

LifeMapSM



"LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success. Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more enjoyable and abundant life."

June 13, 2006

This Week's Message:

Be A Mentor.

Paths Forward

Resources

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Greetings!

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Be A Mentor.

As a boy I fell in love with reading through such classics as Robinson Crusoe, Last of the Mohicans, Treasure Island, and 20,000 Leagues Beneath the Sea. I assure you I was not in search of intellectual development but – adventure! As I searched for ever more exciting stories I luckily stumbled onto Homer's Iliad and The Odyssey – wild tales of ancient history, mythology, war, camaraderie, betrayal, monsters,

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temptation, love, adventure on the high seas, revenge and the competitive jousting of jealous gods toying with the minds and emotions of mere mortals. Wow – thank goodness I didn't know it was great literature.

As an adult I have gone back and reread (and enjoyed all over again) many of these great books. In Homer's tales of the Trojan War and Odysseus' journey home, I was amazed at the number of modern words and phrases that have roots in these stories. Among the many are: siren song, Trojan horse, calypso, cyclops, Achilles heel, the word odyssey itself, and the subject of this week's message – mentor. Before Odysseus left Ithaca (reluctantly, I might add) for Troy he entrusted the care of his household and the education and protection of his son, Telemachus, to a wise and trusted friend whose name was Mentor. His name has come down to us across thousands of years as a synonym for advisor, guide, counselor and confidante

Serving as a mentor to someone who would value your counsel and advice is one way you can do well by doing good. Your advisee gets obvious career benefits. But what do you get out of it? You develop a reputation as a guru; someone with a high degree of expertise and someone secure enough in his or her knowledge and position to be willing to share some time and hard won experience. You can gain insight into what is going on in different departments or in different layers of your organization. You can be on the lookout for energetic, new talent for your organization. You will increase your people skills by gaining a better understanding of folks with different personal or professional backgrounds or from different ethnic or demographic groups. You will not only get the "helper's high" that comes with extending yourself to others but you will, hopefully, be making a return on the investment that others made by mentoring you.

Paths Forward

- **Selecting a Protégé.**

Just stand still and let them come to you. That's right, you don't have to do anything much more than keep your eyes open and be responsive to requests for information and insight. Someone actively looking for a mentor will seek you out – with increasing frequency – with ever more interesting and complex questions and issues. You don't have to be totally selfless here – only serve as a mentor for someone

who brings something to the table for you.

- **Beware the Organizational Pol.**

As you consider investing some of your valuable time in the development of a junior staffer determine if you are being “played.” Is this person asking for tips to develop his or her skills, expertise or gain exposure to new areas? Or are they looking to parlay their relationship with you for political advantage, power by association or shameless self-promotion?

- **Formalize It.**

After a few ad-hoc exchanges suggest setting a regular meeting time to discuss issues such as the ones you’ve been discussing. This formalizes the relationship somewhat by placing it on a firm professional (vs. personal) basis. Monthly meetings assure that your time is spent on issues of major priorities, not day-to-day issues. Setting goals, agendas or assigning topics for upcoming meetings will help you assess the seriousness of your protégé and make your time together more productive.

- **Be Conscious of Boundaries.**

You are not this person’s marriage counselor, psychotherapist or financial planner. You are his or her mentor – a professional, technical and/or career advisor and confidante. If he or she needs counsel in other areas do not hesitate to help identify other, better-qualified resources. Also – nothing travels faster in an organization than gossip. Do not succumb to this by avoiding female / male mentoring relationships but, instead, be conscious of how the timing, location, frequency and other circumstances of your meetings could look to others.

- **Some Ideas Are Before Their Time.**

Not every pearl of wisdom you share will be immediately understood or utilized. It has taken you years of blood, sweat and tears to gain the insights that now come to you almost automatically. It is unrealistic to assume that once you share your (undoubtedly valuable) perspective that it will be consumed and digested whole. Growth, learning and personal change do not happen overnight; they happen over time, in increments. And, in time, you will be able to take justifiable pride in how your wise counsel has helped your protégé develop personally and professionally.

LifeMap is about helping you succeed in your career– and there’s no better way to do that than to have a wide-flung network of people out there whom you have supported and mentored, who sing your praises and who will be there for you when you really need them.

Resources

Stalled at work? Still struggling to find your true vocation?

Or know someone who is? To order your copy of “Love Your Job! Loving the Job You Have, Finding a Job You Love” by Dr Paul Powers, click the link below.

Someone you know job hunting or thinking about it yourself?

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Sincerely,

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