What are Mentors to Do?

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**Key Points**

* The vast majority of what children learn they learn from observation and thought.

* Just exactly what are mentors supposed to do -- day in and day out to make the most of their time with children?

* There are four different sorts of things that mentors can do to meet any opportunity.

* Each role seeks a different outcome using different methods.

* Each of these is a distinct role -- but all are different forms of education.

* More important than the role itself is the spirit with which the mentor performs the role for it is the spirit itself that educates and the spirit that is educated.

* Mentors are not there for themselves but rather for the development of the potential of those they work with -- to help them develop their unique voices and potential.
Mentors as Educators, Counsellors, Guides & Authorities

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Key Points

* Each child is like an uncut gem -- the inner light is there, in potential, awaiting the vision and effort of educators to release it.

* Parents are the first educators of their children -- their curriculum is the virtues, the building blocks of character. Mentors build on the foundation they lay.

* The Mentor’s classroom is everyday life -- the teachable moments that occur each and every day.

* These moments occur when things are going right -- not just when things are going wrong.

* Educators do not put things into children, they bring forth what is already there in potential.
Awakening, Strengthening, Developing, and Preserving the Best in Every Person
The Virtues Project helps the child understand that it is the combination of the gifts they were given and personal effort that results in progress - perfecting is a continual process.

The Virtues Project treats the child as a spiritual being -- born into potential -- capable of forming a relationship with a mentor and using it to develop his/her potential.

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A spiritual child understands the unity of all creation and knows that (s)he never flawed, inadequate, or incomplete -- merely unfinished in this world.

The key to forming any relationship that will empower those you work with is love/respect. You must find something that attracts you to each of those you work with.
As any human being can be, I am, by birth, circumstances and choice, a joyful, competent and confident soul.

I am engaged in the process of perfecting my self--little by little day by day.

I am committed to developing the best within me, to the limits of my capacity, and to helping others to do the same.
Key Points

* Think of any person as a uncut gem. The underlying structure is there awaiting the gem cutters hand.

* Children are placed into the arms of parents/others for care and development -- for preparation for the day when they take their places as independent human beings.

* Children are a sacred trust -- everyone in the community is responsible for the execution of that trust -- parents, teachers and mentors in particular.

* Everyone must help the child develop their potential and all sides of his/her personality. One approach alone will not permit them to do this.

* Each role provides something different that a child requires. Taken all together they work to develop all a child’s potential & prepare him/her for independence.
What Can Mentors Do?

To provide others with an opportunity to develop the Best within each of them?

Goals of your efforts?
Roles to play?
Tools available?
Things to do?

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Key Points

* The first challenge for any mentor is to recognize and respond to the gifts each child brings into the classroom.

* The Virtues Guide is an excellent resource for learning to recognize the virtues when you see them.

* Children are often urged on by physical development -- they do not know what is valuable or worthless.

* The reaction of educators tells the child that something is of value -- awakens him/her to the best within.

* The soul responds to the names of the virtues. - The brain's ability to abstract helps children understand.

* Children will live up or down to our expectations -- a wise mentor expects the best and calls the child to it and acknowledges every effort.
Goal - To awaken and bring forth the gifts within

Function - Explorer, Discoverer

Tools - Expectations, Insights acknowledgements

Things to do -

"See" potential
Recognize capacity
Observe behaviour
Call for the best
Respond when effort is made
Key Points

* Once awakened, a child's gifts are strengthened by having opportunities to use them.

* The goal is always to encourage the development of independence -- do not do it for them if they can do it for themselves.

* The mentormust be there to access the child's inner decision-making ability and encourage its use.

* Children can make choices, to include moral choices -- once made, the challenge is to support the choice.

* Even a bad choice can be a valuable learning experience if a mentor helps a child determine what went wrong.

* Above all a mentor must help a child to develop his/her own way of knowing and a unique voice to express it.
Goal - To strengthen the gifts within

Function - Supporter, Nurturer

Tools - Respect, involvement, encouragement

Things to do -
Companion
Encourage inner resources
Ask questions
Draw forth uniqueness
Assist to clarify
Support decisions
Develop a unique voice
Key Points

* Mentors, when acting as a child's guide, seek to use all their art and skill to benefit those they work with.

* Do everything possible to assure that those you work with are successful in whatever they undertake.

* Rehearsal, explanation, educational correction provided in a climate of respect assure success.

* Children will learn little if tasks are constantly done for him/her -- one or two times to demonstrate is enough.

* If there is no freedom to fail, the pressure makes success much less likely.

* A good guide permits children to take the lead and then watches over the process to see that it goes right.
Goal - To assure mastery by helping another focus, channel & control her/his behaviour

Function - Instructor

Tools - Experience, knowledge, know how

Things to do -

Share
Show
Explain
Correct
Present opportunities to succeed
Watch over
Key Points

* Mentors must use their authority, not as dominance, but in service of a child's learning.
* Children without boundaries, without clear limits, never feel safe.
* One of the primary challenges for mentors is to keep their children safe.
  # To assure that children are prepared to keep themselves safe as much as possible,
  # To step in and assure their safety when they are not ready to handle or manage the situation.
* Another challenge is to support the development of a strong conscience, the child's inner authority.
* The use of a mentor’s authority must never be arbitrary -- it must change as children develop.
Goal-
To preserve the gifts within, the capabilities achieved, and the person’s potential

Function - Protector, Preserver

Tools - Discernment, boundaries, rewards & punishments

Things to Do -
Know what benefits & hurts
Create limits to preserve safety
Create ground rules for behaviour
Provide rewards for respecting the boundaries
Provide logical consequences for violating the boundaries
Alter the limits as responsibility increases

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Key Points

* Just as a gem cutter releases the beauty within a gem, a spiritually oriented mentor releases, strengthens, develops and preserves each child's potential.

* Children who are developed claim their independence -- the progress belongs to them -- the success belongs to them -- it is their voice -- outer effort releases an Inner Light.

* The roles played by the mentor are now played by the child --
  
  # The awareness of the educator becomes the child's awareness,
  
  # The companioning and support of the counsellor builds confidence,
  
  # The experience of the guide develops competence,
  
  # And the preservation of the authority becomes self-discipline.
Rewards of Mentorship

Self-discipline
Awareness
Identity
Competence
Confidence

An Inner Light
A New Voice