



## Starting Strong [A Mentoring Fable]: Strategies for Success in the First 90 Days

By Lois J. Zachary and Lory A. Fischler  
 Publisher Jossey-Bass  
 ISBN: 978-1-118-76771-9  
 Reviewed by Mary Nanavati

**“What does mentoring look like, sound like and feel like?  
 What do really good mentors do to make a difference?”**

How do they engage their mentees, create good conversation, and keep it going? How do mentor and mentee move past the idea of ‘advice’ and into a trust-based relationship that generates real learning?” These are all key questions that become the focus of Lois Zachary and Lory Fischler’s latest book, *Starting Strong [A Mentoring Fable]: Strategies for Success in the First 90 Days*. The book is an excellent read that invites us to participate in the first three months of a new mentoring relationship and experience all that it entails – the high points along with the stumbling blocks. *Starting Strong* chronicles the relationship between an experienced mentor and a novice mentee and invites us to learn by experiencing the cycle of this relationship in its critical initial stages; the point at which relationships begin and become established, goals are set, risks are taken and partners reflect on outcomes and processes.

This book is an exciting and unique addition to the mentoring/coaching body of research and practical manuscripts. Zachary and Fischler are

established names in this field, having contributed three widely used books and numerous articles. Written for mentors, coaches, individuals, pairs and groups, this book is part fable, a framework for deepening our understanding of mentoring conversations and a toolbox of practical strategies. We are invited to observe the conversations between mentor and mentee and also to understand their thinking as they develop and process this deepening relationship. Each chapter in Part One, *The Fable*, chronicles a stage in the cycle of a mentoring relationship and ends with questions for both mentors and mentees, allowing readers to reflect and deepen their thinking about what they have experienced. The reflective questions make the book a great resource for any mentoring partnership or learning team, ensuring that we deepen our own thinking as mentors and mentees. The section ends with a glimpse into the relationship five years later and a summary of tips for both mentors and mentees.

The Mentoring Conversation Playbook, Part Two, includes helpful strategies for deepening mentoring conversations, and parallels six essential conversations from *The Fable* section that are key to the success of any mentoring relationship in the first 90 days. Mentors and coaches will especially appreciate the probing questions that are useful in any mentoring or coaching conversation.

Whether you are seeking to strengthen your current mentoring skills, are an experienced mentor, this book is an essential tool not only to get you started, but to ensure that you become better at the art of conversation – the foundation of any solid relationship. Its unique format, practical tools and inviting style ensure that *Starting Strong* will become a classic referenced by both researchers and practitioners. Mentoring makes a positive and lasting difference in people’s personal and professional lives and, without a doubt, this book is a unique and engaging contribution to this field. ▲

---

Mary Nanavati is the Program Lead and Instructor for OPC’s Mentoring Qualification Program.

✉ [mary.nanavati@peelsb.com](mailto:mary.nanavati@peelsb.com)