate and enjoy more] by ...[what you can do to appreciate/enjoy these things]."

"To treasure above all else ...[most important things to you] and become more...[qualities you want to build on]by ...[what you can do to live your priorities]."

"To be known by ...[a person/group]... as someone who is ...[qualities you want to have]...; by ...[some other person/group]... as someone who is ...[other qualities]...; ..."

Feel free to combine these sentences in any way to carve your own unique personal mission statement.

Sample Mission Statement for Mentorship

Here is a part of a potential mission statement for mentorship using the first sentence template.

"My mission is to be an effective mentor so that I can assist others and help them reach their goals. I will do this by being a good listener, being caring and compassionate and by honouring my personal boundaries and commitments. I will remember to stay true to my values by honouring diversity, by communicating clearly and by finding joy and laughter in every day. These actions will assist me in enhancing my own self esteem and in becoming the person I know that I can be."

Other Sample Mission Statements

My mission is to help serve the people with compassion and understanding. I am committed to bringing balance, wellness, and less pain through the wonderful growing field of Therapeutic Massage.

"I dedicate myself to an attitude of gratitude in order to improve my health and the health of others. With this attitude, I will generously share my time and my talents with my family, my friends and my community."

"To remember where I have been and where I will go through maintaining positive relationships with family and friends. To choose the ethical way by making a personal commitment to honesty and integrity. To find peacefulness within myself by looking inward while using my heart to guide my dreams and desires, and my mind to pursue knowledge, creating balance among all of my obligations. To content myself in my surroundings so I will always know where security lies within my life. To build a reputation of being dedicated to every goal I choose to pursue while having successes in both my personal and professional life. To enjoy every moment along this journey finding laughter, love, and happiness with each day that passes.

"I, Jerry Soto Jr., will live everyday with Integrity and vow to consistently make a positive difference in the lives of others utilizing my knowledge for the good of all people.

My mission is to make a difference in the lives of others by sharing my life experiences and knowledge about diabetes.

"To become more confident in what I do."

"My purpose throughout each day of my life is to express my commitment to love and cherish my family and friends, improve myself personally and professionally so that I can advance within my career, lead a successful career that I will enjoy, and take on any challenges that come my way."

"To empower our unemployed and underemployed tribal community members. To provide the support services, assistance with barrier removal, job coaching and life skill workshops that will uplift and bring them to a level of success"

"To value and live in a manner that shows reverence for all living beings by fostering healthy relationships and mutual respect for all so that those around me so that they may be influenced and encouraged to live positively and fruitfully. Accordingly, I will do this by continuing my education both academic and personal so that I may continue to grow and learn in order to make a progressive, effective, and beneficial impact in my relationships with other people and the environment."

"My personal mission (permission) is to trust my intuition and inner guidance which will provide meaning, purpose and direction in my life. In turn, this will bestow me with the wisdom and courage needed to stand in my truth and become the leader I was meant to be."

"To enhance the lives of those I meet by helping them face demanding and challenging situations with enthusiasm and strength."

VALUES LIST

Abundance	Community	Flexibility	Kindness
Acceptance	Compassion	Forgiveness	Knowledge
Accuracy	Competence	Freedom	Learning
Accountability	Competition	Friendship	Leadership
Accomplishment	Confidence	Fun	Loyalty
Achievement	Connection	Generosity	Love
Adventure	Content over fluff	Going the Extra Mile	Meaning
Agility	Continuous Improvement	Goodness	Merit
Awareness	Convincing	Gratitude	Mindfulness
Balance	Cooperation	Happiness	Modesty
Beauty	Courage	Hard Work	Money
Boldness	Creativity	Health	Non-violence
Bravery	Decisiveness	Holiness	Openness
Calm	Determination	Honor	Opportunity
Caring	Dignity	Honesty	Optimism
Challenge	Discipline	Humility	Order
Change	Discovery	Humor	Organization
Cleanliness	Diversity	Independence	Outcome
Collaboration	Education	Influence	Orientation
Comfort	Effectiveness	Inner Peace	Outgoing
Commitment	Efficiency	Innovation	Outstanding Service
Communication	Equality	Integrity	Passion
Fairness	Empathy	Intelligence	Peace
Faith	Excellence	Investing	Perseverance
Family	Reliability	Joy	Persistence
Positive Attitude	Religion	Justice	Personal Growth
Power	Resourcefulness	Seriousness	Timeliness
Practicality	Respect	Service	Tolerance
Preservation	Responsibility	Simplicity	Tradition
Privacy	Righteousness	Sincerity	Tranquility
Problem Solving	Risk-Taking	Skill	Trust
Progress	Romance	Speed	Truth
Prosperity	Safety	Spirit	Unity
Punctuality	Security	Stability	Variety
Quality	Selflessness	Strength	Well-Being
Quiet	Self-esteem	Style	Wisdom
Rationality		Systemization	
Recognition		Teamwork	
Relationships			

Student Fears and Challenges

It is valuable for mentors to be aware of some of the very real fears that new students or those considering returning to school may face. These fears can often prevent people from even making it up the hill to ask the right questions. And simply getting here, being assessed and registering is just the beginning; for some students fears and challenges will remain obstacles to their success.

Below are some of the fears and challenges that new students may face and room for suggestions as to what a mentor can do to assist. The role of the mentor is to explain that there are resources available to help with almost any problem or issue.

1. **"I tried to go up to university, but I couldn't even find what building to go to."**
2. **"I quit school in Grade 8. I will have to go for four years before I can even start the program I want."**
3. **"I need Math to get into the program I want and I was never any good at Math."**
4. **"I don't have the money to return to school."**
5. **"I want to go to school, but I need to work."**
6. **"I know I need more education, but I don't even know what I want to take."**
7. **"It's been years since I've been in school. I'll be the oldest one in my class."**
8. **"What if I can't handle the work."**
9. **"I don't know what to do about daycare."**

10. "My whole class is going out to the campus Pub on Friday....I have difficulty even being around drinking."

11. "I tried to go back to school a few years ago and it was a complete failure."

12. "My disability will make it impossible to return to school."

13. "I hated high school...and it hated me."

I would like a mentor!

Name _____

Email address _____

Phone _____

Current courses _____

Academic or career plans _____

Personal interests _____

Issues or barriers you may have faced in coming to VIU? _____

What are your expectations of a mentor? _____

How did you find out about the mentoring program? _____

Signed _____ Date: _____

Coordinator's notes:

Issues/barriers

Days & hours on campus

Connected with:

Name _____

Email address _____

Phone _____

Name _____

Email address _____

Phone _____

Name _____

Email address _____

Phone _____

Sign me up to be a mentor!

Name _____

Email address _____

Phone _____

Length of time at VIU _____

Experience with ABE? _____

Current courses _____

Academic or career plans _____

Personal interests _____

Issues or barriers you may have faced in coming to VIU? _____

What can you contribute as a mentor? _____

What do you hope to gain from the mentoring program? _____

Can you commit to two hours per week for one full term? _____

Signed _____ Date: _____

Coordinator's notes:

Issues/barriers

Days & hours on campus

Commitment

Connected with:

Name _____

Email address _____

Phone _____

Name _____

Email address _____

Phone _____

Name _____

Email address _____

Phone _____

MENTOR CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I agree to respect and safeguard all personal information pertaining to both those I mentor and the other mentors in the program. I will adhere to this agreement during my time as a mentor, and at all times thereafter.

In particular, I will not disclose the identity of others, or any personal information about those who seek my assistance, including where I might refer them for further assistance.

Mentor's Name (please print) _____

Mentor's Signature _____

Witness _____

Date _____

Mentor Training

Core Training

- Four, 5 hour sessions. Full attendance is mandatory for certification.
- Participants will be paid an honourarium for attendance.
- Lunch will be provided.

Session One: Role of the Mentor

What is a mentor?

- core skills, abilities
- roles: on campus and community outreach

Identifying and Understanding New Student's Fears

- challenges, obstacles
- self reflection and empathy
- why we are here and how can we help

Putting it into Practice

- establishing relationship; shared experience
- setting boundaries; code of conduct, confidentiality
- format for meetings

Values Clarification

Session Two: Self Awareness and Self Esteem

Johari Window

Self Esteem Models

- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- The Onion

Holistic Approach to Self Esteem: thought, intuition, imagination, body, emotions

Personal Mission Statements

Session Three: Communication

Interpersonal Communication

- listening
- body language
- feedback and suggestions
- effective questioning

Speaking to a group

- ten tips for public speaking
- telling our stories
- assigning mission statements

Session Four: Resources/Closure

- comprehensive list of resources, on and off campus
- guest speakers and visits to facilities
- evaluation of program
- celebration

Ongoing workshops

These workshops will be ongoing, bi-weekly sessions for those who have completed core training. Some will provide information on specific topics, as below, while others will be check-in sessions for mentors, a forum for peer support and sharing of ideas.

- Communication update
- Addictions
- Parenting issues for students
- Myers-Briggs or True Colours
- Dealing with Change
- Anger management
- Stress management
- Time management
- Study Skills
- Human Rights – Discrimination and Harassment
- 5 week burnout
- Ongoing motivation for mentors