

## Thoughts on Leading Mentor One-on-Ones

As you know, mentors are supposed to meet one-on-one with each mentee during the beginning of the mentoring season . . . ideally within a few weeks of the Story Retreat. We receive a lot of questions from mentors about these meetings . . . “What’s the purpose?” “What do I talk about?”

So, here are some thoughts we’d love for you to share with your mentors as you encourage them to make sure they’re doing their one-on-ones.

At the end of your Story Retreat, virtually all your interaction with your mentees has been in a group. It’s all been ‘kitchen table’ environments. Now it’s time to have a little ‘back porch’ time, one-on-one conversation . . . man to man.

To prepare, pray. Seriously. *Pray for that individual guy only!* Ask God to show you the *one thing* you might do to help him . . . show him something about himself that he doesn’t see or hasn’t seriously considered. The *one thing* could be a blind spot. The *one thing* could be holding him back from a closer walk with Jesus. The *one thing* could be keeping him from being a great husband. The *one thing* could point to his unique calling.

Go back and reread his application for your mentoring group . . . his faith story, bio, obituary or anything else he had to submit when he applied. Then reread your notes from the faith story he told on the Story Retreat. Look for places where it seems he left out part of his story . . . unexplained gaps in his life. Look for times when he was badly hurt emotionally. Search for words of blame, shame, anger, and pride. Note anything God calls to mind and prayerfully ask God how He might have you approach your mentee with your hunch about what might be holding him back from an all-in walk with Christ, a better marriage and being the best version of himself.

When you’re together, after catching up on life, you might start the serious conversation with something like this . . .

*“John, we’ve been together in the group for 2 meetings plus our retreat and I feel like I’m beginning to get to know you. As I prepared for our lunch, I asked God to show me where I might be able to help you. It’s a pretty rare thing to have someone in your life who’s been given permission to ask tough questions and give direct unfiltered feedback. Understand, what I’m about to ask could be off-base and maybe even dead wrong. But as I prayed, this was what I felt led to ask . . .*

And then dive into the questions you have for him. Here are a few real-life questions I’ve asked mentees over the last few years . . .

*“Gary, as I listened to your story, I wrote down these words, ‘I couldn’t wait to go to college and get out from under my parents.’ When we talked about father wounds, you said you didn’t have any and that your dad was a perfect dad. Square these two things up for me. Tell me more.” Gary’s life was all about performance.*

"Joe, in your story, you talked about how you come home and go directly to your chair . . . how you expect your wife to bring you a drink. You said you do that because your dad did it. Talk to me about that."

"George, it sounds like your career is 'on fire' right now. Tell me about the endgame. How does your life look 15 years from now if you 'gain the whole world?'"

"Bob, on the Story Retreat, you told us of your struggles with porn. Talk to me about where that stands. I want to help you figure that out as we move through this year."

These kinds of questions can lead to *real* conversations and help set up a *personal* mentor-mentee relationship for the rest of the mentoring season. You're not trying to become his therapist, accountability partner or his dad. **But you are trying to establish an emotional connection with your mentee centered around his greatest felt need and you're learning how to pray specifically for him!** One of the joys of mentoring is to be able to help a guy have a breakthrough on some issue that's holding him back from a life following Jesus.

Remember, life change usually happens through the influence of a trusted friend. Mentors have the best shot because they're ascribed respect from the outset of the Radical Mentoring group. But don't try this alone . . . seek the Lord and only challenge with humility and gentleness. You are first to love your guys whether they 'get it' or not.