

LEADING LITERATURE

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A Quick Glimpse

9 Powerful Practices of Really Great Mentors provides practical and proven techniques that anyone can use when mentoring in the workplace. The support of a mentor is imperative to helping someone actualize his/her potential. This book explores both unique sides of the mentor/protégé relationship. Mentoring involves sharing your life experiences and lessons with others who want to grow both personally and professionally in their designated fields. The mentor becomes the external resource offering guidance and advice to his/her protégé.

This book affirms that the more confident and skilled you are as a mentor, the greater the benefit will be to your protégé. Kohn and O'Connell do not take this role lightly. They move us away from the idea that a mentor can *just wing it*, to a more practical assurance that one can learn to optimize his/her effectiveness by following some basic principles.

The mentor/protégé relationship must be nurtured and created to optimize the learning of both individuals. Kohn and O'Connell dispel the notion that only teachers, coaches, therapists, advisors and gurus can do this well. "*Mentoring is a highly dynamic role, focused on the learning needs of individual proteges.*" Kohn and O'Connell assert that by enhancing a mentor's performance and ensuring he/she understands his/her protégé, both parties will be more fulfilled. The 9 practices laid out in this book are clear, simple and practical for anyone ready to take on mentoring role in any organization.

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EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

Stephen Kohn



Vincent D. O'Connell



The 9 Most Powerful Practices

1. Model Emotional Intelligence
2. Explore Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation
3. Build Rapport Through Understanding Of Different People Styles
4. Identify and Pursue Stretch Goals
5. Reinforce the Importance of Safeguarding Credibility
6. Foster Strategic Thinking
7. Encourage the Protégé to Draft an Initial Mentoring Plan
8. Identify and Leverage Teachable Moments
9. Reinforce the Value of Lifelong Learning



Three Fundamentals When Adopting a Mentoring Role:

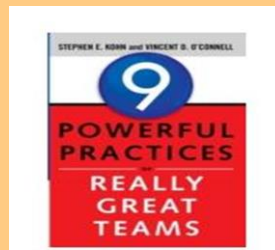
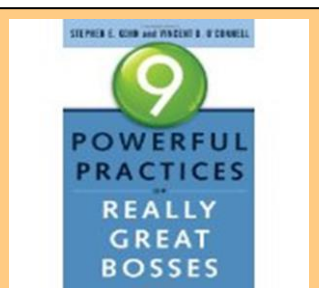
- Self- Actualization
- Self-Awareness Building
- Becoming More Naturally Empathetic

“A MENTOR IS PART ADVISOR, PART TEACHER, PART SPONSOR, PART ROLE MODEL, PART FRIEND AND PART COACH.”

About the Authors

Stephen E. Kohn

Stephen E. Kohn is known for his work in human resources, leadership development and executive coaching in all business models. Having travelled the world, he has cultivated much experience dealing with all types of people in a variety of business models. He has been involved in leadership training for over 20 years and with this third book of a trilogy, he aims to address and support people wanting to be mentors as part of their career paths. He is currently a professor and writer in Long Island, New York.



Vincent D. O'Connell

Vincent D. O'Connell is the President of a coaching and training firm based in Virginia. His business model focuses on enhancing leadership and developing team skills in business organizations. O'Connell has written for many professional journals and he and Kohn have co-authored 5 books together. O'Connell's experience has propelled him to share his successes and assert what works best in a mentor/protégé relationship. He is currently working with his firm, B-Solid Coaching and Training, to better the business world.

STRETCH GOALS

Stretch Goals are defined as goals that cannot be achieved by small improvements but rather by extending oneself to the limit of self-actualization.

Stretch goals are not reached immediately; they require a longer people are pushed to achieve greater than they ever thought possible.

Climbing Mount Everest, landing on the moon and running a marathon with only one leg are considered Stretch Goals. They challenge us to imagine the impossible and then actualize it.

Many companies refer to Stretch Goals as "Vision Statements."

When mentoring, self-actualization must be supported even if the protégé's "stretch goal" is too big and/or it fails. Failure to attain a goal may negatively affect a protégé's self-esteem or cause frustration and anger.

Stretch goals can be achieved through a series of small victories too. A good mentor will support a "lofty ambition" and then make sure the trail is clear for the protégé to actualize it.

Stretch goals benefit the mentors by helping them see the potential of their protégés. Mentors must remember that everyone dreams differently and respecting individual effort and potential are keys to cultivating self-actualization.



IDENTIFY AND PURSUE



to Help Employees Achieve More



"Mentoring takes on similar qualities to these vision statements-it identifies what the process hopes to accomplish, it inspires, focuses on being the best and it assumes the potential exists to implement the vision."

(p.137)

SELF-ACTUALIZATION

COMPANIES AND THEIR

VISIONS:

- 1) MICROSOFT: "Our Vision: a personal computer in every home, running Microsoft software."
- 2) GOOGLE: "To organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful."
- 3) POLO: "We have redefined the American style by providing quality products, creating worlds, and inviting people to take part in our dreams."
- 4) MCDONALD'S: "To be the world's best quick service restaurant experience. Being the best means providing outstanding quality, service, cleanliness, and value, so that we make every customer in the restaurant smile."

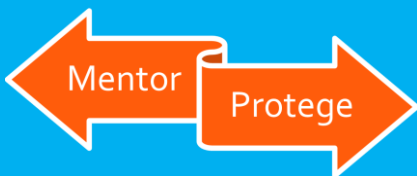
"If you can dream, it you can do it." (Walt Disney)

For a protégé who commits to attaining a stretch goal, the mentor must not only support it but also understand it. Promoting autonomy and being a facilitator will enable a mentor to ensure goal-attainment is always possible.

Reflection and patience on the part of the mentor are essential. Mentoring is not about the mentor; rather it focuses on the mentee. It requires the mentor to hone in on his/her skills so he/she can respond to the needs of the protégé.

Mentoring complements the Situational Approach as described by Peter Northouse in his book, *Leadership Theory and Practice*. “This approach provides a model that suggests to leaders how they should behave based on the demands of a particular situation.” (112)

Both mentoring and the situational approach demand that the mentor/leader carefully diagnose the abilities of the followers in a goal situation. Being keenly aware and in tune with others’ strengths and weaknesses are keys to success with both approaches.

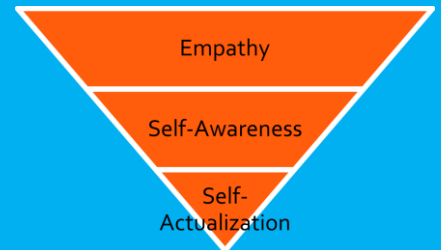


MAKING CONNECTIONS

Self-Awareness Building



EMOTION VERSUS EMPATHY



When a mentor understands a protégé’s strengths and weaknesses, he/she can use those assets to assist in furthering the protégé’s skills. On the contrary, the mentor can find a way to minimize weaknesses. This takes practice, courage and dedication. Emotional self-awareness is also essential here. Gauging emotional distress and reactions to frustrations will enable a mentor to better guide his protégé and enhance his/her learning.

BECOMING NATURALLY EMPATHETIC



“Seek first to understand, then to be understood.” (Steven Covey)

This must be a mentor’s guiding principle. Giving advice out of context is not mentoring.

Mentors must do this by:

- Asking Open Ended Questions
- Slowing Down
- Letting the Story Unfold
- Becoming an Avid and Effective Listener
- Setting Limits When Detecting Avoidance Behaviors

Attributes of a Well-Matched Protégé:

- 1) Motivated
- 2) Time-Committed
- 3) Positive and Optimistic
- 4) Respectful
- 5) Open to learning from you
- 6) Open to expanding self-awareness
- 7) Honest
- 8) Communicative

Key Mentor Profile Groupings:

- 1) Demographic and Background
- 2) Professional Career Path
- 3) Special Professional Interests
- 4) Personal Interests

According to Kohn and O'Connell, It is imperative to carefully match mentors and protégés. The book provides guiding principles to help make that "perfect match." Finding common interests and styles are keys to ensuring the mentor/protégé relationship is successful.

MATCHING MENTOR AND PROTEGE

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Needs and Rewards

- **Intrinsic** - Higher needs, Internal
 - Accomplishment, competence, fulfillment, self-determination received from the process of action
- **Extrinsic** - Lower needs, External
 - -Material comfort, safety, security given by another person

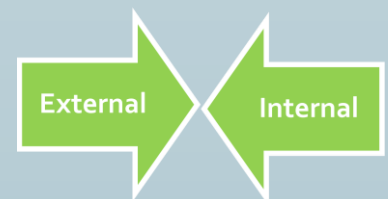
INTRINSIC VERSUS EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Kohn and O'Connell differentiate between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation when aiming to meet a protégé's needs.

Intrinsic motivation occurs when we act without any obvious external rewards.

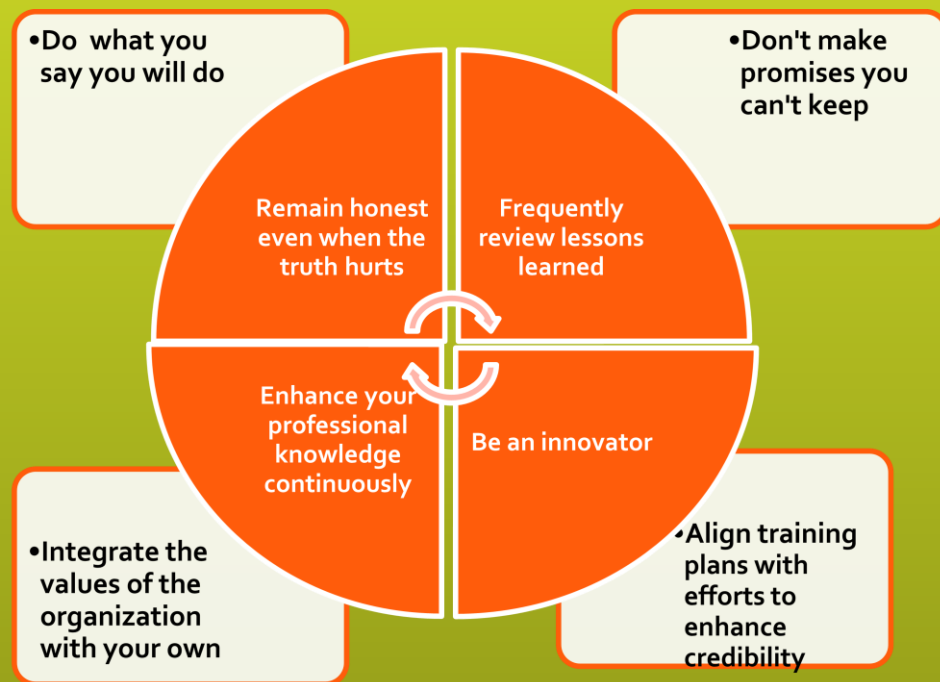


Mentors must support the protégé who is intrinsically motivated by promoting autonomy. Mentors need to focus on the measures of fulfillment and the joy in gaining acquiring knowledge. Intrinsically motivated individuals produce more.



Conversely, extrinsically motivated protégés need a direct mentoring approach. Most protégés fall in the middle of the two categories and the mentor must provide the appropriate guidance. Balance must be achieved between the attainment of a milestone and a sense of greater learning and fulfillment.

8 Guiding Principles for Mentors



ADAPTIVE MENTORSHIP AND ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP: A COMPARISON

9 Powerful Practices of Really Great Mentors focuses on the relationship between the mentor and the protégé. This is similar to Ralph and Walker's Adaptive Mentorship Model. Both assert the importance of the mentor adapting his/her behavior to support the success of the protégé. The mentor must also model his/her behavior to enhance the protégé's growth. By supporting the development of the protégé, the protégé becomes confident and proficient in his/her skill set through the mentor's guidance. Trust and integrity are key factors in both approaches. Mentoring also complements the Adaptive Leadership style as outlined by Peter Northouse. Both models emphasize the idea that empathy is important when monitoring anguish or sensing stress on the part of the protégé/follower. Mentors/Leaders "must help others through the adaptive process and make sure they have their own acts together." (Northouse p.268) Mentors/leaders are also role models who must be self-assured with the emotional strength to handle conflict. All three models support the notion that the leader/mentor must help protégés/followers adjust to new situations and aim to ensure people better themselves for the good of the entire organization. The models also highlight the necessity of dealing with the emotional stress that may come with change. Adaptive leadership is characterized as, "The practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive." (Northouse p.292) Kohn and O'Connell support this notion in *9 Powerful Practices of Really Great Mentors*. They also ascertain that this may involve the mentor overcoming personal and professional obstacles for the betterment of the follower.

SUMMARY EVALUATION

9 Powerful Practices of Really Great Mentors is an informative and clearly written text for anyone interested in taking on a mentoring role. Kohn and O'Connell do a thorough job of defining the roles of mentors and protégés and providing useful tactics for ensuring the success of this relationship. The book takes a systematic approach and the authors clearly identify inherent traits that may indicate the success of a mentor. However, they also emphasize that many successful mentors have learned their skills over time and have honed in on their emotional intelligence to help them do so. Kohn and O'Connell believe like Daniel Goleman, that a well-developed EQ is essential to a mentor's success.

Although the book was well-organized and the messages were effectively communicated, I felt the information provided was more simplistic rather than groundbreaking. If you are becoming a mentor for the first time, this book is a good place to start. However, for more seasoned leaders, a lot of the tips and techniques may not be as useful. I think including some personal and professional examples of mentor/protégé relationships would further substantiate the principles Kohn and O'Connell try to impart.

Otherwise, the language is clear, the techniques are practical and the examples are relevant. Kohn and O'Connell's expertise in the fields of coaching, training, leadership and relationship management all play a part in ensuring the guidelines and information are current and accessible to all readers. They dispel the myth that "anyone" can take on a mentoring role but rather they claim that it is a challenging and complex role that is multi-dimensional. Mentoring, like anything worth doing well, must be nurtured over time. Kohn and O'Connell sum it up perfectly when they say, "Mentoring in any of its forms is certainly a worthy calling."

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Are you curious about others?
- Do you understand the importance of people management?
- Can you identify your own strengths and weaknesses?
- Can you control your emotions?
- Do you get along with most people?
- Can you read people and adapt accordingly?
- Are you resilient and optimistic?
- Do you trust your intuition?

If you answered, "yes," to the above questions, you are ready to take on a mentoring role. Kohn and O'Connell's *9 Powerful Practices of Really Great Mentors* is a good place for you to start learning how to be a skilled mentor. You will understand how to inspire and motivate others through positive reinforcement and a well-developed skill set. Mentors have a highly developed emotional intelligence that Kohn and O'Connell assert is essential to leading effectively.

REFERENCES

Northouse, P.G. (2016) *Leadership Theory and Practice 7th* (Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Ralph, Edwin., and Keith Walker. "Enhancing Mentors' Effectiveness: The Promise of the Adaptive Mentorship Model." *McGill University Journal* 45.2 (2010): 205-18. Print.