

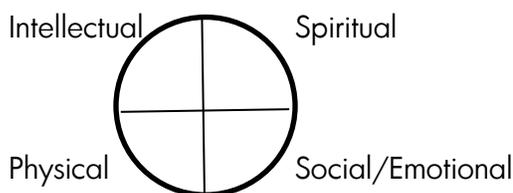
#RealMentoring

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Anyone can teach; becoming a great mentor requires developing skills and abilities. The good news is that skills and abilities can be learned. When you take the leap from teacher to mentor it is no longer about you or the perfect curriculum or a well-ordered schedule. It becomes about the individual needs of your child and identifying the next step. When you are able to look that child in the eye and see her genius, the way becomes a lot clearer and the insecurities give way to faith in her unique path and potential.

The Power of Mentor Meetings

Consider your whole child: “And Jesus grew in wisdom (intellectual) and stature (physical) and in favour with God (spiritual) and man (social/emotional).” Luke 2:52



- Help with goal setting; long term goals in each quadrant.
- Create weekly goal-getters
- Teach time management skills
- Ask questions: How are you doing? What can I do to help you reach your goals? How are things going with your brother?
- Build your relationship; ask about his interests
- Provide accountability for the goals (“How did your week go?”)
- Ask for self-assessment to lead him to identifying personal weaknesses (much more powerful than you pointing them out :)
- Build problem-solving skills (“What might prevent that from happening again?”)

- Offer emotional coaching (“Do you want some suggestions on what you can do next time you feel that way?”)
- Get your planner out and schedule the activities or resources you need to support him (picking up supplies, registering karate classes, etc.)

Don't Get Caught Up in Outcomes

Real mentoring stops when it becomes about you.

How that might look:

- Your high expectations/subsequent disappointment
- Doing learning activities with a specific outcome in mind
- Social. Media. Too obvious? ;)

There Are Three Ways to Teach

Imagine that you were teaching a simple skill like tying a shoe:

SHOW the child how to do it

Have the child DO it

TELL them the steps

Each has its place in instruction. I really like this order for most learning because it is the most likely way for success. A corollary but equally important concept is this: You will save a great deal of time, energy, and effort if you wait for them to ASK! Give them reasons to know something and you are making your job so much easier.

Recognizing Their Genius

It's okay to run with their strengths.

This is a no-brainer, right? Except that we tend to spend our time chasing down their weaknesses.

Consider application of the 80-20 rule.

Personality Typing

While they are not gospel-truth, personality typing can help you to know yourself and your child better. I can highly recommend The Color Code and The Enneagram. Both have tests available online. Because of its simplicity, I will briefly describe the Color Code. It is based on what motivates a person.

Red: Power

Blue: Relationships

Yellow: Fun

White: Peace

Everyone has a primary and a secondary color. An example of why this matters is that a Yellow-Blue needs people and if your homeschool is lacking a social learning environment, you might be setting your family up for failure.

Walking the Tightrope between Inspire and Require

There is likely a pendulum swinging back and forth in your home between stringent rules and regulations about learning/study and giving up in despair and letting the kids run wild. Am I right? Or close at least?

In an ideal world, you are setting an example of lifelong learning while igniting little flames of curiosity and your kids are anxiously engaged in learning of their own free will while following their many passions. The photographer from Homeschooling Heroes magazine snaps the photo and then *presto* it continues on indefinitely. Or not.

We fear squelching a child's love of learning and sometimes swing to the wrong side of the pendulum to the detriment of our children's character. When you want to stop this pendulum ask yourself:

- Have I provided a learning-rich environment?
- Are reasonable safeguards in place regarding the use of screen time?
- Have I made myself available to assist learning?
- Have I set an example of life-long learning?

If No, then fix yourself. If Yes to all of those questions, then ask:

- Is my child using his agency to the detriment of his character? If Yes, then require.

Watch the LDSHE (East) audio library for my presentation dedicated to this topic.

Before You Teach

Any learning experience will be improved if you do this one thing: Develop a Know, Feel, Do.

What do I want them to Know?

How do I want them to Feel?

What do I want them to Do when it is over?

Asking Great Questions to:

Promote Critical Thinking

- Compare and contrast two different characters or books: “How is Anne of Green Gables like (or different from) Pollyanna?”
- Tie a character’s actions to human nature: “Why do you think the other kids decided to help Tom Sawyer paint the fence?”
- Look for logical flaws and help your child to identify the weak spot: “Where did Simba go astray in his thinking?” Consider learning some logical fallacies yourself so you can find them and explain them (ad hominem, strawman argument, begging the question or circular argument, bandwagon)

Move the Elephant

- How is that working for you? (personally, my favorite question for the complaining mentee)
- Would you like a victim card now? (identify a victim mentality)
- He *made* you do it? (catching reactive language)
- Do you think your education is worth the work? (helping them to own their own education)

Writing and Public Speaking

Communication skills are essential for success in life. In addition to the many academic reasons to raise great communicators, this is how our children will *influence* the world. I’ve had several Returned Missionaries thank me profusely for the skills they gained from coaching in these areas.

Writing and public speaking are correlated skills. When you work on them simultaneously they improve one another. Here are some quick tips:

- In the early years encourage memorization and recitation. Start with simple poems or quotes and make the recitation part of your FHE.
- Find audiences. A letter to grandma, a blog post that gets published, a presentation of what they are learning.
- Model and coach! If you are afraid to write or to speak, work on yourself and let them see you do it. Provide an environment where coaching is expected. Always build first (tell them what they are doing right) and then, depending on their age and maturity, start giving feedback for improvement.

Using the Leadership Grid to Assess Issues

The LEMI Scholar Ladders can be used to assess problems and find solutions. It allows you to *name* the problems. VMASK is how you can remember it:

Vision—Does he see the whole picture? Does she know why learning this skill, ability, or knowledge is vital to her personally?

Mission—Does she have a sense that God put her on the earth for a specific purpose? Does he see that his education is tied to fulfilling that mission?

Skills—Does he have the skills necessary to read this book? Is there a sequence of skills necessary to be successful and is she missing one of them?

Abilities—Can she manage her time to accomplish all that she wants to do? Has he learned to master the ability to choose between the goods?

Knowledge—Does she have the knowledge necessary to write on that subject? Is he missing some key information on the topic that would help him over this roadblock?

Power of Debriefing

A dear friend and mentor of mine, Aneladee Milne, says that all the learning happens in the debrief. If that is the case, we would be wise to know what one is and how to conduct one. Simply put, a debrief is when you discuss a learning experience after the fact. It can be a casual conversation (What did you think of that experiment?) or a formal, group conversation (Would anyone like to share insights they had on the hike about trials we face?) During the process of articulating a response, the student internalizes the experience and really owns it. There is also a lot of power and synergy in hearing other people's responses and combining or jumping off of them with your own thoughts.

Types of Mentors (for you or your children)

Mentors can be formal or informal, paid or unpaid, long or short term.

1. Mission—Someone who helps you prepare for, find, or accomplish your mission in life. Stephen Covey calls this your Unique Personal Significance or Voice.
2. Expert—Guides you in a specific skill set or knowledge base.
3. Guru—Usually a spiritual giant in your life who inspires you on your path of discipleship
4. Soul—This is a person who you feel a particular kinship with and who helps you in your way of being.
5. Parent—As a parent to your children you are teaching and guiding them; individualizing the plan for their unique genius and God-given talents.
6. Leadership—Guides you in a path of leadership
7. Experiences and Epiphanies—Life experiences and your own growth from them.