

Mentoring Matters

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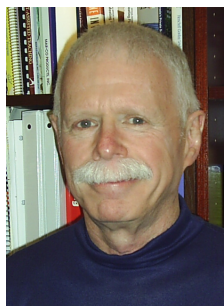
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We are excited to announce a 2nd offering of *Mentoring: Strategies for Success in 2014!*



Interview with
Rey Carr, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief of the [Peer Bulletin](#)

Rey Carr, Ph.D. is the CEO of Peer Resources and Editor-in-Chief of the [Peer Bulletin](#), the only publication available that focuses exclusively on mentoring, coaching and peer assistance.

MM: You've been focusing on mentoring for a long time, what drew you to it?

RC: As a teen and young adult, I was fortunate to have a number of informal mentors, that is, others who helped me learn life lessons that have stayed with me. Eventually, when I went to graduate school and reflected on the influences in my life, I noticed a pattern in the characteristics of those informal relationships. My curiosity led me to wonder whether my friends, colleagues and students had similar experiences, and if there were different outcomes depending on whether people had had such relationships in their lives. From there, I started researching, writing, and training in areas related to mentoring. So, what drew me to mentoring was a combination of life experiences and curiosity.

MM: What are some of the changes you've seen in the practice of mentoring over the past decade?

RC: The three biggest changes I've seen over the past decade are (1) the huge increase of formal mentoring programs in schools, communities and corporations; (2) the increased number of mentoring consulting services that are now available, including the expansion in the use technology to manage mentoring connections; and (3) the increased use of mentoring as a strategy to solve a myriad of social, personal, or health dilemmas in society.

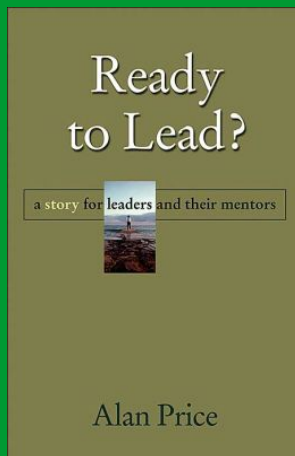
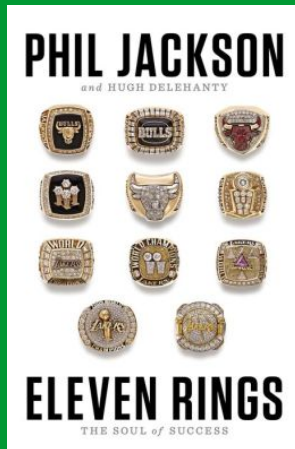
M: What are some of the major stumbling blocks to mentoring practice?

RC: I'd identify four major blocks to mentoring program practice. First, not paying enough attention to the importance of relationship quality in a mentoring connection. Second, automatically assuming that the characteristics associated with a naturally-occurring phenomenon like mentoring can be made formalized and deliberate. Third, in formal mentoring programs paying too much attention to matching and not enough attention to monitoring the match; and fourth, thinking that formal mentoring programs will make up for the lack of adequate

Ask and you shall receive! For those of you unable to make our March session we are offering a [second engagement](#) in Phoenix this fall.

Stay tuned for more information! If you are not already on our event mailing list, [click here](#) to sign up!

Books Rey Carr is reading!



societal resources or poor corporate management policies.

If you were asking what blocks occur in my mentoring, I'd offer these: not listening; jumping in too soon with a solution or advice; not discussing expectations for the relationship; and not paying attention to boundaries.

MM: Mentoring and coaching are used interchangeably but there are differences. Tell us what you see as the key differentials.

RC: I've been writing about this issue for some time. The most recent article appeared in our member magazine, the [Peer Bulletin](#). Here's a brief summary: although there are more similarities than differences between the mentoring and coaching. There are four things that I've experienced over the years that distinguish mentoring from coaching (and I call these the Four Pillars). They are: the focus on paying it forward; an emphasis on relationship; the degree of mutuality; and the propensity for lessons for life. In my article, I illustrate these differences with examples from mentoring relationships that I've had over the years. An abridged version of the article (without the examples, unfortunately) was published in the International Mentoring Association's [Connect Newsletter](#) (Vol 3, 2014).

MM: Peer networking is at the top of your agenda. How does that work in regard to mentoring and coaching?

RC: Throughout our lives, peers play a significant role in our own health, happiness and success. Their support, encouragement, willingness to listen and be there for us, nurture us, act as cheerleaders, and challenge us often determines the degree to which we can handle what life offers. Our resilience and ability to transcend adversity are often dependent on quality peer connections in our lives. Peers are typically our first mentors and coaches, although they may not use those terms. Their natural tendency to want to help others, combined with their puzzlement as to how to do it, makes it possible for peers to learn some of the same skills used by mentors and coaches such as building rapport, deeper listening, asking good questions, and expressing appreciation.

MM: Some might call you a "resource specialist." What are the primary resources mentors and coaches need?

RC: I'd suggest that in this information-rich age, the primary resources for coaches and mentors are actually inside them. That is, being open to learning, staying curious, attending to spirit and connecting with resources that are credible and trustworthy.

MM: What advice would you offer to mentors and mentees?

RC: Resist the tendency to give advice without thoroughly understanding the situation; then ask if the other person would like to hear your advice; and make sure the advice is based on what you've learned from your own lived experience. I'd also advise to stop using the term "mentee" and substitute the phrase "mentoring partner."

MM: What are you reading right now that you would recommend to our readers?

RC: I'm an avid reader, and while I read a lot of crime fiction, I also read many biographies and autobiographies to learn about the role that

mentoring or peer relationships played in the lives of person being written about. One that I'm reading now is by Phil Jackson called [Eleven Rings](#). Phil is the winningest coach in NBA history and his book is basically about how he has been able to be so successful. I was both surprised and gratified to learn that much of his success does not come from drawing X's and O's or diagramming great plays, or even having exceptionally talented players on his team (he was Michael Jordan's coach, for example). His success comes from helping his players develop particular attitudes and ways of being, much of which is based on meditation, Zen, and mentoring relationships. I haven't finished the book yet, but his anecdotes so far about the egos of various players and how to get them to function as a team that will finish in the championship rounds, are very insightful and inspirational.

Another book I finished recently was [Ready To Lead: A Story for New Leaders and Their Mentors](#) by Alan Price. Although promoted as a business book, this book reads more like a novel. It's about a developing relationship between a manager who is being groomed to take on major responsibility for the company's new direction and the executive who acts as his mentor. The manager, whose name is Mark, is full of doubts and questions, and the mentor shows great skill in handling Mark's worries and concerns while at the same time posing questions that require deeper reflection. Readers also get to "listen-in" on how Mark is dealing with his mentor's questions and wisdom when he shares those private concerns with his spouse. The storytelling is such that this business book can be called a "page turner." I was delighted to see how many of the points that are important to me about mentoring were illustrated in the actual interactions described in the book. I can recommend this book as a great read for mentors.

A Note to Our Readers:

We believe that leaders cannot be effective without a strong and ongoing commitment to mentoring excellence. This belief, our passion for mentoring excellence, and our extensive experience in the field with organizations led us to create the Center for Mentoring Excellence. At our virtual center, www.centerformentoringexcellence.com, you will find mentoring tools and resources, expert advice and a forum for sharing best mentoring practices. We hope that you will visit us there and let us know how we can continue to help you raise the bar on mentoring in your organization.

