



"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!" - Revelation 19:6-7

Guiding Stars: Effective Strategies in Christian Mentorship

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Meet David Phillips

My Testimony

What is Brand 316?

- Brand 316 is a Christian ministry focused on lowering recidivism through **Christ-Centered** personal, professional and spiritual training for the formerly incarcerated.
- We target inmates within 2- 4 years from release from prison.
 - While incarcerated we disciple, train and prepare for society.
- Upon release they take part in our 52-week reintegration program.
 - Focused on long term success, changing of the mindset and a living a life devoted and dependent on Christ!

Breaking The Chains of Recidivism!

The Importance of Mentorship In My Life

Growing Up – Laying Foundations, Learning Skills

Adult Life – Smart Choices, Practical and Life Skills,

During Prison: Staying Steady, Staying Positive, Devoting myself to Christ Because of Seeds Planted

After Prison: Adapting, Focusing on Future, Being a Good Husband and Father, Serving Christ, No Real Fear

How is that different than many being released?

- ***Strong Family Ties***
- ***Supportive Wife and Family***
- ***Strong Foundation Since I was a Child***
- ***Educated, Financially okay***
- ***Socially Safe***

BUT After

- I was institutionalized
- Very real and realistic fear that they (law enforcement) can get me anytime
- Prison Habits
- Angry
- I see police and take a deep breath

It is important to remember many have nothing when released. **Nothing is defined as literally nothing!**

Understanding the Importance of Mentorship

A Call to Mentorship in the Bible

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17

- **Jethro mentors Moses** – *Start Delegating Tasks & More*
- **Moses to Joshua** – *Transitioning Leadership & Responsibility*
- **Jesus and the Disciples** – *Teaching, Discipling, Loving*
- **Barnabas to Paul** – *Encouragement, Education, Interactions with Others, Mediator, Patience*
- **Paul and Timothy** – *Sound Doctrine, Leadership, Preaching Perseverance, Teaching, Discipleship, etc*
- **Timothy and beyond**

And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

2 Timothy 2:2

Understanding the Importance of Mentorship

The Value of Mentorship in Business

Many Inmates, once released and while incarcerated do not understand nor value mentorship.

There are trust issues, purpose issues, hierarchy issues, owe you issues, time issues and so on.

I have found relating mentorship to business shows it is not a weakness but a benefit.

Understanding the Importance of Mentorship

The Value of Mentorship in Business

Again, many Inmates, once released and while incarcerated do not understand nor value mentorship.

Perceived Issues with Mentorship:

- Trust: *Why would I trust this random person?*
- Purpose: *What will I get out of this?*
- Time: *I have so much to do!*
- Confidence: *This makes me weak.*
- Why: *Why does this person care, what do they want?*

"Mentoring is a two-way street. While you're helping someone grow, they, in turn, challenge and inspire you to become a better leader."

Richard Branson, Founder of Virgin Group

Understanding the Importance of Mentorship

The Value of Mentorship in Business

- *76% of working professionals feel mentoring **is vital to growth.** (Harvard Business)*
- *70% of Fortune 500 companies have mentoring programs. **Mentoring develops employees fast, builds company culture and cultivates future executive resources.***
- *90% of employees with mentors are **happy at work, and mentoring boosts retention rates.** (Forbes)*
- *Harvard Business Review: CEOs who participated in mentoring experienced fantastic results: **(if it is good for leaders, it is good for all)***

Understanding the Importance of Mentorship

The Value of Mentorship in Business

- *84% accredited mentors to helping them avoid costly mistakes.*
- *84% achieved competence in the roles faster.*
- *69% made more profitable decisions.*
- *A report from Gallup and Amazon, published Oct. 5, found 8 in 10 young adults who grew up in well-off households were more likely to have someone with a successful career whom they looked up to compared to 28 percent of young adults who grew up in poverty.*
- *Young people are looking for a role model whom they can trust in their knowledge and expertise (77%), who has realistic career success (68%) and who motivates them to achieve great things (66%).*

Understanding the Importance of Mentorship

Definition and Significance of Mentorship for the Incarcerated

- Guidance, advice, love through Christ and practical support to help the inmate/recently released navigate the challenges of incarceration, reentry into society, and personal growth.
- Showing them they are not the “trash” society says they are.
- **Understand:** They are looked down upon, unwanted, not trusted and treated like trash in all aspects of their life including when seeking employment, housing and even within the Church.
- **Understand: There guard is up.** All weaknesses are vulnerabilities inside, anything personal is a weakness. Fear of failure, fear of disappointing, fear of judgment.

Understanding the Importance of Mentorship

Personal Stories Inside and Outside in Mentorship

- **Starting own company.** Being realistic, How, skills needed?
- **Worst case I have to sell drugs.** Is that the worst case?
- **Training** vs immediate employment.
- Immediate **Relationships** after Prison.
- Not Understanding **probation terms.**
- **Preparing spiritually for what will be faced.** Time is Limited and much busier.

Strategies for Effective Mentor-Mentee Relationships

Choosing the Right Person - A Two Way Street

- **Are you a good fit for them? Are they a good fit for you?**
- **Know your goals: *What will you get out of this? What will they get out of this? Why are you (the mentor) choosing to do this?***
- **Know Your Commitment: This has to be firm and clear.**
- **Research Them: When possible, know everything you can ahead of time because it will make you a better mentor.**
- **Review and Pray: Have a loose plan for each meeting and pray for direction.**
- **This is not a Bible Study but let Christ shine through you.**

Strategies for Effective Mentor-Mentee Relationships

Building Trust and Rapport

- Consider what they face daily – **Both Inside and after release**
- Active Listening vs Talking – **Opposite of Daily Life in Prison**
- **Do not plan out conversations.** ie: Have 3 points you want to hit and no matter what they say you go to those 3 points. **Let the Spirit Lead and go in with an open mind!**
- Be Personal, not too personal.
- Ask Questions others will not. **Learn from them also.**
- Find things you can both relate to.
- Start it off with a brief prayer. ****BRIEF ON PURPOSE****
- Building trust with your mentee takes time and consistency. It's important to establish clear boundaries from the beginning to ensure a healthy mentor-mentee relationship. This includes your time commitment, expectations from you (be on time, prepared etc), confidentiality, etc.

Strategies for Effective Mentor-Mentee Relationships

Setting Goals and Expectations

- Assist them with setting and achieving realistic goals. Find out why they are choosing to have a mentor?
- Advice on job searches, career development, resume help, real world situations like personal relationships, their relationship with Christ, education and more.
- It's important to set realistic expectations for your mentorship relationship and understand that progress may be gradual.
- Avoid placing pressure on yourself or your mentee to achieve specific outcomes within a set timeframe.
- **Do not make your relationship a checklist!**

Strategies for Effective Mentor-Mentee Relationships

Addressing challenges and conflicts

- Offer support, guidance, encouragement in all aspects of their life that you have knowledge about. Do not give legal advice.
- You cannot solve their problems and doing so will cause more harm than good.
- There will be several challenges that they are facing **that you will not understand**. Help them by asking questions, learning more about the situation and empathy.
- **Processes solve challenges.** Guide them in their thinking of how to deal with situations including breaking down each challenge into smaller portions. Create a process and help them understand why.

Mentorship and Reintegration Training

Mentorship and Reintegration Training

- Importance of pre-release planning and preparation.
- Thinking about release details 6 months before release is not enough time, preparation equals success.
- Role of mentors in assisting with reentry planning
 - Talking through options
 - Preparing the mindset for realistic needs and options
 - Brainstorming and Listening
 - Heavy focus on preparation in every aspect of their life

Mentorship and Reintegration Training

Employment Readiness

- List of jobs and what they did at each particular job daily.
- Resume Creation (this can be a long process)
- What do you like?
- What are you good at?
- Education level and interest in future education
- Preparing for Interviews | Discussing your criminal history

Mentorship and Reintegration Training

Housing Options

- **Live with family?**
 - Are they welcome?
 - Are they legally allowed?
 - Have they made any plans at all?
 - Relying on prison release plan?
 - Probation Officer Call

- **Halfway/Transitional house?**
 - Where?
 - How?
 - Who?
 - How much?

- **Homelessness? What other options?**

Mentorship and Reintegration Training

Financial Literacy

- **Budgeting**
 - Commissary
 - Practice
 - Planning Ahead

- **Cost of living**
 - Apartments (\$700/month plus.....)
 - Utilities
 - Insurance
 - Transportation etc

Mentorship and Reintegration Training

Financial Literacy

- **Fast Food**

- How much is McDonald's Double Quarter Pounder with Cheese Meal?
- The average American spends \$148 per month on Fast food.
\$1,776/year. **That is 2 months of rent and utilities.**

- **Meal Prep**

- On average saves you over 50% versus eating out, some estimates go up to 80%.
- Grocery store prices
- Digital Coupons

Mentorship and Reintegration Training

Support Services

- **Current medications?**
 - Have a list of what you take including doses.
 - Leave Prison with all you can.
 - Options when you leave with none?
- **Cell Phone?**
 - Immediate need for probation, jobs etc
- **Transportation?**
- **Health Care?**
- **Counseling and Trauma Counseling?**
- **Health Insurance?**

Mentorship and Reintegration Training

Building a Support Network

- **Church**
 - Choosing the right Church

- **Staying away from the past**
 - What got you in?
 - Realistic plans to avoid it in the future
 - Substance Abuse

- **Influencers: List out the good & the bad!**
 - 10 years later, who has been here for you.
 - When close to release and just out people want to reconnect

- **Brand 316 and other ministries**

Mentorship After Release

Continuity of Mentorship Post-Release

- **Is this a possibility? Are you comfortable with this option?**
- **Where is their home/release city?**
 - Do they have a home church or family connected to a church?
- **Finding a mentor for them?**
 - Research other organizations (ie. other CMCA members)
 - Reach out to Churches that have some type of prison ministry
- **Letters from Mentors to develop trust**
 - If you can find interested mentors, consider letters through an organization

Mentorship After Release

Challenges They Will Face

- We know this. Everything is against them **BUT** most of the inmates do **NOT** realize the challenges they will face. It is also pivotal for mentors to understand the real world challenges.
- A realistic approach and a reality check of these challenges is important to make sure they understand as early as possible
- **68% of inmates released are rearrested within 3 years.**
- **27% of the formerly incarcerated are unemployed. 7 times higher than the national unemployment rate.**

Mentorship After Release

Finding The Right Mentors

When seeking volunteers, it is important we are very upfront about expectations and commitments.

- **Commitment:** Have Mentors commit to a specific time commitment. 1 hour a week for 6 weeks. They have to know despite being a “tough felon” mentally most are fragile.
- **Empathy:** You are willing and able to understand where the inmate is coming from.
- **Trustworthiness:** A mentor is trustworthy and reliable, maintaining confidentiality, honoring commitments and acting with integrity.
- **Personal Bias and Stereotypes:** We all have biases and stereotypes that can influence our perceptions and interactions. Take time to reflect on their biases and be mindful of how they can affect the relationship with your mentee.

Mentorship After Release

Finding The Right Mentors

- **Managing Boundaries & Avoiding Over-Involvement:** Establishing clear boundaries is essential to maintaining a healthy relationship. Be mindful of maintaining a balance between **offering support and respecting your mentee's autonomy and independence.**
- It is natural to develop a relationship and want to help more and more – **over involvement can hurt them and you.**
- **Christ Focused:** Truly understand and believe that all things are possible in Christ, that we all have messed up and have been forgiven through Christ. We serve a God of Second Chances!
- **Some Common mistakes:** It is important to keep it professional. Do not vouch for them, lie for them. Do not lend/give them money, do not buy a tank of gas, do not buy groceries, and do not give them a ride, no favors! Making Promises You Cannot Keep. Things can be reconsidered over a period of time.

Training Mentors and Mentees

Essential skills and qualities of effective mentors

- **Active listening**
- **Empathy and understanding**
- **Patience and persistence**
- **Cultural competency and sensitivity**
- **Life Experiences**
- **Commitment**
- **Trustworthiness**

Training Mentors and Mentees

Preparing The Mentor

- Help mentors understand **real issues felons face** – In and Out
- Group Mentoring at First – if an option.
- Role-playing exercises
- Peer support and mentorship networks
- Realistic Past Scenarios
- Prepare mentors for things they will hear about. Violence, Corruption, Judicial System etc. Things they may not believe.

As a member of society and a Christian, what are your perceptions of the formerly incarcerated?

There are 3 common views

- 1.** You Trust the system, the process, the prosecutors and the punishment and know it is not perfect, but it is close.
- 2.** You do not Trust the system and think it has major flaws, targets specific groups, has unethical representatives and is relatively unchecked.
- 3.** You generally Trust the system, know it has several flaws but little can be done to fix it and it really has little impact on your life.

Perceptions from Society and the Church

All Views Point To Forgiveness and Facilitating

- 1.** If you Trust the system, we have paid our debt to society, have been rehabilitated and should be accepted with arms wide open and given a real chance to succeed.
- 2.** If you do not Trust the system, we need every ounce of help we can get!
- 3.** If you feel like little can be done, I am giving you a chance to make a real difference and so much can be done!

Training Mentors and Mentees

Preparing The Mentee

- Understanding the Purpose of Having a Mentor
- Benefits of Mentorship (personal growth, skill development, networking, social skills, accountability, emotional support, long term success)
- Developing Mentorship Relationships (build rapport, respect, gratitude, trust over time, why are they willing)
- Identifying personal goals and needs

Training Mentors and Mentees

Preparing The Mentee

- Communicating expectations and boundaries (for both parties – key to remember)
- Openness to feedback and guidance
- Respect the person and time they are taking with you
- This is not a hustle

Guiding Stars: Effective Strategies in Christian Mentorship

Q&A Session

Comments, Thoughts and Other Strategies