



AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

MENTORSHIP

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

LEADERSHIP

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MENTORSHIP is a personal developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. The mentor may be older or younger, but have a certain area of expertise. It is a learning and development partnership between someone with vast experience and someone who wants to learn. The person in receipt of mentorship may be referred to as a *protégé* (male), a *protégée* (female), an apprentice or, in recent years, a mentee.

"Mentoring" is a process that involves effective communication and is relationship based, but its precise definition is elusive. One definition of the many that have been proposed, is below:

Mentoring is a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, wisdom, and support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé)"

The focus of mentoring is to assist in developing an individual. The techniques are broad and require wisdom in order to be used appropriately. A 1995 study of mentoring techniques most commonly used found that the five most commonly used techniques among mentors were:

- I. **Accompanying:** making a commitment in a caring and effective way, which involves taking part in the learning process side-by-side with the mentee.
- II. **Sowing:** mentors are often confronted with the difficulty of preparing the learner before he or she is ready to change. Sowing is necessary when you know that what you say may not be understood or even acceptable to mentees at first but will make sense and have value to the mentee when the situation requires it.
- III. **Catalyzing:** when change reaches a critical level of pressure, learning can escalate. Here the mentor chooses to plunge the learner right into change, provoking a different way of thinking, a change in identity or a re-ordering of values.
- IV. **Showing:** this is making something understandable, or using your own example to demonstrate a skill or activity. The mentor shows what he is talking about by his own behavior.
- V. **Harvesting:** here the mentor focuses on "picking the ripe fruit": it is usually used to create awareness of what was learned by experience and to draw conclusions. The key questions here are: "What have you learned?", "How useful is it?".

Different techniques may be used by mentors according to the situation and the mindset of the mentee. The techniques used in modern organizations can be found in ancient education systems, from the Socratic technique of harvesting to the accompaniment method of learning used in the apprenticeship of itinerant cathedral builders during the Middle Ages. Leadership authors Jim Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner advise mentors to look for "**TEACHABLE MOMENTS**" in order to "expand or realize the potentialities of the people in the organizations they lead" and underline that personal credibility as essential to quality mentoring as skill. There are two broad types of mentoring relationships: formal and informal. In addition to these broad types, there are also peer, situational and supervisory mentoring relationships. These tend to fall under the categories of formal and informal mentoring relationships. Informal relationships develop on their own between partners. Formal mentoring, on the other hand, refers to a structured process supported by the organization and addressed to target populations. Youth mentoring programs assist at-risk children or youth who lack role models and sponsors. In business, formal mentoring is part of talent management addressed to populations such as key employees, newly hired graduates, high potentials and future leaders. The matching of mentor and mentee is often done by a mentoring coordinator or by means of an (online) database registry.

The **African American Male Leadership Academy** seeks young men in need of mentoring. The opportunity to educate and motivate young African American Males should be a priority to those who have experienced the loss thereof. Bertie C Forbes stated "*history has demonstrated that the most notable winners usually encountered heartbreaking obstacles before they triumphed. They won because they refused to become discouraged by their defeats.*" Our focus remains at still, "Change oneself, change the community, change the world!"