



## ETHICS: MAKING THE MISSION POSSIBLE THROUGH MENTORSHIP

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### **Making the Mission Possible Through Mentorship** *Joseph Angersola*

“Show me a successful individual and I’ll show you someone who had real positive influences in his or her life. I don’t care what you do for a living—if you do it well I’m sure there was someone cheering you on or showing the way. A mentor.” — Denzel Washington

Many law firms and businesses have some type of mentorship program. Mentoring is commonly mentioned by management as a requirement or, at the very least, a renewed initiative. What is less frequently discussed is why mentoring is good for both the employees and the business, how to be an effective mentor, and how mentorship differs from sponsorship.

### **The Statistics – Mentorship Makes a Difference**

Dr. Lauren Bidwell<sup>1</sup> wrote a short article summarizing 30 years of research regarding mentorship. While some of the outcomes were not terribly surprising, her points reinforce the positive impact good mentoring can have on individuals and businesses. She identified five reasons why mentors matter: (1) improved career outcomes, (2) employee engagement, (3) employee retention, (4) employee inclusion (formal mentorship mitigated sexual tension related to cross-gender mentoring and also provided access across racial and ethnic lines), and (5) benefits to the mentor (greater job satisfaction, career success, and work-related fulfillment).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bidwell identifies herself as “a Research Scientist with the Human Capital Management Research team at SAP SuccessFactors, a team that studies how technology can be used to positively transform workforce productivity and organizational culture.” <https://www.linkedin.com/in/laurenbidwell>.

<sup>2</sup> Lauren Bidwell, *Why Mentors Matter: A summary of 30 years of research*, SAP SuccessFactors (2016), <https://www.success-factors.com/resources/knowledge-hub/why-men-tors-matter.html>.

When comparing career outcomes of mentored and non-mentored employees, the mentored employees: received higher compensation, received a greater number of promotions, felt more satisfied with their career, felt more committed to their career, and were more likely to believe they will advance in their career.<sup>3</sup>

Employees who had been mentored: were more positive about their organization, were more positive about senior leadership for their organization, believed they had been provided opportunities for career growth by their organization, and reported they felt informed about their future course within their organization.<sup>4</sup>

Effective mentoring has positive results beyond the mentees. Studies showed mentoring reduced people looking for other positions as well as actual turnover. A survey of over 5,000 recently hired sales representatives revealed that those having a mentor/mentee relationship reported “significantly higher organizational commitment and lower intentions to leave their organization.”<sup>5</sup> A study of officers within the United States Army found that mentoring decreased turnover by 38%.<sup>6</sup>

### **Effective Mentoring Is Not Easy**

Tom Hanks’ character Jimmy Dugan said it best in *A League of Their Own*: “It’s supposed to be hard, if it wasn’t hard everyone would do it. The hard makes it great.” Well-known leadership author and speaker John

<sup>3</sup> [tors-matter.html](https://www.success-factors.com/resources/knowledge-hub/why-men-tors-matter.html).

<sup>4</sup> Id.

<sup>5</sup> Id.

<sup>6</sup> Id.

C. Maxwell sheds light on why good mentoring is hard.

In his book, *Mentoring 101*, Chapter Two is titled, “How do I adopt a Mentor’s Mind-set?”<sup>7</sup> Mr. Maxwell has identified the following: (1) make people development your top priority, (2) limit who you take along, (3) develop relationships before starting out, (4) give help unconditionally, (5) let them fly with you for a while, (6) put fuel in their tank, (7) stay with them until they can solo successfully, (8) clear the flight path, and (9) help them repeat the process.<sup>8</sup>

These points, while informative, reinforce that good mentoring is not quick or easy. For many, the top priority in their daily job is to get the work done well and make sure the client or customer is happy. However, taking the time to develop people can result not only in work being done well, but it can also lead to personal and business growth. Mr. Maxwell’s book goes into detail on why a mentor cannot over extend themselves and has to be selective in who he or she is mentoring. Selecting a mentee requires developing a relationship before diving into the mentorship. Being a mentor is more than just cheering on the mentee, it involves having tough and honest conversations that provide critical feedback. Therefore, having a relationship with the mentee based upon a level of trust allows those tough conversations to take place where the mentee is receiving the feedback in a constructive way.

At the same time, despite devoting time and energy, a mentor cannot expect to receive something in return. In today’s fast-paced world where everyone wants an immediate response, carving out time to develop others can easily be pushed aside until another day. It is the underlying relationship with the mentee that can make it a little easier to step back from the daily grind to be a mentor.

In the legal world, Mr. Maxwell’s fifth point has become more and more difficult. It used to be that clients were willing to pay for associate development. As a young lawyer it was common to accompany the senior attorney or partner to meetings, hearings, or depositions. The legal market has changed. Clients paying for associate development has become the exception rather than the rule. It is incumbent upon the partner or firm to prioritize development and mentorship even if it means that time expended is not always fully compensated. At the same time, clients must recognize the value of having trained and seasoned attorneys working on their matters to reach the desired outcome. As this process plays itself out, it will shift from the mentee observing and learning from the

mentor to the mentor observing the mentee and sharing feedback on how the mentee can further perfect his or her craft. Mr. Maxwell points out most learning models in the United States is the classroom approach derived from the Greeks.<sup>9</sup> A leader stands and lectures, asking questions, while the student sits and listens, with the goal being to understand the ideas of the leader.<sup>10</sup> However, Mr. Maxwell also points out the Hebrews used the on-the-job training method that was “built on relationships and common experience.”<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, as lawyers become more senior they many times take for granted what they learned over the course of 10, 15, or 20 years of practice. As a mentor it is important to provide resources to the mentee so they can be prepared to take that next step on their own. In the corporate world it may be providing context to how the legal process interplays with business decisions and corporate realities. Those resources could also be something more tangible, such as an effective article or book that provides insight to the mentee on situations they are likely to face as they progress in their career. When a successful person sits back and really thinks about all the assistance they received over the years, however big or small, they will recognize the importance of passing down similar assistance to others. In today’s terminology this would be the apprenticeship model, with the apprentice working alongside until he or she has mastered the craft.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps nothing is more rewarding than seeing the mentee really take off following successful mentorship. From the mentor’s perspective, they have taken the time to guide, train, and support the mentee to the point that the mentee is ready to take on their own client, matter, or case. Mr. Maxwell analogizes this situation to the difference between a flight instructor and travel agent. “The one stays with you, guiding you through the entire process until you’re ready to fly. The other hands you a ticket and says, ‘I hope you have a good flight.’”<sup>13</sup>

One component of being an effective mentor is often times overlooked, “there is no success without a successor.”<sup>14</sup> Not only should good mentoring involve guiding the mentee’s path to personal growth and success, but giving the mentee tools to identify and effectively mentor someone else.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* at 16.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* at 17.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> *Id.* at 19-20.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* at 22.

<sup>7</sup> JOHN C. MAXWELL, *MENTORING 101*, 11 (2008).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 12-22.

### Attract Other Leaders

In his book, Mr. Maxwell distinguishes between two different kinds of leaders, those who attract followers and those who attract leaders.<sup>15</sup> For those leaders who attract followers, “they’re influencing only one person – a follower.”<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, “people who attract leaders are influencing many other people through their interaction.”<sup>17</sup>

One of the best examples of leaders attracting leaders is legendary University of Iowa Hawkeye football coach Hayden Fry. In 1979 he became the head coach of an Iowa Hawkeye football program that had a losing record for 17 straight seasons dating back to 1962. Coach Fry would go on to lead Iowa to three Big Ten Titles, three Rose Bowl games, and thirteen winning seasons. Despite all the deserved accolades, Coach Fry became known for his unrivaled coaching tree. He had, in essence, taken a moribund football program and injected life into it by finding assistant coaches that he believed could be head coaches. He was quoted as saying, “I don’t want guys on this staff who don’t want to be head coaches.” Thirteen of his assistant coaches at Iowa would go on to become Division I-A football head coaches.<sup>18</sup> The Wall Street Journal published, Iowa: The Harvard of Coaching in 2011.<sup>19</sup> Some of Coach Fry’s most well-known mentees include four current or future Hall of Fame coaches: Barry Alvarez (Wisconsin), Bill Snyder (Kansas State), Bob Stoops (Oklahoma), and Kirk Ferentz (Iowa). Each of these coaches became a national coach of the year award winner as well as their schools all-time leader in wins.

The Hayden Fry coaching tree example reflects Mr. Maxwell’s conclusion that leaders who attract leaders: want to be succeeded, want to reproduce themselves, focus on others’ strengths, want to share power, invest their time in others, are great leaders, and experience incredible success.<sup>20</sup>

### Good People is Good Business

In his book, Good People, author and entrepreneur Anthony Tjan argues that the only leadership decision that matters is choosing to work with good people.<sup>21</sup> Mr.

Tjan states, “Good people purposely and proactively put people first in their decision making.”<sup>22</sup> He has developed a “Good People Mantra<sup>23</sup>,” which is:

BE People First

HELP Others Become the Fullest Version of Themselves

COMMIT Beyond Competency to the Values of Goodness

BALANCE The Realities and tensions of Goodness

PRACTICE Goodness whenever possible, not just when tested

Throughout his book Mr. Tjan makes the case for goodness in people and business. His ideas and interviews are too numerous for this article. He highlights that while competency is important, character and values matter more.<sup>24</sup> Mr. Tjan recognizes that “goodness is something we all intuitively sense but nonetheless have trouble describing clearly or tangibly.”<sup>25</sup>

Goodness also emphasizes that at the core of great leaders is truth, humility, self-awareness, and integrity.<sup>26</sup> Mr. Tjan’s ideas overlap those of John C. Maxwell, in that being a leader and mentor has traits of openness, empathy, and generosity.<sup>27</sup>

Mr. Tjan identifies five critical questions of mentorship<sup>28</sup>:

- (1) What are you truly trying to achieve?
- (2) What are you doing well that is helping you get there?
- (3) What is slowing you down?
- (4) What will change tomorrow to help get you there faster?
- (5) How can I be of help?

His discussion of mentorship has some familiar thoughts along with new ideas.<sup>29</sup> Mr. Tjan advocates for allowing the mentee to “control the volume dial.”<sup>30</sup> While a “nudge,” can be effective, a mentee should turn up or down the level of mentoring.<sup>31</sup> Incorporating this compassionate

<sup>15</sup> Id. at 35-36.

<sup>16</sup> Id.

<sup>17</sup> Id.

<sup>18</sup> Tyler Strand, Legend of the Fall: Hayden Fry, Iowa Alumni Magazine, September 2017, <https://magazine.for-iowa.org/archive/archive-story.php?ed=true&storyid=1677>.

<sup>19</sup> Jared Diamond, Iowa: The Harvard of Coaching, The Wall Street Journal, December 21, 2011.

<sup>20</sup> See John C. Maxwell, supra note 7.

<sup>21</sup> Anthony Tjan, Good People (2017).

<sup>22</sup> Id. at 17.

<sup>23</sup> Id. at 18.

<sup>24</sup> Id. at 21-23.

<sup>25</sup> Id. at 39.

<sup>26</sup> Id. at 41-66.

<sup>27</sup> Id.

<sup>28</sup> Id. at 224-226.

<sup>29</sup> Id. at 209-236.

<sup>30</sup> Id. at 230.

<sup>31</sup> Id.

approach advocated by Mr. Tjan reinforces the initial idea that good mentoring is about relationships. Goodness provides though provoking ideas on how those relationships are developed and effectively grown.

### **Mentorship – A Professional Responsibility**

For lawyers, mentorship goes beyond personal fulfillment and business success. Many states have professional responsibility rules that mirror that of American Bar Association Model Rule 5.1: Responsibilities of a Partner or Supervisory Lawyer:

(a) A partner in a law firm, and a lawyer who individually or together with other lawyers possesses comparable managerial authority in a law firm, shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that the firm has in effect measures giving reasonable assurance that all lawyers in the firm conform to the Rules of Professional Conduct.

(b) A lawyer having direct supervisory authority over another lawyer shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that the other lawyer conforms to the Rules of Professional Conduct.

(c) A lawyer shall be responsible for another lawyer's violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct if:

(1) the lawyer orders or, with knowledge of the specific conduct, ratifies the conduct involved; or

(2) the lawyer is a partner or has comparable managerial authority in the law firm in which the other lawyer practices, or has direct supervisory authority over the other lawyer, and knows of the conduct at a time when its consequences can be avoided or mitigated but fails to take reasonable remedial action.

Model Rule 5.1 places the onus on the partner to train up the associate and avoid or mitigate the consequences of the associate's known conduct. Through effective mentorship, an associate can be placed in a position to learn professional responsibility thereby avoiding any violations by either the firm, partner, or associate. Mr. Maxwell refers to this as communicating the fundamentals. "For people to be productive and satisfied professionally, they have to know what their fundamental responsibilities are."<sup>32</sup>

According to Mr. Maxwell, people remember 10 percent of what they hear, 50 percent of what they see, 70 percent of what they say, and 90 percent of what they hear, see, say, and do.<sup>33</sup> Using these statistics, Mr. Maxwell

developed a five-step process: (1) model, (2) mentor, (3) monitor, (4) motivate, and (5) multiply.<sup>34</sup>

Correlating these statistics to lawyers, if an associate is going to remember 90 percent of what he or she hears, sees, says or does, then providing good mentoring and training is essential to having an associate that is a positive reflection on the partner and the law firm.

### **Mentorship is not Sponsorship**

Seven or eight years ago Michele Coleman Mayes<sup>35</sup>, then serving as General Counsel for All State Corporation, attended a small gathering of young lawyers in Atlanta, Georgia. After a brief reception, Ms. Mays gathered the group of attorneys around her and talked for maybe ten to twelve minutes. Her talk was simple, straightforward, and effective. She touched upon her own career path and used the twists and turns she encountered to demonstrate the importance and differences of mentorship and sponsorship.

Too often these terms are used interchangeably. At the time it appeared that many of those young attorneys did not know the difference or why it mattered. She mentioned that a mentor and sponsor can be the same person, but are commonly different individuals.

Mentorship is helping professionals learn about their field and roles from a senior attorney. They do not need to be within the same firm or business as the mentee. A mentor serves as an advisor, helping to shape a mentee's career goals and plans. A person becomes a mentor based upon their own experiences and general expertise that can be shared with a mentee. A mentor can help to build-up the confidence of a mentee and be a sounding board, but they also provide constructive and at times blunt criticism. Mentors are not a mentee's ticket to a promotion or partnership.

Sponsors on the other hand do help individuals with promotions and partnership. A sponsor works within the same firm or business as his or her protégé. A sponsor takes a direct role in the career advancement of the protégé, advocating for the protégé and helping them to earn a raise, promotion or otherwise have success in the shared firm or business environment. A sponsor expends his or her political capital to assist another person with career advancement. As Ms. Mayes told her small, but captured audience, having a sponsor is having a career champion. A sponsor is a career-changing asset.

Ms. Mayes closed her talk by looking around the room

<sup>32</sup> See John C. Maxwell, *supra* at 63-64.

<sup>33</sup> *Id.* at 64-65.

<sup>34</sup> *Id.* at 65-66.

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.nypl.org/help/about-nypl/leadership/mayes>

and commenting, if you do not know who your mentor or sponsor is, then you do not have one. The takeaway was not for the small audience to rush out and find a mentor or sponsor. Rather Ms. Mayes advocated that the young attorneys in that room needed to work on perfecting their craft, identify individuals that were willing to expend the time and energy in that endeavor, and understand the practical reality that the vast majority of people have achieved career success through guidance and feedback from a mentor along with having a sponsor or advocate in their corner.

### **Developing People Leads to Sound Lawyers, Good Business, and Growth**

The literature regarding developing young professionals is plentiful. In fact, it is at times overwhelming. Despite the abundance of resources, mentoring is commonly taken for granted and misunderstood. Perhaps it is a result of too many ideas combined with the fast pace nature of the legal environment. However, at its core mentoring can be simple. It is about people. It is being selfless. Effective mentoring is identifying an aspiring young professional who is willing to listen, learn, and be pushed to new heights. All the authors, speakers and leadership experts agree, good mentoring is good business.



“Show me a successful individual and I’ll show you someone who had real positive influences in his or her life. I don’t care what you do for a living—if you do it well I’m sure there was someone cheering you on or showing the way. A mentor.” — Denzel Washington



s/c

## **Mentoring: 30 Years of Research**

- Improved Career Outcomes
- Employee Engagement
- Employee Retention
- Employee Inclusion
- Fulfillment to the Mentor

s/c

## **Comparison of Mentored and Non-Mentored**

- Higher Compensation
- Greater Number of Promotions
- Career Satisfaction
- Committed to Career
- More optimistic

*s/c*

## **U.S. Army Study**

Study of officers in the U.S. Army  
found that mentoring decreased  
turnover by 38%

*s/c*

## It's Not Easy

- (1) make it your top priority,
- (2) limit who you take along,
- (3) develop relationships before starting,
- (4) give help unconditionally,
- (5) let them fly with you for a while,
- (6) put fuel in their tank,
- (7) co-pilot,
- (8) clear the flight path, and
- (9) help them repeat the process.

*s/c*

## Understand the Practical Realities

- Clients paying for development is the exception, not the rule.
- Firms need to prioritize development.
- Clients need to recognize the value of having seasoned counsel and succession planning.

*s/c*

## People Remember . . .

- 10 percent of what they hear
- 50 percent of what they see
- 70 percent of what they say
- 90 percent of what they hear, see, say, and do.

*s/c*

## Apprenticeship v. Classroom

- Greeks gave us the classroom model.
- Hebrews gave us the apprenticeship model.
- Statistically, on the job training built on relationships and common experience has a better outcome for lawyers.

*s/c*

## Attract Other Leaders

There is no success without a successor.

*s/c*

### **Iowa: The Harvard of Coaching**

- 17 losing seasons from 1962-1979
- Moribund program transformed, 13 winning seasons, 3 Big Ten Titles, 3 Rose Bowl games.
- 13 assistant coaches would become Division I-A head football coaches.

*s/c*

## Hayden Fry

"I don't want guys on this staff who don't want to be head coaches."



s/c

## Hayden Fry: 1983 Coaching Staff



s/c

## Hayden Fry: 1983 Coaching Staff

- Barry Alvarez - Hall of Fame, winningest coach in Wisconsin Football history.



s/c

## Hayden Fry: 1983 Coaching Staff

- Bill Snyder - Hall of Fame, winningest coach in Kansas State Football history.



s/c

## Hayden Fry: 1983 Coaching Staff

- Bob Stoops - Winningest coach in Oklahoma Football history, national title, future Hall of Fame inductee.



s/c

## Hayden Fry: 1983 Coaching Staff

- Kirk Ferentz - Winningest coach in Iowa Football history, future Hall of Fame inductee.



s/c

## Good People is Good Business

BE  
PEOPLE FIRST

HELP  
OTHERS BECOME THE FULLEST VERSION OF THEMSELVES

COMMIT  
BEYOND COMPETENCY TO THE VALUES OF GOODNESS

BALANCE  
THE REALITIES AND TENSIONS OF GOODNESS

PRACTICE  
GOODNESS WHENEVER POSSIBLE, NOT JUST WHEN TESTED

*s/c*

## Five Critical Questions

1. What are you truly trying to achieve?
2. What are you doing well that is helping you get there?
3. What is slowing you down?
4. What will change tomorrow to help get you there faster?
5. How can I be of help?

*s/c*

## **Mentorship: A Professional Responsibility**

- ABA Model Rule 5.1
- A lawyer having direct supervisory authority over another lawyer shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that the other lawyer conforms to the Rules of Professional Conduct.

*s/c*

## **Mentorship is Not Sponsorship**

- Do not need to work together.
- Serves as an advisor, helping to shape career goals and plans.
  - General expertise that can be shared.
  - Help to build-up the confidence of a mentee and be a sounding board.
  - Provide constructive and at times blunt criticism.
  - Mentors are not a mentee's ticket to a promotion or partnership.

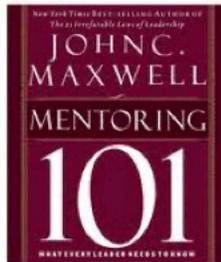
*s/c*

## Sponsorship

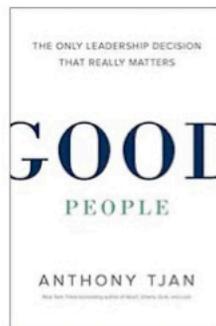
- Sponsors help with promotions and partnership.
- Works within the same firm or business.
- Takes a direct role with the protégé.
- Advocates and helps to earn raises, promotions or otherwise have success.
- Expends political capital to assist another.
- Having a sponsor is having a career champion.
- A sponsor is a career changing asset.

s/c

## Resources



Dr. Lauren Bidwell



Michele Coleman Mayes



s/c



## JOSEPH ANGERSOLA

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Joseph Angersola defends clients in a variety of disputes, with an emphasis on product liability, personal injury and commercial litigation. In addition to representing clients in Georgia, Joe has defended clients as regional and national counsel in Arizona, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Tennessee.

Joe understands that each client, whether it is a large corporation, local business or an individual, has specific objectives and challenges in litigation. His experience in a variety of cases and jurisdictions allows him to tailor his approach to address those considerations.

Originally from Iowa, Joe practiced in Chicago for 5 years before moving to Georgia. He is active in various professional organizations along with his children's youth activities.

### Practice Areas

- Automobile Litigation
- Catastrophic Injury & Wrongful Death
- Commercial Litigation
- Environmental Law
- Premises Liability
- Products Liability

### Experience

- Defended electrical manufacturer in product liability cases alleging defects in electrical equipment and components, including switch-gear, circuit breakers, surge arrestors and disconnect boxes.
- Defended automated-door manufacturer in a lawsuit alleging improper maintenance.
- Defended forklift manufacturer in a lawsuit alleging improper service.
- Defended skid-steer loader manufacturer in product liability suit alleging design and manufacturing defects.
- Defended hose manufacturer in product liability suit alleging design and manufacturing defects.
- Defended tool manufacturer in a product liability lawsuit alleging catastrophic head injury.
- Defended boat manufacturer and dealer in a product liability lawsuit alleging defect in stair design.
- Defended boat manufacturers and dealers in warranty and recall lawsuits.
- Defended individuals in lawsuits involving recreational boats and jet skis asserting wrongful death claims and personal injury.
- Defended importer and distributor of fireworks in product liability lawsuit alleging defective design and manufacturing.
- Defended homeowners and businesses in lawsuits asserting water runoff claims.

### Awards/Recognitions

- AV Preeminent® Rating, Martindale-Hubbell Peer Review
- Martindale-Hubbell Top Rated Lawyer, 2016
- Georgia Super Lawyers Rising Star, 2016 - 2018

### Education

- Syracuse University College of Law (J.D., 2005)
- Loyola University of Chicago (B.A., 2001)

