

PYM Young Adult Friends

Mentorship Project Suggestions for Mentors and Mentees

What is a mentor?

In one Friend's words, a mentor is "a spiritual friend who is older**...(and maybe knows a few more things)." A mentor supports, listens, and shares from their own experience to provide guidance. A mentee is someone who can learn from a mentor's experience and wishes to do so.

Why seek a mentor?

A mentoring relationship is one way for both the mentor and mentee to grow in their spiritual, vocational, or practical/everyday lives. Growth may occur through worship, discussion or action on specific areas of interest, or by making connections to information and people through mutual networks.

Things to remember for a healthy mentoring relationship

- **Mutuality:** Mentoring relationships often grow naturally where there is a common goal or mutual interest, so finding one or two areas to focus on is important. Both parties may be uncertain or feel vulnerable, especially at first. It may help to acknowledge these feelings as they come up. In general, respect each other and the time and energy spent in your work together.
- **For mentors:** It helps if you try to remain grounded in God and be open to learning along with your mentee. Aim to accept your mentee as is at that moment in time. Express yourself in a caring and non-judgmental fashion. Asking questions and speaking from your own experience is often easier to hear than direct critique or challenge.
- **For mentees:** You likely will get more out of interactions with a mentor by being as forthcoming as possible with your thoughts. It might help for you to prepare beforehand by mentally reviewing your activities since you last met (you may even wish to write in a journal or make some notes).
- **Expectations:** Set reasonable expectations for what you can get out of your time together. Occasionally, a mentor gives advice, but this probably works best only if the mentee asks for it. Often, it is enough for a mentor to listen and speak from life experience.
- **Referrals:** Mentors may wish to refer mentees elsewhere with questions or concerns. For instance, are there other members of your meetings/spiritual communities that have relevant expertise or information? Is this a situation where setting up a clearness committee might be appropriate? (Faith & Practice is a good resource, as well.)

Suggestions for Ongoing Meetings

- Discuss when and where to meet.
- Consider setting a standing meeting time (meeting every 1-2 months is suggested).
- Begin and end your sessions with a period of worship or centering.
- Check-in (and tune in) with each other each time you meet.
- The mentee may wish to share and talk about some of the following: experiences since last meeting together; topics opened up for you during worship, reading, working; inward themes that come up in your life; community or work events that have been particularly meaningful or challenging; joys or concerns about service to God.
- Mentors listens prayerfully and may wish to reflect upon: the mentee's experiences; help the mentee reflect upon queries that assist her/him in guiding spiritual life and growth; help clarify questions and concerns that the mentee may need to raise with others. It may be useful

to summarize some of the main points or concerns that were lifted up during the meeting. A summary helps clarify for the participant and you what was heard; it also allows fine tuning for better understanding.

- As desired, use one of the activities suggested below or others that interest you both.

10 Activities to Get You Started

1. What do you have in common?

For example: spiritual community, interests, hobbies, career/vocation, volunteer work, travel, life experiences, geographic proximity, availability of meeting time

Questions to help you:

- How would you describe yourself? What do you think you are really good at?
- What type of spiritual community are you part of? What type of spiritual life are you engaged or interested in? (Friends may have many interests or backgrounds in other faiths)
- What type of work/education are you involved or interested in?
- What do you do in your spare time? What are your hobbies?

2. Discuss people you admire and why. Are they living or dead? Someone you know? Someone famous?

3. Choose a text or two that interests you both to read and discuss together. (i.e.: Quaker history, spiritual practice, fiction, non-fiction, poetry).

4. Play a game together.

5. Practice gardening, cooking, sewing, knitting, building, etc.

6. Discuss people (friend, family, partner) that are important in your lives. Why are they important? Are there ways you want to develop these relationships?

7. Attend meeting for worship or another spiritual community's service and have coffee/tea afterward.

8. Discuss practical areas of your lives you want to work on and how to help each other. For example:

- Health/fitness: Do you exercise regularly? Practice yoga? Consider doing this together.
- Food: Share recipes and resources. Cook a meal together (and eat it, of course).
- Employment: Conduct a mock job interview or share job search tips.
- Money: How do you manage your money and credit? Do you have a budget?

9. Work on an arts and crafts project (like making greeting cards, collage, decorating t-shirts, and so on).

10. Discuss social action or community service you are engaged in. Consider doing this together.

****note** – *mentor/mentee relationships need not be age based, and younger Friends may have strong gifts of spiritual nurture!*

Adapted from:

QVS' Guide for Spiritual Nurturing

<http://www.quakervoluntaryservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/QVS-Spiritual-Nurturers-Guide-2013-2014.pdf>

Going the Distance: A Guide to Building Lasting Relationships in Mentoring Programs

<http://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/going-the-distance.pdf>