

Mentoring Women Q&A

Answers from the Author, Stephanie Wolfe

What do I need to get started?

Your one-year journey begins successfully with your Mentoring Women 13-CD curriculum. I believe the program will be even more successful if you purchase *Who Wants To Be a Mentor: Is that your final answer?* This is the training tool for mentors and for those administering the program. Though in the MW series itself there is one lesson devoted to the mentor/administrator, I still felt there was more training needed so I wrote this 3-lesson training tool. That gives each mentor/administrator 4 lessons and a very good foundation for beginning a successful ministry for the women of their church, and one that will be on-going for years.

Why did you write Mentoring Women?

I originally wrote the program for INJOY, Inc. at the request of John Maxwell and Dan Reiland, but under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit lead by my passion for what I now refer to as "inner beauty" consulting. There are many beauty consultants in the world, but I feel that the development of our inner beauty is the only beauty that leaves our mark on the world around us. There are not enough women helping other women to be beautiful inside and out.

I had been doing this at my church already, but I didn't have a program, notebook, or CDs. I just had the idea, because I saw a need within women to have a true "mentor" - a woman who would honestly speak into their life with words of love and encouragement, but also strength and courage.

Most of us do not have this, and the only way to truly accomplish this for both the Mentor and the Mentee KNOW what is going to happen going into it. Mentoring CAN be life on life, just day to day leading and following, but if there is something HARD to say, do you have the right to say it? In a counseling situation you do, because that is the understanding of the counselor and counselee going into it. Even, if the counselee doesn't like what they hear from the counselor, they "ask" for it, and in most cases they are paying for it, so receiving the hard sayings is a little easier in that scenario because the relationship was established from the beginning.

You wrote these lessons back in 1998, does this material ever go out of date?

Well, I rewrote it in 2004 to update some of my personal stories and life issues, but the twelve lessons are what I would consider "classics." They never go "out of date." Lessons on Influence, People Skills, Significance, Marriage, Motherhood, and Ministry will always need to be encouraged in women's lives. Also, I feel my approach is fresh,

in that I wrote the material with Lesson, Outline, and Leadership Guides, but a good mentor will make the lessons her own. Though everything is there for you to use it word for word, you can also just use it as a track to run on and change it any way that fits your ministry needs. I have seen it be successful both ways. The only requirement is a mentor who cares about those she is mentoring, and not just a woman that is asked to “run a program.”

Isn't Mentoring Women a “program?” What makes it different?

People don't need programs. People need people. People need relationships, and by that I mean relationships of all kinds. I have my shopping friends, my coffee friends, my church friends, my work friends, my family, my close friends, etc. I also have my mentors, my teachers, my leaders. Then I have those that I mentor, teach and lead. Relationships change lives, programs just keep us busy. Most of us are not looking for a program, or another class to join. I wrote MW as a tool to build lasting relationships both between a mentor and her group, and women with other women within the group. Ask any of the women in my groups in my years of using this method. Their lives were changed, because of these relationships. They learned from each other, and from me. They traveled together for a whole year.

Tell me more about how Mentoring Women builds relationship.

Well, the year begins with a retreat. Eight to twelve women get in a vehicle and travel to a cabin, lake house, or Inn – the key here is that they live together for the weekend so hotels are out – too separate. They cook, clean up, sleep, laugh, cry, talk, share, annoy, stretch and grow together.

How important is the retreat? Can we just skip that?

It is so important (to me) that if a person that I have asked to be a part of the year, and they cannot make it to the retreat, then I do not let them participate that year. I did that one year, and that poor woman never did connect with the group like the others who had bonded during that retreat weekend. It wasn't fair to her, and I learned a lesson at her expense. She got the “lessons” but never got the “relationship” and without the relationship, the lesson just doesn't change us.

What is your “mentoring model?”

I call it the Jesus Model. Jesus was the ultimate mentor. Jesus modeled the type of mentoring I wrote into Mentoring Women. I believe in my “message” to women, so I believe in the lessons themselves, but that is not what makes them most valuable. (Wow, as a writer, that was hard to say.)

Jesus' message changed people, but he never taught them in a classroom. Though he taught them plenty, his classroom instruction was effective because of the relationship

he had built with the guys! He didn't say come join my School of Theology, he said, "Come follow me." Mentoring begins with one woman, who says to a few women, come follow me. Not, of course, comparing ourselves to Christ in ways of "perfect" leadership worthy to be followed, but in command and principle. Are we not as believers commanded to give, share, heal, love, teach, build, etc. And are we not asked to live our lives the way that Jesus did? Are we not asked to lead like Jesus did? Then let's mentor like Jesus did.

Also, as my husband, Jack said in a recent sermon, "Jesus did not put out a Sign Up sheet for anyone interested in becoming a disciple." I love that thought, and it took me to the fact that he not only chose them and recruited them; he also prepared them, trained them, trusted them with the message, and loved them even when they screwed up! This is real Christian mentoring.

Is mentoring really effective?

It is as effective as parenting is, if a parent parents with purpose and passion. (That's another passion of mine.) [Order "On Purpose Parenting"](#) If a parent lays out the plans and expectations of child and parent early in the child's life and then sticks to the plans and expectations outlined then and only then will both parent and child have a healthy, successful, beneficial relationship for its

However, as I have said 'Everyone wants me to mentor them until I try to mentor them.' So I guess it all depends on the mentor and the person being mentored. Like I said in an earlier question, both parties need to know that it is expected of them. They both need to understand what the word and the process means; what they are agreeing to, and most importantly they both need to follow through on what they agreed to. The only breakdowns that I have seen in my mentoring are when these issues are broken. It is sad, but it happens. There are no perfect mentors since Jesus, and there are no perfect mentees. Remember, even Jesus was 11 for 12! But if these items are hitting on all cylinders, then success and fulfillment are ahead of you on both sides and oh the testimonies that you will have.

How does Mentoring Women work in a large church?

On the training series, I offer instruction for ratios, along with a myriad of other details for starting up the ministry. In churches of every size I recommend one mentor for every 8-12 women. In all churches (especially larger churches), what we have found that makes the program successful is this - Connectivity. By this I mean, 1) connecting the mentor to her mentees as a group and as individuals, 2) connecting the individuals within the small group to each other, 3) connecting the small groups to other small groups, and 4) connecting each year to both the previous and the upcoming year, and 5) connecting all alumni yearly through a convention,

conference, or retreat. Each step is important and offers the connections that last a life-time. Here is the action for the corresponding target from above:

1) By setting up 12 monthly meetings for the group to meet for 3-4 hours, and by setting up 1-hour meetings for each women in the group to spend time with you.

2) By the creating an environment for bonding during the Retreat, the monthly meetings, the Discovery Day, and the final meeting (this is special and too long to write out).

3) By combining all the groups that are going on in your church at the same time through the Discovery Day, and the Prayer Partners, as well as other special tips throughout the year.

4) By holding an annual convention (our groups are called Leading Ladies and our convention is the same). This is where I utilize the gifts, talents, and training of the women that have just completed the year to teach and lead the conference, and the new group coming into the year will be the "audience." (I'll have to explain more.)

5) Women from around the country, whose groups have gone through or are getting ready to go through the program drive, fly, walk or run to Atlanta for an annual convention. Or you can have your own when you have enough women that have completed the year.

Mentors must be trained well - (I offer to do that for you.) Then they need to stay connected to each other. (I will show you how.) It is so much fun for the mentors, too. The stories abound when they get together.

Not to try to book another engagement, but I suggest to get the full benefit of implementing this relationship building tool effectively within the larger churches 1000+ it is best to bring me to your church to share the program in its entirety with those that are interested in seeing it developed there. I often meet with the leadership team to go over the entire program and then individual training with the mentors together, followed by one-on-one consulting with the woman in charge (pastors' wife, women's ministry leader, etc.) While I am on-site, I usually do an evening or Saturday morning with all the women of the church where I will share a general session.

So you are a Conference Speaker then, too?

Well, yes, and no . . . really more no than yes! I am a writer who speaks. There is a difference. I am not just a speaker. I do not choose to travel the world to share a

message here and there. I choose to travel only to the churches that I build a relationship with. I am the Executive Director of Epic Faith in Duluth, Georgia, where my husband is the Pastor. We have a very unique ministry there, which includes a Jr. Olympic-size Swimming Pool, 12 Tennis Courts, Basketball half-court, Clubhouse, Café and Coffee bar with a wrap-around patio. We gather as a church on Sunday at 10am in the Clubhouse, and host a Theological Discussion on Sunday nights twice a month. I am the architect and administrator of our Learning Communities, and HISkids Children's ministries. I volunteer all of my time working along side of my husband to fulfill the call of God on our lives. That is my full-time job. [Visit Epic Faith](#)

My writing is second to that, and then my speaking choices. I cannot say yes to all speaking requests, so I choose to speak for the churches that use my curriculums in their ministry. [\(View Curriculum\)](#)

Mentoring Women
Mentoring Young Women
You Go Girl (Young Women's Conference)
On Purpose Parenting
Learning Communities
I.M. HISkid!

What if they want to start, but can't have you come in right now. Can they come to Atlanta to see you?

Yes! And many do for that very reason. Large churches have their schedule set way in advance, so they may get excited about starting the program now and not be able to bring me in, so they can make an appointment with me. There is still a cost for my time. (I have learned to do this because I only have so much to give, and to say yes to one thing means that I have to say no to something else.) Again, not to fill my calendar, but to be totally honest, this is less beneficial, in my opinion, because only one or two people are going to hear all that is shared in that time. Then they must go back and try to repeat all that was learned. It is like making a copy of a copy. Hearing it straight from my mouth and my being there to directly answer all the questions that come up is just the better use of all of our time. Let's say, you go home and tell the team what you heard and they have questions that you didn't think of when you were there. Then you call me and I tell you and you tell them, and then they say, 'but what if . . .' and then you call me and I miss your call and then I call you back when I have time and get your voice mail, and well you get the picture. I only say this, because it happens. It will happen somewhat even after your program is established, but that is not near as devastating. Get off the ground on the right foot, and then we can do the follow-up work through email, or phone. If you come to me and we talk,

then we will build a relationship (which is cool), but if I come to you all, I will teach you about relationship building. [\(Speaking Schedule\)](#)

What are your fees for conferences, consulting, etc.?

I hesitate putting anything here, because I customize each event I accept. We base the cost of the event on a lot of criteria. Is it local? How local? Will I be sleeping in my own bed or in a hotel? How long will I be away from my home, my husband, my kids and more importantly grandkids? Am I in relationship with you through my resources? How many sessions will I do (one-on-one time counts as a session)? If I'm talking, you're paying. I'm sorry if that sounds crass, but I have done it the other way for so long, saying "oh, that's fine, or whatever you can give me, or don't worry about it" because I am by nature a very giving person, but I'm old now, and though I am still a very giving person, I have less to give physically and emotionally. I hope you understand my heart here, because it is really not about the money, but it is about the "expense." [Contact us to customize your request.](#)

Isn't mentoring the same as counseling?

Not even close! Don't get me started! No. Counseling, in my opinion, is not nearly as effective as mentoring. Mentoring leads where you haven't been. Counseling tries to correct where you have already been. Mentoring is offensive, where I feel counseling is defensive. Mentoring is long term, and counseling (should be) short term. Both counseling, and mentoring are valid ministries, but they are very different, in my opinion. A counselor's target is usually the past. A mentor's target is usually the future. Oh, that's good! I could go on and all but already run the risk of being misunderstood. (Remember, I said "in my opinion, and "I feel")

Do you do personal counseling?

Whoa, I am on thin-ice here! I am not a licensed . . . anything, really! I do what used to be called (old term) Nouthetic Counseling, a phrase I learned through Jay E. Adams in *Competent to Counsel*. It means I have been training how to use The Bible to counsel. So, really I guess the answer is no, I do not counsel, but I "coach" and "consult." When I say, "some," I really mean some! The majority of my time in this area is devoted primarily to Pastors' Wives. They have no one to talk to, and nobody understands this, like another POW, I mean PW. I wrote a book called, "Ahhh, the Ministry . . . if I have to explain it, you wouldn't understand." [Order "Ahhh, the Ministry](#)

Second to that would be women who hold church leadership positions. You would greatly benefit from reading the book too! It would help you to better understand what your pastor's wife feels and needs. You are there to support her and the Pastor's vision for their community of faith. Don't ever forget that. Also, there are plenty of

issues touched on that will benefit your ministry to the Body of Christ as well, so got back up to that link that you thought didn't apply to you. ☺

I'd say your ministry to women is the most important role in life.

I'm sorry if I made it sound that way, because that isn't really true. It may sound cliché but my role as a wife, mother and grandmother is the most important role in my life. My husband and I have been together for 33 years (1974). We began our life together at 15 (me) and 17 (he). We are lovers and friends and life with him has never been dull! Our boys, Jeremy and Chad are our best friends and they are superheroes to me. They have survived 25 years in a minister's home where both Mom and Dad gave more to the church than they should have, but as kids and now as adults, I am as proud of them as a mother can be. Both of our boys and their wives are precious to me. Jack and I thank God for them every day! Our grandson, Caleb (age 6) is smart, insightful and blesses us with much love. Our granddaughter, Isabella (17 months) is playful, full of life, and loves her Nana and Papa. These members of my family are the real reason I value mentoring. I started mentoring over 30 years ago with our boys, continue it today with their children, and I do not intend to stop any time soon. ☺

Is there anything you would like to say in closing?

Just that I believe in what I do and I love doing it. My goal in life is not to be famous but to be valuable; not to make big money but to make a big difference; not to leave a legacy for legacy sake, but to leave a legacy that leaves a legacy. That is what I believe mentoring can do for Christianity. I am just doing my part in my corner of the world, and if our paths cross at that corner I hope that we will both be better for having met and shared some meaningful time there.

His,

Stephanie

Be sure to carry out the work the Lord gave you.

Col. 4:17