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PERCEPTION OF MENTORING AT NORTH LAKE COMMUNITY CHURCH

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BY

BETHANY VON STEINBERGS
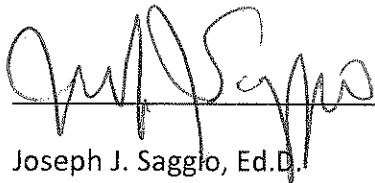

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BY BETHANY VON STEINBERGS

has been approved

May 2010

APPROVED:

_____ 6-11-2010 _____ Chair

Joseph J. Saggio, Ed.D.

ACCEPTED:

_____ 6/15/2010 _____ Dean

Kent J. Ingle, D.Min.

ABSTRACT

This research project was a qualitative study which used a case study approach to consider the research question. North Lake Community Church in Seattle, Washington, was the subject of the study, and the people within the North Lake Community Church community were the participants.

This study unearthed the perceptions of mentoring which exist within the North Lake Community Church community and why those specific perceptions exist. The primary research question was two-fold: "What are the perceptions of mentoring amongst people at North Lake Community Church and why do those perceptions exist?" This question was addressed using four secondary questions: (1) What is your definition of mentoring? (2) How did you arrive at that specific definition? (3) Have you ever been in the type of mentoring relationship you just described? YES or NO (4) If you answered "YES" to question #3, please describe what that relationship was like for you.

A proposed strategy was outlined to research and analyze people's various definitions of mentoring and how their individual perceptions of mentoring have been formed. Specifically, data was collected using questionnaires and interviews comprised of the four secondary research questions. Forty total questionnaires were collected; twenty from males and twenty from females, and five people participated in face-to-face interviews.

The data collected from the participants in the study revealed a variety of perceptions in regards to mentoring and emphasized the role of personal experience in shaping individual definitions of mentoring.

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Introduction

During the researcher's two years working as a Resident Director at Vanguard University, she had several students approach her, some whom she was well acquainted with and others who she barely knew, asking if she would "be their mentor." The researcher's response to each of these students was to ask them what they thought a mentoring relationship was and also what they were hoping a mentoring relationship with her might look like. Most students struggled to give a specific definition of mentoring. Sometimes their descriptions of a mentoring relationship sounded like weekly meetings for coffee, where the mentor would ask the mentee questions about her life. Other times the picture of mentoring these students painted resembled a therapist or counselor and client relationship. Some students desired someone to listen to them or give them advice about their problems. A few students told the researcher, quite frankly, that they wanted a mentor because they thought it was a good idea or because their friends had a mentor and they thought they should too.

Why were there so many different perceptions of the word "mentoring" among a group of students from one small, Christian university? What shaped their individual definitions of a mentoring relationship?

The terms mentoring, coaching, discipling, counseling, and spiritual direction are often used interchangeably within culture. Keyword searches of any of these individual terms, results in an abundance of literature on each subject. Within the literature on each subject, such as "mentoring," there are multiple definitions, descriptions, and approaches to the term. With so many terms and definitions, there is confusion. Enough disparate information exists on the topic of mentoring that a business management book entitled, *Coaching and Mentoring for*

Dummies, was written as an attempt to condense and clarify all the information available on the subject.[1] We find similar dilemmas and attempts to clarify the concept of mentoring within literature written for those in various fields: primary, secondary, and higher education systems, as well as non-profit organizations, parachurch organizations, various church ministries, and leadership in general.

How can we have a common language to share and understand our varying perspectives of mentoring when so many definitions exist? People must be having similar experiences. A person's unique experience with "mentoring" will impact his or her perception of the term. North Lake Community Church, "a new church and worship community for the emerging neighborhood of North Lake in Seattle,"[2] provides a venue for examining the perception of mentoring and an opportunity to grow in understanding of how people's definitions of mentoring are shaped by their experiences.

Literature Review

Definitions

There is a fair amount of research and literature on the topic of mentoring. Mentoring is a term many people have defined. Similarities exist between the various mentoring definitions; although most definitions have a level of uniqueness, based upon the specific type of mentoring the author is referring to and the author's background and experience.

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[1] Marty Brounstein, *Coaching & Mentoring for Dummies* (Foster City, CA: IDG Books Worldwide, Inc., 2000).

[2] Union Church, *Overview*, http://www.unionchurchseattle.org/Overview.aspx (accessed December 5, 2009).

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J. Robert Clinton has done extensive research in the area of leadership development, particularly concerning the topic of mentoring.[3] Clinton's definition of mentoring is focused, and yet broad enough to encompass all genres of mentoring. Clinton defines mentoring as, "a relational process in which a mentor,[4] who knows or has experienced something, transfers that something (resources of wisdom, information, experience, confidence, insight, relationships, status, etc.) to a mentoree,[5] at an appropriate time and manner, so that it facilitates development or empowerment."[6] Johnson and Ridley offer a related definition in *The Elements of Mentoring*. "Mentoring relationships (mentorships) are dynamic, reciprocal, personal relationships in which a more experienced person (mentor) acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and sponsor of a less experienced person (protégé)."[7] Similarly, Fred Smith says, "Mentoring is a one-on-one relationship between a mentor and mentoree for the specific and definable development of a skill or an art."[8]

Integrating a Christian perspective into the definition of mentoring, the Church of God (Anderson, IN) defines mentoring as, "helping a man or woman realize his or her potential in

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[3]Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 1992), 6.

[4]For the purposes of this paper, the term "mentor" will be used, however, terms like coach, adviser, counselor, guide, trainer, leader, master, sponsor, role model, and instructor are also used within the literature on mentoring.

[5] For purposes of this paper, the term "mentoree" will be used interchangeably with synonymous terms, such as, protégé, mentee, trainee, apprentice, counselee, advisee, participant, candidate, or student.

[6]Ibid., 40.

[7] W. Brad Johnson and Charles R. Ridley, *The Elements of Mentoring* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2004), xv.

[8] Fred Smith, "Mentoring that Matters," *Leadership* 20 (January 1999), 95.

Jesus Christ in every pursuit: spiritual, vocational, organizational, and relational.[9] Mentoring is

seen as "a 'covenant' relationship between two individuals."[10] Throughout the Old and New

Testament, God used covenants as a way to build intimacy with people.[11] Verbalizing or writing

down the answers to why, where, when, and how questions of the mentoring relationship,

establishes the "intentionality of a covenant," and brings "some formality to what may remain an

informal relationship."[12]

"Mentoring, discipleship and spiritual direction describe similar modes of pouring into

someone's life."[13] Often the word "friendship" is used in connection with these various terms.

Akira Shinohara, in her research on spiritual formation and mentoring, defines mentoring, from

the perspective of spiritual direction, as "neither hierarchical nor coercive," but rather, friendship

based in equality.[14] Amy McCreath, Episcopal Chaplain at Massachusetts Institute of

Technology (MIT), believes mentoring is a type of friendship with a particular end in mind.[15]

Stratton and Owens believe, "Mentoring has elements of a friendship except that mentoring is

not an equal relationship. The mentor is usually a person who is seen as more knowledgeable

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[9]Church of God Ministries, *Mentoring*,
http://www.chog.org/Ministries/LeadershipDevelopment/FocusAreas/Mentoring/tabid/437/Default.aspx (accessed January 13, 2010).

[10]Ibid.

[11]Keith R. Anderson and Randy D. Reese, *Spiritual Mentoring: A Guide for Seeking and Giving Direction* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 70.

[12]Ibid., 70-71.

[13] Luberta McDonald, "So What is Mentoring?," *Journal of Christian Nursing* 21 (October 2004), 29.

[14] Akira Shinohara, "Spiritual Formation and Mentoring: An Approach From the Christian Tradition of Spiritual Direction," *The Christian Education Journal* 6 (October 2002): 111.

[15]Amy McCreath, *Clergy Sabbatical: The Ministry of Mentoring in the 21st Century Church*, 2009,
http://www.resourcingchristianity.org/clergysabbatical.aspx?CLSID=8f95d483-769e-4f12-8f75-a96cd78637fe (accessed January 13, 2010), 2.

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about or more experienced in certain areas of living. Due to this inequity, mentoring is difficult

to maintain among actual peers."[16]

More specifically, the term "mentor," has multiple definitions. It can refer to the one who

"companions and supports the protégé in discovering and claiming his or her authentic self."[17]

Mentor "refers to an individual with whom a less experienced person has established a formal

relationship with clearly defined goals."[18] This less experienced person, often referred to as

protégé, mentee, trainee, apprentice or candidate, looks to the mentor to "embody and inspire

the possibility of committed and meaningful adulthood."[19] Tom Beaudoin defines a mentor as

"one who agrees to be a steward of another's maturity—spiritual, intellectual and emotional—

through a concrete solidarity with the unique personal needs, questions and desires of a

protégé."[20] The mentor's role, similar to that of a pastor, friend, counselor, or spiritual director,

is to offer "insight and emotional support."[21]

Mentors offer advice and encouragement from their own experience and insights. They

do not control or dictate what the mentee should do. A mentor is not a person to become

dependent upon or mimic, nor is she the "answer" to the mentee's problems. The mentor should

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[16]Stephen P. Stratton and James R. Owens, "Mentoring: Enhancing Values Development Through Intentional Relationships," *Faculty Dialogue* (Institute for Christian Leadership) 19 (1984): 97.

[17]McCreath, 2.

[18] The Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta, *APEGGA Mentoring Handbook,* 2004, http://www.apegga.org/members/mentoring/handbook/chapter2.htm (accessed January 13, 2010).

[19]The Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta, *APEGGA Mentoring Handbook,* 2004, http://www.apegga.org/members/mentoring/handbook/chapter2.htm (accessed January 13, 2010); See also McCreath, 2.

[20]Tom Beaudoin, "A Spirituality of Mentoring," *America,* July 21-28, 2003, 14-16.

[21]McCreath, 2.

"intentionally push" the mentee toward independence, not create a clone of herself.[22] She is a

"brain to pick, a shoulder to cry on, and a kick in the seat of the pants."[23]

Jeremiah A. Barondess, who approaches mentoring from a non-sectarian perspective,

believes the mentor:

> serves variously as teacher, sponsor, advisor and model: as teacher in enhancing the
> younger individual's skills and intellectual development; as sponsor in using his or her
> influence to facilitate the protégé's entry and early advancement in the field they both
> inhabit; as host and guide, in helping to initiate the younger person into a new
> occupational and social world, acquainting him or her with its values, customs,
> resources, and cast of characters; as advisor, providing counsel, moral support and
> direction; and through his or her own virtues, achievements and lifestyle, serving as an
> exemplar whom the protégé can seek to emulate.[24]

Akira Shinohara, looking at mentoring from a faith-based perspective, believes the mentor is a

"holy listener," who is, invited to listen to the most profound parts of the mentoree's heart and

life and to walk together with him or her.[25] The mentoring relationship becomes a window into

the mentee's soul.

History of Mentoring

The term "mentor" comes from Greek mythology. It refers to a wise sage named "Mentor"

who was given the task of tutoring Telemachus, son of Odysseus, King of Ithaca, when he left to

go to war against the Trojans. The King was gone for approximately twenty years.[26] During

that time, "Mentor's task was to provide an education of soul and spirit as well as mind, an

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[22]Larry Matthews, "The Art of Mentoring," *Faith Today* 16 (September/October 1998): 36.

[23]Church of God Ministries, *Mentoring*,
http://www.chog.org/Ministries/LeadershipDevelopment/FocusAreas/Mentoring/tabid/437/Default.aspx (accessed January 13, 2010).

[24]Jeremiah A. Barondess, "A Brief History of Mentoring," *Transactions of the American Clinical and Climatological Association* 106 (1995), 7.

[25]Shinohara, 111.

[26]Barondess, 3.

education in wisdom and not merely in information."[27] "Mentor," the name of Telemachus' tutor,

'has been attached to the process of education and care by an older, experienced person."[28]

The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries highlights the importance of

apprenticeship throughout history. The concept of apprenticeship played a key role in the

formation of modern day mentoring. "Since time immemorial, people have been transferring

skills from one generation to another in some form of apprenticeship."[29] Thousands of years

ago, youth in Egypt, Greece, and Rome were being taught specific skills and trades by artisans,

in order that they might become important members of society.[30] Stratton and Owens work on

mentoring further emphasizes the importance of the apprenticeship aspect within the historical

development of mentoring, particularly in the field of education.

> A young person was taught a trade or was educated by a family member or by working
> alongside a craftsman or scholar. During this period, more was taught than simply
> occupational or educational skills. A way of living was 'caught,' as the old saying goes.
> Beliefs, values, and mores were transmitted from craftsman to apprentice and from
> scholar to student. The occupational and educational skills attained in this training
> period could not be divorced from the lessons of life that were learned through the
> mentor-protégé relationship.[31]

Stratton and Owens also detail the historical transformation of mentoring. The

institutionalization of education began with an emphasis on "educating the whole person," but

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[27] Anderson and Reese, 35.

[28] New South Wales Department of Education and Training, "Retraining Programs,"
https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/employment/teachnsw/retrain/mentoringmod.doc (accessed January 12, 2010).

[29] Washington State Department of Labor & Industries, "History of Apprenticeship,"
http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Apprenticeship/About/History/default.asp (accessed January 14, 2010).

[30] Ibid.

[31] Stratton and Owens, 92-93.

shifted as culture was industrialized and urbanized, adopting the mass production mentality.[32]

Traditional family structure was divided into smaller units. Education became more specialized,

technical and advanced. The mentoring model was seen as antiquated, time-consuming, and

ineffective for quickly producing specialists.[33]

Despite the shift in priority regarding mentoring relationships, it is still seen as "one of

the key realities of life and faith," in that, "each generation is required to hand over the reins to

the next generation of leaders."[34] Biblical examples of mentoring relationships are seen in the

characters of Moses and Joshua, as well as Paul and Timothy. Deuteronomy 34:9 says, "Now

Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on

him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the LORD had commanded Moses."[35] Within

this passage, a godly leadership transition takes place and the people's allegiance is transferred

to Joshua, their new leader.[36] 2 Timothy 2:1-2 says, "You then, my son, be strong in the grace

that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses

entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."[37] Timothy is instructed to

carry on Paul's work and to train others to someday be his successor.[38] Other Christian men and

women from history, who were committed to the values of mentoring, include Augustine,

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[32] Ibid., 93.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Martin Sanders, "The Power of Mentorinng," *Alliance Life* (Christian and Missionary Alliance) 140 (July 2005): 22.

[35] Deuteronomy 34:9, NIV (New International Version).

[36] Dennis and Sharon Grimes, "Mentoring Matters!," *The Teaching Home*, September/October 1997, 57.

[37] 2 Timothy 2:1-2, NIV.

[38] Grimes, 57.

Aelread of Rievaulx, Julian of Norwich, Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, and Jeanne Guyon.[39] Organizations like Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, The National Mentoring Partnership, Mentoring USA, Learning for Life, Youth Venture, and YouthFriends, among many others, have grounded themselves in mentoring and leadership development philosophies.[40]

Types of Mentoring

Within the literature on mentoring, there is a vast amount of information describing the specific types of mentoring. Understanding the different types of mentoring, helps to specify and clarify the term. Generally, mentoring can be classified into two types, informal and formal. Informal mentoring is an "accidental" relationship or simply a relationship which is not mandated by an institution nor prohibited because of a set of expectations.[41] These relationships usually transform into "something unique with its own rhythm and seasons."[42] "Formal mentoring," on the other hand, "happens intentionally and within the framework of a program established by an institution or a structure devised and mutually agreed upon by the mentor and protégé."[43]

Stanley and Clinton classify mentoring into three major types: intensive, occasional, passive.[44] These three types fall on a continuum of more deliberate to less deliberate, with the

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[39] Anderson and Reese, 31-32.

[40] Thomas W. Dortch, *The Miracles of Mentoring: The Joy of Investing in Our Future* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 198-202.

[41] McCreath, 6-7.

[42] Ibid., 7.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Stanley and Clinton, 41.

intensive type being most deliberate and passive being least deliberate.[45] What Marsha Sinetar

calls, "the mentor's spirit," could also be classified as the passive type of mentoring.[46] She defines

"the mentor's spirit" as, "The 'almost anything' that deepens our sense of the sacred or our

understanding or transmits a kind of gladness about life itself."[47] According to Sinetar, "any idea,

image, or unseen energy that reflects or enhances life confers the mentor's spirit."[48]

Beyond classifying types of mentoring into categories, there are various styles of

mentoring, "depending on the type of organization and the individuals involved," including,

casual mentoring, informal mentoring, non-facilitated mentoring, group mentoring, multiple

mentoring, and e-mentoring.[49]

A "mentoring community" is a unique type of mentoring relationship, as its participants

are peers.[50] The mentoring community can be an educational classroom, a group of volunteers,

a Bible study, or an entire college, any group of individuals who are committed to walk

alongside one another, sharing their life experiences, triumphs, and failures.[51]

"Reverse mentoring," a relatively new category of mentoring in American culture,

"assumes a completely opposite perspective on learning. While acknowledging the proven value

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[45] Ibid.

[46] Marsha Sinetar, *The Mentor's Spirit: Life Lessons on Leadership and the Art of Encouragement,* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 1.

[47] Ibid., 7.

[48] Ibid., 6.

[49] The Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta, *APEGGA Mentoring Handbook,* 2004, http://www.apegga.org/members/mentoring/handbook/chapter2.htm (accessed January 13, 2010).

[50] McCreath, 3.

[51] Ibid.

of the older-to-younger approach (teaching down), it provides the vital complement of a

younger-to-older method (teaching up).[52] Reverse mentoring does not assume that the "senior

person in the relationship" be defined by age, but identifies a mentor based on his or her

experience.[53] In reverse mentoring relationships, the younger mentors have the opportunity to

"derive value from sharing their insight and knowledge with the organization, honing their

leadership skills, and forging a direct connection to senior leaders."[54] The older 'mentees' are

given the chance to "learn new skills and gain access to new information and fresh ideas."[55]

Above all, reverse mentoring relationships are "cross-cultural," and are concerned with "the

unlikeliness of the learning connection."[56]

'Spiritual mentoring' is a type of mentoring found more commonly in religious, and

especially Christian circles. The terms "spiritual counsel, spiritual direction, soul-friendship,

discipling and simply spiritual guidance," are often used synonymously when referring to

spiritual mentoring.[57] Tom Beaudoin, professor at Boston College, believes "all authentic human

mentoring is a godly work" because within the context of a mentoring relationship, both the

mentor and mentee have the ability to "redirect the very meaning of [their] lives, reorienting

who [they] become before God."[58] According to Patrice M. Buzzanell, professor at Purdue

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[52]Earl Creps, *Reverse Mentoring: How Young Leaders Can Transform the Church and Why We Should Let Them* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), xvii.

[53]Nancy Cotugna, "Reverse mentoring: A Twist to Teaching Technology," *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 98, no. 10 (October 1998), 1166.

[54]Sarah Boehle, "Millennial Mentors," *Training* 46, no. 6 (July/August 2009), 34.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Creps, xvii.

[57]Anderson and Reese, 35-36.

University, "Spiritual mentoring refers to a particular way of interacting in mentor-mentee relationships. Spiritual mentoring transcends the usual career, psychosocial support, and role-modeling activities to embrace the whole person."[59] In their book, *Spiritual Mentoring*, Keith Anderson and Randy Reese approach spiritual mentoring from an evangelical Christian perspective. They believe spiritual mentoring "is not about telling," but rather, "it is about listening to the Holy Spirit and to the life of the other."[60] It is a type of mentoring specifically focused on "spiritual formation, education of the heart."[61] Spiritual mentoring is relational, autobiographical, partnership with the Holy Spirit, purposive, requires listening, requires adaptable discernment, and belongs to the priesthood of all believers.[62]

Stanley and Clinton created "A Constellation Model of Mentoring Relationship" in order to classify the variety of mentoring relationships. The constellation includes upward mentoring, lateral relationships, which they term co-mentoring, and downward mentoring. Upward mentoring means the establishment of relationships with those more mature and who also have specific skills and experiences the mentee could benefit from. "The upward mentor provides perspective, accountability, and the stimulus to persevere.[63] Lateral mentoring relationships are those relationships a mentee has with his or her peers. Peer co-mentors know one another well, are close in age, and have many experiences in common. Lateral mentoring

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[58]Beaudoin, 15-16.

[59]Patrice M. Buzzanell, "Spiritual Mentoring: Embracing the Mentor-Mentee Relational Process," *New Directions For Teaching and Learning* (Wiley Periodicals, Inc.), no. 120 (Winter 2009): 18.

[60]Anderson and Reese, 28.

[61]Ibid., 17.

[62] Ibid., 37-48.

[63] Stanley and Clinton, 163.

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relationships are mutually stimulating and are focused on accountability. Lateral mentoring can occur internally, within a person's organization, or externally, outside his or her organization. Downward mentoring relationships are those where the mentee now assumes the role of mentor for a younger, less experienced person. Although the mentor will benefit and grow from this relationship, the focus is on the development of the one being mentored.[64]

Functions of Mentoring

Stanley and Clinton unpack the three mentoring types listed above (intensive, occasional, and passive) even further, detailing the specific mentoring functions. Intensive mentoring includes the discipler, the spiritual guide, and the coach. Occasional mentoring functions are that of counselor, teacher, and sponsor. Finally, passive mentoring is characterized by its modeling function, manifesting in contemporary and historical examples.[65]

First, consider the functions of intensive mentoring. "The discipler-mentor teaches and enables a mentoree in the basics of following Christ."[66] The spiritual guide functions as the one who moves the mentee beyond the elementary level of spirituality to a deeper place of maturity.[67] Coaching is a process of imparting encouragement and skills to succeed in a task through a relationship.[68] A coach teaches a mentee how to do a specific skill.[69]

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[64] Ibid., 161-168.

[65] Ibid., 42.

[66] Ibid., 51.

[67] J. Robert Clinton and Richard W. Clinton, *The Mentor Handbook: Detailed Guidelines and Helps for Christian Mentors and Mentorees* (Altadena, California: Barnabus Publishers, 1991), 4-1.

[68] Stanley and Clinton, 76.

[69] Clinton and Clinton, 5-1.

Next, consider the functions of occasional mentoring. The major function of a counselor is "timely advice and impartial perspective on the mentoree's view of self, others, circumstances, and ministry."[70] The counselor mentor can function in two capacities—the formally trained counselor whose ministry vocation involves counseling and the informally trained counselor whose giftedness flows avocationally in ministry."[71] The teacher offers "knowledge and understanding of a particular subject."[72] The teacher mentor, whether serving in a formal role, informal role, small group setting, one-to-one setting, or large class atmosphere, is able to motivate the mentee to desire knowledge and apply it.[73] Sponsorship functions as the "relational process in which a mentor having credibility and positional or spiritual authority within an organization or network, relates to a mentoree not having those resources, so as to enable development of the mentoree and the mentoree's influence in the organization."[74] The sponsor gives career guidance and protects the emerging leader, as he or she moves within an organization.[75]

Finally, consider the model function of passive mentoring. Model mentors can be contemporary or historical. The contemporary model is "a person who can empower emerging leaders by providing a role model which inspires, challenges, and demonstrates in real life

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[70] Stanley and Clinton, 89.

[71] Clinton and Clinton, 6-1.

[72] Stanley and Clinton, 42.

[73] Clinton and Clinton, 7-1.

[74] Stanley and Clinton, 124.

[75] Ibid., 42.

various aspects of leadership needed by a mentoree."[76] Contemporary models have three key

functions, which require a response from the apprentice: first to embody values, secondly to

demonstrate the possibility and reality of these values in life, and thirdly to motivate by

example.[77] The historical model functions much like the contemporary model, however, the

historical model mentor is no longer alive. "The historical model refers to a person now dead

whose life or ministry is written in a(n) (auto)biographical form and is used as an example to

indirectly impart values, principles, and skills that empower another person."[78]

Kathy Kram believes there are two major functions of the mentoring relationship: career

functions and psychosocial functions. Career functions, which include, sponsorship, exposure-

and-visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments, "are those aspects of the

relationship that primarily enhance career advancement." Psychosocial functions, "those aspects

of the relationship that primarily enhance sense of confidence, clarity of identity, and

effectiveness in the managerial role," manifest as role modeling, acceptance-and-confirmation,

counseling, and friendship.[79]

In the life of a mentee, the mentoring relationship functions as a means of being

"supported, persuaded, cajoled, prodded, humbled, and pounded into becoming who I was

created to be."[80] Mentoring functions as "an act of generativity—a process of bringing into

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[76] Clinton and Clinton, 9-2.

[77] Stanley and Clinton, 144-145.

[78] Ibid., 147.

[79] Kathy E. Kram, "Phases of the Mentor Relationship," *The Academy of Management Journal* 26, no. 4 (December 1983), 614.

[80] McCreath, 2.

existence and passing on a professional legacy."[81] Mentoring is a tool for intentionally investing in and developing leaders.

Characteristics of a Mentoring Relationship

Mentoring relationships do not follow a specific blueprint because they are living relationships involving unique individuals.[82] There are, however, some unifying characteristics identified in the literature, which bring greater clarity to the definitions of mentoring. In *The Mentoring Handbook*, the authors outline the five underlying dynamic factors of mentoring relationships: attraction, relationship, responsiveness, accountability, and empowerment.[83] "Attraction is the natural tendency for a mentoree to move toward a mentor because there is something seen in the mentor's life or ministry that is compelling and suggests the possibility of help for the mentoree."[84] The relationship dynamic refers to the growing bond of trust between a mentor and protégé.[85] The responsiveness and accountability dynamics are built upon the crucial dynamic of relationship.[86] Responsiveness, which can also be termed submissiveness or faithfulness on the part of the trainee (to the mentor and the mentoring process), "describes the attitude of voluntary submission that a mentoree exhibits toward the mentor so that advice and assignments will be respected, appreciated, heeded, and fulfilled."[87] Whereas

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[81] Johnson and Ridley, xv.

[82] Fred Smith, "Mentoring that Matters," *Leadership* 20 (January 1999), 95.

[83] Clinton and Clinton, 2-14.

[84] Ibid., 2-15.

[85] Ibid., 2-16.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid., 2-17.

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responsiveness describes the apprentice, the accountability dynamic describes the master. The accountability dynamic "is the responsibility of oversight that a mentor must have in order to insure that the mentoree follows through on advice and assignments and actually profits from them."[88] Finally, the empowerment dynamic, the ultimate goal of the mentoring relationship, illustrates a mentee who has been enabled by the mentor and is now a further developed leader in his or her "abilities, attitudes, and capacity to minister."[89]

Similarly, Kathy E. Kram identifies phases of the mentor relationship: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition. Kram describes the initiation phase as the first six to twelve months of the mentoring relationship, during which the mentee gains an initial fantasy with the mentor, looking towards him or her for support and guidance. During this phase, the guide recognizes the student as someone enjoyable to work with and someone with potential and "begins to provide developmental opportunities" to the student, whether formally or informally. The cultivation phase, which last two to five years, continuously tests "the positive expectations that emerge during the initiation phase." The number of interactions between the mentor and mentee increase during this phase, as both the mentor and mentee discover the value of relating to one another. "The range of career functions and psychosocial functions characterizing a mentor relationship peaks during this phase." The separation phase is a period of six months to two years, characterized by significant change and occasional feelings of turmoil, anxiety, and loss. By this point in the mentoring relationship, the mentee has gained "new independence and autonomy" and the relationship is in need of reassessment. The

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[88]Ibid., 2-18.

[89]Ibid., 2-19.

mentoring relationship is no longer a central part of the mentor and mentee's life, so separation, both structural and psychological, takes place. The final phase of the mentoring relationship, as Kram describes, is the redefinition phase. This phase lasts an indefinite period of time following the separation phase, during which "the relationship is ended or takes on significantly different characteristics, making it a more peerlike friendship."[90]

Shirley Peddy also believes there is "no cookbook for mentoring, but there is a process that works."[91] She describes this process in a single, eight-word sentence: "Lead, follow and get out of the way!"[92] This process begins by the mentor taking the *lead* in an active teaching, coaching, and explaining role. The mentee recognizes that he or she can benefit from the knowledge and skills the mentor possesses. The mentee actually begins to lead as he or she learns to *follow* the mentor. The mentor now acts as "a consultant, advisor, counselor and sounding board to the person mentored." The mentor checks in with the mentee regularly, offering reactions, advice, criticism, and comments, only as needed. By *getting out of the way*, Peddy is describing the end of the mentoring relationship. "The mentee's independence and judgment and the mentor's sense of how much more she can offer" are important aspects to consider in the transition out of a mentoring relationship.[93]

Gordon F. Shea believes the characteristics of mentoring relationships vary, depending on whether the partnership is formal, informal, or situational.[94] Formal mentoring relationships

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[90]Kram., 615-622.

[91]Shirley Peddy, *The Art of Mentoring: Lead, Follow and Get Out of the Way,* (Houston: Bulliion Books, 1998), 25.

[92]Ibid.

[93]Ibid., 173.

are often characterized as being for a set amount of time, driven by the needs of an

organization, focused on achieving goals, and permitted or supported by an organization.[95]

Informal mentoring relationships "are often characterized as being: caring, sharing, or helping

initiated by the mentor; a mutual acceptance of roles; a path to developing respect and/or

friendship; dependent on mentor's knowledge, skills, abilities, and competence."[96] Finally, the

situational mentoring relationship, a spontaneous and casual relationship of isolated, specific

acts by the mentor, to meet the mentee's current needs, is characterized as being responsive to

the current situation, mentor-initiated, a single incident, "the mentee's responsibility to use

lessons offered," and not established upon clearly defined expectations or outcomes.[97]

Sometimes mentoring relationships develop spontaneously and unexpectedly, other

times they are assigned. Shirley Peddy likens assigned mentoring relationships to arranged

marriages. "Some take, some don't. It all depends on commitment and chemistry. The ideal

situation is when two individuals form a common bond."[98] The chemistry Peddy describes, is

often termed "mutuality" within the literature on mentoring. Micki Holiday defines mutuality as

"sharing a vision of common goals."[99] Johnson and Ridley define mutuality as "the shared respect,

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[94]Gordon F. Shea, *Making the Most of Being Mentored: How to Grow From a Mentoring Partnership*, (Menlo Park, California: Crisp Publications, Inc., 1999), 73.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid., 74.

[97]Ibid., 71 & 75.

[98]Peddy, 29.

[99]Micki Holliday, *Coaching, Mentoring & Managing: Breakthrough Strategies to Solve Performance Problems and Build Winning Teams*, 2nd ed. (Franklin Lakes, New Jersey: The Career Press, Inc., 2001), 10.

trust, and affection that evolve in a reciprocally beneficial mentoring relationship."[100] Mentors

who strive to walk beside their mentees, instead of directing them, often learn as much as the

mentee through the mentoring relationship, a process known as "mutual learning."[101] The

presence of mutuality, a gratifying feature of mentoring associations, not only reveals the

maturity of the mentoring partnership, but also the maturity of the individual participants.[102] In

addition to the terms chemistry and mutuality, the terms "reciprocity" and "resonance" are often

used to describe this essential bond, characteristic of the mentoring relationship.

"Mutual trust and commitment" are necessary in the mentoring relationship.[103] Holiday

speaks about "mutual trust and commitment," as essential components of the mentoring

relationship. Commitment is directly related to the amount of time the mentor and mentee

spend together and the amount of accessibility that mentee has to the mentor, when he or she

needs to "talk, complain, or voice concerns."[104] Trust grows as the mentee begins to see the

mentor as a confidante and feels safe to open up and share his or her dreams and fears.[105]

Mentoring relationships must have a "temporal element."[106] The learning intrinsic to

mentoring relationships takes time to transmit and absorb. Barondess believes, "The longer the

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[100]Johnson & Ridley, 34.

[101]Larry Matthews, 29.

[102]Creps, 149.

[103]Church of God Ministries, *Mentoring,*
http://www.chog.org/Ministries/LeadershipDevelopment/FocusAreas/Mentoring/tabid/437/Default.aspx (accessed January 13, 2010).

[104]Holliday, 127.

[105]Ibid.

[106]Barondess, 18.

extent," of the mentoring relationship, "the richer, in general, the experience."[107] Boundaries are

another key aspect of the temporal element of mentoring relationships. By definition, the term

'boundary' could be viewed as limiting, but Matthews believes, "Setting boundaries opens the

door for mentoring, which often continues past the original contract, by mutual consent."[108]

Beyond the temporal aspect of boundaries within the mentoring relationship, a

mentoring relationship must also have relationally defined boundaries. Johnson and Ridley

believe "mentorships are defined both by what they are and what they are not."[109] They

highlight important boundary issues to cover, such as confidentiality, frequency of contact,

acceptability of communication by phone (work and home) and email, and strategies for

handling uncomfortable dual roles such as collegial mentor and primary supervisor.[110] In

Margo Murray's work, *Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring*, she addresses the

importance of boundaries in mentoring relationships. She believes a "mentoring agreement,"

should be established, outlining "the role of the mentor and the goals of the protégé."[111] Beyond

the necessity of these two basic elements, she also acknowledges the importance of discussing

and establishing guidelines regarding several other components within a mentoring agreement:

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[107] Ibid.

[108] Larry Matthews, 29.

[109] Johnson & Ridley, 69.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Margo Murray, *Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring: How to Facilitate an Effective Mentoring Process*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 168.

confidentiality parameters, duration of relationship, no-fault termination, frequency and type

of meetings, and guarantees of promotion.[112]

Characteristics of a Mentor

Chip R. Bell, in his book, *Managers as Mentors*, outlines a helpful mnemonic device,

SAGE, for remembering "four core competencies" of an effective mentor. He believes, "Mentoring

greats are effective at Surrendering, Accepting, Gifting, and Extending." Surrendering means a

mentor yields to the mentoring process rather than trying to control it. "Accepting is the act of

inclusion." Rather than judging or evaluating the mentee's growth or progress, the mentor

embraces the mentee and gives unconditional respect. "Gifting is the act of generosity." The

mentor freely offers his wisdom, gifts, and talents to the mentee. The mentor's motives and

actions flow from a spirit of giving, rather than selfishness or manipulation. Finallly, a mentor is

characterized by extending, "pushing the relationship beyond its expected boundaries." The

mentor acknowledges that the mentee's growth is not solely dependent on him. He is "willing to

give up the relationship in the interest of growth, to seek alternative ways to foster growth."[113]

The *APEGGA* (The Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of

Alberta) *Mentoring Handbook*, outlines some critical mentoring skills, which should be

characteristic of an effective mentor. A mentor listens actively, meaning he or she should not

formulate a response while the mentee is talking, but rather, stay focused on what the mentee

is sharing and repeat back what he or she has heard for accuracy. A mentor questions openly.

By asking questions that elicit more than a "yes" or "no" response, the mentor raises the potential

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[112]Ibid., 170-173.

[113]Chip R. Bell, *Managers as Mentors: Building Partnerships for Learning.* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1998), 11-12.

for deep, meaningful conversation and increased learning and understanding. A mentor reads body language. When a mentee looks away, crosses his arms, puts his head in his hands, moves backwards or tilts chair backwards, fidgets or taps his foot, or covers his mouth or eyes with his hand, he may be communicating feelings much deeper than his words are expressing. A mentor avoids communications roadblocks, such as ordering, threatening, preaching, avoiding, pacifying, and lecturing. Finally, a mentor builds trust. Rapport is built between the mentor and mentee when the mentor calls just to talk, picks a good place to meet away from his office, prepares for meetings, offers suggestions, arrives to visits with mentee on time, and sets a comfortable tone.[114]

A mentor must have a willingness to engage and impart wisdom to the next generation. Martin Sanders, the author of *The Power of Mentoring*, was speaking at a mentoring conference to an audience of leaders, the majority in their fifties and sixties. Sanders, in his thirties, pleaded with his audience to open themselves up to mentoring the younger generation of leadership, even though they found them to be less experienced, credible, and spiritual. Sanders said, "Rather than evaluating and critiquing me, mentor me. Spend *time* with me. *Show* me. *Teach* me what you know. *Help* me to be a man of wisdom."[115] Ultimately, the mentor has to take the initiative, engaging the mentee and freely offering his or her knowledge and experience.

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[114]The Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta, *APEGGA Mentoring Handbook*, 2004, http://www.apegga.org/members/mentoring/handbook/chapter2.htm (accessed January 13, 2010).

[115]Martin Sanders, "The Power of Mentorinng." *Alliance Life* (Christian and Missionary Alliance) 140 (July 2005), 23.

The terms coach and counselor generally refer to people who are "change-oriented," whereas a mentor is characterized as "growth-oriented."[116] A mentor believes in his protégé, recognizing his or her potential and encourages deeper levels of development and competency. "Great mentors are not only devoted fans of their protégés, they are loyal fans of the dream of what the protégé can become with their guidance."[117]

Research Question

The collection of research highlighted in the literature review reflects the history and development of the concept of mentoring. The review also provides a comprehensive sampling of the definitions of the word "mentoring" which exist. Although implied in some of the literature, no authors have specifically tackled the reasoning behind the numerous definitions of mentoring or the connectedness between a person's experiences and his or her particular definition of mentoring.

This study uncovers the perceptions of mentoring that exist within the North Lake Community Church community and discovers why those specific perceptions exist. The primary research question which drove this project was two-fold: Primarily, "What are the perceptions of mentoring amongst people at North Lake Community Church?" Secondly, "Why do those perceptions exist?" This research question was addressed using four secondary questions: (1) What is your definition of mentoring? (2) How did you arrive at that specific definition? (3) Have you ever been in the type of mentoring relationship you just described? YES or NO (4) If you

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[116]Holliday, 126.

[117]Bell, 8.

answered "YES" to question #3, please describe what that relationship was like for you. The methodology section outlines the specific approach used to ask these secondary questions.

Methodology

Method/Rationale

This research project was a qualitative study which used a case study approach to consider the research questions above. Qualitative research is interpretive, meaning the researcher interprets what he or she sees, hears, and understands.[118] The entire qualitative research process is about gaining understanding, "learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue," rather than generalizing.[119] This branch of inquiry allowed for particularized analysis of perceptions and experiences. Qualitative research is also "emergent," meaning "the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and all phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to collect the data."[120] Qualitative research is focused in nature, allowing the researcher the chance to select a specific group for close examination, through the use of purposeful sampling. Since, the perception of mentoring and people's experiences or lack of experiences in mentoring relationships was at the heart of the research question, a qualitative approach seemed most reasonable. A case study approach was the logical means for qualitative data collection, allowing for interpretation and analysis of the perceptions of a prescribed group of individuals, namely, the community of North Lake Community Church.

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[118]John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches.* 3rd Edition. (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2009), 176.

[119]Ibid., 175.

[120]Ibid., 176.

Sample

For the purposes of this study, a select group of people from North Lake Community Church were participants in a qualitative case study. These people were in effect the "co-researchers."[121] North Lake Community Church was selected as the focus group for this research because of its leadership's openness to the study and the researcher's own interest and involvement in the church community.

In October of 2006, University Presbyterian Church, a large church community in Seattle, Washington, planted a new congregation in the North Lake neighborhood of Seattle. North Lake Community Church was birthed as "an informal environment for learning about God through community service and the development of authentic relationships, in addition to up-to-date worship services and practical real-life messages."[122] In addition to this objective, North Lake Community Church also determined to "be a community of faith where people can explore faith while sharing common passions and activities—from hikes and dinners to serving the homeless or building houses in Tijuana—with friends who are also asking questions, following Christ, and growing in their own faith journeys."[123]

North Lake Community Church began as a congregation comprised of a number of individuals and families from the planting church, as well as a few others from large churches in the area. All people involved in planting North Lake were acquainted with the co-pastors, a married couple, and the church plant vision. Their mission was "to participate with the Holy

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[121] Joseph J. Saggio, "Introduction to Qualitative Research," (guest lecture, Research & Evaluation Methodology class, CMIN 6203, Northwest University, Kirkland, WA, October 21, 2009).

[122] Union Church, *Overview,* http://www.unionchurchseattle.org/Overview.aspx (accessed December 5, 2009).

[123] Ibid.

Spirit to be a life giving transformative presence in the city and beyond' and their vision was to be "externally focused, internally alive, eternally connected."[124] North Lake's mission and vision, along with their desire to broaden the Sunday worship experience to more than "four songs and a long sermon," led to the development of a unique *Sunday rhythm*.[125] On the first, third and fifth (if there is one) Sundays of each month, North Lake gathers as a collective group "to meet God in music, prayer, Scripture, and communion."[126] On the second Sunday of each month, North Lake has corporate time for music and prayer, but, in addition, they provide intentional time "to connect with other and interactively engage what Scripture says."[127] They do this in groups of six to ten people, led by a facilitator, seated around tables while they enjoy a light breakfast. On the fourth Sunday, the people of North Lake Community Church "worship through action," gathering throughout the city in smaller community groups, of ten to twenty people, to live out the vision of the church.[128] The opportunities for worship through action are diverse, ranging from "helping a neighbor, working through different social agencies in Seattle, caring for the environment or meeting together for a meal or an activity to know one another better."[129] The North Lake community has experienced steady growth for more than three years. On average, 150 people attend the service at North Lake Community Church each Sunday.

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[124]Ibid.

[125]Union Church, *Sunday Rhythm*, http://www.unionchurchseattle.org/Home.aspx (accessed December 10, 2009).

[126]Ibid.

[127]Ibid.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid.

Since this research was qualitative in nature, and focused on gaining a better understanding of the perception of mentoring and why those perceptions exist, it was not necessary to collect data from all 150 people. The goal was to particularize, to be able to describe the unique definitions of mentoring and mentoring experiences among a select group of congregants. Particularization is "a process or direction of ideological flow in which values and concepts associated with the remote, the vast, and the important become translated into effective guides and stimuli for the immediate, the humble, and the individual."[130] To particularize is to value the story of the individual. Particularization stands in contrast to generalization, where the goal would be simplification of the individual responses of participants into more broad overarching statements about the perception of mentoring within the entire North Lake community or among churches in general; in other words, generalization is a progression from the specific to the more comprehensive.[131] The original methodological approach was to randomly distribute twenty-five mentoring questionnaires containing the four secondary research questions (listed in the question section above), within the church community. In addition to the twenty-five congregants supplying data, five people were to be purposefully selected for face-to-face interviews, where they would be asked the same four questions. Of the five people interviewed, one would be a person in a formal leadership position within the North Lake community and the remaining four would be chosen based on their age: one person 20-29 years of age, one person 30-39 years of age, one person 40-49 years of age, and one person 50+ years of age.

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[130] Morris E. Opler, "Particularization and Generalization as Processes in Ritual and Culture," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 23 (June 1964), 84.

[131] Ibid., 85.

The reason for this specific sampling within the case study of North Lake Community

Church was because each participant represented a major group of people in attendance at

North Lake. North Lake Community Church has eight people in formal leadership positions.

The vast majority of people who attend North Lake Community Church fall in the 20-65 year old

range. The church has very few attendees over the age of 65 and between the ages of 5 and

20. North Lake does have a large number of babies and small children; however, this study

would not be applicable for such a group. Most babies and small children would not have had a

mentoring experience, due to their undeveloped ability to deeply engage in an interpersonal

relationship. It would also be difficult or even impossible to collect prolific oral or written data

responses from babies and young children.

North Lake Community Church's congregation has a fairly even number of males and

females in attendance. Of the five people interviewed face-to-face, three would be female and

two would be male. Of the twenty-five questionnaires handed out, thirteen would be given to

males and twelve would be given to females. Thus, data would be collected from fifteen

females and fifteen males.

After the researcher submitted her thesis proposal, and upon further discussion of the

original methodological approach with the married couple who pastors North Lake Community

Church, the research methodology was changed slightly. The researcher would still conduct

five interviews, three with females and two with males, using the four secondary research

questions; however, the methodological approach for the questionnaires would change. The

pastoring couple encouraged the researcher to give all church community members an

opportunity to participant in the mentoring questionnaire, so everyone might feel informed

about the research and have the chance to contribute to the study. The pastors anticipated that only a small percentage of the congregation would complete and submit the questionnaire during the Sunday morning service, but in doing so, they would supply the researcher with at least thirteen male and twelve female responses. This methodology would also assure that the data would be collected at random. If the researcher collected more than thirteen male and twelve female responses, she could either randomly select a subset of thirteen male and twelve female questionnaires from the larger number collected, or she could use the data from all questionnaires completed and submitted (as long as the number was not too sizeable), allowing for greater understanding and validity.

Researcher

The researcher began regularly attending North Lake Community Church in August of 2008, after moving to Seattle, Washington from California. Her fiancé, now husband, was attending North Lake, so she heard about the community through him. The researcher is not in a formal leadership position within North Lake Community Church and has been attending the church for about a year and a half. Because of the small size of the congregation and the intentionality of the people, the researcher quickly established relationships with people within the community and with people in leadership. She was asked to be involved in the worship ministry, as a vocalist, and also as a facilitator for the small group discussion during second Sunday services. She has only participated in these informal leadership responsibilities for about a year; however, this involvement could naturally play a role in her level of bias. As a church attendee, particularly one who is involved in the ministries of the church, the researcher will inevitably bring some bias to my research. The researcher is not an outside observer, but a

participant within the church community. However, because she is not in a formal leadership

position within the church, she is not in a position of authority over research participants from

the church, which would cause dual relationship, namely, ministry leader and researcher.

Concerning the subject of mentoring, the researcher has been in both formal and

informal mentoring relationships. Most of her mentoring experiences have been within the

realm of Christian higher education, more specifically within the student affairs arena.

Mentoring relationships have yielded much fruit in the researcher's life and in the lives of those

she's mentored. She has also observed much confusion around the topic of mentoring and

encountered various individuals, both inside and outside her former student affairs profession,

who have had negative experiences in mentoring relationships. Her passion for mentoring and

familiarity with mentoring relationships could contribute to biases, as her overall perception

and knowledge of the subject has been framed positively.

Instrumentation, Analysis, and Validity

As highlighted in the sample section, data was collected using two approaches,

questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. As stated above, the specific questions used to

collect data, in both the questionnaires and face-to-face interviews were the secondary

research questions: (1) What is your definition of mentoring? (2) How did you arrive at that

specific definition? (3) Have you ever been in the type of mentoring relationship you just

described? YES or NO (4) If you answered "YES" to question #3, please describe what that

relationship was like for you. In order to assure that the research questions would result in

workable data and would be as free from bias as possible, a pilot study, in the form of an

informed consent form and questionnaire, were given to three individuals within the church

community, selected at random, on Sunday, February 21, 2010. After the participants in the

pilot study had the opportunity to answer the four questionnaire questions, the researcher

debriefed the questionnaire with them, asking them for feedback as to the questions which

may have been unclear or phrased in a confusing manner. The comments given by each pilot

study participant are listed in Appendix 5. Upon receiving the pilot study participants' feedback,

the researcher reworked and rephrased the secondary research questions. The questionnaire

responses given by the three pilot study participants were not used in the overall data analysis.

The original secondary research questions, given to the three pilot study participants, in

the form of a questionnaire were: (1) What is your definition of mentoring? (2) How did you

arrive at that specific definition? (3) Have you ever been in the type of mentoring relationship

you just described? (4) If so, describe what that was like for you. As a result of the comments

each pilot study participant gave, the researcher decided to change question #3 and #4 of the

questionnaire slightly. Question #3 on the final draft of the mentoring questionnaire now

states, "Have you ever been in the type of mentoring relationship you just described? (circle

your response)," followed by the words "YES" and "NO" for the questionnaire participant to circle.

Question #4 now reads, "If you answered "YES" to question #3, please describe what that

relationship was like for you." On March 11, 2010, the researcher provided a copy of the

modified mentoring questionnaire to the Human Subjects Review committee at Northwest

University.

The researcher printed 120 copies of the updated questionnaire and 120 copies of the

questionnaire informed consent form. She stapled the consent form on top of the

questionnaire. Attaching the two forms in this manner was done for two reasons. First, the

researcher wanted to ensure that each participant was well informed about the kind of research being conducted and his or her rights as a participant in the mentoring study. Secondly, the researcher wanted to ensure that each person who submitted a questionnaire had also completed an informed consent form. Without an informed consent form, the researcher would be unable to use a participant's responses for data analysis. If the forms were not attached, the researcher could not be sure if each participant submitting a questionnaire had also submitted a *signed* informed consent form.

Questionnaires were distributed to the entire North Lake Community Church congregation on March 14, 2010, during the second Sunday service in March, when the community is gathered around small tables for a more interactive worship service. Questionnaire participants were asked to provide their gender and age, but were not asked to give their name. The face-to-face interviews were conducted by the researcher on Friday, March 26, 2010, Sunday, March 28, 2010, and Sunday, April 11, 2010. The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews within the confines of the North Lake Community Church building. The interviewees' responses to the research questions were recorded on a tape recorder. The data recorded was transcribed and the participants' identity protected using a pseudonym. In addition, when the data was presented and analyzed within the thesis (in the sections to follow), the same pseudonym was used to protect confidentiality. Upon conclusion of research and after the degree is conferred, the recorded interview data will be deleted.

On Sunday, March 14, 2010, the researcher arrived at North Lake Community Church, an hour prior to the beginning of the service. She placed a pen and an informed consent form and questionnaire (stapled together) on each chair. The service began when one of the pastors

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came to the front of the church, invited the congregation to be seated, welcomed them, and introduced the researcher. As the researcher approached the front of the church, a PowerPoint slide the researcher had created prior to the service appeared on the screen behind her. The researcher was given three minutes to explain the graduate research she was doing, describe how the church community could be involved in the research, and give instructions as to how to complete the consent form and questionnaire. As the researcher asked for the church's involvement and provided the necessary instructions for data collection, a second PowerPoint slide appeared on the screen (both PowerPoint slide images are provided in the Appendix). The pastor came back to the front and encouraged the church community to complete the questionnaire, if they felt comfortable, and place it inside a folder the researcher had provided, upon completion. Five minutes of silence were provided for people to complete the questionnaire, after which a second pastor came forward and invited people to continue working on the questionnaires as a time of singing began or to finish them at the end of the service and turn them in before they left church that day.

During the middle of the service, the researcher went over to the folder, where the questionnaires had been submitted, and quickly glanced at the top of each questionnaire, counting to make sure she had enough male and female responses. The researcher made it a point to look only at the top of each questionnaire and not at the consent form attached to the front of the questionnaire, for confidentiality purposes. The researcher planned to collect a minimum of thirteen male and twelve female questionnaires. After counting the number of questionnaires she had received, the researcher realized she was short two male questionnaires and five female questionnaires. The pastors at North Lake Community Church

asked the researcher to tell them whether or not she had collected enough responses before

the end of the service, so they could once again encourage the congregation to complete and

submit the questionnaire before dismissing them. The researcher told the pastors how many

questionnaires she still needed to collect a few minutes before the end of the service. When

one of the pastors went to the front to dismiss the congregation, he reminded them to turn in

their completed questionnaires before leaving. He reminded them to place the questionnaires

in the folder provided and not to leave them on their chairs, for confidentiality purposes.

After the service was over, the researcher opened the folder where the questionnaires

had been collected and separated the consent form from the questionnaire, making sure to

only keep questionnaires which had a signed consent form attached to them. All consent forms

were signed properly so all questionnaires were kept. The researcher put the consent forms

back into the folder and shuffled the questionnaires. She then separated them into piles of

male questionnaires and female questionnaires and counted them to assure she had collected

enough male and female responses. She was surprised to learn she had collected exactly

twenty male and twenty female questionnaires. The researcher determined to use data from

all twenty male and female questionnaires, since she was able to collect more data than she

originally planned on. She concluded that the additional data would give increased

opportunities for analysis and understanding. The original methodological approach allowed

for twenty-five co-researchers, but due to the new methodological approach, suggested by the

pastoring couple at North Lake Community Church, along with the amount of data collected,

the number of co-researchers was forty-five, twenty-two males and twenty-three females

(twenty male questionnaires, twenty female questionnaires, two male interviews, and three

female interviews).

On Friday, March 26, 2010, Sunday, March 28, 2010, and Sunday, April 11, 2010, the

researcher conducted face-to-face interviews using the four secondary research questions, the

same questions participants answered on the mentoring questionnaires. In addition to these

questions, the researcher asked a few follow-up or clarifying questions to each interviewee.

Each interview was recorded and transcribed. The entire transcription of the researcher's and

the interviewees' responses are provided in the Appendix. An additional way the researcher

hoped to eliminate bias and conduct thorough instrumentation and analysis was by

triangulation. After transcribing the data from each face-to-face interview and revisiting the

responses several times, the researcher compiled a summary of the participants' responses.

The researcher went back to each interviewee and asked him or her to read through the

researcher's interpretation and summary of his or her responses, in order to gain feedback as to

the validity of the assessment. The researcher made corrections to each summary, as needed.

The triangulated summary of each interviewee's responses is provided in the data section,

below.

Data

Forty mentoring questionnaires, completed by twenty women and twenty men, provide

the data for this project. Participants' comprehensive responses to each of the questionnaire

questions have been compiled by the researcher and are provided in the Appendix. Within the

Appendix, participants' responses are organized according to the four specific questions they

answered. The data within this section is divided similarly, into four sections which correspond

to the four secondary research questions participants answered on the questionnaire. Here,

questionnaire participants' responses are summarized, in tables, charts, and paragraph form.

Key words and phrases from each participant's response have been noted and counted. A

participant's answer to a particular question may contain multiple key words and phrases.

Question #1—What is your definition of mentoring?

Table 1. Key words and phrases used in participants' definition of mentoring

Key word/phrase	# of times in female responses	Key word/phrase	# of times in male responses
Relationship	7	Relationship	1
Role model/models	2	Be an example	3
Provides direction, guidance, counsel, training, shepherding	7	Provides direction, guidance, counsel, training, shepherding	5
Helping	0	Helping	3
Encourage, support, care for	7	Encourage, support, care for	2
Intentional	2	Intentional	2
Come alongside, walk with someone/walk alongside	10	Come alongside, walk with someone/walk alongside	9
One-on-one	2	One-on-one	1
Coaching	1	Coaching	2
Leader/leading/leadership	1	Leader/leading/leadership	3
Mentor is more experienced/mature, mentee has interest in mentor's role or experience, learning/teaching/sharing from experience or knowledge	14	Mentor is more experienced/mature, mentee has interest in mentor's role or experience, learning/teaching/sharing from experience or knowledge	10
Growth/area to grow in, meet goals	6	Growth/area to grow in, meet goals	5
Mutual	1	Mutual	0
Older person to younger person	0	Older person to younger person	2

Question #2—How did you arrive at that specific definition of mentoring?

Table 2. Key words and phrases used to describe how participants arrived at their specific definition of mentoring

Key word/phrase	# of times in female responses	Key word/phrase	# of times in male responses
Experience	12	Experience	13

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-As a mentee/being mentored	4	- As a mentee/being mentored	1
-As a mentor	1	-As a mentor	0
-As mentor and mentee	1	-As mentor and mentee	3
-As a professional	1	-As a professional	4
Observation	3	Observation	3
Dictionary definition	1	Dictionary definition	2
Personal fabricated definition *(e.g. "I said so" or "Made it up")*	1	Personal fabricated definition *(e.g. "I said so" or "Made it up")*	3
Christian circles/church	2	Desire for self and others	1
Education/mentor training	4	Personal reflection on subject	2
Knowledge of similar terminology (discipleship/discipling)	2	Scripture – Jesus	1

Question #3–Have you ever been in the type of mentoring relationship you just described? (circle your response)   YES   NO

Table 3.1. Visual representation of female responses to research question #3

No response
(1/20 = 5%)
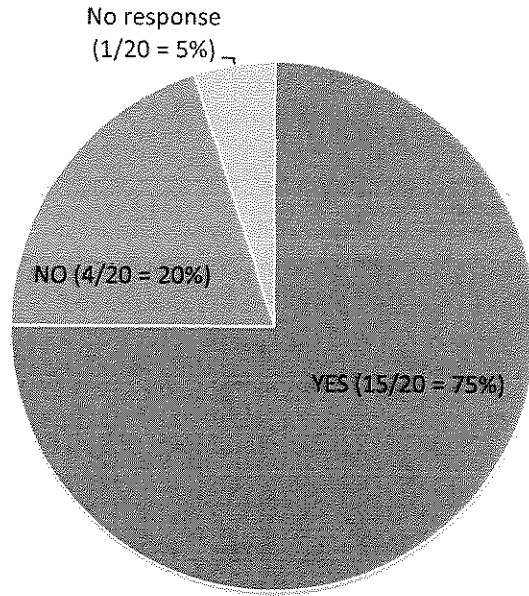
NO (4/20 = 20%)

YES (15/20 = 75%)

<u>Female Responses</u>
Yes–15/20 = 75%
No–4/20 = 20%
No response–1/20 = 5%

Table 3.2. Visual representation of male responses to research question #3

<u>Male Responses</u>
Yes–15/20 = 75%
No–5/20 = 25%

Table 3.3. Visual representation of total responses to research question #3
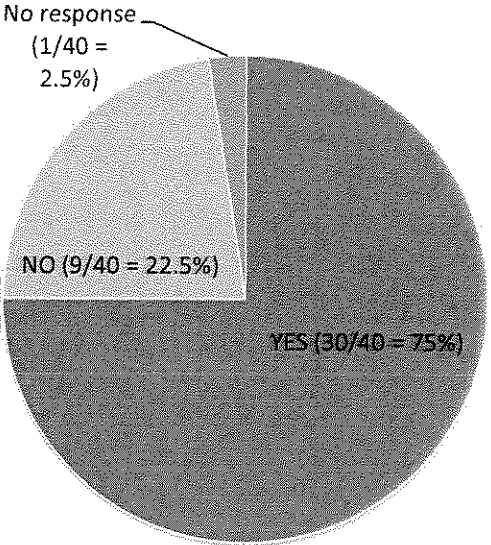
<u>Total Responses</u>
Yes–30/40 = 75%
No–9/40 = 22.5%
No response–1/40 = 2.5%

Question #4—If you answered "YES" to question #3, please describe what that relationship was like for you.

Of the forty total questionnaires collected, thirty people, fourteen males and sixteen females, responded to question #4 (above). Partic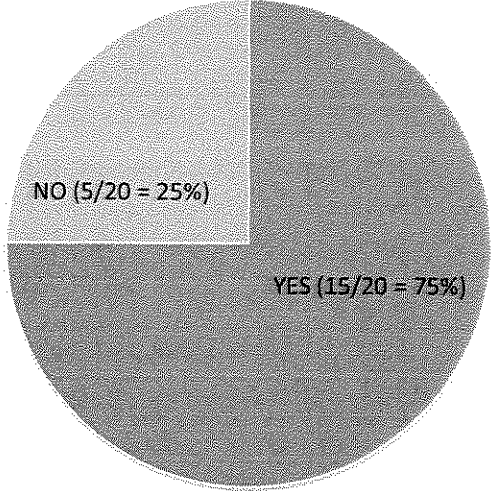ipants should have only responded to question #4 if they had answered "YES" to question #3, which stated, "Have you ever been in the type of mentoring relationship you just described?" Fifteen females answered "YES" to question #3, and therefore responded to question #4 as well. One female responded "NO" to question #3, but still responded to question #4. Three females answered "NO" to question #3, and therefore, did not answer question #4. One female did not respond to question #3 or #4. Fourteen males answered "YES" to question #3, and therefore, responded to question #4 as well. One male responded "YES" to question #3, but did not respond to question #4. Five males answered "NO" to question #3, and therefore, did not answer question #4.

The data collected for question #4 is difficult to summarize, as each participant answered according to their unique experience in a mentoring relationship. Within the thirty responses given to question #4, however, there were four major ways participants answered: as a mentee/someone being mentored, as a mentor, as BOTH a mentee and mentor, or generally, without specifying whether their experience was as a mentor, mentee, or both. Specific breakdowns noting the number of participants responding in each of these four ways is shown on the following page, in Table 4.

Table 4. Breakdown of male and female responses to research question #4

Responses	As a mentee/someone being mentored	As a mentor	As both a mentee and mentor	General – not specifically as a mentee or mentor
Female	6	2	2	6
Male	2	1	3	8
Total	8	3	5	14

The vast majority of descriptions of mentoring relationships were positive descriptions, specifically how the participants gained something from the mentoring relationship. Their positive descriptions were communicated in words and phrases like, "I am a better person because of it," "very fulfilling," "very energizing and comforting," "beautiful, rich, nurturing," and "really helped me grow." A few participants did not specifically comment as to whether the relationship was positive or negative, but simply described it for what it was. These participants used words and phrases like, "We talked about daily issues and struggles," "everyday life with family," or "It took a lot of work to build a relationship of trust." There were also a few descriptions of mentoring that had negative undertones. Nearly every one of these participants connected their negative experience to the fact that the mentoring relationship was informal. For example, one female responded, "A more informal mentorship that grew out of teaching next door to another teacher and talking on a daily basis was far more beneficial." A male participant preferred a "lifestyle oriented" relationship to a "Bible study oriented" one. Another male said that most of his mentoring relationships have "been awkward—especially in formally set up situations."

Interviews

On Friday, March 26, 2010, the researcher interviewed Rita, a female in the 30-39 year old age bracket, as well as Debby, a female in the 40-49 year old age bracket. On Sunday,

March 28, 2010, the researcher interviewed Jennifer, a person in a formal leadership position at

North Lake Community Church. On this Sunday, the researcher also interviewed Trevor, a male

in the 20-29 year old age bracket. Finally, on Sunday, April 11, 2010, the researcher

interviewed Wayne, a male in the 50+ age bracket. Following are summaries of each

interviewee's responses, after being checked for accuracy.

Rita

Rita's definition of mentoring: Mentoring is a passing on of experience or knowledge

from one person to another. Mentoring can occur in any field, may involve a difference in age-

range, and has an accountability component, a regular checking in with the other person, with

the intent to grow. Rita believes the mentoring process "ends up growing both sides, both

parties."

Rita arrived at this specific definition of mentoring mostly from experience. She has

observed standard models, like the Boys & Girls Club, had personal experience mentoring ten

girls as a volunteer in the junior high and high school ministries at [a local church], and was

mentored, during high school by a woman named [Angela].

Rita has been both a mentor and a mentee. She described her experience in mentoring

relationships positively. She still hangs out with the girls she mentored, although the

relationship has changed from more of a mentoring relationship into a friendship. Rita

describes the woman who mentored her in high school as, "someone who I looked up to," "a safe

place to ask questions," and someone she felt comfortable talking with and taking advice from.

Rita had the same type of mentoring relationship with [Angela], as she did with the ten girls she

volunteered with, except now, Rita was the mentor.

The ten girls Rita mentored were assigned to her. The relationships she had with them felt "stiff" at first, as she felt like she didn't know what she was doing and was only a year out of college. Rita was given some mentoring training from the church where she was a volunteer, but found the reason for the success in the relationship to be the regularity with which she met with the girls (every Sunday morning and every Wednesday night) and how "naturally trusting" they were of her. Even though Rita and the girls were ten years apart in age, she viewed them as friends from early on. Rita's relationship with the girls not only allowed her to think back on her own high school experience and share her past with them, but also put her own life into context.

[Angela] was assigned Rita as a mentee, although the relationship was not quite as formal. The relationship began as a regular group of women meeting with [Angela] for a Bible study and then evolved into hanging out. Rita could call her mentor at any time and she welcomed her attention. The relationship between Rita and [Angela] was fairly mutual, they both pursued one another and it was never burden.

Rita remembers a few students who she mentored informally during the same time she was mentoring the ten girls. The relationships developed over the course of seeing one another on a regular basis and interacting with one another. One informal mentoring relationship, in particular, began out of a conversation, when a girl opened up to her, while they were on a retreat, about difficulties she was facing.

Rita has also informally sought out mentors in her professional life. She views her employers as people in a mentoring role. She has asked them questions as "someone who's learning" and they have answered out of their experience and knowledge.

Debby

Debby's definition of mentoring: Mentoring is a relationship, usually between two people, "that's built on somebody who has either, I don't wanna say an expertise, but it's like you have somebody who's considered knowledgeable or informative in a particular area, whether it's personal or professional." The person being mentored doesn't necessarily need to be younger (could be the same age or older), but they are learning from the mentor. Mentoring is relationship-oriented and can be nurturing in some respects.

Debby arrived at her specific definition of mentoring, mostly from her own work experience, personal experience, and personal observation. Debby has come to appreciate mentoring more, as a result of the positive impact she sees it having in her work in [focus of Debby's career]. Mentoring helps individuals in [focus of career] "see a different way of looking at life." Debby feels very fortunate to have had great people around her, both personally and professionally. She seems to attract and be drawn towards "old souls," people who have wisdom, are inspiring, smart, clever, and funny. She often finds herself gravitating towards those types of individuals and attaching herself to them. In turn, she also finds herself seeking out encouraging and inspiring individuals to mentor. She remembers always having somebody in her life that she would consider a mentor. To Debby, mentoring is how she builds relationships and how she lives. When mentoring is not a present component of her life, it feels less enjoyable.

Debby's mentoring experiences have nearly all been informal and very positive. She describes her mentoring experiences as natural and organic. The only formal mentoring experience Debby had was when she mentored a young girl in the foster care program for

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about a year. Being in her early 20's and at a place in life where she was still trying to figure herself out, Debby did not find the mentoring relationship to be very positive. She found it very difficult to connect with someone with deep psychological issues. She thought the relationship was an "interesting experience," but wouldn't necessarily define it as a mentoring relationship in terms of the impact other mentoring relationships have had on her life. This relationship felt "forced."

Debby has been both a mentor and mentee. She still maintains friendships with those who have mentored her and those she has mentored. Debby spent some time going through life coaching, but found it to be a more "clinical" and "forced" relationship than mentoring. Even though some people view mentoring as coaching, Debby doesn't. She views the person who has been her life coach and those who have been her mentors quite differently. She finds mentoring to be much more meaningful.

The mentoring relationships Debby has had consisted of "getting to know the person's likes, dislikes, quirks, character." Debby's mentors have been thoughtful with their suggestions and a sounding board. She, in turn, models those characteristics with the people she mentors. Debby currently informally mentors a woman in her office and has found that paying attention to the person and understanding their limitations is very important. As a mentor, she believes there are "ways of teaching people without them feeling like they're being talked down to." As a mentor, Debby tries not to put caps on people's abilities or impose herself upon them, but rather, remain open to whatever situation that the mentee is in at the time. Debby sees mentoring as "heartwarming," no matter which side of the relationship a person is on.

Debby does not view her current work supervisor as a mentor, nor does she desire to seek her out to be a mentor. Debby knows there are certain things she needs from a mentoring relationship. She considers her supervisor to be a wonderful woman with great experience, but does not seek to learn and to grow as a person from her mentorship.

Jennifer

Jennifer's definition of mentoring: Mentoring is a process of mutual sharing where growth takes place. Mentoring doesn't have to be an older to younger relationship, exclusively, but can take place between contemporaries. Jennifer goes on to define mentoring with the image of iron sharpening iron, "something where people are sharing life together and there is growth in potentially both parties from sharing that information, sharing that life journey, sharing, if it's faith related, just sharing faith together."

Jennifer arrived at her specific definition of mentoring by seeing it in action. She has observed examples at North Lake Community Church. On the one hand, she has seen people open themselves up by being vulnerable to ask questions, ask for help, share personal struggles, or look for advice. On the other hand, Jennifer has "seen people willing to walk alongside other people and share what they've learned in their life professionally or spiritually." The mentoring relationships Jennifer has observed have come out very naturally. People, who might be considered the mentor in these relationships, have had growth happen in their own lives because of the mentoring relationship.

Jennifer was mentored formally by her boss when she first began ministry. She would meet with her supervisor on a weekly basis to receive feedback about how ministry was going, talk through personal and ministry relationships, and "just sort of hash it through." Jennifer has

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been on the flip side, mentoring others. She understands what it is like to be asked questions you haven't thought through and be asked things that cause you to think. Most of Jennifer's informal mentoring relationships evolved because of her ministry position. She believes when a person is in a position of ministry, they have time for mentoring, mentoring is how they think, and mentoring is even an expectation of being in ministry. The ministry mindset is about developing people, training people, and encouraging people. Outside of her ministry context, Jennifer views her relationships as more friendship than mentoring. The only formal mentoring relationship Jennifer remembers being in was a Bible study situation, where she was the designated leader.

<center>*Trevor*</center>

Trevor's definition of mentoring: "When I think of mentoring I think of having a positive role model, a positive influence that helps develop character and kind of a holistic approach to helping you develop as a person into someone who can contribute well to your community."

Trevor arrived at this definition of mentoring because of his own life experience. He was able to identify three or four people who intentionally chose to engage with his life. These individuals entered his life at different moments and had various reasons for doing so. These mentors walked through decision making with Trevor or helped him chart a course through a particular time in his life. As Trevor reflects on those experiences, he sees how they were not isolated. His experiences, as a result of the mentoring relationships, still "echo" as he makes decisions.

Trevor specifically remembers a youth leader who mentored him when he was in junior high. Trevor still maintains a relationship with this youth leader, years later. Trevor thinks the

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mentoring relationship began as a result of his parents asking the youth leader to step into his life. He would interact with this youth leader a couple times a week at youth group related activities, but also spent longer, one-on-one periods of time with the youth leader, as he and his sisters would stay at the youth leader's home, with he and his wife, while his parents were away on vacations. This mentor told Trevor he was praying for him, went out of his way to make sure that he was involved in Trevor's life, and called Trevor to check in. Trevor was struck by the fact that his youth leader was an adult, who had a life and responsibilities, and yet he still sought him out in junior high and high school. Trevor was greatly impacted by his youth leader's intentionality. He remembers a specific incident in college, where he was "floundering a little bit," and his youth leader invited him over to his home for dinner with another mutual friend. Trevor's youth leader and the mutual friend formally intervened into his life, telling him they were going to help him make a decision and get moving forward in his life.

Trevor's mentoring relationship with his youth leader began in a more formal way, but then became more informal, as it developed into a friendship. Despite their differences in age, life experience, and wisdom, Trevor saw his youth leader's role change from mentor to friend over the course of their relationship. Trevor sees the validity of this change in that his youth leader was a groomsman in his wedding.

Trevor has been a mentor to others in more formal settings. He worked as a family advocate at an elementary school, where he did social skills training for kids with behavioral issues or those who were missing social cues. His responsibility was to develop relationships with the kids by establishing rapport with them and finding out a little bit about their lives. His relationship with the kids was influential in helping them move into a better set of social skills.

Trevor has also led a couple different Bible studies for young kids. His role in that group is also a little more formal, as it is an established group, but nonetheless, feels like he is "afforded the chance to speak into kids' lives and not make decisions for them, but help them at least have a context and a fuller background before they make decisions."

Wayne

Wayne's definition of mentoring: "My definition of mentoring is having the experience in life to maybe come alongside that person, guiding them through life's changes, whether it's in a career, maybe in a marriage.something to that effect—really using your experience in life, that you have learned, that you're able to pass on to others."

Wayne arrived at his specific definition of mentoring through experience in life. He looks back at the successes or failures of his fifty plus years of life, as a way to learn. He has had the ability to mentor and be mentored, as a younger person. Wayne "always thought when [he] got older that [he] would have all the answers." He later realized that "regardless of age, being a mentee or having a mentor in life is very crucial in life."

Most of Wayne's mentoring experiences have been within the context of [his career background], where he has spent a significant portion of his life. Within his professional field, Wayne has discovered how critical it is to be a good mentor and mentee. Mentoring and being mentored is, in fact, an expectation within [Wayne's career background]. Wayne has mentored some younger people. In his mentoring role, he helped guide his mentees to an end result, rather than telling them how to do something. Wayne benefited from being mentored, having someone older come up and say, "These are the steps you need to achieve step A through B."

Wayne considers most of his mentoring experiences to be formal, by nature, but also believes these relationships have an informal aspect, because of the coming alongside and genuineness of the relationship. He thinks being a mentor to someone would be difficult without first establishing a friendship.

Data Summary

When both questionnaires and interviews are considered, data in this study was collected from a total of forty-five members of the North Lake community. Since roughly 120 to 150 people attend North Lake Community Church on a given Sunday, forty-five responses denote approximately 30% of the church community. Of those forty-five responses, thirty-five people reported being involved in a mentoring relationship at some level. Therefore, 77.8% of the participants surveyed (35/40) and between 23.3% (35/120) and 29.2% (35/150) of the North Lake community have been involved in a mentoring relationship.

Analysis

The data retrieved through a qualitative case study is not meant to be quantified or generalized, but rather, interpreted, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the participants in the sampling and the topic of study. Therefore, the goal of qualitative analysis is to learn the meaning behind the positions participants hold regarding a particular concept. The researcher interprets the data, noting trends and themes, according to what she has learned through the study. Analysis allows the data to speak at a deeper level.[132]

The data collected in this study is being used to understand the perceptions of mentoring among the people of North Lake Community Church, and more particularly, to

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[132]Creswell, 183.

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discover why those perceptions exist. As participants responded to the initial research question, which asked for their definition of mentoring, two major similarities were found.

First, and most notably, was the regularity of the phrases, "mentor is more experienced/mature," "mentee has interest in mentor's role or experience," and "learning/teaching/sharing from experience or knowledge," which appeared in participants' questionnaire responses. To summarize more generally, participants identified a difference in the experience and knowledge of a mentor and mentee, as essential to the definition of mentoring. The exchange of this experience or knowledge, from the more experienced person (mentor), to the less experienced (mentee) is the core of the mentoring process. This finding seems to be consistent with the frequency with which similar phrasing occurs in the mentoring literature.[133] The variety of definitions people offered also supports the findings in the literature, which reveal multiple definitions. The diversity of definitions supports the initial assumption that people's definitions are relative to their experience. This assumption is further supported through the data collection, namely, the secondary research question, which asked participants how they arrived at their specific definition of mentoring. By and large, questionnaire participants and interviewees responded that their experience played the major role in shaping their definition.

Secondly, and even more surprisingly, was the frequency with which participants' definitions of mentoring contained the phrases "come alongside," "walk with someone", and "walk alongside." As the researcher read and reread participants' definitions, these phrases were more noticeable than any other, perhaps because of their specificity, in addition to their frequency.

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[133]See for example: Stanley & Clinton; Johnson & Ridley; Smith; Stratton & Owens; *APEGGA Mentoring Handbook*

Similar phrasing can be found in the mentoring literature. Shinohara uses the phrase "walk together" when describing the nature of a mentoree and mentor interaction.[134] Stratton and Owens, discussing the evolution of mentoring from the historical foundation of apprenticeship, describe the apprentice as, "working alongside a craftsman or scholar."[135] Even in the broader definition of mentoring, McCreath defines a "mentoring community," as a group "committed to walk alongside one another."[136] The regularity with which participants at North Lake Community Church responded with the phrases "come alongside," "walk with someone", and "walk alongside," does seem to be a bit more frequent than similar phrasing found in mentoring literature. To walk or come alongside implies that the mentoring relationship is supportive, based in equality, and has a level of consistency. If most participants' definitions come from their experience, it would seem that at some point in their lives, participants have "come alongside" someone as their mentor or had a mentor "walk alongside" them. Perhaps this particular phrasing is common language at North Lake Community Church, and thus the frequency with which it occurred is unique to this church community.

Beyond the initial overall analysis of the data collected, distinctions were noted between male and female responses. In addition to gender, participants were asked to provide their age range, but for sake of time, thoroughness, and several participants' decisions to forego noting their age range, analysis of participants' responses based on age will be

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[134] Shinohara, 111.

[135] Stratton & Owens, 92-93.

[136] McCreath, 3.

postponed for future study. Here, we will simply focus on analyzing the differences between the data collected from males and the data collected from females.

Many myths abound in regards to the differences between males and females. Alice P. Matthews warns about the "tendency to exaggerate the differences between men and women" or to deny that any differences exist, beyond body composition.[137] She goes on to say that both tendencies, to exaggerate or deny the differences between males and females, "lead us away from the truth about gender as God's good gift to humanity."[138] Exaggerating differences reduces people to a set of roles and denies their personhood, while denying differences may thwart God's purposes in creating humanity as distinctly male and female.[139] Within the mentoring literature, there is little to no mention of the differences in the perception of mentoring between males and females. After analyzing the data this study uncovered, there are several points to note in regards to a male versus female perception. The goal of this analysis is to interpret the data and understand males and females at Northlake Community Church, without over or under emphasizing gender differences.

First, within the definitions of mentoring, given in response to research question number one, females used the word "relationship," as well as the words "encourage," "support," or "care for" significantly more times than men did. Seven female responses and only one male response contained the word "relationship." Seven female responses and only two male responses contained the words "encourage," "support," or "care for." Matthews states, "Because

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[137]Alice P. Matthews, *Preaching That Speaks to Women*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003, 23.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Ibid.

relationships are so integral to most women's sense of personhood, women often do defer to the opinions of others and alter their judgments accordingly. Women tend to define themselves in terms of relationships, and they also evaluate themselves morally in terms of their ability to care."[140] If a core component of a woman's identity is in her relationships with others and if she counts the opinions of others highly when making decisions, it seems natural that when describing a term like mentoring, women would use the word "relationship." If women evaluate themselves and perhaps correspondingly, their relationships, on their ability to care, words like "encourage," "support," and "care for" would be logical choices to define a mentoring relationship. More often, men used the word "helping" in their definition of mentoring (three times versus zero times in female definitions). Matthews quotes Roy McCloughry, author of *Men and Masculinity*, who notes among the characteristics of conventional masculinity is a drive to get things done and solve problems.[141] Getting things done and solving problems, as underlying attributes of masculinity could contribute to why several men responded with the word "helping" as an important descriptor within their definitions of mentoring.

Secondly, there is a seemingly small difference in the terminology males and females used in their definitions of mentoring, specifically to describe the mentor's role. Men more often used the word "example" and women used the phrase "role model." Even though these terms mean essentially the same thing, it is fascinating to note that no females used the word "example" and no males used the phrase "role model" in their definitions of mentoring. Further

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[140] Ibid., 38.

[141] Ibid., 54.

study could be done to determine the reasoning for this difference in language between males and females.

The context for several of the male participants' mentoring relationships was their profession. As noted in research question number two, four out of thirteen males, who answered "experience" as their means for arriving at their specific definition of mentoring, noted that this experience occurred within their vocational environment. In addition, Wayne's interview revealed that his career, serving in the military, was the context for his mentoring experiences. Mentoring literature highlights the two major forms of mentoring, informal and formal.[142] Kathy Kram also noted two major functions of mentoring, career functions and psychosocial functions.[143] Definitions of mentoring arrived at through professional experience would normally be classified as formal mentoring relationships, serving mainly a career function.

In the questionnaires, one female noted professional experience as the context for arriving at her specific mentoring definition, but later noted in question number four, that she found informal mentoring relationships within her profession to be "far more beneficial." In the interviews, Rita, Debby, and Jennifer all mentioned professional mentoring on some level throughout their interviews. Debby shared that her work environment played the major role in shaping her definition of mentoring. Debby's professional mentoring experiences were unique in that they were more informal in nature and driven by her own personal desire to be mentored and to mentor others. Jennifer shared about an experience she had being mentored

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[142] McCreath, 6-7.

[143] Kram, 614.

by her boss, however, her initial response of how she arrived at her specific definition of mentoring was through her own observations, not through professional experience. Rita alluded to her mentoring experience in a professional setting, only after the researcher probed deeper into specific informal and formal mentoring relationships she had been a part of. Her primary experiences in mentoring were informal and served a psychosocial function.

The data retrieved, particularly from the interviews, reveals the presence and importance of mentoring in professional settings. Even though there were a few more male responses which mentioned professional mentoring on the questionnaires (four male responses and one female response), there was a fairly even number of males and females who commented on their professional mentoring experience when data from both the questionnaires and interviews was considered. All female responses, on questionnaires and interviews, spoke of their positive mentoring experiences in careers settings as informal in nature.

Seemingly, in this study, most females' definitions of mentoring have been shaped by their experiences outside of vocational settings. Females, who have had mentoring experiences within the context of their workplace, had or preferred informal professional mentoring experiences. Normally, career mentoring is formal in nature. These female responses reveal atypical experiences, according to definitions given in the literature, but perhaps provide insight to an emerging and attractive type of mentoring experience. None of the responses from male participants, regarding their formal professional mentoring experiences, were explicitly negative, so perhaps this style of mentoring is more acceptable and beneficial to men.

The final distinction between males and females within the data, although quite minor, concerns age difference and the idea of mutuality. First, two men highlighted age difference, within in their definition of mentoring (research question number one), as a foundational component to mentoring. These two participants characterized mentoring as something that occurs between an older person and younger person, where the older person is the mentor. None of the female participants mentioned age difference as essential to mentoring. There were both male and female responses which specifically noted that mentoring was not contingent upon age. In Debby's definition of mentoring she said, "The other person doesn't necessarily need to be younger. I think they could still be the same age or even older and be learning from that individual." One of the female questionnaire participants defined mentoring as, "An ongoing relationship in which an older, wiser, or more experienced individual shares their knowledge, skills, stories, etc. to help the other grow, solve problems, and meet her goals." A male questionnaire participant believed mentoring was "to walk alongside someone with more experience, not necessarily older, but for me personally older." During Wayne's interview, he said, "I have had the ability to mentor and be mentored, when I was a younger person. I always thought when I got older that I would have all the answers, but you know, regardless of age, being a mentee or having a mentor in life is very crucial in life."

Just as Wayne's definition of mentoring has changed over the course of his lifetime, the definition of mentoring has evolved throughout history. The idea of mentoring, originally coined from Greek mythology, meant an older person, in this case, "Mentor," the wise sage, tutoring the young Telemachus.[144] "Mentor has been attached to the process of education and

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[144] Barondess, 3.

care by an older, experienced person."[145] The history of apprenticeship, formative and

foundational to mentoring is described as, "transferring skills from one generation to another."[146]

As both the literature and participants' responses reveal, the transference of skills or knowledge

within the context of a mentoring relationship, does not just occur from one generation to the

next, between someone older and someone younger. Experience and understanding can be

shared between peers, groups of individuals, and from a younger to an older person. The

community at North Lake Community Church seems to be quite progressive, as their definitions

of mentoring resemble the majority of current literature, which does not define mentoring

based on age. It is important to note that two male participants viewed mentoring as an older

to younger interaction, and one male interviewee responded that he used to think of

mentoring in this way. This traditional thinking is accurate; however its presence within North

Lake Community Church and the mentoring literature in general, is not very prevalent.

The concept of mutuality, characteristic of mentoring relationships, as evidenced in the

literature, does not occur very often in research participants' mentoring definitions (research

question number one); however, in the times this concept was purposely suggested, it was by a

female.[147] One female used the word "mutually" to describe mentoring on her questionnaire.

Another female questionnaire participant described mentoring as "encouraging one another."

Rita believes the mentoring process "ends up growing both sides," and "the passing on of

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[145] New South Wales Department of Education and Training, "Retraining Programs," https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/employment/teachnsw/retrain/mentoringmod.doc (accessed January 12, 2010).

[146] Washington State Department of Labor & Industries, "History of Apprenticeship," http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Apprenticeship/About/History/default.asp (accessed January 14, 2010).

[147] See for example: Johnson & Ridley; Larry Matthews; Creps

knowledge somehow grows the passer." Jennifer described mentoring as "mutual sharing." There were no male responses, in questionnaires or interviews which emphasized the idea of reciprocity or the mentoring relationship as being mutually beneficial to both parties involved. Overall, both male and female participants viewed mentoring as more of a one-way interaction, where the goal is for the mentor to impart skills, knowledge, wisdom, or experience to the mentoree. However, the female participants from North Lake Community Church seem to understand mentoring to be a mutually beneficial process, more than male participants.

The concept of "reverse mentoring" concerns both the ideas of age difference and mutuality. No research participant specifically used the phrase "reverse mentoring" in his definition of mentoring or to describe his personal experience in mentoring relationships, however one female questionnaire participant said, "in practice it [mentoring] often works in reverse, where the mentor has things to learn from the mentee." Even though the people of North Lake Community Church did not use the specific terminology of "reverse mentoring," they have a general understanding of mentoring, in line with the literature base regarding reverse mentoring. Generally, participants saw mentoring as something based upon experience and knowledge more than age or seniority.

A major theme within the data is the correlation between mentoring relationships and friendships. In their interviews, Trevor and Rita both described mentoring relationships that grew into friendships. Jennifer described her experiences in mentoring relationships as feeling more like friendships than mentorships. Wayne thought, "It would be very hard to be a mentor without first being maybe a friend or a confidant in that person." In Debby's mentoring experiences, she had a sense of attraction or being drawn to the other person as the initial

beginning to the mentoring relationship. She also comments that she is still friends with people she has been in mentoring relationships with previously. Several questionnaire participants used phrases like, "more like a friendship," "relationship changed to more of a friendship than mentorship," and "the relationships were friendly" when describing mentoring relationships they were a part of.

These findings parallel information presented in the mentoring literature, even though there are varying opinions as to whether the friendship aspect of mentoring is based in equality or inequality, namely a difference in knowledge or experience.[148] It would have been interesting to follow up with participants who responded in this way, asking them about whether they have been in a mentoring relationship with a peer, how the dynamics of their mentorship changed after the relationship evolved into friendship, and how they determined when the relationship changed from mentorship to friendship. Friendship is woven throughout the mentoring process. As a mentoring relationship progresses, it may be difficult to distinguish whether the relationship is exclusively a mentoring relationship, if it has morphed into friendship, or if mentorship and friendship are in coexistence.

This research reveals that people's knowledge of mentoring comes from experience. Four out of five interviewees responded that they arrived at their definition of mentoring from experience. Twenty-five out of forty questionnaire participants (62.5%) mentioned experience as the way or one of the ways they arrived at their definition of mentoring. Categorically, the number of people who arrived at their definition of mentoring from a means other than experience were similar; however, there were several categories of key words or phrases to

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[148] Shinohara, 111 & Stratton and Owens, 97.

describe mentoring which differed, namely, Christian circles/church, education/mentor training, knowledge of similar terminology—discipleship/discipling, desire for self and others, personal reflection on subject, and Scripture—Jesus. Experience and many of the other key words and phrases which have shaped participants' definitions of mentoring are unique to them as individuals. Therefore, the perception of mentoring is difficult to both qualify and quantify. It is an organic and slippery concept.

More questionnaire and interviewee co-researchers reported being on the mentee side of a mentoring relationship, than being the mentor. As the data shows from research question number four, thirteen out of thirty participants (43.3%) who had been in mentoring relationships noted their role as a mentoree and eight out of thirty participants (26.7%) had been in a mentor role (five out of the thirty, or one sixth of the participants, noted being BOTH a mentor and mentee). Participants' perception of mentoring relationships is seemingly shaped more from their experience as a mentee than as a mentor.

A final category of analysis should be considered, the outlying data. The consideration of atypical or infrequent responses provides additional understanding of the North Lake Community Church population and their perception of mentoring. First, bear in mind one questionnaire participant's response to research question number one. This individual answered, "I don't know what mentoring means in the context of North Lake Community Church. I am a new Christian and am not sure what mentoring means." Understandably, this participant did not answer questions two through four on the questionnaire. This participant's response not only reveals a lack of understanding as to the general definition of mentoring, but also highlights the connectedness this participant feels between her growing faith and her

understanding of the church community. It seems the participant has not gained familiarity of the term "mentoring" through North Lake Community Church, whether through observation, education, or experience.

Secondly, one questionnaire participant specifically noted her negative experience in both a mentoring role and as a mentee. What was especially interesting about this participant's response was the parallel between her negative experience being mentored and her negative experience as a mentor. In regards to her relationship with her mentor, she said that the experience "caused me to ignore my doubts when I should have been working through them." She goes on to say that as a mentor, her "avoidance of doubt was a bad example" to her mentee. In both Rita and Debby's interviews, they specifically mentioned mentoring others in a similar fashion to the way they were mentored. Rita and Debby had positive things to say about their mentoring relationships. This notable connection between the way someone is mentored and the way they ultimately mentor others, implies that a person's experience in a mentoring relationship, whether positive or negative, will influence the way that individual mentors another person.

Finally, participants' responses support the literature base regarding the two basic forms of mentoring, formal and informal. The data reveals a positive view of mentoring relationships overall, however, a few participants mentioned their distaste for formal mentoring relationships. These types of responses were most common amongst those who had experienced both the formal and informal types of mentoring, those who could compare the two.

Implications

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The findings of this research expose the intangibility of the mentoring process. The perceptions of mentoring amongst people at North Lake Community Church have developed through a myriad of different sources, the most common of which is their own personal experience. The unique nature of the human experience makes mentoring something difficult to quantify, define, or generalize. At the same time, the common language and commonality of experiences, which emerge in the questionnaire and interview responses from the North Lake community, reveal some overarching characteristics of mentoring and some general implications for the process within the church setting.

As stated in the data section, a large percentage of people within the North Lake Community have been involved in mentoring relationships in various capacities (77.8% of the people surveyed and interviewed). One could therefore assume that many of the people who were not surveyed or interviewed have also been in mentoring relationships. It might be helpful to learn the number of North Lake Community Church members who are currently involved in a mentoring relationship, not only those who have been involved in one in the past.

Since North Lake Community Church's initial launch, three and half years ago, the church has not done any formal education, discussion groups, or programming specifically geared towards the topic of mentoring. Perhaps now, as the findings of the research are shared, opportunities will be generated for discussion and education about mentoring. Discussion about the perception of mentoring at North Lake may generate a desire amongst community members for involvement in mentoring relationships or a place to process or be supported in their current mentoring relationships.

Most participants developed their definition of mentoring from experience and most responded that their experience had been positive. Overly generalizing what a mentoring relationship is, putting the topic into a box, or exclusively providing black and white definitions of the word from the mentoring literature, might minimize individual experiences. It might also prevent the church community from learning from one another's experiences, and thus gaining a broader understanding of mentoring. Giving the community space to dialogue with one another about past and current mentoring relationships, whether positive or negative, will help to unearth the misconceptions of mentoring. Additionally, as common factors of mentoring relationships emerge, community members may find themselves able to articulate in words, what is normally a difficult to describe, organic process.

North Lake Community Church seemed to have shared language when it came to their definitions of mentoring, as described in the analysis section. The phrases "come alongside," "walk alongside," and "walk with" were distinct within the responses of this church community. Further study could be done on the specific meanings of these phrases, to determine whether or not everyone who responded in this way was implying the same thing. In addition, it might be helpful to learn whether this phraseology is common only among people at North Lake Community Church, whether it is common among faith communities, or whether it is phrasing that is also used outside of religious or faith communities to describe mentoring. To draw a better conclusion, further research would need to be conducted, as to the perception of mentoring within different church communities and other types of non-sectarian communities.

As this study reveals, differences in language and reported experiences exist between the genders, yet there are commonalities within the male participants, and similarly among the

female participants. Leadership at North Lake Community Church would need to decide if mentoring programs should be specifically shaped with gender in mind, or if they should be created using gender neutral criteria. Additional resources may be needed to facilitate two gender specific mentoring programs, so leaders may find it helpful to begin conversation with a mixed group of men and women.

Due to the experiential nature of mentoring observed in this study, more questions have arisen for reflection, processing, and future study, than concrete suggestions or action steps. In addition to posing these questions to the North Lake community, the questions could act as a guide for further study on the perception of mentoring within other church communities and non-faith-based organizations. They are as follows:

- Are there distinct differences in people's definition of mentoring based on their age?

- Could individuals benefit from having common language to describe their mentoring experience and the overall process of mentoring or would it corrupt the informal nature of the mentoring process that so many individuals enjoy?

- How does a church, organization, work environment, etc. educate about the benefits of mentoring and train people to be mentors, without the process becoming "cookie-cutter" or rigid?

- Have males been the mentor or mentee more often? Have females been the mentor or mentee more often? Has anyone ever been a mentor without being a mentee or a mentee without being a mentor?

- Are individuals at North Lake Community Church currently in mentoring relationships? If not, would they like to be?

- Ask people for a more specific description or picture of their formal mentoring experiences versus their informal mentoring experiences

- How do people go about initiating and continuing informal mentoring relationships?

- What characterizes a person's "best" or "worst" mentoring experience?

- How could formal mentoring relationships develop and maintain an informal feel?

- Why are people more often mentees than mentors? If people have a positive experience, within the context of a mentoring relationship, as a mentee, are they motivated to seek out opportunities to be a mentor? Why or why not?

- Do individuals "outgrow" mentoring relationships once they've turned to friendship? As people describe their mentoring experiences, does friendship simply mean "less formal?"

- How does the traditional view of mentoring, as a relationship exclusively between someone older and someone younger, impact mentoring relationships today?

Conclusion

This thesis has addressed the importance of understanding the various perspectives of mentoring which exist within culture. A proposed strategy was outlined to research and analyze people's various definitions of mentoring and how their individual perceptions of mentoring have been formed. This strategy was implemented among the community members at North Lake Community Church in Seattle, Washington.

The data collected from the participants in the study revealed a variety of perceptions in regards to mentoring and emphasized the role of personal experience in shaping individual definitions of mentoring. A large percentage of those surveyed and interviewed had been involved in a mentoring relationship in some capacity, and their overall experience in these mentoring relationships was positive. There were some notable gender differences among participants' definitions of mentoring; however, for the most part, the North Lake Community Church members who were studied had a common language regarding their perceptions of mentoring. North Lake Community Church members studied seemed to prefer the characteristics of informal mentoring relationships to formal mentoring relationships.

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There is potential for the findings of this case study to impact the members of North Lake Community Church. Sharing the data, analysis, and implications of this study with the entire North Lake community may help initiate discussion about the overall perception of mentoring within the church, facilitate the development of future mentoring-related programs, and promote the establishment of life-giving mentoring relationships. Beyond the initial impact the research could have on the North Lake community, is the potential for the research to impact other church communities and non-faith-based organizations. As North Lake Community Church and other communities explore the perception of mentoring, they may wish to broaden their understanding of mentoring by studying the questions generated from this research in greater detail.

Appendix 1: Face-to-Face Interview Questions

Participant's Gender (please circle):   Male   Female
Please Circle Your Age Range (for research purposes):   20-29   30-39   40-49   50+

Interview questions:

    (1) What is your definition of mentoring?

    (2) How did you arrive at that specific definition?

    (3) Have you ever been in the type of mentoring relationship you just described? (circle

    your response)   YES   NO

    (4) If you answered "YES" to question #3, please describe what that relationship was

    like for you.

Appendix 2: Mentoring Questionnaire

Participant's Gender (please circle):   Male   Female
Please Circle Your Age Range (for research purposes):   20-29   30-39   40-49   50+

1. What is your definition of mentoring?

2. How did you arrive at that specific definition?

3. Have you ever been in the type of mentoring relationship you just described? (circle your response)

     YES   NO

4. If you answered "YES" to question #3, please describe what that relationship was like for you.

Appendix 3:

Questionnaire Informed Consent Form: Perception of Mentoring at North Lake Community Church

       I am conducting research on the perception of mentoring for my master's thesis. If you decide to participate in this study you will be given a questionnaire containing four research questions. You will be asked to write written responses to each of these questions. This study will last approximately fifteen minutes.

       This study involves personal disclosure through honest written responses. All of the information you provide will be kept confidential. Your written responses will not be shared with anyone besides the researcher. You will not be asked to write your name on the questionnaire, but simply provide your gender and age range. Your written responses will be transcribed into the data section of the thesis. This study is expected to produce a greater understanding of the perception of mentoring and why those perceptions exist. If you choose to take part in this study you will contribute greatly to this increased level of understanding. Taking part in this study is up to you, and you will not be penalized in any way if you choose not to participate. If you do decide to participate in this study you have the option of withdrawing at any time for any reason without any penalty.

       This project has been approved by the Human Subjects Review Board at Northwest University.

       If you have any questions or comments about this study please contact me at 651-249-1220 or bethanyvs@gmail.com. You can also contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Board, Dr. Kevin Leach, at Northwest University at 425-889-5248 or Kevin.leach@northwestu.edu.

You will receive a copy of this form.

Sincerely,

Bethany von Steinbergs
Master of Arts in Missional Leadership Grad Student at Northwest University

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I have been made aware of my responsibilities as a participant. Furthermore I have been made aware that I may withdraw from participation at any time and for any reason without any penalty whatsoever.

| _____ | | _____ |
| Print Name | | Date |

| _____ | |
| Signature | |

Appendix 4:

Face-to-Face Interview Informed Consent Form: Perception of Mentoring at North Lake Community Church

I am conducting research on the perception of mentoring for my master's thesis. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked your age range, gender (for data purposes), and four research questions in a face-to-face interview with the researcher, Bethany von Steinbergs. You will be asked to provide verbal responses to each of these questions. This study will last approximately fifteen minutes.

This study involves personal disclosure through honest oral responses. All of the information you provide will be kept confidential. The face-to-face interview will be recorded; however, the recording will not be shared with anyone besides the researcher. Your responses will be transcribed and your name changed for the purpose of confidentiality within the thesis. This study is expected to produce a greater understanding of the perception of mentoring and why those perceptions exist. If you choose to take part in this study you will contribute greatly to this increased level of understanding. If you do decide to participate in this study you have the option of withdrawing at any time for any reason without any penalty. This project has been approved by the Human Subjects Review Board at Northwest University.

If you have any questions or comments about this study please contact me at 651-249-1220 or bethanyvs@gmail.com. You can also contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Board, Dr. Kevin Leach, at Northwest University at 425-889-5248 or Kevin.leach@northwestu.edu.

You will receive a copy of this form.

Sincerely,

Bethany von Steinbergs
Master of Arts in Missional Leadership Grad Student at Northwest University

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I have been made aware of my responsibilities as a participant. Furthermore I have been made aware that I may withdraw from participation at any time and for any reason without any penalty whatsoever.

_____   _____
Print Name   Date

_____
Signature

Appendix 5: Summarized Responses of Pilot Study Participants

Participant A
- Question #1 and #2 made perfect sense
- Seems like #3 and #4 could be a combined question
- I wondered if I should elaborate when answering question #3
- Perhaps provide boxes ("yes" and "no") to answer question #3

Participant B
- All questions were clear
- Clarify #3 to "yes" or "no" question
- You could leave question #3 as is or combine it with question #4

Participant C
- Question #1 may be a closed statement; feels like the "end of story"
- Perhaps use a word other than "definition" for question #1
- Question #3 – wondering if I could have been involved on either side of the relationship?
- Confused a bit by what you wanted for question #3 versus #4

Bethany von Steinbergs

•Member of Union Church community since summer of 2008
•Graduate Student at Northwest University in Kirkland
•Currently working on Master's thesis – a qualitative case study of Union Church community
•Topic of research – perception of mentoring
•Graduation is May 8, 2010
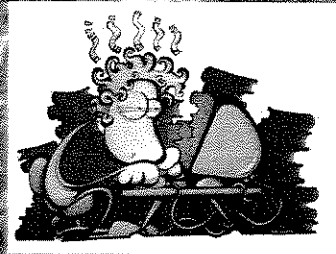
Master's Research – Perception of Mentoring

Ways you can be involved...

- Read and sign the consent form on your chair
- Fill out questionnaire with honest responses (be sure to note your gender and age range)
- Pray for me as I work on my thesis between now and May 8th

Appendix 7: Questionnaire Responses

Question #1 – What is your definition of mentoring?

<u>Female Responses</u>
1. A role model who actively provides direction in the life of another person interested in their role.
2. Walking someone one-on-one through a tough spot in life
3. A supportive relationship where one person models an area of life another wants to learn. The mentor often directly engages to support this learning process.
4. I believe mentoring is to come along another person in respect to an area they are looking to grow in.
5. Coming alongside, sharing knowledge, caring for
6. Guidance
7. Come alongside of a person in support of their goal, endeavor, or growth; hopefully in an area in which mentor has experience and/or skills.
8. Walking alongside someone, teaching them from your experience, being a sounding board.
9. An experienced person who guides and trains a novice. A person who provides encouragement and support to another.
10. Coming alongside another to teach, encourage their walk with the Lord.
11. Establishing a relationship; being in conversation; listening; guiding when asked
12. Mentor – someone who comes alongside someone else to coach and shepherd them in various skills and in interpersonal relationships. Provides a foundation of life experience for the other person to draw upon and build from.
13. Coming alongside someone about something that the mentor has more maturity in
14. Someone who is more mature in their faith, walking alongside someone who is not. Intentionally meeting with one another and encouraging one another, and growing towards Christ.
15. A one-on-one relationship where someone more experienced at a given thing provides guidance to someone less experienced.
16. Coming alongside each other in a mutually chosen relationship where the mentored person grows through the life and work experience of the mentor.
17. An intentional relationship where one person has a leadership role to help guide and encourage the other party to grow spiritually, personally, and in their relationships.
18. An ongoing relationship in which an older, wiser, or more experienced individual shares their knowledge, skills, stories, etc. to help the other grow, solve problems and meet her goals.
19. Being in a relationship with an individual in which one person is learning and being encouraged by the other person. It is an active relationship, not just passive relationship.
20. I don't know what mentoring means in the context of North Lake Community Church. I am a new Christian and am not sure what mentoring means.

1. Mentoring is an intentional relationship in which one gives counsel, advice, support, encouragement, and a listening ear; sometimes it is around a specific topic or content, other times it is general.
2. Encouraging young people to progress in their careers; Help them make decisions on their own; Key function of senior people
3. Leading, assisting others that have less knowledge or experience than you – assisting them with understanding and application of certain things new to them
4. A more experienced person leading/guiding/teaching a less experienced person in some particular area. Mentoring happens most often in the workplace, but can happen at church, school, athletics or elsewhere.
5. Make available and come alongside someone. I think to a great deal, be an example.
6. Coaching one-on-one, but not providing answers so much as helping the mentee discern the right questions to ask – the questions whose answers will help mentee arrive at answers right for him/her.
7. Being an example to another person in some specific life practice or virtue.
8. A more experienced person providing guidance and setting an example to one who is of lesser experienced.
9. Self-less coaching of another, walking along someone who has interest in learning from your experiences without any expectations.
10. It's when a person with specific experiences or general life experience offers to interact with someone who would be helped by that experience.
11. Somebody older, wiser, more experienced coming and walking along/leading someone.
12. "Coming alongside," helping others achieve their goals in life.
13. To walk alongside someone with more experience, not necessarily older, but for me personally older.
14. Walking with someone to help them reach their full potential
15. Help the young and old; how to grow and enjoy life
16. Interaction with guidance between an individual experienced and one less experienced in a discipline or life in general (usually one-on-one).
17. Intentional walking alongside someone younger or less experienced and helping them grow
18. Coming along someone, long-term, to help shape and mold a world view and ways to act on it.
19. Something between teacher and friend/colleague. A person who helps another define a goal and seek tools to achieve it
20. Walking along side another person to whom you can provide advice and education.

Question #2 – How did you arrive at that specific definition?

1. The important parts are the <u>role</u> to which both people are interested and the <u>active</u> relationship around the role.
2. Firsthand experience

3. Observation, past experience
4. Experiences of being mentored have helped shape my definition.
5. That's just what I have experienced a mentor to be.
6. Everyday life
7. I have been both a mentor and mentee so my definition is based on experience AND some mentor training as a Bible study leader with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and mentor training for a science fair.
8. By the experience of someone doing it for me.
9. I have been a mentor in the teaching profession. My job was to be sure new teachers were familiar with district and building policies, dates of upcoming events, to help with curriculum and lesson planning, and to be someone to help answer questions and encourage teachers when they felt overwhelmed or unsure.
10. We used to call it "discipling" and the idea was to "make disciples." I think both terms rise from the idea of a "paraclete."
11. Experience
12. From the experience of being mentored.
13. Masters in Education, esp leadership studies; experience with incidental mentoring; interest in mentoring and apprenticeship as a learning/education form
14. Through a mentoring relationship as well as doing a Bible study on mentoring.
15. I don't think my definition differs much from a straight forward dictionary – except that I think in practice it often works in reverse, where the mentor has things to learn from the mentee.
16. Mentoring classes, setting up mentor programs
17. Not through direct instruction, but through an understanding of the concept via church, work place, and media messages.
18. Ha! Had to think about it "on the spot" for this survey! But also, my emphasis on the aspect in which the mentor supports what the mentee needs and wants comes from being in "discipleship" relationships which were not that way, but more controlling. Mentorship isn't just a cookie-cutter training program or "agenda from on high" – what's unique3 about it is the two-way, truly relational aspect which responds to the specific needs and personalities involved.
19. Observing others in this type of relationship, definition that seems to circulate in Christian circles

Male Responses
1. It's more or less the actual definition and it's coupled with some observations and experience.
2. Many years of managerial experience
3. I come from a scientific background and my definition of mentoring comes from my career in the sciences. I have had great mentors that have assisted me and I have been a mentor for others.
4. Based on the idea of mentoring I've been exposed to in the workplace, and the general use of the idea in our culture.
5. Scripture – Jesus

6. Reflecting on mentor/mentee experiences that felt productive to me
7. Reflection on the concept; also reflection on my experience in a men's small group
8. Personal experience under a mentoring relationship
9. I have personally thought that when seeking a mentor, a person is often looking/expecting/wanting help to see a bigger picture based on another's experience.
10. I've had a mentor and been a mentor and that's how it was approached in those situations.
11. That's what I want for myself and others.
12. Living it as friend and manager of human beings.
13. I grew up in a house that was involved with a Navigators-based ministry.
14. Experience
15. I said so.
16. Daf vat irs! Seriously though, I suppose this definition is what I understand mentoring to mean through my experience and my interpretation of dictionary definition (ongoing).
17. Seeing it in action over time
18. Made it up
19. Professional experience
20. My own interpretation

Question #3 – Have you ever been in the type of mentoring relationship you just described? (circle your response)

<u>Total Responses</u>
Yes – 30/40 = 75%
No – 9/40 = 22.5%
No response – 1/40 = 2.5%

<u>Female Responses</u>
Yes – 15/20 = 75%
No – 4/20 = 20%
No response – 1/20 = 5%

<u>Male Responses</u>
Yes – 15/20 = 75%
No – 5/20 = 25%

Question #4 – If you answered "YES" to question #3, please describe what that relationship was like for you.

<u>Female Responses</u>
1. A high school Bible study leader, who I grew to trust and admire. I felt safe with her, and began to seek her advice on a deeper level. Her advice and her example are still things I look to, as a Christian woman.

2. An older woman in the Lord spent six months of her life walking me personally through a tough time – we both went through a Kay Arthur Precepts book – it really helped me grow and kept me going.
3. The more unofficially arranged (but longer term) have been more broadly supportive and beneficial.
4. It's been different in different situations. In a professional realm it is more about development of skills. In a relationship/faith realm, it was more like a friendship and growth of my faith.
5. Someone helped me through a rough time, held me accountable, shared her experiences with me and listened to me when I needed help. She was caring about my experience and interested to know what I needed.
6. Everyday life with family
7. Acting as a mentor was gratifying especially when my mentee was an active participant. I also learned more about being human! Acting as a mentee was helpful and bonding since I was receiving wisdom and guidance from someone who had "been there."
8. It was a great experience – I was able to learn from another. It was a great support mechanism.
9. Although I was trained and felt I was of some help, we only met quarterly on a formal basis, which was not often enough, in my opinion. A more informal mentorship that grew out of teaching next door to another teacher and talking on a daily basis was far more beneficial.
10. Lots of growth. Lots of challenges. A wonderful sense that I was following God's call.
11. In both cases, I was mentoring a preteen. I thought it was important not to come across as just another irrelevant adult. Both (girls) were shy and it took a lot of work to build a relationship of trust which was really important.
12. Extremely positive – provided fuel for lots of personal and professional growth. Also provides inner strength to face challenging situations within the professional and personal world.
13. Beautiful, rich, nurturing; felt very Kingdom of God like; respectful, sharing of gifts, gentle correction in the context that we are all far more glorious and far more depraved than we can imagine
14. It was very encouraging and convicting. I think it was very important in growing in my faith.
15. When I was in college, I was mentored by the wife of a Christian club staffer at our campus. I also mentored a younger student. The woman who mentored me challenged me to be more godly. I enjoyed the relationship, but it ultimately did little to help me through a spiritual crisis that was brewing. Really, it just caused me to ignore doubts when I should have been working through them. As for the girl I mentored, I think all that was accomplished was I guilted her into not sleeping with her boyfriend. But, they got married and he is an atheist. He ridiculed her faith and my avoidance of doubt was a bad example. She ended up abandoning her faith. So, I enjoyed both relationships on a friendship level. However, I don't think much was accomplished in terms of helping each other spiritually.
16. I've been in coaching relationships, which are quite different.

17. Not an intentional relationship, however, there have been people in my life that I've patterned my life after.

Male Responses

1. Not as fully as described above. We spent time together – running, grabbing a beer, golfing, whatever – and chose topics of conversation. We became good friends and the relationship changed to more of friendship than mentorship.
2. Many people – new professionals, new graduates, new employees and primarily engineers and scientists.
3. As a person being mentored, it gave me comfort and confidence in myself. As a mentor, I felt the responsibility of being correct and sensitive to others.
4. My first professional job encouraged the development of a mentor relationship between a senior employee and new employee. I found it to be fairly useful. I had the opportunity to learn about my new career. I also had a couple of spiritual mentors. I found the experience connecting with more spiritually mature people to be very beneficial, and it helped in my spiritual growth.
5. Parent, grandparent; work relationships; available; assume you are under constant observation (you are – God is watching)
6. Felt like I was learning some things about myself that could be applied generally. Not simple answers to specific questions, but general principles that might be more broadly applicable to my life.
7. The relationship is informal – not labeled as mentoring. I listened and observed and prayed with and for the other guy. Very energizing and comforting. I never experienced censure or criticism. Maybe this is a limit in my experience, as this could be constructive.
8. It was a Christian discipleship when I was in college. My mentor and I met once a week. We talked about daily issues and struggles living as a Christian and other life issues.
9. I have had several varying degrees of informal and formal mentoring relationships. I've also sought out mentors in the past. It really depends on the situation as every relationship is unique. In most cases it's been awkward – especially in formally set up situations. What kind of roles does eeach party play? How long is the relationship? How do you facilitate communication? More often than not, the mentorships that have worked best are those that grow out of respect for each other and where there are clear objectives understood by both the mentee and mentor with the mentee taking the lead.
10. Very positive in both circumstances. You learn a lot in both situations.
11. Very fulfilling. It is good to know and to be known.
12. I have been on both sides of the equation. My mentorer pushed me in my career and challenged me to be more. In my being a mentor, I have helped others by listening and asking focused questions on their goals and how they are achieving those goals. The relationships were friendly, supportive, and lasted one to three years.
13. It's been a decent range. Some has been a mix of "Bible study oriented" meeting and some have been more "lifestyle oriented." I personally prefer the latter, not the former.
14. I am a better person because of it. I received more than I gave.

Interview #1 – Friday, March 26, 2010
Rita – Female, 30-39

Researcher – What is your definition of mentoring?

Rita – I would say anytime that someone who has more experience or knowledge who is passing that on to someone with less experience or knowledge, in any field, sometimes involving an age-range difference and with kind of an accountability component. There is the passing on of knowledge or wisdom and there's regular checking in with that person with the intent to grow. I think the process ends up growing both sides...both parties, also...the passing on of knowledge somehow grows the passer.

Researcher – How did you arrive at that specific definition?

Rita – Mostly experience. There are standard models...Boys and Girls Club. I was a sponsor with The Rock and The Edge, the junior high and the high school ministry at UPC. And so we lived that out. I had ten girls who I walked with. I see them. I still hang out with them. It's transferred from a more mentorship relationship now to friendship. Yeah, mostly through experience...through someone doing that for me when I was in high school. Someone older, literally going for walks and talking about life and then being able to ask questions...a safe place to ask questions.

Researcher – The next question may already have been answered. Have you ever been in the type of mentoring relationship you just described?

Rita – Yes.

Researcher – If you answered "YES," please describe what that relationship was like for you. So, maybe you can go into more detail about the relationships where you were a mentor or where you were a mentee and discuss what those specific relationships were like.

Rita – Ok. When I was in high school I had this...with The Rock and The Edge we were called sponsors...I can't remember what she was called, she was just a youth leader at that time. Her name was Annette and she was someone who we would meet, we would go for walks, sort of like for exercise, but also just to have conversation. She was out of college, still single, someone who I looked up to...just cuz I thought she was really cool. It's like a person...I didn't feel like I could bring questions to my parents cause they were my parents, but I knew I could ask her questions and I knew they were safe. It was anything...from homework to boys to dynamics in the youth group itself. I could put these things out there, talk about them with her, and she would help give perspective on anything that I asked her based on her life experience. That's pretty much how it looked like for The Rock and The Edge for me, it just reversed. It was

these ten girls who were all struggling with different things and they were able to...I think most of them felt comfortable coming to me and saying...here's this or that issue...what do we do? They couldn't talk to their parents. They wouldn't talk to their siblings. So it was a place for them to bring questions that wouldn't have been answered elsewhere.

Researcher – How did the relationship that you established with Annette and also with those ten girls come about? How did those mentoring relationships develop?

Rita – With the girls literally I was assigned. At first I thought...I felt like I didn't know what I was doing. It was a year after college. They were in junior high...they were in 7th grade and they were all really shy. So, at first it was like...it was a little stiff. We met every Sunday morning and then at that time it was also the youth group met on Wednesday nights. And so we had twice a week where we would spend time. I think luckily for me, the girls at that time especially were really trusting and so you get twice a week with somebody and someone who is naturally trusting and you grow quickly into friendship with them. With them it was something that...I really early on viewed them as friends and so it was kind of strange. There are ten full years between us. But, somehow I think still feeling really close to high school at that time and then walking with them as they grew up through it. It's funny because the relationship helped me look back on high school of my own and sort of put my own life into context, relative to these girls. I don't know if I'm answering the question or not, but it's almost like being able to reckon with my own past by sharing it with them and then growing a friendship at the same time. So now they're inviting me to their weddings. They're inviting me to their birthday parties. I'm very much a part of their lives.

Researcher – Were you assigned Annette also?

Rita – Yes. She similarly was handed a few of us. It was not as formal...well, I think there was a Bible study component to start with, sort of a regular meeting group. But, she and I continued to hang out. I really valued having her...I looked up to her and she welcomed my attention. When I needed to talk, I would just give her a call and she would come over and we'd go for a walk or we'd go out, I guess we didn't have coffee at that time.

Researcher – Who pursued the more individual component of that relationship?

Rita – It's hard to remember...probably more her or pretty even. It's hard to say. It was never a burden. She was never put out if I would say, "Can we hang out?" Or she would suggest something and I'd have to make it work with my busy high school schedule, that kind of thing. She was always very open to meeting.

Researcher – When you mentioned that you didn't know what you were doing...was there ever a time through that mentoring relationship that you were given some type of training of how to be a mentor?

Rita – Yeah. The sponsors...with The Rock and The Edge, we were called sponsors. We would meet regularly also. I think we had, it's a while ago, but I think we had training altogether. We had to fill out forms, we had to meet with...I think it was James B at the time...they had to make sure we were ok to take that position and then I feel there was some sort of training. It wasn't a real intensive thing.

Researcher – Have you ever been part of a mentoring relationship where it wasn't assigned?

Rita – Yeah, there were a few students at the same time that just kind of stuck to me. They were in other people's groups, actually. Through the course of seeing them on a regular basis and being able to speak to them differently than their own leaders. There were two in particular. One who had a really tough thing that she went through and we talked. We just ended up in the same place and started talking on a retreat, and she for whatever reason decided to share with me what she was going through and it sucked. It made me cry. It was a really tender moment and literally because we had that conversation. I don't know what built up to that to make her feel comfortable speaking about it, but that conversation changed our dynamic. She became like one of my girls. Even though she wasn't in our group...she was a year younger than all of them, but I saw her about four months ago to check in. So that was, you know, thirteen years of more distant...I don't see her nearly as often as I see my girls, but that was a very natural, grew out of a conversation mentoring. I would say professionally. I haven't specifically said to my employers, "Will you mentor me?", but very much looked like that relationship as an employee as that same type of relationship. Some who I could literally ask questions to and just say, "As someone who's learning and from you who knows so much, what's your take on x, y, or z?" and they would answer.

Interview #2 – Friday, March 26, 2010
Debby – Female, 40-49

Researcher – What is your definition of mentoring?

Debby – Mentoring is I think when...it's usually two people. And it's a relationship that's built on somebody who has either, I don't wanna say an expertise, but it's like you have somebody who's considered knowledgeable or informative in a particular area, whether it's personal or professional. The other person doesn't necessarily need to be younger. I think they could still be the same age or even older and be learning from that individual. It's definitely relationship-oriented. It can be nurturing in some respects. It can have, like I said, it could be professional only. It's got a lot of meanings, but I do think it all ties back to relationship.

Researcher – How did you arrive at that specific definition?

Debby – Mostly from my own work. I always look for mentors in my work environment. I love to be around people who are inspiring and who are smart and clever and funny. I sort attract...I sort of go to that kind of work environment and I usually end up attaching to someone, not physically. There is definitely an appreciation for it so I always find that I just naturally or

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organically establish that kind of relationship with someone. I find that in turn, I'm doing the same thing with people who are in my environment who seek me out. I love building relationships with people that are encouraging and inspiring. So I think that it's through my own personal observation. Although I think my work, cause I do work around poverty reduction and I've been doing it for a really long time. I've come to really appreciate the impact that mentoring has on people who are in poverty and how it can really help someone sort of see a different way of looking at life so it's not just about poverty. There are other ways in which they can live their lives and often times it comes through mentoring. So I see it in action as well. It's both personal and professional. I'm stuck in the personal professional world. It's definitely through my own personal experience that I've come to really define it as being relationship-oriented.

Researcher – I'll ask you the next question, but it sounds like you've already answered it. Have you ever been in the type of mentoring relationship you just described?

Debby – I have actually. I am great friends with those folks still to this day. Some of them are younger than me and some of them are older than me. It has been, you know, I've gone through life coaching. I don't know if you've ever done life coaching. That came across as somewhat clinical to me cuz it's kind of a forced relationship, whereas I find that for me mentoring often tends to happen organically and that to me is much more meaningful. That's probably why I tend to lead to that kind of definition of mentoring. Although some people will say coaching is kind of a form of mentoring, but I don't. I've had personal experience of life coaching, but I wouldn't say it's the same. I don't have the same relationship with the person who's my life coach than I do with people who've been my mentors.

Researcher – There's definitely a distinction.

Debby – Yeah, totally.

Researcher – So, because you answered "yes" to question number three, can you describe what that relationship was like for you...a specific mentoring relationship? You mentioned both that you mentored and also that you've been a mentee. Describe what those relationships were like for you.

Debby – Definitely getting to know the person's likes, dislikes, quirks, character. On both levels, as a mentee, I find that the person really takes time to get to know who I am and what my passions are and sort of views. Really spends some time thinking about it and is always thoughtful about making suggestions or being a great sounding board. And I, in turn, cuz I have come to really appreciate that, use that as my own sort of guidepost of when somebody is reaching out to me and I find that I build that kind of relationship. I have one right now in my office who, she's a younger woman. She's just a smart individual and fun, but she's in a very...she's got a huge learning curve. And I find that there's ways of teaching people without them feeling like they're being talked down to. I think that I use my experience of what I've come to really appreciate when people mentor me, that I use the same way. I really do pay

attention to the person and understand what their limitations are. I don't really like to put caps on people's abilities cuz I feel like anybody is capable of doing anything they put their mind to. But I understand too that there are limitations to how I see things versus how they might see it. I don't impose myself upon them. I just try to be as open to whatever situation that they're in at the time. It's so funny to watch this woman in our office. She's just great. She'll come to me and she...in the beginning, it was very important for her to be liked. Anybody that was in the office or working with us on the outside as partners, when she felt like somebody wasn't wanting to work with her she was like, "They don't like me." And I was said, "It's nothing to do with like." So, you know, it's heartwarming to be in that relationship, whichever side you're on.

Researcher – For example, this woman in your office...it sounds like it more of an informal mentoring relationship that you have with her.

Debby – It is.

Researcher – Have most of your mentoring relationships been informal or have you also been involved with formal mentoring relationships?

Debby – No formal. I think that's probably why I define mentoring as organic and very personal and relationship oriented. Well, actually that's not true. A long, long, long time ago I was a mentor to a young girl in the foster care program. That one was really difficult for me because I was in my early 20's and for me, I don't know if everybody else is this way when their in their 20's, but I was still figuring myself out. So, it was hard for me to really connect to a young girl who was having really difficult issues...psychological issues. So, it was an interesting experience, but I wouldn't say that it was a mentoring relationship that I would say, for today...my own experience, has the same impact. It could have impacted her, I don't know. That was for about a year that I mentored her. It was challenging...in a very different way. I didn't build a relationship like I described. I didn't build that with her. It seemed very forced. So, yeah.

Researcher – So it sounds like that relationship you had with her doesn't fall into what you would describe as the definition of a mentoring relationship. Would you say you've been in any relationship the other way around, where you asked someone to formally mentor you?

Debby – No. I think a lot of it is because I was very fortunate to have great people around me for a really long time. Even when I first started my career and even on the personal side, I always seem to attract people that have sort of, what I would define as, "old-souls." They have sort of a wisdom that I would always gravitate towards. Maybe again, my heart and mind would sort of go straight to that so I wasn't intentional, but it was definitely how I liked to...it's just how I build relationships or how I lived. There was always somebody in my life that I would consider a mentor. When it's not present...this is really interesting...I had a conversation with our director not too long ago about really needing that in an environment that I work to feel like I really enjoy the work that I do.

Researcher – How was that received?

Debby – Really well, actually. It's funny because most people might think that your supervisor, if you have a good relationship, might be a mentor, but in this case it's kind of like I wouldn't want...I don't seek her out as a mentor because there's...it sounds kind of snobby, but there are certain things that I really want from a mentoring relationship. And while I feel like she's a wonderful woman and her experience is great, it's not where I seek to learn and to grow as a person, so I think that's probably why I didn't view her as a mentor.

Interview #3 – Sunday, March 28, 2010
Jennifer – Leadership at North Lake Community Church

Researcher – What is your definition of mentoring?

Jennifer – My definition of mentoring...I think it doesn't have to be older to younger. I think it can be contemporaries, but I think that it generally is a process where somebody shares information, shares life guidance...it can be...this is a hard question, Bethany. The image that comes to mind is iron sharpens iron, something where people are sharing life together and there is growth in potentially both parties from sharing that information, sharing that life journey, sharing...if it's faith related, just sharing faith together. So, it's a mutual sharing where growth takes place. I guess that would be my short definition.

Researcher – How did you arrive at that specific definition?

Jennifer – I guess I've seen it in action, really. Examples here at North Lake...people opening themselves up by being vulnerable to ask questions, to ask for help, to share personal struggles, to look for advice. On the other side, I've seen people willing to walk alongside other people and share what they've learned in their life professionally or spiritually. I've seen it in real natural ways, come out. But I've noticed in that process that the person that maybe you would consider being the mentor also has growth happen because of that relationship. So, that's where the both ways comes from.

Researcher – Have you ever been in the type of mentoring relationship you just described? Yes or no? And then the follow-up question is, if you answered "yes," then please describe what that relationship was like for you?

Jennifer – Probably the closest would have been a boss when I first started ministry, where we would meet weekly, basically for the purpose of feedback about how ministry was going. We would talk through different relationships, personally and in ministry...just sort of hash it through and talk it through and that was probably, because when I think about that I was younger and my boss was older and had more experience in ministry than I had. But then, I have in turn, been that mentor for other people and so I understand the flip side of that...when they ask questions you haven't thought through or bring up things that cause you to think too. I've been on both ends of that too.

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Researcher – Would you say that being on both ends were both pretty much formal mentoring relationships?

Jennifer – The boss thing was for sure. On my end, being a mentor, not formal. Unless it was a small group Bible study situation, where it was as a designated leader, when I was in college ministry.

Researcher – The non-formal relationships, where you've been a mentor, how did those relationships evolve?

Jennifer – In some ways because of my position of being in ministry. When you're in ministry you have the time and that's how you think. You think about developing people and training people and encouraging people and that's just kind of your mindset. So in some ways, it was because I had the time and that was even an expectation of being in ministry. Outside of that, I guess I wouldn't think of it in those terms. People I know now, outside of a ministry context, its more friendship in a way than it is mentoring.

Interview #4 – Sunday, March 28, 2010
Trevor – Male, 20-29

Researcher – What is your definition of mentoring?

Trevor – You know, when I think of mentoring I think of having a positive role model, a positive influence that helps develop character and kind of a holistic approach to helping you develop as a person into someone who can contribute well to your community.

Researcher – How did you arrive at that specific definition?

Trevor – In my own life, I can identify a few people anyway...3 or 4 people...that specifically I can see how they intentionally chose to engage with my life and it was at different moments in life, so they had various reasons for doing that, but they chose to engage specifically in my life and did that. They walked through decision making me with or they walked through kind of helping me chart a course or chart a path through that moment. Now I can look back on those experiences and see how those weren't isolated. They still kind of echo as I make decisions.

Researcher – The next question is pretty self-explanatory. Have you ever been in the type of mentoring relationship you just described? So, you would answer yes?

Trevor – Yeah, definitely.

Researcher – If you answered yes, please describe what that relationship was like...maybe a little bit more detail of what specifically the relationship involved.

Trevor – Sure. Well, I can think of a youth leader that I had when I was in junior high, who stuck with me long enough to be...he stood up for me in my wedding as a groomsmen. Part of it was...I think my parents asked him to step into my life. They went away a number of times on vacation and my sisters and I stayed at his house with he and his wife. So there were those kinds of moments where I was around him quite a bit. But then, as well, at youth group a couple times a week or whatever. I could tell he prayed for me. At times he would say, "I've been praying about this for you." He went out of his way to make sure that he was involved in my life. He would make calls. Obviously, he is someone who is an adult, who has a life, who has responsibilities and still is kinda seeking out me as a junior high and high schooler. I can think of one moment, where I was in college now and kind of floundering a little bit...definitely had lost direction, and he had me over for dinner with another mutual friend that we had and they sat me down and actually said, "We're having an intervention...we're gonna help you make a decision here and get moving forward instead of just running in circles." And so, out of that then emerged my choice of where I was going to college and things like that. Yeah, I could just see how over a number of years he chose to engage intentionally in my life.

Researcher – Obviously, that relationship sounds like it was pretty informal.

Trevor – Yeah.

Researcher – It was formal in the sense that your parents initiated, but informal that he continued that relationship.

Trevor – Sure, totally. I think it developed into a friendship where obviously there was difference of years of experience in life and wisdom and things like that, but I looked at him...it kind of moved from just being a mentor to I felt like we had a friendship too. That's where him being involved in our wedding and things like that, made a lot of sense to me.

Researcher – Have you ever been on the giving end? Have you ever been a mentor to anyone...in a formal or informal relationship?

Trevor – Yeah, probably in more formal settings. I worked as a family advocate for a while, at an elementary school and so my job at that point was doing social skills training for kids who had behaviors or kind of were missing social cues. A lot of what I needed to do was develop rapport with those kids and find out about their life a little bit...develop a relationship that they felt comfortable with and out of that leverage that relationship to help move them into a better set of social skills and things like that. So then, as well, I've led a couple different on-going Bible studies for young kids. That, I felt like again, it's little more formal cuz it's an established group and things like that. But again, afforded the chance to speak into kids' lives and not make decisions for them, but help them at least have a context and a fuller background before they make decisions.

Interview #5 – Sunday, April 11, 2010
Wayne – Male, 50+

Researcher – What is your definition of mentoring?

Wayne – My definition of mentoring is having the experience in life to maybe come alongside that person, guiding them through life's changes, whether it's in a career, maybe in a marriage...something to that effect – really using your experience in life, that you have learned, that you're able to pass on to others.

Researcher – How did you arrive at that specific definition of mentoring?

Wayne – I have gained that through experience in life. I'm in my early 50's right now and I look back on some of the successes or failures I have had in life as a way to learn. Things often weren't planned out...just through experience.

Researcher – Have you ever been in the type of mentoring relationship you just described?

Wayne – Yes, I have. I have had the ability to mentor and be mentored, when I was a younger person. I always thought when I got older that I would have all the answers, but you know, regardless of age, being a mentee or having a mentor in life is very crucial in life.

Researcher – Because you answered "yes," could you please describe what those specific mentoring relationships...maybe a little more detail...of what those mentoring relationships were like – when you were a mentor and also when you were a mentee.

Wayne – A significant part of my life has been in the military, whether being active duty or reservist. I'm a retired military, at this time. I can't tell you how critical it is to be a good mentor and mentee...in fact, that's just expected in that particular endeavor. So, I have had the ability to work with younger people, as mentoring, not telling them how to do something, but maybe showing them how to achieve an end result. I have definitely...hopefully been a benefit to a younger person, but certainly it benefited me when I was a younger person in the military to have someone older to come up and say, "these are the steps you need to achieve step A through B."

Researcher – Would you say that both types of mentoring relationships you've been in, were most of them formal, with the military, or have you been in any informal mentoring relationships?

Wayne – Most of them have been formal, by nature, but they tend to be informal because you come alongside that person and you have a genuine relationship with them. I think it would be very hard to be a mentor without first being maybe a friend or a confidant in that person.

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