



Mentoring is Win-Win

Mentoring—one of the oldest forms of human influence—is vital for developing a well-educated, successful, growing, optimistic, positive, and caring civilization.

It is an activity that benefits the mentor as much as, if not more than, the “mentee.” Mentors are our everyday heroes who strengthen families and communities, teams, organizations, countries, and the world. Because of mentoring, man has become the most powerful being on earth, working together, training, supporting, and encouraging younger generations, from the first hunters who trapped game to feed their families, to modern times when people from all walks of life gather together to exchange ideas, learn, and grow together.

People in the same occupation—whether it be dentists, lawyers, hair stylists, veterinarians, parents, or homemakers—all benefit from the give-and-take of information, support, and reinforcement that occurs when they meet with each other.

Three people—although they probably did not realize it, and I have only recently admitted it—have been vital influences as mentors in my life. The first was my Grade 12 English teacher, the second a lawyer for whom I worked for 10 years, and the third, a Notary I met 20 years ago.

Miss Mayse was the holy terror of our graduating class. Merciless with her red ink remarks on my papers, which I had prepared in dogged determination to obtain perfection, she returned them

covered with notes on the finer points of grammar, sentence structure, and tone of voice.

Before meeting Miss Mayse, I had arrogantly enjoyed my position as the best English student in class. She may have been impressed by my work—I did get the top marks—but she was sparing with the “Good Work” comments. She made me “see red” in more ways than one. But she knew I could do better, and by refusing to accept anything less than the best, she inspired me. My biggest regret is she passed away before I could thank her for her valuable contribution to my future.

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Tom was a lawyer who personified the ideal mentor; confident and competent, he facilitated his staff’s opportunities for learning and growth, listened well, and cared. He worked with me and the other staff, exchanging ideas and suggestions for organizing and modernizing the technical procedures of producing legal documents—long before modern-day word processing equipment—and showed that he wanted to help all of us enjoy and excel in our work. Never holding himself out as an all-knowing expert, he had no hesitation in referring me to law books and manuals to clarify any questionable point we had been discussing. He even encouraged me to think seriously about obtaining a law degree.

Karen hired me as a consultant to upgrade the word-processing technology in her office. Luckily for me, she noticed my abilities and talents in the legal field, and was first to encourage me to become a Notary. With Karen’s mentoring support and reinforcement, I worked through the process of obtaining my Notarial commission and building a successful practice. I have benefitted in many ways from Karen’s encouragement, vision, and leadership.

In recent years I have experienced the joy and deep satisfaction that comes from being a mentor—twice for mentoring new Notarial candidates while they proceeded through the university course and once as an “accidental mentor” to a former client who has now been accepted into the next Notarial education program. I have taken great pleasure in providing encouragement when needed, in helping people grow and develop professional skills; the process provides mutual benefits to everyone.

I feel there is no richer reward—above money or fame—than the heartfelt thanks I have received for mentoring. It is a wonderful “feel good” activity. It provides me with the opportunity to help repay my debt for all the support and encouragement I have received over the years, and to help make our Notary Society a better and more effective organization, one person at a time. ▲

Vancouver Notary and roving (substitute) Notary **Lorraine Wait** owned a busy Burnaby practice until 2001. She is a member of The Society’s Board of Directors and the Education Committee.