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## The Peculiarities Of Mentor-Mentee Relationship (On My Own Experience)

Throughout life people often have a person who one looks up to as a role model. Having an adult figure in one's life to help guide, support, and assist to reach goals one wants to achieve (Rhodes, 2002). This person often will guide you as you experience many lessons in life, while facilitating a path one wants to take is one-way mentoring is helpful for many people who experience the benefits of this mentorship partnership. The support of a mentor in today's society is often viewed in the wrong manner. Many people identify a mentor in the same way they view their parental support (Rhodes, 2002). The mentor – mentee relationship cannot be confused with a parent – child relationship, and it is not recommended that the mentor is a relative of the mentee (Rhodes, 2002). Rhodes (2002) believes "the term has generally been used in the human services field to describe a relationship between an older, more experienced adult and unrelated, younger protégé- a relationship in which adult provides ongoing guidance, instruction, and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the protégé" (p. 4). One of the benefits of having a mentor is when two people create a relationship based upon trust, respect, and in a judgement free zone. This gives a person the opportunity to be authentic and focus on their agreed upon goals of the mentor partnership.

I am fortunate to have a mentor in my life today. His name is Andrew, who is my boss at Lifetime Fitness. This mentorship relationship began last summer, which was during my early adulthood development phase. Andrew recruited me to work on his team and gave me the opportunity to expand my horizons as one of his team members in the café. He was impressed with the manner I was able to handle myself in the Café. He identified an opportunity to expand some skills, leadership and conflict resolution behaviors because our primary role in the café was customer service. His mentorship style was to identify and discuss obstacles that I had confronted during my day at work, which also extended into my personal life. He understands my strengths and weaknesses. He often guided the discussion in a format which would outline a problem, resolve, what was the conflict and how would it be resolved from a leader's perspective. He organized the discussion which ensured accountability and self-identification. Andrew and I would see each other almost every day during the summer at work. He would often bring to my attention issues or circumstances of how to provide customer service in a fast-paced environment. This would allow me to learn and adapt new techniques when dealing with customers. The pathways of mentoring influence model help foster mentor-mentee relationships. This creates a partnership that fosters trust, accountability, and action steps to transition to a preferred outcome. Having a mentor on the job is beneficial because you have someone who is experienced and been through obstacles that the mentee will face. He motivates and pushes me to work at higher levels, through learning from my mistakes and follow up actions that can or could have been completed. I was at a point in my life where I needed additional support and someone whom I could confide in. He was there and very willing to help me but as a mentor more than a boss. Many organizations are able to retain their employees this way because it is creating a positive work environment (Emma, np). This relationship bolstered both my cognitive and identity development. Thus, to further analyze this relationship, I will utilize both cognitive development theory (L. S. Vygotsky) and identity development (Daniel Levinson). It will help demonstrate the identification, implementation and growth that I experienced at Lifetime Fitness due to my relationship with Andrew.

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The mentoring model is a model that is widely used to help mentor have a guide while building a relationship with their mentee. Rhodes (2002) explains how this is used during youth adolescence. The first step in any relationship is to identify a person who is willing to be your mentor. After one accepts this role, it is essential to begin the process of building trust. This part of the process is timely because building trust takes place over a period of time it not instant. During the process of building trust there are three developmental stages that are focused on: social-emotional development, cognitive development, and role modeling and identification. These stages will help foster a relationship with your parents and other close relatives. The outcome will be the success the mentee has accomplished and experienced growth. It could be in school, work, or skills that one may focusing working on in that moment or an identified opportunity to experience personal growth. Andrew used this model to help me develop my skills. His focus was primarily on the cognitive, role modeling and identification stages.

To begin, cognitive development happens when one starts to learn new information and knowledge about an environment (Rhodes, 2002). People use the information one learns and applies it to their everyday personal and professional life. Rhodes discusses throughout adolescence you are beginning to learn new tools such as problem solving, how to handle conflict, and how to evaluate thoughts (p.42). When a person is strengthening their cognitive skills, their perspective of themselves and how others view them will continue to change positively (Rhodes, 2002). This applies to my relationship with Andrew because he understood when I first started my job that it was going to take time for me to understand the procedures and technical skills necessary to be successful on the job. He knew learning new information and skills would take some time so we would meet daily to ensure the skills were being implemented and adapted each day in the café. This helped facilitate an environment where learning was not rushed and minimized mistakes which enabled me to be a valuable member of his staff. Andrew continued to build trust during our initial meetings which helped foster additional success and a path for me to discuss errors and remediation. He would open up to me about his personal life and his journey. An approach that Rhodes explains is L.S. Vygotsky "zone of proximal development" .... "it is beyond what a young person can do when problem solving on his or her own but within a range of what he or she can do while working under adult guidance or with capable peers" (p.42). This is where the mentee has the opportunity to grow and expand their strengths and capabilities. One may feel they are not ready for this step which is why the mentor will just observe and give guidance if necessary. For example, I was nervous when my mentor Andrew wanted me to move up to a job with more responsibility, which was preparing meals for the customers. This involved memorizing more recipes, working with more coworkers, and pushing myself out of my comfort zone. He knew I could do it, but he wanted me to come to the realization on my own. This was how he would build accountability and drive me to learn more and more each day. This is when a person starts to take responsibility for their growth and solving issues. Making decisions each day made me feel gratified that I was growing and learning new aspects of this business. I was motivated to want and learn more with his guidance which was his goal, for me to become more independent in my role in the café.

Communication is also very important in the mentor relationship. Vygotsky research on zone of proximal development has illustrated why it has had positive impact on the relationship between a mentor and a mentee. Through the process of zone of proximal development, the mentee is learning the skills that will help translate into meaningful conversations between the mentor and mentee (Rhodes, 2002). These conversations that are meaningful represent how one's relationship will become even stronger and build upon the trust that is already present. While learning more tools, skills, and more advance vocabulary from experiences the mentee can now

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use it in their daily lives while having conversations with peers, parents, and your mentor. It is evident that I have experienced growth (Rhodes, 2002). This was recently experienced in the manner in which I rushed for a sorority. Utilizing my expanded skills that I developed with Andrew as my mentor, I enjoyed the process of meeting new people on campus, did not lead with judgement, and was present. This allowed me to search for the best possible match for me that aligns with mutual goals in life and in the world.

After experiencing the stage of cognitive development where I was able to strengthen my skills in conflict resolution and leadership development I was able to experience self-identification which he used through role modeling. This was powerful because I was able to make adjustments in the moment which was valuable to me in the café. During this time of development, one starts to think who they want to be and how one will get there (Rhodes, 2002). Rhodes describes “the modeling process is thought to be reinforced through mentor’s emotional support and verbal feedback” (p.45). Levinson explain that “imagined self” is used during this developmental stage while emerging into early adulthood (as cited in Rhodes, 2002, p.47). This is used to help create moral and values in the ongoing development of who a person wants to evolve to be in life. This stage is important for developing a version of yourself that is rewarding. The mentee needs to think about their overall goals and determine what steps need to be taken in the process of this development. My mentor Andrew did this for me through many discussions and ongoing evaluation of my goals. He felt it was important to check in to ensure this process was mutually satisfying. . We would create maps and goals of what I want my life to look like after college and what steps I needed to accomplish in this process.. Andrew would help me work on my self-confidence and believing in my abilities. Andrew illustrated through his life experiences that your life can go in directions that you do not want. It is up to me to use the motivation I have inside of me to adjust my action, behaviors and point myself in the right direction. Levinson’s theory aligns with how Andrew was helping me because he wanted me to learn what I want out of my life. Andrew would not sit there and give me the answers, but he would guide me. This took me a great amount of time figure out because I need to take the next steps in my life. Brainstorming and experimenting with new ideas is one-way Andrew would help guide to lead me to answers. Although, I feel I will never have a mapped out perfect plan of my life, but I now have an idea what kind of action plan I have to help me achieve the life I want to be successful and be happy.

In conclusion, this model is a helpful guide for mentors to guide their mentee through this structured process to achieve success. Not every mentee is going to necessarily need guidance in each developmental part therefore, communication is important. It is essential before committing to this mentor and mentee relationship you set expectations and goals for one another. For example, creating a contract of agreement to help keep one another accountable is essential for the success of the partnership. This is important because each person needs to know what one another needs and wants out of this relationship. This model is built on trust so it is important to discuss what trust looks like and how it will evolve. Trust is a key attribute of this model. After trust is built , it allows you to transition forward moving to the next developmental stages of the mentoring processing. There is no timeline in how long a mentor- mentee relationship should last; it is all dependent on your initial commitment. Currently, Andrew is still my mentor. When I am in need of guidance, I know I can call or text while I am at college. Therefore, since we do not have our regular meetings, we always schedule a meeting when I return home from college. I am fortunate to have a mentor who really cares about my successful in life and is willing to be available to help me further expand my skills at work, college and overall life. It really means a great deal to me that he has personally and professional invested in my development.

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