

GREENLANE CHRISTIAN CENTRE



BECOMING A  
**GREENLANE  
CHRISTIAN CENTRE  
MENTOR**

**MENTORING COORDINATOR:**  
Juliet McArthur

# INTRODUCTION

There are not many greater privileges than being asked to be a mentor—having an intentional relationship, with another person, enabling them to maximise the grace of God in their life and service.

As a mentor you will have an ongoing relationship with your mentee, providing general support, guidance and encouragement. You will be an independent, listening ear, a person with whom issues can be aired and discussed, but also someone who will challenge the mentee to take responsibility, and deal with problems, to achieve goals and effect change.

One of the most significant needs of the church is the continuous development and maturing of leaders. At Greenlane Christian Centre we believe mentoring is one of the most effective ways to guide people with leadership gifts towards their potential.

## **A few mentoring definitions...**

“Mentoring is a long term relationship that meets a development need, helps develop full potential, and benefits all partners, mentor, mentee and the organisation”.

- **Suzanne Faure**

“Mentoring is a protected relationship in which learning and experimentation can occur, potential skills can be developed, and in which results can be measured in terms of competencies gained”. - **Audrey Collin**

“The purpose of mentoring is always to help the mentee to change something—to improve their performance, to develop their leadership qualities, to develop their partnership skills, to realise their vision, or whatever. This movement from where they are, (‘here’), to where they want to be (‘there’).” - **Mike Turner**

“Mentoring involves primarily listening with empathy, sharing experience (usually mutually), professional friendship, developing insight through reflection, being a sounding board, encouraging.” - **David Clutterbuck**

“Mentoring is an intentional spiritual friendship—“intentional” because it thrives on mutually agreed-on goals, “spiritual” because it has the highest achievement when we acknowledge daily our dependence on the Holy Spirit, and a “friendship’ because it works best when a warm relationship is nurtured.” - **Rowland Forman**

## CORE ACTIVITIES

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According to HTB Church, London, the core activities of a Mentor include the following:

- Supporting the Mentee through a time of change
- Providing guidance through practical matters in life and through special issues of the Christian life
- Sharing experience and knowledge
- Discussing problems the mentee is facing
- Offering encouragement to make changes and grow in faith
- Building up their spiritual development and their sense of direction in life
- Challenging patterns and behaviours
- Prayer support
- Being a role model

# BECOMING A GOOD MENTOR

A few thoughts by Charles Hewlett

## 1. Work hard at developing the relationship

We must appreciate the relational nature of mentoring. Like all living things, mentoring relationships will deteriorate if they are not maintained. Remember there is no formula, no ideal model, and no programme of steps to success. We must work hard at nurturing the connection between us.

## 2. Maintain regular contact

Develop ways of regularly communicating with the person you are mentoring. It is amazing how some form of contact between more formal sessions can encourage people. Write them a note, send them an e-mail, call them on the phone, sit by them at church, etc and let them know they are important to you. It is so easy to get ourselves busy and to ignore this. Let them know the relationship is important and that you are committed to them.

## 3. Establish clear goals

It is important that you both have clear expectations. How often will we meet? Where will we meet? For what length of time? What does the mentee expect of you? What do you expect of them? What is the agreed goal or objective you are trying to grow and develop the person towards? What structure will your meetings have? What questions will be asked and who sets the agenda? What boundaries do we need to put in place? What happens if we have to cancel or postpone? Is it fair to mentor someone who reports to you? Establishing a contract can be helpful—remember to review it regularly.

## 4. Provide a safe space

My Dad was a brilliant mentor to me because he provided me with a place to be dumb and creative. Although a brilliant theologian he didn't mind if I was naive or ignorant or wrong. I didn't feel like I had to perform when I was with him. He also provided a space for me to be creative—to share my whacky thoughts and ideas. By creating a safe place the mentor enables the mentee to step out of their comfort zone and risk something new and untried. I believe this encourages self-reliance and confidence.

## 5. Listen (it is not all about you!)

It is nice to be wanted and to have someone to tell our stories to, but this is not what mentoring is about! We need to let the mentee speak and listen to them well and carefully. It is important to listen behind the spoken word and read between the lines of the written word. Try and hear what is going on inside the person's heart as well as head.

## 6. Ask good questions

Mentoring is more about asking good questions than giving good answers. Think questions, questions, and more questions. It is very easy for us to answer and to tell someone what to do—good mentoring resists this. Mentoring is about listening and questioning, not about answering and giving direction. Learn to ask questions that enhance reflection.

## 7. Provide some new information

However, do try and contribute information that might be new. Adults are usually pragmatic learners—they want their learning to help them solve a problem, build new

skills, advance in their jobs, make more friends—in general, to do, produce, or decide something that is of real value to them. Think about the mentoring session you are about to have and put time aside in preparation. What will be a good Bible passage to read? Is there a page from a book that might be helpful? Is there some skill information I need to pass on? Have I written up my critique notes?

### **8. Encourage theological reflection**

As a leader it is important to encourage people to think biblically, with a Christian worldview. This is particularly so of mentoring. Pyle and Seals note, “Theological reflection is the search for meaning, when done in the light of faith. Theological reflection occurs when the events of life are examined through the eyes of faith in order to integrate experience and faith.” What might the Bible say about the issue we are discussing? Think about the nature of God. What would Jesus do? Where do worldly values and kingdom values collide? How would the Apostle Paul encourage me to respond? What am I discovering about my relationship with God? What would God want me to do? Have you prayed about this?

### **9. Be transparent**

I believe mentoring is the sharing of your life and experiences, the successes and failures, the good times and the bad. In mentoring relationships who we really are and what we really believe become evident. When mentors and mentees open their hearts and minds to one another they make themselves vulnerable—this is the heartbeat of mentoring. Remember that trust and confidentiality are essential for this level of vulnerability. It is amazing how quickly people are honest with you when you are honest with them.

We need to remember that mentors are people too—we do not necessarily have it all together. People who have a good self-awareness of their strengths and weaknesses make the best mentors. When mentors put their insecurities, weaknesses and fears on the table for discussion, the modeled vulnerability opens doors for learning and growth. Having bad self-awareness could result in us giving distorted encouragement or direction.

### **10. Be honest**

From my experience a mentoring relationship is only worthwhile if we are able to speak the truth to one another. A good mentor will have the ability to confront. Remember people are more likely to accept the truth, and speak it, if it is done in a spirit of love and within an environment of confidentiality. It doesn't take long for the mentee to determine if you are “on their side”. When I understand someone is wanting the best for me I am far more likely to listen to their hard words. Some of the most significant growth you can experience as a person can result from a caring mentor who confronts you about issues you need to face or changes you need to make.

### **11. Be creative**

Don't always do everything the same (tends to get a bit boring!). Try a different venue now and then—walk along a beach, go out for a meal, take them to a different church to observe something, watch a movie, visit somewhere or someone inspiring etc. I like to be spontaneous every now and then.

### **12. Provide encouragement and hope**

Don't hold back on the affirmation. Affirm people's efforts and let them know when

they have done well. Often you will see the potential in the people you are mentoring before they do. Giftings and risk taking can be nurtured with encouragement and hope. Don't underestimate the value of providing hope.

### 13. Be an advocate

There will be times when we will be required to speak up for the person we are mentoring. Examples might include: when an activity they undertake goes poorly, when their potential is not appreciated, when they are badly treated. A good mentor is there in the bad times too!

### 14. Be prepared to learn

It is amazing how much I learn from the people I mentor. I often sit in my office opposite a mentee and hear them talk of their passion for God and love for his people and feel hopelessly inadequate. I hear of all that they are prepared to sacrifice and am hugely challenged. Approaching mentorship as a partnership of learning and encouragement makes things far more exciting. What can I learn by sharing in the learning and growth of this person? What can I learn from this unique person and their unique perspective?

### 15. Encourage holistic development

I like to use a learning model that has four components; knowing, doing, being and feeling. In your mentoring try and focus on all of these aspects of the mentee and not just one or two of them. Knowing is about knowledge, doing is the skills, being is about character, and feeling is about empathy and passion. How am I encouraging them to grow in their knowledge of this area? How am I encouraging them to develop skills in this area? How are they coping with being involved in this area? How am I developing their passion for this?

MENTORING CHECKLIST	1	2	3	4	5
	(bad)				(good)
Developing the relationship	1	2	3	4	5
Maintaining regular contact	1	2	3	4	5
Establishing goals	1	2	3	4	5
Providing a safe space	1	2	3	4	5
Listening well	1	2	3	4	5
Asking good questions	1	2	3	4	5
Providing new information	1	2	3	4	5
Encouraging theological reflection	1	2	3	4	5
Being transparent	1	2	3	4	5
Telling the truth	1	2	3	4	5
Being creative	1	2	3	4	5
Providing hope/encouragement	1	2	3	4	5
Being an advocate	1	2	3	4	5
Happy to learn from the mentee	1	2	3	4	5
Encouraging holistic development	1	2	3	4	5

# OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

The ability to ask **open-ended questions** is very important when it comes to mentoring.

An open-ended question is designed to encourage a full, meaningful answer using the person's own knowledge and/or feelings.

It is the opposite of a **closed-ended question**, which encourages a short or single-word answer.

Open-ended questions typically begin with words such as "*Why*" and "*How*", or phrases such as "*Tell me about...*". Sometimes they can be a statement which indirectly asks for a response.

## **Examples:**

### **Close-Ended Questions:**

1. Do you get on well with your boss?
2. Who will you vote for this election?
3. What colour shirt are you wearing?

### **Open-Ended Questions:**

1. Tell me about your relationship with your boss?
2. What do you think about the two candidates in this election?
3. That's an interesting coloured shirt you are wearing.

According to MediaCollege.Com the most famous (or infamous) open-ended question is "*How does this make you feel?*" or some variation of this. They note, "*This has become a cliché in both journalism and therapy. The reason it is so widely used is that it's so effective.*"

# SAFETY ISSUES

At Greenlane Christian Centre, safety is extremely important to us.

- **Criminal Record check:**

Greenlane Christian Centre requires that a Criminal Record check is undertaken before the mentor enters a mentoring relationship. This is a simple process that is managed by the Executive Director at Greenlane Christian Centre.

- **Confidentiality:**

Any sensitive issues discussed must be held in confidence. However, if the Mentor is at any stage concerned for the safety of the Mentee they may seek outside help (as agreed to in the contract).

- **Seeking other help:**

The Mentoring Coordinator is available to mentors for support and advice, and Greenlane Christian Centre will undertake regular mentor training. If it becomes clear that a mentee's needs go beyond the mentor's experience, help from others should be sought. In some cases, it may be appropriate for a mentee to recommend counselling, or refer the mentee to the Greenlane Christian Centre counselling ministry.

## BECOMING A GREENLANE CHRISTIAN CENTRE MENTOR

If you would like to discuss becoming a mentor, or if you have questions about becoming a mentor, please contact the Mentoring Coordinator at [mentoring@gcc.org.nz](mailto:mentoring@gcc.org.nz)

If you have read this book carefully, prayerfully considered becoming a mentor and want to take the next steps, please

- Visit [gcc.org.nz/mentoring](http://gcc.org.nz/mentoring) and complete the Mentor Application Form.
- Complete a Criminal Record Check (available on the website) and supply a copy of your Drivers License to [daniel.palmer@gcc.org.nz](mailto:daniel.palmer@gcc.org.nz)

Your application will be considered by the Greenlane Christian Centre pastoral staff. Once you are accepted into this ministry, the Mentoring Coordinator will contact you and match you with a mentee.



[gcc.org.nz/mentoring](http://gcc.org.nz/mentoring)