

# HOW WELL ARE YOU MENTORING THE NEXT GENERATION?

Sustainable  UNIVERSITY  
AG & Horticulture Extension OF WYOMING  
Agriculture & Horticulture

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SPEAKER NOTES:

## Why Mentoring?



Dargis Sister's Story



Another way?

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### **SPEAKER NOTES:**

To say the least, Leona Dargis and her four sisters were thrown for a loop when their parents and grandmother were killed in a plane accident. Overnight, they became responsible for 7,000 acres and 4,000 head of cows. They have risen to the occasion and their full story can be found on the Farm On website. But they also talk about the struggles they have faced with the lack of planning and discussions on how to manage the operation and what to do in the case of their parents death. As Leona summed it up:

“It is safe to say that there is no time like today, because there might not be a tomorrow to figure it all out.” – Leona Dargis

But, even in the absence of a tragic event, there will come a time when the next generation will want to be more involved, or will need to take over all or part of a family operation. The Dargis sisters had many family, neighbors and their long time hired hand to help them learn the management and day to day decisions that needed to be made, but is there another way? Mentoring may be a way to pass on this information. We are going to talk today about how a more formalized mentoring program could help in passing on these skills to the next generation.

*“The mediocre teacher **tells**.  
The good teacher **explains**.  
The superior teacher **demonstrates**.  
The great teacher **inspires**.”*

- William Arthur Ward



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## **SPEAKER NOTES:**

Tell, Explain, Demonstrate, Inspire...Though a good teacher or mentor may do all of these things, there is no doubt that all of us would like to be considered an *inspiration* to others.

Mentoring is a relationship in which a more experienced or knowledgeable person guides a less experienced or less knowledgeable person through an activity or event in their life. While the mentor can be older or younger than the mentee, they must have a specific expertise which qualifies them.

If you are looking for a mentor, think about what you want to learn and who would be a good mentor, who has the right expertise? If you are asked to be a mentor, what expertise qualifies you? Are you looking to pass on skills specific to your farm or ranch to the next generation and wondering where to start?

## 5 Types of Mentoring

- Traditional **One-to-One** Mentoring
- **Group** Mentoring
- **Team** Mentoring
- **Peer** Mentoring
- **E-mentoring** (online mentoring, or tele-mentoring)



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Adapted from National Mentoring Partnership, <http://mentoring.org>

### SPEAKER NOTES:

There are different ways to approach mentoring. Finding the best format for you, both the mentee and the mentor, can help to set you up for success.

One-to-one mentoring places one mentor in a relationship with one mentee.

Group mentoring involves one mentor forming a relationship with a group of up to four mentees. The mentor assumes the role of leader and makes a commitment to meet regularly with the group over a long period of time.

Team mentoring involves several mentors working with small groups of mentees, with a mentor-to-mentee ratio no greater than one to four.

Peer mentoring provides an opportunity for individuals at the same level providing skill training, individuals in similar positions (e. g., ranchers, farmers, wheat growers, etc.) providing support, empathy, and advice or those in a similar stage of career mentoring on options and career goals

E-mentoring connects one mentor with one mentee. The pair communicate regularly via the Internet using email, web meetings, social media, etc.

You may also find that a combination of the above structures might be best. For example, maybe a combination of one-to-one mentoring and e-mentoring.

## What is Mentoring?

- A great mentor sees his/her mentee as a person, not just an employee
- A mentor must also believe in his/her protégé and work toward their success



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### **SPEAKER NOTES:**

A mentee must have a stake in the game, some sense of ownership, or they will simply feel like another employee. Feeling they are respected by their mentor will also help them to solidify the relationship and make them more able to be more open in sharing goals, feelings, frustrations, etc.

That trust and respect must be mutual. The mentor will also feel more inclined to participate and contribute if their advice and assistance is appreciated and respected.

## What is Mentoring? *cont.*

- There's a lot of *personal satisfaction* that comes from watching someone you care about reach his/her full potential
- Mentors often report gaining more *from mentoring* than they feel that they give



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### **SPEAKER NOTES:**

“Helping someone else succeed can be immensely gratifying,” “But what I’ve heard time and again, from those who have had the opportunity to mentor, is how much they gain in return when they mentor young people. They’re often surprised at how much they learn from their mentees. Mentoring really goes both ways; when different generations come together, their blend of skills can be highly complementary.”

## 10 Attributes of a Great Mentor

- Be **credible**
- Be a positive **role model**
- Be genuinely **interested** in your mentee as an individual
- Share your **experiences** and **insights**
- Ask open **questions**
- Act as a **sounding board**
- Provide a **fresh perspective**
- Provide helpful **feedback**
- Acknowledge **achievements**
- Offer your **advice**, but only if your mentee asks for it

### SPEAKER NOTES:

The best mentors I've encountered have been people that have credibility in, and have personally achieved success in, the area where I'm looking for support. For this reason, most people will seek the guidance of different mentors to help them develop specific skills or qualities, or to help them reach important decisions. Being credible doesn't mean that you need to have all the answers. The best answers for your mentee will come from their own thinking, with the help of your wisdom to support them.

Good mentors are respected by their mentees. A mentee can learn a lot from their mentor simply by watching how their mentor behaves in any particular situation. Good mentors will also look out for experiences, or even create situations in which their mentees can become involved to learn new things, for example, providing a look behind the scenes or a glimpse at how other people live or do things.

A mentoring relationship is a very personal one, which is often very important to the mentee, so, as a mentor, you need to get to know your mentee personally, about their hopes and dreams, so you can help them in a way that meets their personal best interest. For this reason, a parent is often not a good mentor for their child, as their parenting relationship and emotional connection will influence their guidance. That's not to say that a parent can never provide a mentoring moment for their child - they can - however, a parent can't be as objective as a person who's independent of the parenting role. In the same way, a manager is also not the best person to mentor someone on their team, as they'll often have a conflict of interest to contend with, between what's in the best interest of each individual and what's in the best interest of their team.

Choose stories that you feel are appropriate and helpful, but do so in a neutral way, without any attachment to how your mentee will use this learning. Be open to sharing your mistakes and failures too, as these are often where our biggest lessons are learned. It will also help your mentee be aware that challenges will arise, and the way you dealt with the situation might also help them gain insight about how to build resilience.

Asking your mentee open questions will help you as a mentor to identify their real needs, values and passions. It's also a great way to get your mentee to think through situations themselves and draw out the consequences of the various choices or courses of action they can take. During these

conversations, you can share your wisdom, without making decisions for your mentee. That's their job.

Mentees benefit greatly from the opportunity of having a good mentor listen to them. Allow them to explore their thoughts and ideas openly with you. This will often help them unravel their thinking and gain insights about a situation as they share their concerns with you.

## **SPEAKE**

One of the benefits of working with a mentor is that a good mentor will often provide their mentee with a fresh perspective on an issue. A good mentor will often have the clarity of distance from an issue or problem that's needed to provide objective feedback to their mentee. They can also hold up a 'mirror' to the mentee to, for example, let the mentee see what their behavior looks like to others.

Not all feedback is helpful. A good mentor knows this and will deliver feedback in a way that will help their mentee gain insight to further develop specific qualities or skills. For example, a good mentor will always ask for permission to give feedback before doing so. Giving unwelcome feedback can be detrimental to any mentoring relationship. Instead, explain what you'd like to talk about first and highlight the benefits of doing this.

Highlight for your mentee any achievements they might have forgotten, to help build their confidence. Remember to celebrate their successes on your mentoring journey too.

It can be very tempting for a mentor to just jump in and offer advice before a mentee has actually asked for it, especially when you've dealt with a similar situation yourself. Being a sounding board for your mentee, allowing them to discuss the situation with you, then helping them to think through the situation by asking them questions to draw out the consequences of various actions, is always more empowering for a mentee than advising them what to do. It helps them work through the issue and come to their own conclusions. By doing so, you ultimately help them to learn to think through issues themselves and trust their own judgment, both valuable life skills.



## 10 Qualities of a Good Protégé



"Thanks for asking. Everything's going great!"

- **Willing** to be mentored
- **Asks** questions
- **Strives** to give his/her best at all times
- **Accepts** criticism graciously
- **Learns** from mistakes
- Has **courage** to try new things
- **Open** and **honest**
- **Respectful** and **grateful**
- **Listens, watches, learns,** and **grows**
- **Accepts** responsibilities

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### SPEAKER NOTES:

We often talk about finding the right mentor, but the mentee also has some responsibility in the relationship.

They must be willing to be mentored. If not, then they are wasting both people's time. They must also be open to asking questions, meaning that they must be able to admit that they don't know everything!

In order for this relationship to work, the mentee must be fully invested and must give their best at all times, while also being able to accept criticism and learning from mistakes.

The mentoring process requires courage. As the mentee you are admitting you don't know something, accepting criticism, asking questions, and trying new things. This takes courage, especially to accept that your mentor is going to guide you through this process. But if the mentee can show true willingness to be mentored and accept help and advice and criticism, they set themselves up to gain a lot from the experience.

Respect, gratitude and honesty really speak for themselves. Humility is a big part of this process on both sides. But it does not mean that the mentor must accept everything at face value. Mentoring is different than coaching, in that the mentee is the one setting the goals and devising the plan to accomplish them. The mentor is there to help as a guide, sounding board and to provide advice when necessary and appropriate. But open and honest discussion should be a big part of the process as well.

Listening, watching and learning are also be a part of the process. Sometimes the best way to learn is to watch and learn. As you develop a mentoring relationship and go through the process, think about how you learn best, and what ways you could best learn a specific skill, and incorporate this into your plan.

Finally, be willing to accept responsibility. At some point, you will need to go out and try something you have discussed, or implement your plan. Take responsibility and go do it! Then take time to review the experience with your mentor. The good, the bad and the ugly of it. Learn from it and move on!

## 6 Skills for Being Mentored

- **Seek** criticism
- **Share** your efforts
- Offer **assistance**
- Offer **critiques**
- **Summarize** your learning
- **Sense** your relationship



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Adapted from Rutgers "The Role of Mentoring."  
[http://comminfo.rutgers.edu/publications/reputation-management/Mentoring\\_part1.htm](http://comminfo.rutgers.edu/publications/reputation-management/Mentoring_part1.htm)

### SPEAKER NOTES:

When you goof up, ask your mentor where you went wrong. Listen carefully, because a good mentor doesn't lecture you at length. A good mentor knows how to hit the nail on the head.

Allow enough time when completing your work to run what you have done by your mentor, or perhaps share your plans for the work before starting. Even if your mentor only picks up on one or two aspects of the job to suggest improvements or things to consider -- it could make a difference in your finished product and enhance your ability to recognize other approaches for the future.

Volunteer to assist when your mentor takes the lead on a project. This allows the mentor to demonstrate to you his or her working style, and it gains you critiques of your work that are integral to the regular functioning of the business.

At some point when you have gained confidence, take the lead and offer your critique of a job completed by your mentor. Demonstrate back to the mentor that you have learned from the mentor's critiques of your work. Done right, it will be seen as constructive criticism -- more importantly, as proof that you are a team player who cares enough to make the work of the team the best it can be.

When a task or a phase is completed, make a short statement to your mentor in appreciation of the value you have received. Not a gushy stream of "Oh, you're just wonderful; I don't know what I would have done without your help," but rather a concise appraisal of where you stand: "I learned a lot from this project, and I really appreciate what you showed me about how to analyze what should be done in this kind of situation."

Develop a sense of your mentor's comfort level with your relationship. Don't push familiarity. On the other hand, pick up on the mentor's indications that your help and suggestions increasingly are important. A good mentor doesn't expect thanks or praise (or gifts) from you in return for the favor of tutelage. A good mentor is rewarded when you do well.

## 6 Steps to a Mentoring Relationship

- **Identify** the purpose
- Determine the **type** of mentoring
- **Brainstorm** potential activities or discussions
- Create a **structure**
- Define **success**
- **Commit** to the mentoring relationship



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Adapted from WikiHow "How to Develop a Mentoring Plan," <http://www.wikihow.com/Develop-a-Mentoring-Plan>

### SPEAKER NOTES:

Mentoring is used in schools, churches, and staff development programs. There is no single mentoring plan that fits everyone. Some are formal, official programs within an organization, while others are more casual and informal relationships that you create for yourself.

You may want to teach specific information or develop a particular skill. Having a clear purpose in mind will help you develop a specific mentoring plan that meets your needs and expectations. Academic mentoring relationships help students learn skills for studying, writing, and math that will help them succeed in the classroom.

Personal development mentoring focuses on growing in social or leadership skills, or in developing one's character.

Workplace mentoring often partners new employees with current ones in order to help them learn specific tasks or jobs. They may also be training opportunities designed to help an employee earn a promotion or transition into a different job.

Each person prefers a certain environment in which they can connect with their mentor. Decide what works best for you. Traditional mentoring consists of a one-on-one, face-to-face relationship. Group mentoring includes one mentor but several mentees.

Team mentoring involves several mentors with several mentees.

Peer mentoring consists of a more mutual relationship, where each person mentors the other. E-mentoring tends to be one-on-one, but takes place via email and the Internet. However, the individuals involved in e-mentoring often start their relationship with a face-to-face meeting

You have a particular purpose for this mentoring relationship. Explore different things you may learn throughout it. Make a list of specific things you want to learn. For example, if the purpose for mentoring is to learn more about classic literature, identify authors like Shakespeare and Milton in whose work you have a particular interest in learning.

Write a tentative agenda for mentoring sessions. Do this with your mentor. Allow them to add things to the list. For example, they may want to introduce you to a classic author you have never read.

This helps both mentors and mentees have appropriate expectations and enables them to decide if the commitment is one they can realistically manage. Determine when and how often you will meet. Figure out which days and times work best for you. Then, based on your goals for this mentoring

relationship, decide how often you will need to meet with your mentor.

Decide where you will meet. Some mentors prefer to have their mentee tag along with them during daily routines. Others may want to meet in a more casual setting such as a coffee shop, a restaurant, or the park.

Lay down relationship guidelines. Together, decide when it is appropriate to call each other, what information will be kept confidential, if it is okay to visit one another at home, and so forth.

Set a tentative time frame for your mentoring relationship. Mentoring often takes place for 6 months to 1 year. At the end of that time, revisit your purpose for meeting and decide if you want to renew your commitment for another set period of time.

## **SPEAKE**

Describe what a successful mentorship looks like to the mentor and mentee. Not all mentor relationships proceed in the same way. Define what success looks like from both sides. Also consider discussing how to handle the situation where the mentorship does not seem to be working out—a contingency plan.

Trust and reliability are two factors that are essential in strengthening the mentoring relationship. Each person needs to agree to show up regularly and on time. They also need to fulfill any personal obligations they agreed to throughout the mentoring. For example, if you are reading through a book together, each person needs to finish the reading for each session.

## Keeping the Mentoring Relationship On-Track

Forms/worksheets can help to structure the relationship and keep it on track as things unfold



### **SPEAKER NOTES:**

Can be easy to feel overwhelmed by paperwork, but having an organized structure to the process is helpful. This might include checklists, attendance rolls, evaluation forms, list of goals and the mentees plans to achieve them and so forth. It can be easy to forget something that was discussed if it is not written down.

Discuss what forms you will need and who will create them, fill them out and where they will be kept for future reference. Will you each have a copy? Decide who will take notes and how you will hold each other accountable at the next meeting.

Will cover more on the forms and this aspect of the structure in the online Moodle course.

## A Mentor-Mentee Mismatch...

Despite the best efforts of those involved, mismatches very well may happen, and should be prepared for.



- A mismatch is possible
- No-fault divorce policy
- ***Does not mean you are a bad mentor!***
- Switch mentors?
- Include a “check”
- Try to work through the conflict

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Adapted from How to Build a Mentoring Program-A Mentoring Program Toolkit, U.S. Office of Human Resources-Enterprise Training Division, 3/2010.

### SPEAKER NOTES:

- Make clear up front that mismatches are possible.
- Make clear that mismatches will be handled with a no-fault divorce policy.
- Point out that mismatches do not mean that the mentor is a bad mentor.
- Where a protégé is not open to the advice of one mentor, switching to a new mentor may help.
- Emphasize that the mentoring process will include a mismatch check to ensure things are working.
- If possible, working through conflict where each side values the contributions of the other can lead to a much richer learning experience than where no conflict arises.

**THANK YOU!**



**QUESTIONS?**

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**SPEAKER NOTES:**