



Mentoring Comes in Many Forms and From Many Sources

By David Millay

Many past and current APPA members, although our numbers are gradually receding, were born during a period between the mid-1940s and the mid-1960s, a period of time also known as the “baby boomer” generation. Many baby boomers walk among us, and if you are one, you may gain something from this article.

I started thinking about mentoring the other day when I was considering material for this article. Advisor, coach, guide, instructor, teacher, trainer, tutor, or counselor may well be words that describe the mentors many of us have interacted with over the years. So, I dutifully searched the Web, now the undisputed fount of all knowledge. From this fingertip research I gleaned an amazing wealth of information on the subject. I unearthed definitions of the mentoring process such as:

“A process whereby an experienced, highly regarded, empathic person (the mentor) guides another individual (the mentee) in the development and re-examination of his or her own ideas, learning, and

“MENTORING IS... ABOUT AN ONGOING RELATIONSHIP OF LEARNING, DIALOGUE, AND CHALLENGE.”

personal and professional development. The mentor, who often (but not necessarily always) works in the same organization or field as the mentee, achieves this by listening and talking in confidence to the mentee.”

—*The Free Dictionary, citation from Segen’s Medical Dictionary.*

And:

“A personal developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. However, true mentoring is more than just answering occasional questions or providing ad hoc help. It is about an ongoing relationship of learning, dialogue, and challenge.”

—*Wikipedia.*

And:

“Mentoring is a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and



a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé).”

—*Wikipedia.*

I’ll get to my point in due time, but first I have to share a couple of incidents that caused me to veer sharply from my intended path regarding mentoring.

I was passing by the office of our young and brilliant IT expert Shanna Morris the other day and mentioned to her that I had recently bumped into her significant other, another exceptional individual named Kevin. I asked her what Kevin’s last name is and she said, “Fitzgerald.” I said, “Oh, like the Edmund Fitzgerald,” to which she replied, “Huh?” I said, “You know Gordon Lightfoot’s song ‘The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald’?” to which she replied, “Who?”

After retreating to my office to consider this exchange, and because I was still officially on my lunch break, I googled YouTube and called up one of my old favorites, “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy,” featuring the Andrews Sisters. Feeling a bit frisky, I walked into the office next to mine, where another brilliant young lady named Shakarie Murphy was dutifully performing her financial duties, and said to her, “Come on, let’s jitterbug.” To which she replied, “Huh?” I said, “You know, the Andrews Sisters.” To which she replied, “Who?”

As I sat back in my office feeling all together aged and out of step, it became clear to me that in order to get back in step, I badly needed someone to help me catch up, someone I could trust, take into confidence, and learn from. Eureka!

I needed a mentor, someone who could help me learn and appreciate the e-world we live in today.

So, if you, like me, are a product of the baby boom generation, and you have just a glimmer of understanding of such terms as blogs, going viral, cloud computing, Internet culture, Internet memes, Pinterest, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and so on, don’t be embarrassed. Just find yourself a good mentor! ☺

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