

# Mentoring Matters

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"I'VE LEARNED THAT  
PEOPLE WILL FORGET  
WHAT YOU SAID,  
PEOPLE WILL FORGET  
WHAT YOU DID, BUT  
PEOPLE WILL NEVER  
FORGET HOW YOU  
MADE THEM FEEL."

MAYA ANGELOU

We are sending a big thank you to those of you who completed our annual Mentoring Matters Reader Survey. Over the next several months, we will be sharing the results with you. In this issue, we focus on the responses to the first three questions.



## What is your motivation for being involved in mentoring?

Our survey revealed three primary motivations for respondents' involvement in mentoring. For the majority, mentoring is a job responsibility. They hold mentoring leadership roles as mentoring program coordinators or managers. Others are poised to lead the effort in initiating an organizational mentoring program.

Many are motivated by the desire to pay it forward by giving back. Here are some of their comments about why.

- *Mentoring has been a game-changer in my own career and I am now in a position to pay it forward.*
- *I see the impact the process has on those leaders coming behind me.*
- *I had very positive experiences being mentoring in the early stages of my career and want to give back what was so beneficial to receive.*
- *I benefited in several ways from being mentored, so I want to support and promote the practice.*

Others are invested in career development.

- *To be able to share knowledge and information from years of experience with others who are just starting their careers.*
- *I am passionate about mentoring because it can help with career development.*
- *To create a culture of promoting from within and personal growth.*

*The results are not surprising. Program managers are always asking us for best practices to improve organizational*

Mark Your Calendar

# FREE WEBINAR

The First 90 Days  
of a Mentoring  
Relationship  
June 16th  
12:00 PM EDT



[click here to register](#)



Our recent annual *Mentoring Matters Reader Survey* revealed dozens of best practice topics. Our blog post entitled [Top 10 Best Practices for Mentors](#) is the first in our upcoming series of mentoring best practice posts. Each month we will post new topics, make sure to look for them in our elletters and on our [blog](#)!



Looking for a little  
summer reading?



Dr. Lois Zachary

mentoring. As to "paying it forward," many mentors (like Cynthia in our mentoring fable, [Starting Strong](#)) tell us that they want to give back, especially when they have personally benefited from mentoring. The third finding means there is unlimited potential for mentoring, since career development is a lifelong journey. Mentoring is the ideal tool for supporting employees along the path.



Lory Fischler

I'm not surprised either. People who have had a good mentoring experience want to give back. When someone wants to 'pay it forward' by mentoring others it means mentoring made a difference in their own growth and development. I wish there were more people out there who benefited from strong mentoring relationships. We don't have enough good role models for people to draw on. Most people tell us they would welcome a mentor who will help them develop themselves in their role.

## In your opinion, what is the #1 attribute of a good mentor?

Hands down, the #1 attribute of a good mentor among our responding readers is the ability to listen. And, not just any listening will do. For most, the listening was qualified - good listening, active listening, excellent listening, empathetic listening, nonjudgmental listening, and effective listening.

- They actively listen and don't try to 'fix' the issues their mentee may be working through.
- A mentor who will listen and then challenge their mentee to go beyond what they think is possible.
- The ability to listen to the mentee, be receptive and open minded to the situations/experiences that are occurring in the life of the mentee.

"Good communication skills" was the second attribute mentioned by respondents. Included in these responses were qualifying criteria about just what good communication should look like: transparency, empathy, being respectful, establishing trust, asking good questions, and patience.

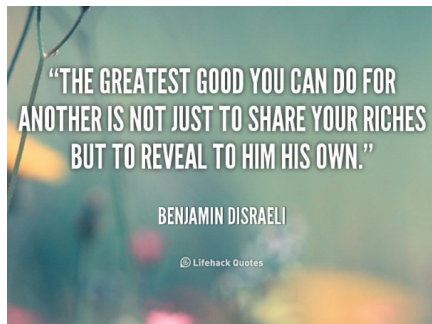


Dr. Lois Zachary

These findings validate what we consistently hear from mentees who attend our workshops. They truly appreciate mentors who listen. While the listening is important, going deeper and really hearing them enables mentees to feel that their mentors "get them." In fact, the very act of listening often helps mentees hear their own inner voices and "sit at the feet of their own experience and learn from it." Staying in communication is also essential in a

### Starting Strong

is more than an engaging story of mentorship, it's a vital resource for understanding how to implement and sustain a meaningful mentoring relationship. **Now available at [audible.com](https://www.audible.com)!**



#### **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](https://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.*

*mentoring relationship. I am often reminded of a cartoon character sticking his head in an empty mailbox with the thought bubble caption, "I wonder what's wrong. I don't hear from my mentor anymore." You will want to keep these 4c's in mind: contact, connection, communication and consistency.*



**Lory Fischler**

*I agree completely. Mentors often come into the relationship thinking, "someone could benefit from my wisdom." In reality, today's mentoring is more about drawing out the thinking of the mentee and helping them articulate, refine and advance their ideas. Although mentees come with questions, I believe good mentors already already have the answer in their minds, buried somewhere. A good mentor resists the temptation to just provide answers. Instead, good mentors ask probing questions, listen, and engage in conversation to push the mentee's thinking forward. I think everyone can benefit from becoming a better listener.*

### **What is the best advice you've ever received from a mentor?**

While many respondents shared some very specific advice their mentors had given them, there was one theme that dominated the responses: self-empowerment. Mentors helped their mentees increase their self-knowledge, to "get to know themselves better" and encouraged them "to believe in themselves," "to be true to themselves" and "just to be themselves." Variations on the Nike mantra of "Just Do It" showed up as "You can do it." Or, "Stop all the planning and just do it."

As to specific advice, there were lots of gems. Among them:

- Don't reinvent the wheel.
- Seek to do what is meaningful to you.
- Stretch yourself to try new things.
- Life and success is NOT ABOUT YOU, it is about helping others and focusing on them.
- Consider and think before you speak, your first answer may not be the best answer.
- Treat your job as if you owned the business.
- Don't be afraid to take advantage of good opportunities that arrive at a bad time.
- Don't think you know everything. You're not always the smartest one in the room.
- Give your well-thought out plan the time to develop.
- Small steps can be huge.
- You don't have to know all the answers, but rather to know where to go to find them.
- Do what you love and follow your passion. Life is too short to dream of doing what you love. Living life is doing what you love to do.
- Think big, start small, start now.



**Dr. Lois Zachary**

*The role of a mentor is to support a mentee's growth so that they have the capability, confidence and competence to accomplish their goals. Effective mentors invite and challenge mentees to get to know themselves, and encourage the mentee's belief and ownership in their own potential. Often the right words said at the right time make all the difference in the world. A simple phrase, like "just do it," may offer the permission and momentum a mentee needs to take the first step in creating the future they desire.*

*I'd say there are some really good pointers in the specific advice these respondents received from their mentors. It is a good reminder that the wisdom and encouragement we receive from our mentors has staying power years after our relationships come to a close.*



**Lory Fischler**

*So often mentees come into the relationship feeling like they are in a one down position ... "I'm not as smart, as accomplished, or as good as everyone else." A mentor's belief in the mentee is a powerful motivator. A gentle "kick in the butt," or words of encouragement is a sure way to motivate that first important leap of faith to try something new. Knowing someone is there to watch your back, act as a safety net or advocate for them helps a mentee take risks to get to the next level.*