

Journal #5: Describe your mentoring experience. Explain 3 new pieces of information you learned by participating in this experience. How does the information about mentorship in the article relate to your experience?

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The Often Overlooked but Invaluable Benefits of Mentorship

My colleague Ken Perlman is a strong proponent of mentorship. He gets as much out of being a mentor as he does from his own mentors. Here he shares the often overlooked benefits that make mentorship invaluable. Read more about the “Serious business” of mentoring in his interview in the [Financial Times](#).

I get to work with many different clients as they lead their organizations through significant change. When I ask them, to whom or what they attribute their strong leadership skills, their answers are rather consistent. More often than not, they attribute their leadership skill-building to one or more influential individuals – strong mentors – who helped show them how to lead.

The value of a mentor can be doubly undervalued by many people – especially younger professionals and junior executives. We learn a great deal about management principles and practices in school. Leadership, though more popularly discussed in school now, is still more often learned outside of school. The value of a mentor who can help cultivate leadership skills one-on-one in real-time, reduce the anxiety in taking big steps, and focus leaders on achieving their goals – is huge. Many times it’s the first few years out of school that can shape the career path of an MBA, and that is determined by whether they create or are given an opportunity to demonstrate their leadership skill.

Also, as a mentor myself, the lessons I’ve learned about myself and my own leadership style are huge.

Finally, I see many recent graduates looking to their friends and peers for advice. While this is a good perspective to have, the power of a mentor who can provide a different perspective, relate different leadership experiences, and ask a different set of questions is critically important. Part of this “we know better” thinking may come from the expectation that new will disrupt old, simply based on its ‘awesomeness’. The danger is that people can far too easily filter out views and opinions different than their own simply by changing the channel or subscribing to a different RSS or Twitter feed.

Leadership is about taking it all in, looking at what we really want to achieve, and determining a compelling path forward so that others will help you make it happen. Mentors and peers, colleagues and friends, customers and competitors are all part of that ecosystem that helps give a platform to leaders who know how to make it work for them.

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