

Student Activity

The Power of Mentoring

In the video, students from Explorations Academy talk about the support they have received from the school's Peer Mentoring program, and how the program has helped motivate them to achieve as well as to help others.

Consider these Self-Reflection and Discussion Questions:

- William Seda said that at first, he did not open up to his mentor, because he didn't know him. *What would it take for you to open up and receive support from a peer mentor?*
- Desmond Bryan explains that the program "backs you up when you have fallen." Can you think of a time when you (or a friend) have fallen off track? Who has been there for you? What type of person would you want to help *you* when you face challenges?
- Marc Rivera says he would like to pay it forward, by helping other young people. What qualities do you think a person should have to be a peer mentor?

Student Activity

Mentors & Mentees

Mentors offer guidance, support and advice. They also serve as role-models by exhibiting positive behaviors, attitudes and actions. There are formal mentoring programs, but a mentor can also be someone in your life who serves as a role-model in a more informal way. Read the excerpt below about the origination of the term, "mentor." Then answer the following questions.

The Origination of "Mentor" by Gordon Shea, author of *Mentor*

The story of Mentor comes from Homer's *Odyssey*. Odysseus, king of Ithaca, fights in the Trojan War and entrusts the care of his household to Mentor, who serves as teacher and overseer of Odysseus' son, Telemachus.

After the war, Odysseus is condemned to wander vainly for ten years in his attempt to return home. In time, Telemachus, now grown, ventures in search of his father. Athena, Goddess of War and patroness of the arts and industry, assumes the form of Mentor and accompanies

Telemachus on his quest. Father and son reunite and cast down would-be usurpers of Odysseus' throne and Telemachus's birthright.

The word *Mentor* evolved to mean trusted advisor, friend, teacher and wise person ... Mentoring is a fundamental form of human development where one person invests time, energy and personal know-how in assisting the growth and ability of another person.

History and legend record the deeds of princes and kings, **but each of us has a birthright to actualize our potential.** Through their deeds and work, mentors help us to move toward that actualization.

Source: Shea, Gordon F. (1997) Mentoring (Rev. Ed.). Menlo Park, CA: Crisp Publications

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1. Write several characteristics and adjectives that describe an ideal mentor, such as trustworthy, responsible, a good listener, etc.

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2. What are some of the ways in which a "mentee" benefits from being mentored? Consider benefits such as more confidence, more motivated, getting help with academics, etc.

3. What are some of the ways in which a mentor benefits from his/her role? Consider benefits such as better social skills, feeling good about helping others, learning to understand others better.

4. What are some of the qualities you have that would be helpful to someone else, if you served as a mentor for your peers or younger students? Consider your academic skills (such as being good at math); your talents (such as sports or songwriting); as well as your social and emotional skills, (such as a friendliness, positive attitude, accepting of others).

“If you cannot see where you are going, ask someone who has been there before.”

-- J Loren Norris