



Quick Start Guide

I have just been asked to mentor someone! What do I do?

You should feel privileged that you have been asked to be a mentor, even if mentoring seems like a daunting task. You are seen as a person with gifts, skills, and knowledge that your mentee would like to learn. The mentoring experience can be life changing for both the mentor and the person being mentored (the mentee).

This guide is designed to give you a quick and simple framework for starting a mentoring relationship. Don't let a lack of knowledge or experience keep you from starting a mentoring relationship. Just as you help your mentee grow and learn, you too will grow and learn by being a mentor.

Here are three principles which will help you get started:

1. Mentoring is a Learning Relationship. Your job is to help your mentee learn, not just intellectually, but also in ministry, work skills, cultural understanding, and relationships. In order to teach, you must establish trust. Research has shown that the most effective mentors are people who:

- Listen well
- Are patient
- Know and understand ministry
- Understand others
- Are honest

Take time to demonstrate the qualities of effective mentors early in your mentoring relationship. As you begin, remember that your ability to help your mentee is only as strong as the relationship you have established together.

2. Mentoring is an Intentional Relationship. Growth and learning don't just happen by accident; they must be pursued. During the first month of your mentoring relationship, take time to talk about **learning goals** as well as **boundaries**. During the Cross-Cultural Ministry Internship (CCMI), your mentee

identified some learning goals in the learning contract. By reviewing the learning contract, you will begin to understand the ways that your mentee would like to grow and learn during the first year on the field. You may find that you know of resources or activities that would help reach some of those learning goals. Feel free to talk about these resources or approaches and suggest changes to the learning contract.

In addition, you may want to use some of the following questions or discussion starters with the person you are mentoring.

- In order to be effective in ministry, what things do you think you need to learn within the next 6 to 12 months?
- Are there any areas of your life on which you feel that God would like you to work? If so, what are they?
- As your mentor, I expect the following from you...(This could include things such as:)
 - Show up on time for meetings
 - Complete assignments that I give you
 - Be willing to learn new ways of doing things
 - Ask questions about things you see or experience, etc.
- What do you expect from me? (During this conversation, you may discuss how often you will meet, set up an evaluation time in the future to talk about how the relationship is developing, confidentiality, etc.)

3. Mentoring should be an "Organic" Relationship. While Bible studies and books can be a great resource for personal growth, don't feel that you need to develop a sophisticated curriculum. Some of the greatest learning experiences come through simply doing ministry together! Spend an afternoon a week together and show your mentee how to lead a Bible study, visit someone, prepare a sermon, or complete administrative tasks together. These activities will provide more practical skills and insight than studying a book together.

This technique is called "shadowing". To shadow well, have your mentee:

1. **Accompany** you as you complete routine ministry duties
2. **Ask questions** after you have completed the tasks
3. Plan to **do a small part** of the task the next time you do the task (e.g. lead a short portion of a Bible study, or complete part of an administrative task)
4. **Reflect** on what went well and what could be improved (provide encouragement and suggestions for improvement after observation)

Don't feel that you need to have everything about mentoring figured out before you start. Experience is the best teacher! However, if you would like additional help, here are some resources you might want to consider:

- **Mentoring Foundations** is a three-day seminar designed to help mentors develop the skills and techniques needed to mentor effectively. It is offered several times a year.
- **Introduction to Mentoring** is an on-line course which focuses on how to structure a mentoring relationship. It is offered twice a year.
- **The Mentoring Newsletter** is a series of short mentoring articles which are e-mailed periodically and are designed to help mentors gain the skills and knowledge needed to be effective.
- **The Mentoring Help Desk** is manned by experienced MTW mentors who can give you advice about a specific problem you may be facing. Send your questions to mentoring@mtw.org.