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# Is mentoring for you?

## Five key considerations

**"S**how me a successful individual and I'll show you someone who had real positive influences in his or her life. I don't care what you do for a living — if you do it well, I'm sure there was someone cheering you on or showing the way. A mentor." — Denzel Washington

How many of us, somewhere along the way in our career, came to a point where we weren't sure which direction to take or which path to follow? How powerful would it have been to have had someone who could see in us what we could not see in ourselves to help guide us on our journey to success? Many times we need assistance in making a decision, navigating the course or perhaps simply taking the next step.

There are many definitions of a mentor, but simply put, a mentor is a wise and trusted person with extensive knowledge and experience who can help to guide a less knowledgeable or experienced person.

I was fortunate enough to have been blessed with wonderful mentors: my parents and my college accounting instructor. They helped me to discover my passion; they continually inspired, encouraged, listened, helped point me in the right direction and, most importantly, helped me to build my self-confidence. I will be forever grateful to all those who have believed in me and my life's journey.

Here are five considerations that may help you determine if you need a mentor who:

- Provides you with perspective. A mentor can provide you with

strategies for helping you look at concerns, issues, situations and problems you would not have thought of on your own. Being able to visualize and recognize different ways of looking at and handling things can give you "wow," "aha" and "never thought of that" moments that can go a long way in reducing frustration and increasing enthusiasm and confidence for moving forward in achieving your goals.

- Serves as a sounding board. When your creative juices begin to flow or you come up with an idea that you think is the greatest since sliced bread, wouldn't it be invaluable to have an objective person you could call and bounce ideas off of? This is just another reason to have a mentor. He or she could objectively walk you through the pros and cons of your thoughts, because sometimes we are unable to see the forest for the trees.

- Supplies moral support. Oprah Winfrey points out, "A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself." Effective mentors help to raise your self-esteem and sense of purpose. They encourage you and help you believe you can achieve what you think may be impossible. As Napoleon Hill, the author of "Think and Grow Rich," reminds us, "Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve."

- Offers knowledge and experience. A mentor can guide you, provide you with advice, keep you from making mistakes or at least help you learn from your past mistakes. In addition, a well-chosen mentor offers

you a wealth of information that can in turn help you to grow and develop.

- Pushes you forward. A mentor can give you that "kickstart" push. Abhijit Bhaduri, author of the blog "Four Reasons Why We Need a Mentor," posts, "Mentors push us past our limits. They prevent us from doing less with our lives than what we would if left unassisted." Gina Belli, author at "Career News," continues with, "A mentor can help to shorten your learning curve, open your mind to new ideas and possibilities, identify opportunities and advise on how to promote yourself."

I could continue with additional considerations; however, I encourage you to reflect on the bottom line: In today's competitive work and job search environment, collaborating with a mentor can provide you with a "winning edge" that enables you to shine as well as distinguishes you from the competition.

Here is a lasting thought from Zig Ziglar: "A lot of people have gone further than they thought they could because someone else thought they could."

*Dr. Shirley White is now a member of BIC Media Solutions' speakers bureau. For more information about BIC Media Solutions' speakers bureau, contact Earl Heard at earlheard@bicalliance.com or call (800) 460-4242.*

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