

“Life Giving Mentors: A Guide for Investing Your Life in Others” Interaction

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Point #1. Life Giving Mentors described

In chapter one, Enloe answers the question, “Who are lifegiving mentors?” He explains that “More time with less people equals greater impact for everyone” (pp. 1-2). The idea seems counter-intuitive but is rooted in scripture. An examination of the life of Jesus reveals that he spent most of his time and energy on a few men rather than on the masses. Those disciples transformed the then-known world. Enloe asserts, “Anyone can mentor, provided he/she has learned something from the past and is willing to share with others what he/she has learned” (pp. 2-3). Mentoring at its most basic level requires only two things: I have learned something, and I am willing to share it with others.

Interaction with Point #1

I am currently living out this process. I regularly mentor men who lead small groups in our ministry. I mentor a handful of men who in turn mentor a handful of students each. By investing deeply in a few, I deeply impact them, and they in turn impact those they touch. Time prohibits me from influencing all the students in our ministry, but I multiply myself when I influence the influencers.

Enloe’s two-pronged definition – I have learned, and I am willing to share – inspired me. After reading the book I took 51 students to camp at a local lake. I spent the weekend intentionally imparting lessons. I shared on splitting wood, canoe techniques, fish-cleaning methods, fire starting, and tent set-up. In the past I modeled but did not always share. Enloe inspired me to be more intentional.

Point #2. Why mentoring is necessary

Enloe asserts in chapter two that mentoring makes a difference in our culture. He said, “I read recently that one half of the Nobel Peace Prize winners last year were mentored by former Peace Prize laureates. Is that a coincidence? I don’t think so. The Harvard Business Review ran a cover article in 1983 entitled, ‘Everyone Who Makes It Has a Mentor’” (p. 14). He shares one of his organization’s core values: “Mentoring: Leaders cannot be mass produced, but are developed through life-on-life mentoring” (p. 14). Enloe describes his life as a mentor over the years with a surprising statement. “No matter how poorly I played my role as mentor, those relationships were always better than if I’d only performed on some platform in an auditorium. In other words, even my feeble attempts at mentoring are better than my best attempts at impressing someone from the stage. Good, honest attempts at developmental relationships are better than no attempt at all” (p. 16). Enloe describes how mentoring is different than teaching in its focus and intentionality. He says, “The surest way to secure your impact on people is to enter an accountability relationship with the conscious objective to produce measurable growth” (p. 16).

Interaction with Point #2

I was challenged by Enloe’s points of focus and intentionality. I spent years mentoring without specific, clearly stated goals. My mentoring sessions cover daily devotional life, small group health, responsibility for reaching out to unsaved students, and accountability in areas of sexual purity, but I feel challenged to add specific, written goals. I was encouraged by his statement that “good, honest attempts” are better than not mentoring at all.

Point #3. The Unique task of mentoring men

Enloe highlights nine unique factors faced when mentoring men. Three of them stood out: “Men draw their identity more from achievement than from relationships...Men have rarely had good models of developmental relationships...Men are driven to get to the bottom line and

not oriented to enjoy the process” (pp. 42-43). Enloe encourages mentors of men to model areas of deficiency and focus on strengths.

Interaction with Point #3

I experience this point weekly as I mentor. The men I meet with find personal value in the “conquest of their world” (p. 42). Most do not have fathers or other men who were good models of empathy and compassion. I am routinely challenged to model healthy emotion to these men. They are goal-oriented and become impatient with processes. We have a saying: “It is a garden, not a factory.” Growing to maturity is a slow process we must get comfortable with. Because men typically prefer action over conversation, I provide experiences for them like arduous hikes and chopping firewood. I see men grow in emotional health as a result.

Point #4. Finding the right mentee

Enloe gives detailed advice about finding the right person to mentor. He says, “The bottom line is this. You want to pursue mentees that demonstrate they are ready for what you have to offer...I am only saying – choose someone that won’t frustrate you, because they are flaky in their commitments and unproven as to their readiness” (61). FAITH is the acronym Enloe uses to describe the type of person you want to mentor. The person must be **F**aithful, **A**vailable, demonstrate **I**nitiative, be **T**eachable, and **H**ungry. Enloe insists that the mentoring relationship will be vital only if the mentee is fully engaged and committed to the relationship (63). Enloe is opposed to cross-gender mentoring (64).

Interaction with Point #4

I agree with Enloe’s idea that a successful mentee must be fully engaged and committed. We require all our student leaders to submit to mentoring relationships regardless of their desire. Consequently, we sometimes deal with half-hearted leaders. We consistently see less growth in

student leaders who are not fully committed to the mentoring relationship. Students who demonstrate FAITH grow much more consistently than those lacking one or more of the components. Regarding cross-gender mentoring, I agree fully with Enloe. I do not believe that men and women can be involved at the deep levels engendered by mentoring without peril of sexual impropriety.

Point #5. What to do if you are new to mentoring

Enloe offered excellent counsel for those starting out in mentoring. He talked about the stages of mentoring from “come and see” to “come and multiply” (pp. 71-73). He described the six ingredients of good mentoring as painting pictures, giving handles, offering roadmaps, providing laboratories, furnishing “roots”, and supplying wings. (pp. 73-75). Describing good mentors, Enloe says, “They modeled what they taught. They didn’t just say it, they lived it. They practiced what they preached” (p. 76).

Interaction with Point #5

I was both challenged and encouraged by this point. I was challenged by Enloe’s comments about offering roadmaps. He said, “This generally happens only when we communicate intentionally, not accidentally. While there is a place for spontaneous interaction, planned opportunities to speak into a mentee’s life are necessary. Friendship may happen by chance, mentoring happens on purpose” (p. 74). I am guilty of waiting for spontaneous moments to happen rather than intentionally planning for them. I sometimes prioritize friendship over speaking hard truths to students. I feel mildly rebuked by Enloe’s comments and am determined to be more intentional.

I really appreciated Enloe’s thoughts in the section titled “Furnish Roots.” He said, “The foundation we must help to lay in our mentees involves the construction of a ‘character-based

life' versus an 'emotion-based life.' This means we help them develop core values to live by. They should leave us possessing strong convictions by which they can live their lives and the self-esteem to stand behind those convictions” (pp. 74-75). My staff and I have identified a lack of character as the most outstanding deficit of this generation of students. We find ourselves continually challenged helping our students build a foundation of truth and strength of character.

Point #6. The Practices of Successful Mentoring

In chapter 12, Enloe describes the practices of a successful mentor. He surmises that a mentor who doesn't raise up another mentor has failed (p. 93). He expresses some misconceptions about mentoring and simplifies the idea of mentoring. “The mentor-protégé relationship in its simplest form is a lot like a big brother, big sister relationship. The big brother really wants to see the little brother win” (p. 93). He highlights the wisdom of investing in the important versus the trivial. “How often do we sell ourselves short by investing so much in insignificant, temporal and trivial causes? We give so much time to things that don't really matter” (p. 99).

Interaction with Point #6

I am reassured by this point. I often doubt my effectiveness as a mentor. The simplicity of the big brother analogy boosts my confidence that I am having a good effect on the young men I mentor. I do not have all knowledge and wisdom, but I can, along with Enloe, say to students, “I'm going to help you finish your race well” (p. 94).

Point #7. Enabling a mentee to become a mentor

Enloe highlights the story of Joshua from the Bible and points out that Joshua, although mentored by Moses, did not identify and mentor the next leader for Israel. As a result, the nation fell into chaos and turmoil. Judges 17:6 records the condition of Israel: “In those days Israel had

no king; everyone did as he saw fit” (New International Version, Zondervan, 2002). Enloe points out that, “Leaders are the carriers of the culture” (p. 140). Fail to raise up a new generation of leaders and cultural or organizational extinction looms.

Interaction with Point #7

I am currently learning this point the hard way. We did not effectively raise up a new generation of student leaders. Over the summer we lost seven leaders through graduation or other attrition and raised up only three. We are on the wrong side of the growth curve. I must more effectively mentor new “culture carriers,” if we are to continue to grow as a student organization. I am ramping up my intentionality in mentoring and modeling with my leaders to inspire them to replicate themselves into a new generation of leaders.

Personal Interaction with the Video on Mentoring

Point #1. Available versus Seeking

Dr. Blakney commented on a change in his mentoring where he transitioned from simply being available for mentoring to actively seeking mentees. Instead of waiting for people to approach him, he began pursuing them.

Interaction with point #1

I am currently in a season where I have more mentees than time to mentor. I direct a Chi Alpha ministry and am responsible for mentoring a male staff member and three student leaders. I agree with Dr. Blakney that a day will come when I need to actively pursue men to mentor, but for the moment, I am consistently supplied with mentees.

Point #2. Mentors do not have to know everything

Dr. Blakney mentioned mentoring conversations when topics came up that he had no experience with. He recommended not trying to bluff your way through an answer but deferring your answer until you took time to research the topic.

Interaction with Point #2

I agree with Dr. Blakney and have often said, “Let me do some research and get back to you on that.” Mentees do not expect us to have all knowledge. In fact, when we admit we do not know something, we become more “human” to our mentees and more approachable.

Point #3. Eye Contact is Required

Dr. Blakney spent a significant portion of the video encouraging good eye contact during mentoring. He encouraged keeping focused on the mentee rather than on external distractions.

Interaction with Point #3

I agree that eye contact is beneficial for three reasons. First, eye contact informs the mentee you are truly listening rather than just hearing their words. Second, good eye contact aids in determining truthfulness in accountability questions. Lastly, as we minister to a generation born with smart phones, eye contact models healthy behavior to students more comfortable looking at screens than faces. I have one caveat about prolonged eye contact. Many Indigenous tribes inhabit Arizona, so Navajo, Hopi, and Apache students are sometimes involved in our community. In those cultures, constant eye contact is considered rude. Cultural sensitivity reminds me that infrequent eye contact with Natives helps the conversation flow and the relationship grow.

I, Ryan A. Ribelin, have read 100% of the book.