

A wise and trusted advisor ... A Mentor and Coach

Some thoughts about those who mentor and coach

We are all teachers. Every day, in every setting and social role we play, we are teaching. Teaching is the core of our humanity. It is, literally, what life is all about: passing it on. As parents or leaders, managers or mentors, coaches or instructors or neighbours, we are constantly teaching – sometimes intentionally, sometimes skillfully, sometimes neither. We teach to transmit a culture. We teach to impart facts and skills. We teach to instill a conscience. We teach to articulate for ourselves what on earth matters. We teach to be sure that we have not lived in vain. We teach to learn.

By listening and watching, by entering the lives of the guiding lights all around us, we become more effective in how we reach and shape others. We change people's lives. We change our own lives.

(Excerpt from the Guiding Lights – Eric Liu, published by the Random House Publishing Group)

In simple terms, someone who helps someone else learn something that he or she would have learned less well, more slowly, or not at all if left alone.

A mentor may offer advice, information, or guidance by a person with useful experience, skills, or expertise for another individual's personal and professional development.

A coach does not offer advice. A coach will guide, through questioning, provide information to help an individual to move in a direction which will serve in achieving personal or business goals, or change specific behaviours.

For coaching or mentoring to work there must be mutual trust and respect and a commitment by both parties to invest time and energy in the relationship.

Lou Holtz, the infamous Notre Dame football coach, is convinced that three questions can reveal a great deal about someone's character. Does this individual demonstrate genuine concern for your welfare? Is he or she committed to excellence? Would you take his or her word as gospel?

A coach and mentor will:

Foster Trust. All relationships are based on trust. I can't begin to tell you how many people I have seen ruin tremendous opportunities because they didn't have the discipline and decency to do what's right. Continually ask yourself, "Is this the right thing to do" Do what you feel is right, regardless of peer pressure or personal desires; success and confidence will not be far behind.

A coach and mentor is:

Committed to Excellence. Do everything to the best of your ability. Everybody wants to be associated with people who set and maintain high standards. When you lower standards, you only invite mediocrity.

A coach and mentor will:

Handle with Care. Treat others as you would like to be treated – with concern and care.

(Excerpts from “Winning Everyday” – Lou Holtz published by Harper Collins)

Characteristics of a Mentor and Coach

They set high standards

They make themselves available

They are successful and respected in their field

They are good listeners – they empathize

They have access to information and resources

They have integrity and are candid in their dealings

They genuinely care about their protégés or clients

Mentors and Coaches – their key job is to help other people help themselves

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