

# Mentoring Matters

October 2011

Volume 2 | Issue 5

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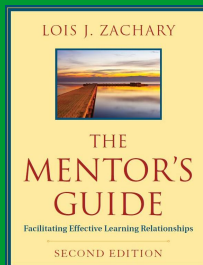
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## COMING SOON!



The Mentors Guide  
Second Edition

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## An Interview with David Fain



For this month's issue, we interviewed [David A. Fain](#), a financial advisor in Chicago, Illinois. Mentors have played an important role in this GenXer's career development.

**MM: You've had many mentors and in different ways they have contributed and I suspect, are still contributing to your professional success. Who were they and when did they come into your life?**

**DAF:** My success as a person, professional and as a father has been greatly enhanced and my world is terrifically larger because of the mentoring relationships that I've had. Two mentors immediately come to mind for me. The first was a mentor I had in college. He was someone who at a young age was incredibly important to me. He was a business professor I had at the University of Pennsylvania. By that time, I had started a summer ice cream business and wanted to learn more about entrepreneurship. So, I enrolled in a course and this teacher became a mentor to me both professionally and educationally. I looked to him for guidance in how to grow my thinking and expand my study of entrepreneurship.

The second mentor was what I would call my "professional" mentor. I relied on him because in that he kept me up when I was down and kept me on track with my development by encouraging me to think big. He provided a carrot and a stick and a blend of inspiration and perspiration. He had a keen sense for what motivates me. He knew what I needed and when I needed it. I always had the feeling that he cared about me even when we were not together.

**MM: Did you seek out your mentors or did they just appear when you were ready? If the former, how did you go about finding a mentor?**

**DAF:** My antennae are always up for people who can help me grow exponentially. I take personal responsibility for my success but know that I can attribute some of that to the counsel and support of mentors who have been down the path I am about to go down. My goal is to be better and more successful than where I am at any given moment.

**MM: What were some of the lessons you learned from your mentors?**

**DAF:** First and foremost, it is vitally important to be coachable. For me, that means it is important to hear and listen. You have to be able to look outside yourself so you can digest the feedback being given. It is the constructive message that is important, even though it is natural to

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feel defensive. Second, it is important to be accountable and be willing to be held accountable. Third, it is important to be able to give to the relationship, whether it is by sending a note, staying in touch, or providing resources (i.e. articles and information). Fourth, show your appreciation to your mentor. Recognize that mentors have a choice about how they spend their time and that they are choosing to spend it with you. Fifth, be a good learner and show that you are conscientious and a good person to mentor, worthy of their time.

**MM: What were the most satisfying aspects of your mentoring relationships and why?**

**DAF:** For me, it is that I can look back over a period of time and see the growth that has taken place. I know that I would not be as far along as I am if I had not had those mentoring relationships. My world is larger and I have greater opportunities because of my relationships. I am far better for having had a sounding board that really understood who I am.

**MM: What did you learn about mentoring from those relationships?**

**DAF:** Mentoring is a dance. You have to find the right partner. Like dancing, being in a mentoring partnership takes practice and humility - - and little bit of attraction, love, and like. You have to be willing to work on the relationship. It feels a little clumsy at first until you find the rhythms to it. I also learned that you can't always ask; you have to give of yourself to the relationship and the other person.

**MM: Would you offer some advice about being a mentee that could serve as a guide for our readers?**

**DAF:** By allowing yourself to be vulnerable you enable the other person to help you become successful. Remember that mentoring relationships have a season. The seasons come and they go. The capacity of a mentor for one period of time may be appropriate and at another time you may experience that mentoring in a different way. The dynamic is still there, it is just different.

## Mentoring Quote of the Month

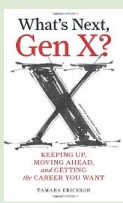
"If someone listens to me say what I am feeling,  
then my feelings are given substance and direction, and I can act."  
Joseph Jaworski

## Six Tips for Managing Your Mentoring Meeting

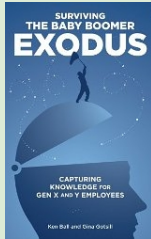
1. **Set up your agenda in advance.** It will help you stay focused and productive.
2. **Build in time to catch up and put a limit on the time you allocate.** Catch-up can easily fill up all your time.
3. **Decide on the specific topic or question you want to address.** When you make time for reflection prior to your meeting, it makes the conversation richer and deeper.
4. **Develop timeline for the topics you want to cover.** Setting aside specific blocks of time for each topic you want to cover will help you be accountable for how you spend your time.
5. **Use a log, journal or diary to record ideas, issues and commitments.** It will help you recall and review, and stay on track.
6. **Schedule check-ins and feedback time.** It will ensure that you address problems so that you don't get side-tracked.

## More About GenX: Recommended Resources

[What's Next, Gen X?: Keeping Up, Moving Ahead, and Getting the Career You Want](#)



GenXers often face a "disconnect" with their boomer superiors, who just don't get them. As a result, many get caught up in doing something because they think it is "going to lead to something else even though they don't enjoy or it or think it is worthwhile." Erickson suggests ways that mentors can help define expectations, provide a longer term perspective, recalibrate a career path and better manage both superiors and direct reports.



### [Surviving the Baby Boomer Exodus: Capturing Knowledge for Gen X and Y Employees](#)

Ball and Gotsill argue that as more and more organizations employ multigenerational workforces, it is imperative (as never before) to capture explicit, implicit and tacit organizational knowledge. Each generation has its own way of communicating, learning and working that challenges an organization's ability to capture and share knowledge. Mentors need to be aware of these differences in order to facilitate learning.

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#### **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](http://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.

