

THOUGHTS ON LEADING MENTOR ONE-ON-ONE'S

As you know, mentors are supposed to meet one-on-one with each mentee during the beginning of the mentoring season . . . ideally within a few weeks of the Story Retreat. We receive a lot of questions from mentors about these meetings . . . “What’s the purpose?” “What do I talk about?”

So, here are some thoughts we’d love for you to share with your mentors as you encourage them to make sure they’re doing their one-on-ones.

At the end of your Story Retreat, virtually all your interaction with your mentees has been in a group. It’s all been kitchen table environments. Now it’s time to have a little back porch time, one-on-one conversation.

To prepare, pray. Seriously. *Pray for that individual only!* Ask God to show you the *one thing* you might do to help them . . . show them something about themselves that they don’t see or haven’t seriously considered. The *one thing* could be a blind spot. The *one thing* could be holding them back from a closer walk with Jesus. The *one thing* could be keeping them from being a great spouse. The *one thing* could point to their unique calling.

Go back and reread their application for your mentoring group . . . faith story, bio, obituary, or anything else they submitted when applying. Then reread your notes from the faith story they told on the Story Retreat. Look for places where it seems they left out part of the story . . . unexplained gaps in their life. Look for times when they were badly hurt emotionally. Search for words of blame, shame, anger, and pride. Note anything God calls to mind and prayerfully ask God how He might have you approach your mentee with your hunch about what might be holding them back from an all-in walk with Jesus, a better marriage and being the best version of themselves.

When you’re together, after catching up on life, you might start the serious conversation with something like this . . .

“We’ve been together for two meetings plus our retreat and I feel like I’m beginning to get to know you. As I prepared for our lunch, I asked God to show me where I might be able to help you. It’s a pretty rare thing to have someone in your life who’s been given permission to ask tough questions and give direct unfiltered feedback. Understand, what I’m about to ask could be off-base and maybe even dead wrong. But as I prayed, this was what I felt led to ask . . .

Ask questions that can lead to *real* conversations and help set up a *personal* mentor-mentee relationship for the rest of the mentoring season. You’re not trying to become their therapist, accountability partner or parent. **But you are trying to establish an emotional connection with your mentee centered around their greatest felt need and you’re learning how to pray specifically for them!** One of the joys of mentoring is to be able to help someone have a breakthrough on an issue holding them back from a life following Jesus.

Remember, life change usually happens through the influence of a trusted friend. Mentors have the best shot because they’re ascribed respect from the outset. But don’t try this alone, seek God and only challenge with humility and gentleness. You are first to love your mentees whether they “get it” or not.