

Understanding Mentoring that Facilitates Personal Growth
in a School Setting

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the experience of mentoring between teachers and high school students. Through semi-structured one-to-one interviews, two mentors and four protégés share their reflections on their mentoring relationships. An analysis of the data, using hermeneutic phenomenological methodology, has produced the reconstructed stories of these relationships. These stories have revealed 99 themes that characterize them. Thirty-three of these themes are considered essential to the experience of mentoring. Presented together, these themes provide two exhaustive descriptions of mentoring from the perspectives of both mentor and protégé. The interpretation of the essential themes provides a deeper understanding of the nature of mentoring. An examination of the pedagogical qualities and actions of the mentor discovered in this research reveals that these are identical with those of the teacher. This study challenges teachers to see themselves as mentors and to recognise that educating a child requires a deep commitment to one's own moral development.

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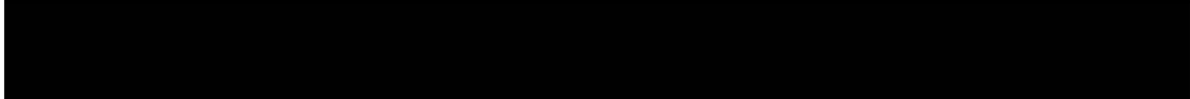
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For my mother, my first teacher and mentor

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

As young adults are beginning to think critically about self and world, mentors give them crucial forms of recognition, support, and challenge. . . . Mentors care about your soul. (Daloz Parks, 2000, p. 128)

The right to a formal education is now recognised by all the governments and peoples of the world as one of the fundamental human rights. Formal education refers to training and instruction imparted by teachers in an institutional setting, generally referred to as a school. Ever since schools became universal, society has debated about the purpose of formal education. It is now a general belief that formal education is a means to individual and social advancement and the only means to individual and national prosperity.

Interestingly, we have now reached a point where on the one hand educators around the world increasingly accept and apply some of the established principles of educational psychology, such as the pernicious effect of the corporal punishment of the child, yet on the other hand, countless volumes written on the purpose and philosophy of education reflect increasingly divergent worldviews with respect to what constitutes "true" education. Does "effective teaching" mean efficiency in the use of the teacher's time and energy or is it about the outcome of education? Should the outcome of education be measured only in terms of the attainment and application of technical information and artistic skills or should we also hold education responsible for our declining moral values? Should education deal only with the intellect and the body or should it also recognise and address our spiritual nature and potential?

Disagreement on these fundamental questions has weakened our ability to "produce" educated individuals. Universities around the world are dismayed at the ever-dropping academic aptitude of high school graduates. Drug and alcohol abuse among our youth continues to be a serious social concern. Many public schools, especially those in large urban centres, have become so unsafe as to require the installation of metal detectors for the control of firearms and need permanent police vigilance. These schools, and many others, have classrooms in which the teacher-student interaction is mostly limited to instruction and evaluation. In settings such as these it is difficult to imagine a meaningful relationship developing between students and staff where the latter might have a chance of making a positive and lasting influence on the former.

Alarmed at this state of affairs, many parents have turned to private schools in the hope of providing their children not only with a safer environment but also an education that addresses all of their developmental needs. Foremost among these needs is the development of the spirit, generally addressed by religious schools. Many of these schools recognise that "the purpose of education is to give the individual mastery over himself, a creative relationship with society and understanding of his place in the universe" ("Bahá'í International Community," 1947).

Mastery over self is a spiritual concept that is not in vogue in the modern world. National economies, and indeed the present global economy, depend on consumerism; and consumerism grows through indulgence, not through mastery over self. In other words, consumerism is proof of our collective indulgence. Another evidence of indulgence is

the way in which we treat one another. When I find that my need to fulfil my own desires is greater than my desire to fulfil the needs of those around me, I know that I have not attained mastery over my self.

It is indeed difficult to imagine the world becoming a better place if educators do not model and teach mastery over self. Certainly, once mastery over self comes into vogue, consumerism will decline and we will be faced with the challenge of developing an economic system that is no longer dependent on it. However, a society whose members practice mastery over self would be infinitely more caring, fair and just and well capacitated to face that challenge.

"A creative relationship with society" requires a deep "understanding of [one's] place in the universe" ("Bahá'í International Community," 1947). This understanding comes from asking questions, "big questions," as Sharon Daloz Parks (2000) calls them in a book titled *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*. Why does she call them big questions? Because,

Questions of little consequence or those that only skim the surface of things can distract and preoccupy us while a larger field of potential consciousness remains assumed, unexamined, or neglected. . . . In contrast, big questions stretch us. They reveal the gaps in our knowledge, in our social arrangements, in our ambitions and aspirations. Big questions are meaning-full questions, ones that ultimately matter. (p. 137)

Some of these big questions are:

Who do I really want to become?

What are my real talents, preferences, skills, and longings?

What do I want the future to look like—for me, for others, for my planet?

How am I complicit in patterns of injustice? (pp. 137-138)

Questions such as these may or may not be asked by young adults depending on what we teach them at home and at school. It is no secret that the relationship between parents and their children is severely affected by the trials and tribulations of modern life. This has resulted in an ever-decreasing influence of parents on their children. And since the advent of secularism, the influence of religion on the belief system and character of youth also continues to wane.

In the public school system, we not only avoid discussing the history and impact of religion on civilisation, but we also sidestep the promotion of spiritual values and principles. We encourage our youth to believe that moral values depend on the individual conscience alone and cannot be taught to them by anyone. We teach that our individual freedom is limited only by our infringement of another individual's freedom. We explain to them that Darwin's theory of evolution practically proves that we are animals, subject to the same natural drives as all other animals. At the same time, we are careless in elucidating for our students that, as rational beings, we have the capacity and the responsibility to not give in to our natural drives when such behaviour is detrimental to our individual or collective well-being.

At home, we make sure that our children are constantly entertained during the long hours not spent with us. Since we firmly believe that it is important for our children to have "fun", we furnish their room with a television set complete with a 100-channel cable service and a DVD player, buy them the latest video game console, and provide them with their very own personal computer with unlimited wide-band access to the Internet. We counsel them to avoid smoking cigarettes and taking drugs but turn a blind eye when we find out that they have begun to drink

socially with their friends. We warn our youth about the dangers of promiscuous sexual behaviour but allow our schools to hand out condoms to "protect" them in their relationships with the opposite, or perhaps the same, sex. We do this on the assumption that they will engage in sexual activity regardless of our admonitions. The definition of happiness for our youth has become to "hang out" with their friends, not have any restrictions on their activities, have nothing to answer for, and no one to answer to.

When we want to encourage our children to do well at school, we remind them that only a university education will guarantee them a descent standard of living. To get them to help out with the chores at home we offer them money. When we do them a special favour, we remind them that we expect to get paid back towards the end of our lives: "Don't even think of sending me to an old-age home." No wonder that our children are always bargaining with us and their teachers.

This grim scenario is enough to make us all, whether parent or teacher, want to give up altogether on parenting and teaching; but it should not. It should, rather, make us ask ourselves those same big questions that we hope and expect our youth to ask themselves, albeit from a different perspective. We need to ask ourselves questions such as:

- What is my role as the parent/educator of this young person?
- What is the nature of a good parent/child or teacher/student relationship?
- How can I have a life-long positive influence on this youth?
- How can I provide this young person with "crucial forms of recognition, support, and challenge" (Daloiz Parks, 2000, p. 128)?

- What does it mean to care about this youth's soul?

Many of us associate these questions with the function of mentoring. In recent years, we have come to believe that every young person needs to have someone to accompany and guide them through this critical juncture in their lives. As parents, we may question our own ability to be that someone for our child. It may be either because of the overwhelming demands of everyday life or because, not having experienced a meaningful relationship in our own youth, we have given up on developing one with our offsprings. As teachers, we may believe that our job is merely to impart knowledge, understanding, and skills in the subjects that we teach. Then again, we may ardently wish to be a mentor to our students but believe that it is unrealistic to develop a meaningful relationship with them given the constraints of time and the extent of our other responsibilities.

Mentors seem to have two advantages with respect to parents and educators. Unlike parents, they can focus on the big questions, "as young adults are beginning to think critically about self and world," (Daloz Parks, 2000, p. 128) without having to deal with day-to-day matters such as curfew time and the use of the family car on Saturday night. And, in contrast to teachers, mentors are able to spend time getting to know the youth on a one-to-one level, which makes it possible to develop a much deeper relationship. As numerous studies and our common experience have shown, it takes time, effort, and particular qualities and attitudes to develop a relationship in which a young person is willing to open up to an adult and to discuss life's big questions.

It is not surprising, therefore, that both parents and teachers and, perhaps, our whole society has come to see mentoring as the best means

to provide our youth with an important developmental need. This explains the growing number and size of mentoring programs across North America. According to one recent estimate (Rhodes, 2002), over two million youth are involved in a formal mentoring program somewhere in the United States of America. In Canada, organisations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters continue to enlist an ever-increasing number of mentors who volunteer to help young people. Yet, according to the Big Brothers Big Sisters Canada website, the demand continues to be greater than the number of volunteers.

Many schools, both public and private, also have climbed aboard the mentoring bandwagon. They have come to believe that mentoring provides their students with the kind of caring that Nel Noddings (1992), a prominent educational philosopher, refers to in her book, *The Challenge to Care in Schools*. She says,

The need for care in our present culture is acute. Patients feel uncared for in our medical system; clients feel uncared for in our welfare system; old people feel uncared for in the facilities provided for them; and children, especially adolescents, feel uncared for in schools. (p. xi)

In an earlier publication, Noddings (1984) proposes that "the primary aim of every educational institution and of every educational effort must be the maintenance and enhancement of caring" (p. 172). According to Noddings, this aim is achieved when the teacher acts as "the one-caring":

Everything we do . . . as teachers has moral overtones. Through dialogue, modeling, the provision of practice, and the attribution of best motive, the one-caring as teacher nurtures the ethical ideal. She cannot nurture the student intellectually without regard for the

ethical ideal unless she is willing to risk producing a monster. . . .
(p. 179)

In very clear terms, Noddings shares her belief that focusing only on developing the intellectual potential of the child while ignoring her spiritual potential would do great harm both to the child and to society.

How does the teacher facilitate the personal growth of the child?

I do not need to establish a deep, lasting, time-consuming personal relationship with every student. What I must do is to be totally and nonselectively present to the student—to each student—as he addresses me. The time interval may be brief but the encounter is total. (p. 180)

Another prominent educator, Max van Manen (1991), considers caring to be essential to personal growth. He says,

Schools need to offer young people a caring and supportive environment, not only because caring teachers and caring schools tend to produce a caring orientation in the students themselves, but also because a caring school climate sponsors the conditions for personal growth itself. (pp. 34-35)

Statements such as the above have universal acceptance. We know, both instinctively and from experience, that growth comes from caring. It applies equally to plants, animals, and humans. A caring gardener produces healthy and verdant plants. A caring animal trainer brings out the best in the beast. And a caring teacher or mentor draws out the full potential of the youngster.

It is important, for the purpose of this research, to explore the meaning of personal growth at the outset. Personal growth, in the context of this work, refers to the growth of the whole person; not just the intellect but also the mind; not just the body but also the soul. Therefore, facilitating personal growth means attending to the needs of

both the intellect and the mind. It also means ministering to the needs of both the body and the soul.

The question of interest in this study is how does the mentor facilitate personal growth in the young person? More specifically, the purpose of this study is to understand the nature of mentoring that facilitates personal growth in a school setting. Borrowing from van Manen's (1990) exploration of the pedagogical relation, in this work I attempt to attain "a deep understanding of that which makes it possible to say that between this teacher and this [student] there exists a [mentoring] relation" (p. 46). This study will explore questions such as:

- What is the protégé's experience of the mentoring relationship?
- What are the pedagogical qualities of the mentor?
- In what respect is the protégé influenced through mentoring?

These and other questions are investigated in a private residential school setting on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, using a research method known as "hermeneutic phenomenology". This methodology, which is also known as human science research, is described at length in a book titled

Researching Lived Experience (van Manen, 1990). According to this book,

The point of phenomenological research is to "borrow" other people's experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning of significance of an aspect of human experience, in the context of the whole of human experience. (p. 55)

To achieve an understanding of the nature of mentoring, this study will necessarily rely on the "reflections on the experiences" of its participants, both mentors and protégés, obtained through individual interviews. As a purely qualitative study, the outcome of this work depends to a great extent on the ability of both mentor and protégé to

put into words their innermost reflections of their mentoring experience. It depends, also, on my ability to faithfully apply the human science methodology in the analysis of the testimonies of the protagonists.

At this point, I would like to make an important comment about writing in general and this work in particular. All writing is intentional, and all reading is interpretive. Although this statement may seem like a broad generalization, and the reader is free to disagree with it, it is important for her to understand that this is what the writer believes. The reader should ask herself, at every instance, what does the writer mean by what he says? She should also ask herself, how does the writer's beliefs influence his findings and his interpretation of these findings?

In this introduction and in the rest of this thesis, I have made many statements that may give the impression that they are factual declarations. Except statements that are cited from other sources, these reflect my view of where we stand in regard to the challenges and opportunities facing us as parents and educators. Although, for the sake of fluidity, often I have avoided using terms such as "I believe that . . ." or "In my opinion, . . .", the reader should be aware that what I have written is a reflection of my understanding and worldview which I have deliberately chosen to share with her. In the third chapter of this work, the reader will appreciate that sharing my beliefs and biases with the reader is an essential aspect of the human science research methodology.

Organisation of Thesis

In this first chapter I have explained why we believe that mentoring complements the functions of parenting and teaching in facilitating the personal growth of young people. I have shared the

meaning of personal growth in the context of this work. Also, I have stated the purpose of this study and the methodology used to achieve that purpose. I have not defined the term *mentoring* because defining it would indicate that I have already determined its meaning. It is my hope that the meaning of mentoring in the specific context of this study will be revealed progressively through the reading of this work.

In the next chapter I review the existing literature on mentoring. This review is the result of a painstaking study of many different sources but limited mainly to qualitative methods of research. Although I found it impossible to comb through the vast number of published studies in the field of mentoring, I anticipate that this review will assist the reader in obtaining a good idea of the depth and breadth of mentoring research.

In Chapter Three I describe the process that led me to the methodology that I have chosen for this study. This description is intertwined with the theory of hermeneutic phenomenology. I have done this to familiarize the reader with a research method that is both relatively unfamiliar as well as fairly deep. It is important to comprehend the theory behind the method used in this work in order to appreciate what has been attempted.

Chapter Four is a detailed description of the research method itself. It begins with an account of my choice of the research setting, the participants, and the method of data collection. Then I describe the different stages of the analysis and interpretation of the data. I have documented the changes made to the method and explained the reasons for making these changes for the benefit of researchers who may be interested in the evolution of my research method.

The findings of this work are presented in Chapter Five. The first part of this chapter contains the reconstructed story of each of the participants based on the collected data. This is followed by a categorised list of essential themes extracted from the data. The final part of this chapter presents an exhaustive description of mentoring based on the experience of both mentor and protégé. These descriptions are the essence of the findings of this study.

In Chapter Six I offer the reader the "description of meaning of the expressions" (van Manen, 1990, p. 170) of the lived experience of mentoring, in the form of a systematic examination of each one of the essential themes identified in this study. Here I reflect on the meaning of each essential theme, drawing on my own experience of mentoring and on insights from other works.

In the final chapter of this work I will examine whether the aims of this study were accomplished, discuss its limitations, and explore its implications for the field of education, especially at the high school level. Based on my experience of this research, I make some recommendations for future research in the understanding of the teacher-student relationship.

Throughout this work, the reader will find that I avoid using terminologies such as "he/she" and "his/her". Instead, in order to maintain gender sensitivity and yet retain the natural flow of the text, I randomly designate a gender to the fictitious person. Of course, the exception to this random gender designation is when I refer to a real person, including the participants in this study. Finally, the reader should be aware that in all the quotations used in this thesis, the words in *italics* reflect the emphasis in the original text, unless stated otherwise.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature on Mentoring

The review of the literature on mentoring presented in this chapter reflects the two phases of my search. In the first phase, I searched the literature in preparation for my research proposal. I began by searching through the theses and dissertations of graduate students in the Department of Educational Psychology and in the Department of Language Arts and Curriculum Studies at the University of Victoria (UVic). I did not find any works related to mentoring. Then, I extended my search to journals, books, and other publications available through the UVic libraries. This included a search of the ERIC Database. The first part of this review roughly corresponds to this first phase of my search plus a later update of articles found on the ERIC Database. Here, I have also made reference to a few works on pedagogy which, I believe, not only indicate that mentoring is a form of teaching but that mentoring is an integral part of teaching.

After completing my data collection and the analysis of that data using the phenomenological method, I searched Dissertations Abstract for works on mentoring. The results of this search appear in the second part of this chapter. I have chosen to present these separately hoping that it will assist future researchers in evaluating postgraduate research on mentoring.

Some Common Features of Mentoring Research

Before looking at the studies and dissertations cited below, I would like to point out some of the common features of mentoring research.

Although these studies focus on different aspects of mentoring and are based in different settings and diverse age groups, they have some common features. One of these is the tendency to break up the mentoring relationship into phases. I believe this practice is due to the influence of relationship theory and the widespread use of reductionism in scientific research.

A second common characteristic of mentoring research is to compare mentoring to other relationships such as parenting, teaching, and coaching. At the same time, researchers attempt to list the different functions and roles filled by the mentor. This is understandable because although an ancient practice, mentoring is a rather new phenomenon in modern culture which needs to be comprehended in terms of experiences which are more familiar to us.

A third feature of mentoring research is to focus on the qualities and behaviour of the mentor. Researchers want to know if there is a direct correlation between the character of the mentor and the success of the mentoring experience. Although we know this instinctively, many studies have attempted to prove this using thorough analysis of real mentoring relationships. An important outcome of this research is the identification of positive mentor qualities and behaviour patterns.

Finally, most mentoring research is interested in identifying the benefits of the relationship. Also, it is generally considered important to identify the exact nature of the influence of mentoring on the protégé. Some studies venture even further by trying to identify the effects of the relationship on the mentor.

Review of Studies (other than Dissertations) on Mentoring

There is a large body of literature on mentoring which reflects its widespread use mainly in the business sector and in educational settings. A search of the ERIC Database from 1980 to the present on mentoring revealed over six thousand articles. Of these, 1,294 were published between 1980 and 1989, and 4,789 between 1990 to the present. If we look at these figures in relation to the 107 articles on mentoring that were published from 1967 to 1979, we see a phenomenal increase in interest in mentoring in recent years. Some have attributed this surge to the publication of *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (Levinson, Levinson, Darrow, Klein & McKee, 1978) which highlighted the benefits of mentoring in the overall development of adult males. However, it should be noted that mentoring has been promoted in North America since the beginning of the twentieth century by well-known organisations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, founded in 1904.

As the twentieth century drew to a close, there were over eight hundred organisations dedicated to promoting and developing mentoring relationships in North America. This colossal movement has been accompanied by the publication of a few periodicals such as the journal "Mentoring International", as well as numerous other one-time publications which promote mentoring, provide reports on existing programs and explore the nature of mentoring.

At present, mentoring is widely used in educational settings to foster the development of student teachers, beginning teachers, novice school administrators, graduate students, students from minority groups, at-risk students, and gifted students. Many of the studies listed in ERIC describe and evaluate existing mentoring programs in educational

settings while others analyse the qualities and training of mentors. A few of these explain the benefits of mentoring or categorise the different types of mentoring used in education. Very few studies refer to the nature of the mentoring relationship.

I will begin this first part of the review of literature by referring to works that describe the nature of mentoring, followed by contributions made to our understanding of the qualities of the mentor. In the last section, I will explore what has been written about the effects of mentoring.

The Nature of Mentoring

Van Gyn and Ricks (1997) developed a framework for the classification of the different types of mentoring relationships. This framework is based on the work of Miller and Seller (1985) on curriculum orientations and the teacher-student relationships ensuing from these orientations. The three orientations to curriculum defined by Miller and Seller are transmission, transaction, and transformation. Van Gyn and Ricks (1997) combine these orientations which reflect different modes of instruction with the framework suggested by Collins (1993) which distinguishes the phases of mentorship by degree of interpersonal commitment. The four phases of Collins' model are:

- The interaction: an emulation of the mentor by the protégé;
- The investment phase: a growth in the affinity between mentor and protégé;
- The facilitation phase: the development of a mature relationship;
- The adaptation phase: the professional growth of the protégé beyond the purview of the mentor (as cited in Van Gyn & Ricks, 1997, pp. 82-83).

The resulting framework suggested by Van Gyn and Ricks (1997) is shown in Table 1. They propose that "with each of the described mentorships and their outcome there is an increase in the interpersonal characteristic of the relationship as described by Collins" (p. 83).

According to this framework, the process of mentorship for transformation involves the creation of a vision, internalisation of what the mentor shares, and collaborative interaction between the mentor and the protégé. An equalising of relations, and the development of a genuine, mutual affection and respect distinguish the characteristics of this type of relationship. Achieving these conditions can lead to personal and social change.

In this study, Van Gyn and Ricks (1997) interviewed seven groups of six participants that were selected at random from two gender pools of a group of 621 individuals who had participated in a larger normative study on mentoring (Ricks & Van Gyn, 1997). Nine specific questions were presented for discussion in each group beginning with the same question that was, "How would you describe a mentor?" They responded to questions regarding the incidences of mentorship, characteristics of the mentoring relationship, and the impact of the mentorship experience on the protégés. In the discussion of the participants' most influential mentor, it was found that they valued those relationships which had a profound life-changing effect on the protégés.

Van Gyn and Ricks (1997) classify these relationships as transformational, which they consider to be the most advanced type of mentorship. In fact, they found that for most participants the term "mentor" was reserved for a relationship of this nature. Van Gyn and Ricks (1997) report that "in the discussion of the use of structured

Table 1

An Expanded Conceptual Framework for the Classification of Mentorships

Type of Mentorship	Process	Mentorship Characteristics	Outcome
Transmission	Modelling, concrete explication, unidirectional	Hierarchical, respectful, formal relationship, low level of interpersonal interaction	Learning of skills, knowledge and values
Transaction	Addressing dilemmas, dialogue, values reconstruction, bi-directional	Identification, mutual admiration, increasing informality, increased interpersonal interaction	Learning of independent problem-solving
Transformation	Creating a vision, internalisation, collaborative interaction	Equalising of relations, genuine mutual affection, mutual respect, high interpersonal component	Personal and social change

Note. From "Protégés' Perception of the Characteristics of the Mentorship Relationship and its Impact," by G. H. Van Gyn and F. Ricks, 1997, *Journal of Cooperative Education*, XXXII (3), p. 84.

mentorship in education and the workplace, the majority of the participants saw this as a misuse of the term since they described a mentorship as developmental and requiring time and an interaction that culminates in a personal, mutually respectful relationship" (p. 92). Based on this study, Van Gyn and Ricks (1997) identified some of the characteristics of the transformational mentor-protégé relationship:

- The mentorship promotes the protégé as a whole person: Mentors and mentoring situations should be responsive to intellectual, physical, social, emotional and moral development of the student and not limited to his/her specific academic needs.
 - The mentorship has protégé-centred control: Mentorships are concerned with protégés and their progress. Mentors who act in a facilitative manner, allowing the protégé to actively work at coming to conclusions and making decisions, appear to be more successful than those mentors who plan and direct the student's decision.
 - The mentorship acknowledges the uniqueness of the protégé: Mentors who attempt to understand and respond to the individualised needs of the protégé most likely will facilitate the development of the mentorship as they enhance the potential for interpersonal connections between them and the protégé.
- (p. 93)

The work of Van Gyn and Ricks is an important contribution to the understanding of transformational mentoring relationships. Few other works provide such a clear and concise view of true mentoring. One such work is a book called *Mentor: Guiding the journey of adult learners* by Laurent Daloz. Drawing on many years of experience as mentor and teacher, Daloz (1999) suggests that,

mentors [and anyone concerned with guiding development] seem to do three fairly distinct things: they *support*, they *challenge*, and they *provide vision*. . . . The notion of support refers to those acts

through which the mentor affirms the validity of the student's present experience. She lets him know through her empathy with his feelings or her comprehension of his words that he is understood. (p. 206)

Daloz believes that the mentor's support leads to trust and, trust is the well from which we draw the courage to let go of what we no longer need and to receive what we do. Without a reasonably well-established sense of basic trust, it is difficult to move ahead. (p. 206)

According to Daloz, "the function of support is to bring boundaries together; *challenge* peels them apart." The mentor challenges the student when he assigns a mysterious task, introduces contrary ideas, and questions tacit assumptions.

The function of challenge is to open a gap between learner and environment, a gap that creates tension in the learner, calling out for closure. The work of closing that gap strengthens our sense of agency, of power in the world. Thus, the twin elements of support and challenge lead to developing the twin capacities for trust and agency. (p. 206)

Daloz (1999) uses a simple diagram (see Figure 1) to explain how different levels of support and challenge lead to different outcomes for the person on the receiving end.

If both support and challenge are low, little is likely to happen. . . . If support is enhanced, however, the potential for some sort of growth increases. . . . The learner is confirmed and may feel good about himself but may also lack the capacity to engage productively with the outside world. . . . Too much challenge in the absence of appropriate support, on the other hand, can drive the insecure student into retreat. . . . Finally, in an appropriate mix development can occur. Just what it is, of course, depends on the particular needs of the student and style of the mentor. (pp. 208-209)

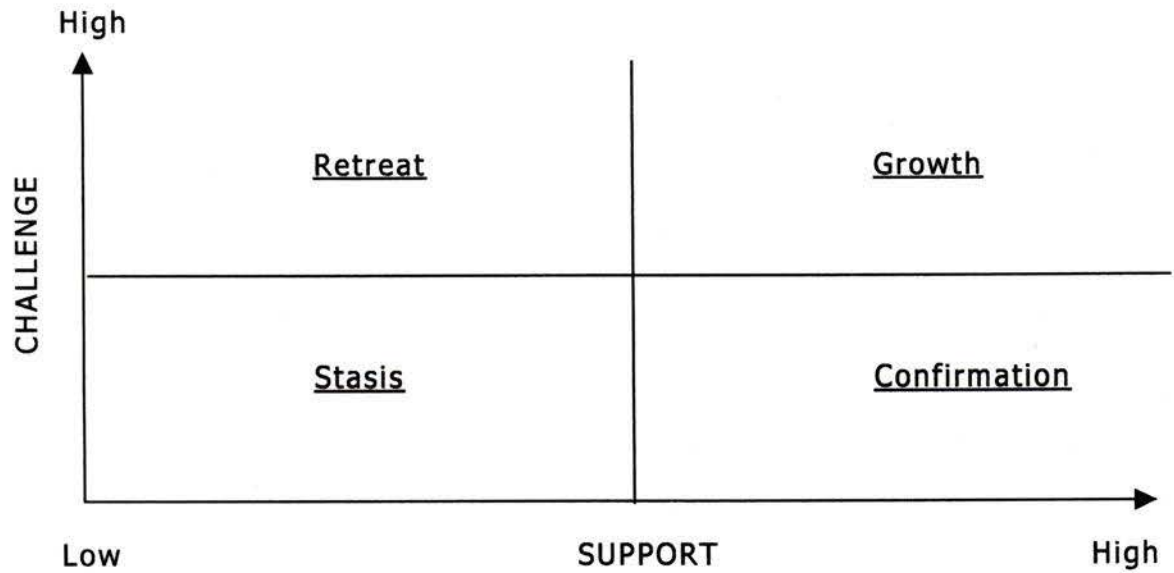


Figure 1. Different outcomes of support and challenge.

Note. From *Mentor: Guiding the journey of adult learners* by L. Daloz, 1999, p. 208.

Kegan (1994) echoes Daloz' belief about the necessity of support *and* challenge. He believes that "people grow best where they continuously experience an ingenious blend of support and challenge." According to Kegan, "the balance of support and challenge leads to vital engagement." (p. 42)

The third component of mentoring, as Daloz see it, is vision. It is also an important component of the model of transformational mentoring presented by Van Gyn and Ricks. According to the Bahá'í Writings, vision leads to understanding. In a passage that elevates the function of those "who dedicate themselves to the education of the world" Bahá'u'lláh (1988) offers the following guidance to humanity:

[Those] who dedicate themselves to the education of the world and to the edification of its peoples...are, in truth, cup-bearers of the life-giving water of knowledge and guides unto the ideal way. They direct the peoples of the world to the straight path and acquaint them with that which is conducive to human upliftment and exaltation. The straight path is the one which guideth man to the dayspring of perception and to the dawning-place of true understanding and leadeth him to that which will redound to glory, honour and greatness.

We cherish the hope that through the loving-kindness of the All-Wise, the All-Knowing, obscuring dust may be dispelled and the power of perception enhanced, that the people may discover the purpose for which they have been called into being. In this Day whatsoever serveth to reduce blindness and to increase vision is worthy of consideration. This vision acteth as the agent and guide for true knowledge. Indeed in the estimation of men of wisdom keenness of understanding is due to keenness of vision. (p. 35)

It is worthwhile to reflect on these words of Bahá'u'lláh in the light of the insight of Daloz. The above passage enlightens and guides teachers and mentors, designated by Bahá'u'lláh as "cup-bearers of the

life-giving water of knowledge and guides unto the ideal way." The title of Daloz's book, *Mentor: Guiding the journey of adult learners*, clearly indicates his belief that the primary role of the mentor is to serve as a guide on the journey of life. He says,

Mentors are guides. They lead us along the journey of our lives. . . . They embody our hopes, cast light on the way ahead, interpret arcane signs, warn us of lurking dangers, and point out unexpected delights along the way. (Daloz, 1999, p. 18)

Bahá'u'lláh says that the duty of educators is to direct their students "to the straight path and acquaint them with that which is conducive to human upliftment and exaltation." Daloz says,

The proper aim of education is to promote significant learning. Significant learning entails development. Development means successively asking broader and deeper questions of the relationship between oneself and the world. (p. 243)

Bahá'u'lláh describes the straight path as that which "guideth man to the dayspring of perception and to the dawning-place of true understanding and leadeth him to that which will redound to glory, honour and greatness." Daloz says,

A good education ought to help people become both more receptive to and more discriminating about the world: seeing, feeling, and understanding more, yet sorting the pertinent from the peripheral with ever finer touch, increasingly able to integrate what they see and to make meaning of it in ways that enhance their ability to go on growing. (p. 243)

Bahá'u'lláh cherishes the hope that "people may discover the purpose for which they have been called into being." Daloz says, "Effective mentors add value and moral content to the relationship. They inspire a sense of worthy purpose" (p. 244). Bahá'u'lláh explains that vision acts "as the agent and guide for true knowledge." He goes on to

affirm that "keenness of understanding is due to keenness of vision." Daloz says, "Vision . . . is the context that hosts both support and challenge in the service of transformation" (Daloz, 1999, p. 223).

As a member of the Bahá'í faith, it is reassuring for me to see that the ideas and convictions of an experienced and respected mentor coincide with the teachings that guide me in my life. In fact, I know that if I were to look into the teachings of any of the world's great religions on the role of a true educator, they would coincide with the insights and reflections of those who have lived their lives serving humanity in the role of a wise teacher and mentor.

In a manual designed for setting up a mentoring program for at-risk youth, de Rosenroll, Saunders, & Carr (1993) express their belief that,

the principal focus of mentoring partnerships . . . is on the *quality* of the relationship. . . . Interpersonal behaviours that express caring, support, commitment, respect and trust are the cornerstones to quality relationships. (p. 29)

They also believe that mentorship is,

a mutual exchange, a two-way passage. . . . where *both* parties are acknowledged as equal contributors to the relationship and to one another's well-being. . . . Neither party brings or attempts to display any role power over the other, nor does one member give away his/her personal power to the other. . . . [Both parties] share and explore with one another their perceptions of themselves, each other and their community. (pp. 22-23)

The concept of reciprocity is a recurring theme in mentoring research. The explanation given here about what reciprocity looks like in mentoring is very useful to our understanding of the nature of this relationship. Yet it should be made clear that the mentor has a greater

responsibility in this relationship than the protégé, as would be the case in a teacher-student relationship. The authors of the above manual have clarified this. They explain that,

Although the desired outcomes within [mentoring] relationships include the partners reciprocating in like manner, the onus is on [the mentor] to model these behaviours and to express these values . . . [and to help the protégé] to clarify and assess [his] values. (de Rosenroll et al. 1993, p. 29)

In *The Authentic Teacher*, Moustakas (1966) shares the findings of an early qualitative research on classroom teaching. Describing the nature of the relationship between the teachers who participated in his study, and their students, he says,

All of these teachers were able to set limits firmly and consistently but in a warm, accepting manner. The children in these classes were given time to express their feelings and attitudes. They were helped to feel that their feelings would be respected, however different or intense they were.

The interpersonal relationship was thus a relationship between a teacher and a child or group of children where there was freedom of expression within the necessary limits of the classroom, where each person could state himself in terms of himself without fear of criticism or condemnation, where feelings were expressed and explored, where ideas and creative thinking were treasured, and where growth of self was the most important value. In such an atmosphere the emphasis is not on knowledge, in the sense of knowing about, from the point of view of an outside observer. There is no special attempt to explain and analyse attitudes and ideas or to discover "facts" in children's lives. These teachers wanted to experience an authentic life with the child in the fullest, deepest human sense. Genuine presence and love are not expressed solely in verbal comments. These values exist in the total experience in feeling and in attitude, in silence and in solitude.

Authentic interaction frees the teacher to function in terms of his own values, ethics, and convictions and frees the child to explore his uniqueness. In this kind of relationship growth occurs naturally and spontaneously. There is a feeling of being confirmed within, and a sense of movement within that makes work personally satisfying and life in school a real experience. In spite of pressures, frustrations, and anxieties, when teachers and children can be themselves, that is, honest, authentic persons, there is always hope that difficulties will be resolved, blocks removed, and meaningful living experienced. Human creativity is then fostered, and reality is perceived fully and completely through the total being of the individual person. (p. 259)

I find this description of the nature of the relationship between "authentic" teachers and their students is not only incredibly insightful but also truly inspiring. How could any teacher read this and not want to do everything that it takes to be authentic?

It goes without saying that everything that Moustakas says about the authentic teacher also applies to the authentic mentor. The only difference between the two relationships is that whereas a teacher interacts with a group of students, the mentor in a school setting has the benefit of developing a one-to-one relationship with the young person under her care. It is with this understanding that I have included in this study references to the nature of the teacher-student relationship.

Another author that examines the nature of the relationship between teachers and students is Bollnow (1989). In exploring the notion of the pedagogical atmosphere, Bollnow describes "those affective conditions and qualities which are necessary for the raising or educating of children to be possible or successful" (p. 5). He identifies trust as "the basic constitution, the atmospheric condition of all education" (p. 41). He says,

Trust is to be realized in its basic importance as an indispensable prerequisite for education. . . . True pedagogic trust is not blind. The true educator clearly sees the child in his or her human weakness, with all its inclinations toward evil. Nevertheless, this educator will muster new trust after all the emotions of disappointment have passed, because he or she knows that without it educational help is fundamentally impossible. In fact, this trust is never more important than at new beginnings after educational crises. When the child, after making a mistake, promises honestly to improve, then he or she is still not able to handle the situation alone. It only works if the other person, to whom improvement is promised, believes in it. If this person denies restoring the trust, by explaining that the child has disappointed him or her already too often and that the next relapse is already foreseeable, then the adult must bear the consequences of withholding the power from the child to persist in keeping the promise. (pp. 41-43)

It is clear from the above statements, that Bollnow holds the teacher responsible for the development of trust in her relationship with the student. A teacher that withholds her trust in the student disempowers him from keeping his promise. He balances this dire prediction of the outcome of the teacher's shortcoming with the assurance that students respond well to the teacher that wins their affection.

Children tend to want to learn, but they are prepared to learn without resistance only from a teacher who deserves their respect and adoration. . . . The adoring affection opens the child to the influences of the educator. (Bollnow, 1989, p. 34)

Bollnow goes on to explore the qualities of the "true" educator at length. I will refer to these in the next section.

Van Manen has written extensively on the nature of the pedagogical relation. In his book, *The Tact of Teaching*, van Manen (1991) explores this relationship in great depth. He says,

In pedagogical situations the adult and the child do not just happen to be in the same spot; rather, they are together in a special way. They are together in an interactive unit that constitutes a relation, a pedagogical relation. (pp. 72-73)

He goes on to say,

The pedagogical relation with the educator is more than a means to an end (to become educated or grown-up); the relation is a life experience that has significance in and of itself. (p. 73)

The notion that the pedagogical relation has "significance in and of itself" is wonderfully refreshing. I can fully relate to this now that I have experienced teaching in a school. I can only hope that my students experience at least half the joy that I experience when I am with them. And I believe that this joy comes from caring for my students. But this joy is sometimes interspersed by moments of trepidation. This trepidation comes from knowing that my imperfection can cause sorrow or pain to my students. At moments like these I take comfort in these words of van Manen (1991):

It frees us to realise that it is impossible as pedagogues always to act right: to teach impeccable lessons, to be wise and fair, to explain difficult concepts with ease, always to keep the whole child in view, to be an inspiration to students, to understand perfectly a child's needs, to help students through deep learning difficulties. We must accept our personal limitations as well as the limitations inherent in the realities of everyday living with children. How else could we go on teaching and parenting children without being devoured by guilt, regret, and remorse over our constant mistakes and failings? More than many vocations, the task of educating young people is particularly demanding and consuming of a person's spirit. (p. 82)

In connection with caring for our students, van Manen believes that this caring should not only be focused on the child with whom we have a pedagogical relationship but also on the potential of that child.

The pedagogical relation is always (to some extent ambiguously) a double intentional relation. I care for this child—for who this child is and for who this child may become. If the relation is not characterized by this double direction, it is no longer a pedagogical relationship. (pp. 73-74)

He elaborates further on the importance of caring in a pedagogical relation:

If the child does not experience the adult's actions and intentions as caring in a pedagogical sense, then the adult obviously does not have a pedagogical relation with the child. (p. 78)

He stresses that, "it is pedagogically essential always to ask how the child experiences the situation" (p. 78).

The need to understand a child's experience of a situation as perceived by that child is also mentioned by Moustakas (1963). He stresses the importance of not judging the student's perception of his own experience in the interest of establishing a genuine relationship.

A special kind of objectivity is required in the teacher's approach to the child in the personal classroom relationship. It is the completely unbiased attitude of seeing what an experience means to the child, not how it fits into or relates to other experiences, not what causes it, why it exists, or for what purpose. It is an attempt to know attitudes and concepts, beliefs and values of the child as they are perceived by him alone. The experience of the child as he perceives it is sufficient unto itself. Any kind of evaluation or diagnosis of the child's behaviour breaks up the child's experience, treats him as an object, and interferes with the establishment of a genuine relationship. (p. 30)

Van Manen (1991) touches upon a theme that is especially relevant to mentoring programs. In these programs, whether community or school based, generally mentors are matched with young people by a third party. It is difficult to predict whether the young person is willing to accept the adult assigned to him as his mentor. Van Manen says that

The pedagogical relation between teacher and student cannot be compelled or coerced. A teacher cannot force the student to accept him or her as teacher—ultimately that recognition must be won from, granted by the student. (p. 77)

Can learning take place if the student is not a willing partner? Van Manen explains that

The pedagogical relation between teacher and student requires a two-way intentional relationship. The teacher intends the students to learn and grow with respect to the kinds of things that the teacher teaches. In turn, the students need to have a desire, a willingness, a preparedness to learn. Without this “readiness to learn” nothing of consequence will be learned. (p. 77)

Every teacher knows this to be true. Yet, some educators are better at expressing some of the essential aspects of teaching and learning. In *The Joy of Teaching*, Mueller (2000) shares his insights regarding what motivates students to learn. He says,

Teaching as a pedagogic act is called into being through the learning of the student. Pedagogy calls the teacher to be an experienced, caring guide who leads children through rich fields of learning experiences. Pedagogically, the child is seen not as *something* to be filled, but as *someone* to be travelled with. Teaching-learning occurs for both partners, the guide and the guided, as a unitary experience, and, in fact, often the guide and the guided exchange places or explore learning experiences together. The artificial boundaries between teacher and learner become blurred in these moments, and we see how interrelated and interdependent teacher and learner are. Students can sense, in

this way, a teacher's enjoyment and this experience becomes part of their lived school experiences. I, as a student, see the adult enjoying; he is enjoying in my presence. I am a part of his enjoyment. My guide through learning enjoys his being with me. Could there be a greater incentive for continued travelling through the fields of learning ahead?

Once again we come across the metaphor of learning as a journey in which the teacher guides her student along the paths of knowledge. The concept of the interdependence of teacher and learner is acknowledged with the understanding that the goal is always the illumination of the student. Any positive outcome for the teacher is considered as a blessing that is received but not sought.

The Qualities, Functions, and Roles of the Mentor

Although the previous section focused on the nature of mentoring, I also included a few references to the qualities and functions of the teacher/mentor. In this section, we will continue to explore some of the qualities, functions, and roles of the mentor.

Bollnow (1989) states, "Only the joyful educator is a good educator." (p. 21) He believes that,

To create hope for a person and then to reawaken it after every disappointment is the condition which must be fulfilled if one is to help a person out of a crisis. To foster and uphold this attitude of joyful hope is therefore one of the most basic demands of education. . . . Innocent, overflowing joy belongs in a real sense to the morning spirit as well as to the life of youth. All full and rich development of the child is rooted herein. Therefore, no adult skepticism should darken this innocence. (p. 25)

He elaborates further on the importance of hope combined with patience:

Hope and patience are ultimately religious virtues (independent of any particular denomination), and it is clear that human life in

general and education in particular are possible only on the foundation of their existence. (p. 52)

Although some of us may disagree with Bollnow about the religious character of hope and patience, most would probably agree that all virtues are spiritual in nature. Bollnow also refers to the importance of the educator's belief in the potential of the child. He says,

The educator's mere belief has certain practical implications. The educator may not be talking about what he or she thinks; nevertheless, these beliefs have consequences on his or her behavior and in this way they influence directly the development of the child. It depends very much on the educator's belief of how the child will develop. (p. 41)

According to Bollnow, another important quality of the educator is humour. He recalls that "the German educator scholar Nohl loved to mention the significance of educational humour, and he used to point out that a humourless person is completely unfit as an educator" (p. 58). He explains that,

With respect to education, humor means the ability to see the small worries of the child from the perspective of a certain preponderance and so to take them lightly. If the educator takes any sorrow as serious as the child, for whom the trouble often seems infinite and unbearable, he or she would not be able to help the child in appropriate ways. (p. 58)

But he warns sternly that "ironic treatment of children is simply forbidden" (p. 59). He adds that "in general, educational humour is possible only when it is couched and supported by warm human goodness" (p. 60).

Bollnow (1989) believes that "goodness is probably the highest of all the virtues of an educator" (p. 60). However, he does not believe that it is necessarily a common quality.

Goodness is far from a natural attribute of human beings. It is a mode of being which can be reached only through a steady and painful process of maturation in the confrontation with one's own suffering. Individuals who thus have arrived at goodness are able to open and share themselves with others. (p.61)

Van Manen (1991) provides a list of qualities which he considers to be "probably essential to good pedagogy":

A sense of vocation, love and caring for children, a deep sense of responsibility, moral intuitiveness, self-critical openness, thoughtful maturity, tactful sensibility toward the child's subjectivity, an interpretive intelligence, a pedagogical understanding of the child's needs, improvisational resoluteness in dealing with young people, a passion for knowing and learning the mysteries of the world, the moral fibre to stand up for something, a certain understanding of the world, active hope in the face of prevailing crises, and, not the least, humour and vitality. (p. 8)

He explains that all these qualities are the reflection of "pedagogical thoughtfulness," which is "a multifaceted and complex mindfulness toward children" (p. 8). After conceding that "this is a tall order for any human being," van Manen asks, "Does a person who lacks any of these qualities possess the pedagogical fitness required for educating young people?" (p. 8).

Along with the concepts of "pedagogical thoughtfulness" and "pedagogical fitness," van Manen introduces the concept of "pedagogical tact." He explains that,

To be tactful is to be thoughtful, sensitive, perceptive, discreet, mindful, prudent, judicious, sagacious, perspicacious, gracious, considerate, cautious, [and] careful. . . . In contrast, someone who is *tactless* is considered to be hasty, rash, indiscreet, imprudent, unwise, inept, insensitive, mindless, ineffective, [and] awkward. . . . (p. 126)

In order to help the reader understand the relation between thoughtfulness and tact, van Manen makes the following remarks:

Thoughtfulness and tact go hand in hand. They complement each other. Without thoughtfulness there is no tact, and without tact, thoughtfulness is at best a merely internal state. Thoughtfulness is the product of self-reflective reflection on human experience. In a sense, tact is less a form of knowledge than it is a way of acting. It is the sensitive practice of heedfulness. Tact is the effect one has on another person even if the tact consists, as it often does, in holding back, waiting. (p. 127)

"Tact is the effect one has on another person. . . ." Based on this simple statement the title of van Manen's book, *The Tact of Teaching*, could be interpreted to mean "The effect of teaching." Of course, effect is not the literal meaning of tact. It is the outcome of tact or lack of it. To many of us, thoughtfulness, heedfulness, and tact would mean the same thing. But it seems that van Manen makes a distinction between the internal state and its external manifestation. This is good food for thought.

De Rosenroll et al. (1993) cite Baran (1992) on the functions and roles of the mentor. He suggests that,

Being a mentor can include being a friend (as opposed to an authority figure), an advocate, an academic supporter, a personal advisor, a role model, an agent for social, cultural, athletic and occupational enrichment, or an agent for the development of positive self-concepts. (p. 21)

They also refer to Smink (1990) who describes the mentor as "a wise and loyal advisor, teacher, or coach...who develops an ongoing one-on-one relationship with someone *in need*." According to Smink, "a mentor encourages, listens, gives advice, advocates, acts as a role model, and shares information and experience" (p. 21).

According to this manual, at-risk youth are most likely to drop out of school before graduation because of the following three factors:

- the school curriculum has minimal *relevance* in meeting their present-felt needs and perceived future needs;
- the school personnel show little interest, care, respect and regard in *relationships* with them; and
- the world of work provides *rewards and recognition* not available in school. (de Rosenroll et al., 1993, p. 9)

Based on the findings of Bernard (1991), de Rosenroll et al. (1993) suggest that, in order to support these youth, the environments in which they live (family, school, and community) must clearly express:

- (1) unqualified caring and support of the child;
- (2) high expectations concerning the child's ability to mature and learn; and
- (3) respect for the child's ability to contribute to the environment. (p. 17)

What was introduced in the work just cited is the concept of a mentoring environment or environments. Daloz Parks (2000) gives us a clear picture of what a mentoring environment looks like. She says,

In a mentoring environment that nourishes the formation of adult faith, others do care. There is a place for asking the questions that begin to arise in the imagination of the young adult, from the inside, from that emerging inner authority. There is a willingness to tolerate the conflict (along with both the zest and the anguish) that such questions may raise, in the trust that it may lead to a more faithful imagination. In return, mentoring environments pose

questions that the young adult would otherwise not have the privilege of engaging. The mix of questions arising from within and posed from without can create great questions that launch the worthy investment of a lifetime. (p. 139)

The focus here is on the questions "arising from within and posed from without," the willingness of the environment to "tolerate the conflict that such questions may raise," and the possibilities opened up by these questions. In other words, a mentoring environment provides the young person an opportunity for dialogue—genuine dialogue. In the words of Daloz Parks (2000),

A mentoring environment that prepares young adults for today's world appropriately can and necessarily must assist in creating norms of discourse and inclusion that invite genuine dialogue, strengthen critical thought, encourage connective-holistic awareness, and develop the contemplative mind. (p. 142)

She goes on to explain what she means by the terms used in the above statement.

Dialogue is not just talk. It is a way of being in conversation with others that involves a good deal of listening, desire to understand, and willingness to be affected—to be moved and informed, and to change one's mind. . . . Dialogue tills the soil for the growth of critical thought. (pp. 142-143)

Critical thought is the capacity to step outside of one's own thought and reflect upon it as object, to recognise multiple perspectives and the relativised character of one's own experience and assumptions. . . . Mentoring environments that serve the formation of adult faith extend hospitality to critical thought and invite its further development. (p. 143)

The capacity to see distinctions and differences must be combined with the capacity to discover the fitting connections among things, to recognise how the vast tissue of life is dynamically and interdependently composed. (p. 144)

Pause is powerful for young adults because it encourages cultivation of the inner life, honours the emerging inner authority of the young adult, and activates the awareness that he or she participates in the motion of life. . . . The place of pause in the process of imagination is the place where each of us must go with the apparently irreconcilable tensions that constitute life's biggest questions. Initiation into the power of pause at once strengthens and chastens the imagination of the young adult and can be one of the greatest gifts of a mentoring environment. (pp. 145-146)

Daloz Parks (2000) also shares her ideas about the qualities and functions of the mentor. She says,

As young adults are beginning to think critically about self and world, mentors give them crucial forms of recognition, support, and challenge. . . . Mentors care about your soul. . . . Good mentors know that all knowledge has a moral dimension, and learning that matters is ultimately a spiritual, transformative activity, intimately linked with the whole of life. (p. 128)

I believe that these statements reflect a profound understanding of true mentoring. It is difficult to imagine that a young person would not go through a transformational experience with a mentor that truly understands and has the capacity to care for the soul of her protégé. In the following passages Daloz Parks (2000) shares some additional insights on the functions of the mentor:

Mentors convey inspiration for the long haul. . . . They know that the young adult has a future beyond the imagination of the mentor. . . . They respect the competency of the young adult, and at the same time they are prepared to be present in ways that invite more learning and becoming. (p. 128)

The good mentor simply recognises that the young adult is still dependent in substantial ways upon authority outside the self, while at the same time the mentor is a champion of the competence and potential the young life represents. Thus the mentor extends

support, in part by consistent recognition and affirmation of every manifestation of that potential. (p. 129)

Mentors are supportive in a host of ways, including serving as an advocate, a guide to resources, a source of comfort, and sometimes a source of healing. (p. 129)

While giving the well-timed push into a new area of potential competence, the mentor may also provide essential counsel when a protégé is in well over his head. (p. 130)

The art of mentoring is located, in part, in assessing the readiness of the protégé to recognise and creatively respond to heretofore unseen opportunities, ideas, dangers, relationships, and solutions. Good mentors almost always practice a kind of tough love. (p. 130)

Although a mentor brings some larger realm of experience or talent to the relationship, great mentors nevertheless also learn from their protégés through a process of mutual challenge and discovery. Mentoring relationships are most alive when both the mentor and protégé are working on the edge of new knowing and possibility. (p. 130)

Mentors worthy of the name embody and inspire the possibility of committed and meaningful adulthood. . . . A good mentor is an antidote to mere cynicism. (p. 131)

The functions of mentoring occur . . . through grand and subtle gestures, as well as the elusive quality we call presence. (p. 133)

Clearly, the author of the above passages must, herself, be worthy of the designation of mentor. Her reference to the elusive quality called "presence" reminds me of the following words of Gabriel Marcel (as cited in Atchison, 1995):

Encounter can only be accomplished at the level of presence. If it is to be an authentic encounter, it cannot be limited to coexistence at a particular point in a particular moment. Such coexistence is only a matter of "being there." There is true encounter only if there is being with. (p. 47)

The Effects of Mentoring

Now that we have glimpsed at some of the available research and writings about the nature of the mentoring relationship and the qualities, functions and roles of the mentor, we will review the reported and expected effects of mentoring. A decade before *The Season's of a Man's Life* (Levinson et al., 1978) disclosed the importance of mentoring in the development of successful adults, Moustakas (1966) wrote about the effect of a loving relationship in the lives of troubled children:

A common experience of those individuals rejected in the early years but realising values of love and self-fulfillment later was a significant relationship with at least one person. These youngsters mentioned at least one special person in their backgrounds with whom they had a deep, warm relationship. In spite of painful, early experiences, in each of these lives, there was one loving, supporting, and encouraging person. Apparently, one significant interpersonal relationship is enough to enable the individual to move toward personal identity, acceptance, and effective social living. (p. 223)

As we have seen earlier, van Manen (1991) considers the experience of the pedagogical relationship for both the educator and the student as an end in itself, over and above its lasting effects. He says,

The respect, love, and affection between adult and child finds its meaning in their own enjoyment and satisfaction with each other in the present, rather in any future benefits (p. 74).

Daloz Parks (2000) too believes that mentoring is rewarding to both sides. She says that "when the mentoring relationship works, the meanings and satisfactions that it yields are gifts to both the protégé and the mentor." (p. 133) This view is shared also by Rhodes (2002) who says,

A mentor-protégé relationship is not necessarily mutually empathic. The protégé's life is centre stage. Nonetheless, there is often mutual caring, respect, and understanding; and in that sense, the mentor and protégé each benefit from the relationship. (p. 37)

Realistically speaking, it is clear that a pedagogical relationship does not only consist of pleasant moments; however, the potential rewards far outweigh the sacrifices as witnessed by Moustakas (1966) in his study.

Those teachers who participated more deeply in the emotional experiences of their children in school found the going difficult at times, confusing and stressful, but most of them felt their contribution to the child's total life and their own growth were rewarding experiences. Seeing a frightened, timid, struggling child move forward toward freer expression and spontaneity, toward richer self-achievement, is an incomparable gratification. (p. 21)

Review of Dissertations on Mentoring

An exhaustive search on Dissertation Abstracts provided nearly 300 dissertations on mentoring. As in the case of publications listed on ERIC, only a few of these dissertations were done prior to 1980. Since that year, there has been a proliferation of doctoral research on this topic, most of them conducted in educational settings. Given that this work is a qualitative analysis which seeks to explore the nature of mentoring, I felt that it would be most beneficial to focus on those dissertations that used a similar approach to mine, preferably in a school setting. As in the first part of this chapter, I will present each study based on its contribution to our understanding of the different aspects of mentoring beginning with the nature of the mentoring relationship.

The Nature of Mentoring

The earliest doctoral work that explored the nature of the mentoring relationship using a qualitative method (grounded theory) was conducted by Beverly Jean Schmoll in 1981. She used the following definitions for the terms "mentor" and "mentee":

A mentor was a person who was perceived by him/herself or another person to have had significant influence on the professional and/or personal growth and development of another person. The mentee was a person who perceived him/herself or was perceived by another person to have had his/her professional and/or personal growth and development significantly influenced by another person. (Abstract)

Schmoll individually interviewed fourteen mentor/mentee pairs in a business setting and asked them to describe,

- (1) The overall qualities of their relationships;
- (2) qualities about themselves and their mentors or mentees;
- (3) how their relationships developed; and
- (4) the significance of their relationships for themselves and their mentors or mentees. (Abstract)

The three conclusions arrived at in this study were,

First, characteristics common to mentors, characteristics common to mentees, characteristics common to mentor/mentee pairs and environmental factors collectively contributed to the establishment and continuation of the mentor/mentee relationships. Second, the mentor/mentee relationships contributed to the professional and personal growth and development of the mentors and mentees. Third, the mentor/mentee relationships were distinguishable from other types of relationships. (Abstract)

Although these conclusions seem to state the obvious, they are based on in-depth interviews and analysis. They are significant because of their focus on the essential elements of the mentoring relationship. Foremost

among these is the concept that the mentoring relationship contributes to the personal growth and development of both mentor and protégé.

Using an "in-depth case approach focused on four mentorial pairs, chosen from the fields of music, politics, literature, and psychiatry,"

Hobbs (1982) concludes that,

The mentor's role is more paternal than fraternal. . . . Nonetheless, the relationship is different from a father-son relationship in several critical ways:

- (1) The element of choice in mentoring and its inception in adulthood,
- (2) the transitory nature of mentoring,
- (3) mentoring occurs primarily within a workplace, and
- (4) mentoring, when it works best, tends to be collaborative, not competitive. (Abstract)

It is obvious from Hobbs' conclusions that he has taken the liberty to make a few assumptions about the occurrence of mentoring relationships. His assumptions that mentoring has "its inception in adulthood" and that "mentoring occurs primarily within a workplace" clearly don't take into account the countless mentoring relationships between adults and youth, not to mention children. His point regarding mentoring being "collaborative, not competitive" begs the question, "Is he implying that parenting is competitive?" Even the element of choice is not always present in mentoring relationships. Most structured school and community mentoring programs match mentors based on certain criteria rather than give the mentor and protégé the chance to choose their partner. Finally, conceding that mentoring has a "transitory nature", one wonders if this is the only significant difference between mentoring and parenting.

Hobbs also proposed "a sequence of four phases through which all mentor relationships must pass":

- (1) connecting, courting, and testing,
- (2) the honeymoon and the promise of a legacy,
- (3) de-idealization and mutual accommodation, and
- (4) breaking away, often involving a declaration of independence supported by trumped-up charges and, following the split, (a) internalization of the mentor by the protégé, (b) a final settling of accounts, and (c) the protégé's preparation for mentorship. (Abstract)

This and many other studies have attempted to separate and describe the different phases of a relationship. Useful as this may be, it seems to lure researchers into making generalisations (in this case, based on four famous mentoring relationships) which clearly do not apply to all situations. For example, "the promise of a legacy" may be interpreted as a deliberate attempt by the mentor to promise something that he or she may or may not be able to deliver. How often this happens in a mentoring relationship is anybody's guess. This, however, is not what one would generally expect a wise and loving mentor to do. Finally, the description of the last phase of the relationship in which there is a "breaking away, often involving a declaration of independence supported by trumped-up charges" is rather unexpected if we were to take the term "often" at face value.

In an effort to complement the work of Hobbs, Roberts (1987) examined mentoring relationships between women. Replicating the design and method used by Hobbs (1982), Roberts studied four famous "mentorial pairs" representing the fields of anthropology, literature, photography, and politics. She concluded from her findings that

There was an underlying pattern to the evolution of female mentor relationships consisting of a sequence of three phases: initiation, cultivation, and transition to friendship. Different from Hobbs' (1982) male mentorships, women's mentorships did not end in crisis, but rather in life-long friendship. (Abstract)

This is certainly a more comforting conclusion about the final phase of mentoring relationships. The question that comes to mind is, Is it necessary to be a female mentored by another female in order for the relationship to not be doomed to end in a crisis?

Another study "uses case study methodology informed by both ethnographic and phenomenological perspectives" to capture and analyse the "insights and activities of two mentor teachers" (Silva, 1999, Abstract). The data in this study "included field notes, interviews, documents, journals, and email" produced by the researcher and her participants. Silva explains that,

The analysis resulted in two stories of mentor teacher work in a professional development school. Drawing on metaphor, the first story depicts the work of a "gardener" who nurtures an intern and the second story portrays a "playwright" who scripts and stages a story of growth.... These stories collectively reveal seven assertions that help make sense of effective mentoring practices. First, mentoring should be considered an art form that teachers develop by drawing on their own unique strengths to construct an approach that fits their context, own teaching style, and intern. Second, mentoring requires embracing the PDS concept and the multiple roles of working with a PDS. [Silva does not explain the meaning of "PDS" in her Abstract.] Third, to construct knowledge about mentoring, mentors draw on the same philosophical and pedagogical orientations that they use with children. Fourth, powerful mentoring practices include both a cycle of inquiry and a cycle of spaces. Fifth, mentors can use focused observation as a tool for guiding prospective teacher reflection. Sixth, the school's

culture has a strong influence on a mentor developing a problem posing stance to her practice. Seventh, mentors need to make mentoring "a part of" rather than "apart from" the work that they do as teachers. (Abstract)

Using the grounded theory method, Bravmann (1986) studied "mentor/protégé relationships in the lives of the gifted." She generated forty-eight hypotheses "in four interrelated theoretical categories: relational conditions; relational characteristics; individual characteristics, activities, and perceptions; and relational effects." (Abstract)

Bravmann (1986) defines relational conditions as "those things that are necessary if a mentor/protégé relationship is to exist but not sufficient in and of themselves to call it into existence" (p. 140). She explains that mentoring "relationships pass through a prescribed series of stages, each having its own characterizing components" (p. 140). According to Bravmann, "the mentor/protégé relationship is idealistic in the beginning stages and moves to a more realistic base at its culmination" (p. 183). She explains that the mentoring relationship goes through the following three stages:

- The first stage . . . is characterized by the greatest degree of protégé dependence.
- The second stage . . . is characterized by its intensity and by negotiation.
- The third stage . . . is characterized by the highest degree of protégé independence. (p. 182)

Bravmann (1986) defines relational characteristics as "qualities without which an interaction cannot be described as taking place between a mentor and protégé" (p. 145). She lists twenty-one characteristics that describe the mentoring relationship. I will list a few of them here.

According to Bravmann, the mentor/protégé relationship is characterized by:

- The multiple roles played and multiple functions served by both mentor and protégé
- Reciprocity
- Mutuality of interest, commitment, respect, trust, affection, benefit
- Directness of communication
- Feelings of personal comfort (pp. 184-185)

The mentoring relationship

- Capitalises on the stated, demonstrated, and/or perceived strengths of mentor and protégé
- Provides an arena for controlled problem-solving
- Exists as a "world with the world," where the protégé is free to safely experiment and grow (p.186)

Although Bravmann's explanation of the different stages of the mentoring relationship does not shed any light on my understanding of this phenomenon, I find her relational characteristics to be very insightful. Also, her analysis of the "individual characteristics, activities, and perceptions" of the mentor and protégé, and of the "relational effects" of mentoring are particularly useful. I will refer to these in the next two sections of this review.

In another work, Young (1985) discusses the results of her investigation into the "perceptual development of women protégés." This work, which predates that of Roberts (1987), also concludes that there are three phases in the mentoring relationship.

In the first phase, Initiation, the protégé broadened her perception by joining with the mentor. In the second phase, Development, the protégé integrated viewpoints of others in her immediate work/study environment. During the third phase, Separation and

Rejoining, the protégé integrated viewpoints of others in her profession and society. (Abstract)

Young goes on to explain that,

The process used in each phase consisted of three aspects: (1) the protégé's willingness to change [her] perception, (2) her development of joint values and goal priorities based on her previous perceptions as well as the view of those she had joined and (3) her redefinition of herself and situation by using her new broader perception as a frame of reference. (Abstract)

The implication of this study is that the development of perception is an important aspect of personal growth, which is the clear, although unstated, goal and outcome of all true mentoring relationships.

In a study of mentoring among nurses, Slagle (1986) "investigated the phases of the mentor-protégé relationship from the protégé's perspective." She describes these phases in terms of the degree of the protégé's dependence on the mentor.

[Mentoring] relationships were characterized by the protégé's gradual shift from dependency on the mentor in the beginning of the relationship, to increasing independence and autonomy of the protégé as the relationship developed. Relationships were perceived as helpful and supportive, involving a two-way give-and-take process between the mentor and protégé that became more balanced as the relationships evolved. Relationships became collegial partnerships or friendships, depending on the extent of involvement between the mentor and protégé. (Abstract)

The concept of "a two-way give-and-take process" comes up frequently in the mentoring literature. As would be expected, it seems to be more prominent in relationships where the mentor and protégé are professional colleagues than in a school setting where staff and/or adult members of the community are engaged in mentoring children and youth. This is not to say that mentors working with young protégés receive a

smaller benefit than those working with adults. It is the nature of the benefits that is different. What these mentors experience is akin to what teachers and parents experience when they witness the growth and development of a beloved student or offspring. We will discuss this theme further in the next section.

The Qualities, Functions, and Roles of the Mentor

A few studies have attempted to understand the nature of the mentor-protégé relationship using a phenomenological approach. The most recent of these studies was conducted by Moss (2001) who researched the lived experience of five women mentors. Moss' findings revealed "seven core themes" which were true for all of her participants.

It appears that relationship is central; the primary function of the mentor is to provide support; most of the characteristics of the mentor are similar to those of the parent; at its core, mentoring is a spiritual activity; there exists a shadow side to mentoring; and the benefits derived are mutual for mentor and mentee.... (2001, Abstract)

Moss' finding that "most of the characteristics of the mentor are similar to those of the parent at its core" confirms Hobbs' (1982) finding that "the mentor's role is more paternal than fraternal." It is useful to conceptualise some of these characteristics. Ideally speaking, a parent is loving, firm, kind, and has the best interest of the child in heart and mind. So, we may expect that the "ideal mentor" would also have these same qualities and many more.

Using the responses of two groups of doctoral students, Rose (1999) developed "The Ideal Mentor Scale" to "assess graduate students' definitions of the 'ideal mentor.'" She concludes that the ideal mentor is an experienced person who exhibits intellectual curiosity, reliability, research ethics and good communication skills. The ideal

mentor is available to the student, provides challenge and constructive criticism, and conveys a belief in the student's capabilities. (Abstract)

Howard (1998) "empirically identified essential mentor traits and functions within the academic, business, and military contexts." He pointed out "seven essential traits that were common to mentors in all contexts": "confidentiality," "dependability," "genuine," "high moral and ethical standards," "honesty," "integrity," and "professionally competent." (Abstract)

Another work that contributes to the list of "mentor attributes" was actually focused not on mentors but on "exemplary teachers." In her dissertation titled "Like mining for precious stones: The wisdom and work of exemplary teachers", Blier (2002) reports on an "ethnographic research project with seven exemplary high school teachers" (Abstract). Her inquiry presumed "that all education is 'religious,' invoking a response of 'duty and reverence' in its participants (A. N. Whitehead) and contributing to their capacities to make meaning out of experience (Dewey)" (Abstract). Her "observations and interviews focused on teachers' sense of identity (voice), sense of purpose (vision), and sense of work vocation)" (Abstract). Blier came up with "two primary insights": First, what marks these teachers as exemplary is a quality of integrity. Despite their significant differences in practices, personality, and motivation, they shared an integration of voice, vision, and vocation. Second, their persistence rests in what Maxine Greene calls the capacity of the "reshaping imagination," or that which opens one up to the new and the "other" and makes empathy, transcendence, and democratic community possible. The "reshaping imagination" enables them to engage both change and diversity as well as the vision of the common good towards which Greene says all teachers strive. (Abstract)

These are not so much "attributes" of exemplary teachers as they are an attempt to describe their "way of being." Teachers and mentors that manifest this way of being are truly blessed. And so are their students and their protégés.

Egan (1985) used data from interviews with thirteen teacher-protégés and six of their mentors to come up with "several observations which describe key aspects of mentoring relationships as they are experienced by classroom teachers." These "key aspects" are:

- (1) The mentor must be readily available to the protégé if the relationship is to flourish; (2) The mentor must be seen as approachable and the protégé must be seen as receptive to ideas; (3) An experience differential between mentor and protégé is more important than an age differential; (4) Mentors play many roles in the professional life of their protégés; (5) Clear two-way communication is a hallmark of mentoring relationships; (6) The mentor's influence on the professional style of his or her protégé is long lasting; (7) Learning in a mentoring relationship takes place in the andragogical mode; (8) The individual autonomy of each protégé was honored by each mentor; (9) Mentoring is an empowering relationship. (Abstract)

Although Egan's study was based on the experience of mentoring between veteran and novice teachers, I believe that his observations apply to all types of mentoring. This work has made an important contribution to our understanding of the nature of the mentoring relationship and the different roles of the mentor.

Bravmann (1986) has identified the "characteristics, activities, and perceptions" of the mentor. She believes that "what the mentor is, as an individual, is more important than what the mentor does" (p. 188).

According to Bravmann, the mentor

- Perceives the protégé as having promise of some kind

- Consciously helps to shape the growth of the protégé
- Guides the protégé intuitively
- Actively encourages the individuality of the protégé
- Validates the protégé and his experiences
- Clearly enjoys all aspects of the relationship with his protégé (pp. 188-189)

In a statement that echoes Daloz's concept of maintaining the balance between challenge and support, Bravmann says, "mentors plan learning experiences so that they will stretch protégés, not overwhelm them." (p. 189)

In a study that explored mentoring "in order to identify and illuminate the necessary elements for creating a successful and satisfying mentor-novice teacher relationship" (Lewis, 1998, Abstract), the author sought

to show a range of emotions and behaviours which are intended to indicate support, encouragement, nurture, and transformation. These behaviours, dialogues, gestures, and assorted communications, however, are subject to interpretation and counter-interpretation thereby making the mentoring relationship richly complex as the two, mentor and novice, wend their way through professional transitions and emotional transformations. (Abstract)

It seems that Lewis started this study with the assumption, perhaps on the basis of previous studies, that the function of the mentor is to provide the protégé with support and encouragement which would facilitate her transformation. Although, as we shall see later, transformation is closely linked to mentoring, very few dissertations in the field use this term.

Vardi (1992) studied mentoring among school teachers by using questionnaires and in-depth interviews with nineteen mentors and twenty

protégés. One of the findings of this study was that “most participants perceived effective mentorship in transformational terms: sharing a vision, energizing, inspiring and changing based on reciprocity” (Abstract). Here, we find some of the other things that mentors do that could lead to transformation, referred to as “changing” by Vardi. She also refers to “reciprocity” as an important component of mentoring. As was mentioned earlier, this is to be expected in a mentoring relationship between colleagues—in this case, school teachers—but would not be expected in an adult-child relationship, at least not in the same way.

In addition to describing the nature of mentoring, Hobbs (1982) identifies the major functions of the mentor as

- (1) sharing and encouraging the Dream of the protégé, (2) compensating for parental insufficiencies, (3) introducing the protégé to the occupational world, and (4) understanding and responding to the protégé’s extraoccupational needs. (Abstract)

It is interesting to note that although Hobbs studied mentoring among adult males, he lists “compensating for parental insufficiencies” as one of the mentor’s functions.

The Effects of Mentoring

This topic is not only central to my research but is the reason why mentoring happens; nevertheless, very few postgraduate works on mentoring have focused on its effects both on the protégé and the mentor. One of these is the work of Bravmann (1986), referred to earlier. In relation to the effect of mentoring on the protégé, she states the following:

The mentor/protégé relationship impacts the protégé’s rational and intuitive capabilities: within it he gains both competencies and

insights. The effect on the totality of the protégé's life is central to the mentor/protégé relationship and becomes an integral part of who the protégé eventually becomes. (p. 161)

And in relation to the effect of mentoring on the mentor, Bravmann believes that, "the protégé, on the other hand, provides the mentor with a sense of continuity and immortality and within the relationship the mentor gains feelings of singularity, importance, and of 'making a difference'" (p.161). She summarises the mutual influence of mentoring on both mentor and protégé in the following words:

The influence of a mentor/protégé relationship has permanent impact on both participants: maintaining lifelong contact is not necessary for the influence to last a lifetime. (p.161)

McKenna (1988) conducted one of the few qualitative studies with an exclusive focus on the benefits of being a mentor. Using a survey instrument which employed Likert-type responses and open-ended responses and in-depth interviews with thirty-three experienced teachers serving as mentors to new teachers, she identified "twenty substantial benefits to the mentor." McKenna summarises these benefits in her Abstract:

Mentors gave detailed examples of improvements in their own classrooms because of the mentoring experience. Their examples included curriculum innovations, acquiring and experimenting with new ideas/techniques as well as improving their current procedures. (Abstract)

A later work provides a clearer understanding of the benefits of mentoring in this context. Hoover (1996) used a phenomenological method "to determine the meanings veteran teachers attach to their experience as mentors." He found that,

(1) [These] teachers perceive the relationship to be one of mutual benefit to both parties and describe the experience in terms of

reciprocity. (2) [Mentoring] provides abundant opportunities for mid-life teachers to grow personally and professionally. (3) [They] believe they contribute to the success of their mentees, provide help to beginning teachers and give back to their profession and others through their role as mentor. (4) [They] receive personal and professional benefits from the experience. They regard the experience as personally and professionally enhancing, contributing to their growth as individuals and professionals. [They] viewed the mentoring experience as a revitalizing and renewing experience which positively affected their attitudes and beliefs about themselves and their profession. (Abstract)

Musgrave (1997) conducted a study "to gain an understanding of the experiences of youth participants in a rural, community-based adult-youth mentoring program." He found that,

The participants felt *if* [emphasis added] their mentor was easy to talk to, believed in them, was a good listener, helped them solve problems, cared about them, had a good sense of humour and positive attitude, was honest and trustworthy, and spent time with them, then the mentor and the mentoring experience was perceived as positive. (Abstract)

He states that,

The participants reported improved attitudes toward school, increased school attendance, improved grades, improved relationships with family and friends, and positive changes in their management of anger, sadness and disappointment since their involvement with the mentoring program. (Abstract)

This concludes my review of postgraduate research into mentoring. It is evident that although there has been a significant number of dissertations on mentoring, a mere handful have attempted an in-depth understanding of this important phenomenon. It is my hope that this study will contribute towards a deeper comprehension of the nature of the mentoring relationship than what is available to us.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Methodology is the theory behind the method, including the study of what method one should follow and why. (van Manen, 1990, pp. 27-28)

The method chosen for this study is called "human science research." As described by van Manen (1990),

[Human science research] is the phenomenological and hermeneutical study of human existence: phenomenology because it is the descriptive study of lived experience (phenomena) in the attempt to enrich lived experience by mining its meaning; hermeneutics because it is the interpretive study of the expressions and objectifications (texts) of lived experience in the attempt to determine the meaning embodied in them. (p. 38)

In this chapter the description of my search for a research method is intertwined with the theory behind human science research (also called "hermeneutic phenomenology").

It is difficult for me to separate the process of coming up with my research question from my search for a method to study it. It would not be incorrect to say that it was my exposure to phenomenology and hermeneutics that led me to my research question. Being asked and encouraged to write reflectively about my experiences in life in one of my first graduate courses set me on a path of asking questions. My natural tendency to look for quick and simple answers to the questions of life gradually gave way to an understanding that not all questions have an answer, or even need to have one. I began to understand that often it is more important to ask questions than to answer them. When I ask a question I open myself to the world that contains that question and other

questions related to it. Along the way, I may come up with some answers, but these answers inevitably lead to more questions.

All of this was new to me. This understanding seemed to open the door to a new level of understanding or consciousness, which I had never experienced before. It was as if I had entered a new level of being, one that was deeper than the one I was leaving behind. I became aware that I could deepen my understanding by asking myself a question and then dwelling on it reflectively.

This new awakening helped me to ask myself questions such as: What was I really looking for when I decided to enter the field of education? What motivated me to want to be an educator? What do I hope to accomplish as an educator? What does it mean to educate? Is it about influencing the learner? How do teachers influence their students? In fact, how is it that some educators manage to have a life-long influence on their students in such a way that they continue to inspire them long after they finish school?

This last question stood out among all the other questions. It stood out because I have experienced it myself. Not only do I remember some of my teachers with a sense of gratitude and admiration, but I also recognise that a part of who I am and what I do is a direct outcome of their influence on my being. For example, every time I make an effort to write beautifully and with care, I remember my Grade One teacher. He always asked us to write beautifully, and when we did, this is what he would write in our notebooks: "Excellent! Just like a flower on a Persian carpet." I can no longer remember his name, but his sincere appreciation of my effort to write well continues to influence the way I write today, forty years later.

Apart from the influence of my teachers (and my parents) I am also aware of all of the other influences that my own history, my friends, the cultures that I have been exposed to, the books I have read, the movies I have watched, and so on, have had on me. I cannot help but think that my parents and teachers felt responsible for the type of influence that they had on me. They probably tried hard to mitigate some of the negative influences to which I was inevitably exposed. I know this because that is how I relate to my children and students. Van Manen (1991) calls this "pedagogical responsibility". Since it is impossible to eliminate the influence of the world on her students, the teacher uses it "pedagogically as a resource for tactfully influencing the child". (p. 80)

Therefore, "tactfully influencing the child" became my main topic of interest and I had a question that focused on it. I decided that to look for answers, I needed to study the nature of the influence between teacher and student. But then I was faced with other questions. Would it be good enough to try to understand the nature of this influence by studying the literature or would I benefit more by doing a study of my own? Would I be able to design a study that could shed some light on this phenomenon? What research method would be the most suitable for conducting such a study?

In my search for ideas, I conducted a survey of my cohorts in one of my graduate courses about their teaching experience and about what had inspired them to become educators. Many of them mentioned one or more teachers who had a clear influence on their decision to become teachers. Some of them talked about their teachers as mentors and others explained that the person that had influenced them the most was not a teacher but rather a person that they described as their mentor.

I had never thought of my own teachers as mentors, so I began to reflect more deeply about my teachers and the kind of influence that they had had on me. Would I have chosen to become an educator were it not for the positive and memorable relationships that I had with my teachers all through elementary and secondary school? Did I not feel that these teachers were fully committed to my education and took a personal interest in my well-being? Is that what people mean when they say that a certain teacher was also their mentor?

These questions were still fresh in my mind when, quite fortuitously, I was offered the opportunity to become involved in designing, coordinating, and participating as a mentor in a mentoring program at a private residential school on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The objective of this program was to help students to develop certain well-defined capabilities aimed at their personal growth and to improve their interpersonal skills. It seemed to me that a program such as this had the potential for having a life-long and life-transforming influence on the young people that participated in it. But I was still not sure if there was a clear connection between teaching and mentoring. Could an understanding of the nature of the mentor-protégé relationship be helpful in understanding the nature of the influence between teacher and student?

As I reflected more on the relationship between mentoring and teaching, it became clear to me that many people, including myself, could identify one or more teachers who have had a life-long influence on them, even if our relationship was confined to a crowded classroom. This is because some teachers have the remarkable ability to touch a significant number of their students in a positive way even if they do not

have the chance to develop one-to-one relationships with them. Mentoring, however, gives teachers the chance to develop a deeper relationship with their students and it is reasonable to expect that the deeper the relationship, the greater the influence of the teacher on the student. This was one of my presuppositions that influenced my thinking about mentoring (see end of this chapter). I concluded, therefore, that mentoring has the same characteristics as teaching, albeit at a deeper level. If this was true, then, by studying the nature of the mentoring relationship between mentors and students, I could deepen my understanding of how teachers influence their students in a profound way.

Before deciding to conduct my own study on the nature of the mentoring relationship, I reviewed the literature on mentoring. As I explained in Chapter Two, I found very few studies on mentoring aimed at the personal growth of students in a school setting. I was confident that a study of this nature, if properly done, would make a significant contribution to the literature on mentoring and of value to the understanding of the teacher-student relationship. So, I contacted the school principal and accepted her invitation to participate in their mentoring program. Soon after that, I was permitted by the school to conduct a study on mentoring for my master's thesis.

Now that I had decided to conduct my own study on the nature of the mentoring relationship, I needed to choose a research method that would be the most suitable for my study. Although I was, at that point, strongly influenced by phenomenology, I decided to keep an open mind so that I would not inadvertently leave out a research method that was better suited to my study. Based on my limited knowledge of qualitative

research methods, I narrowed my choice down to three: phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study. After a prolonged study of these three methods and a course in qualitative research methods, I decided to use phenomenological research. The reason for this choice will become progressively clearer to the reader.

When I shared this idea with one of my instructors, she cautioned me to be open to what I might learn in this study. She told me that I should not be oriented towards the results of my research. The process itself mattered more than the findings. After pondering about her guidance, I concluded that this meant that in order to benefit the most from the process of my research I needed to obtain a deeper understanding of phenomenology before embarking on this exciting journey.

I started by studying *Researching Lived Experience* by van Manen (1990). This book "introduce[s] and explicate[s] a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to human science research and writing" (p. ix). This was my first encounter with human science research and I was not familiar with hermeneutics. Nevertheless, I was very comfortable with the idea of going beyond "pure" phenomenology to "hermeneutic" phenomenology because it seemed to provide the means to a deeper search for meaning.

In this book, van Manen (1990) explains "the type of reflection required in the act of hermeneutic phenomenological writing on the meanings and significances of phenomena of daily life is fundamental to pedagogic research" (p. 4). I felt reassured that I was on the right research path, but was I capable of this type of reflection? After all, I was a novice in this field and writing phenomenologically was not easy

for me. Nevertheless, I decided to press on. When I read that "the end of human science research for educators is a critical pedagogical competence: knowing how to act tactfully in pedagogic situations on the basis of a carefully edified thoughtfulness" (p. 8), I knew that regardless of the outcome of my study, I would, as a parent and an educator, benefit from practising this type of research. But I wondered what van Manen meant by "thoughtfulness".

Van Manen (1990) describes thoughtfulness as "a heedful, mindful wondering about the project of life" (p. 12). He explains it in relation to what we need to do as educators. He says,

As educators we must act responsibly and responsively in all our relations with children, youth, or with those to whom we stand in a pedagogical relationship. So for us the theoretical practice of phenomenological research stands in the service of the mundane practice of pedagogy: it is a ministering of thoughtfulness. (p. 12)

Here, van Manen seems to say that we need to incorporate "a heedful, mindful wondering about life" into our interactions with "those to whom we stand in a pedagogical relationship." He also seems to say that practising phenomenological research helps us to practise thoughtfulness with our children and students. I had a feeling that he was right.

At about this point, I began to realise that my earlier questions were mostly an indication of my need to seek meaning and understanding. Meaning that would help to motivate me in this new undertaking, and understanding that would help me to grow and develop as an educator.

Hermeneutic phenomenology looks for meaning in everyday experiences, such as teaching, learning, and mentoring; and the analysis of meaning leads to a deeper understanding of those experiences. As van

Manen (1990) says, "phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences" (p. 9). He also says that "phenomenological research has, as its ultimate aim, the fulfillment of our human nature: to become more fully who we are" (p. 12). This statement helped to confirm my choice of this research method and to clarify my aim for doing this study. My aim would now be to become more fully who I was in my role as an educator.

Another concept in phenomenological research is "intentionality," which "indicates the inseparable connectedness of the human being to the world." (van Manen, 1990, p. 181). This is how van Manen (1990) explains this concept:

From a phenomenological point of view, to do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings. And since to *know* the world is profoundly to *be* in the world in a certain way, the act of researching—questioning—theorizing is the intentional act of attaching ourselves to the world, to become more fully part of it, or better, to *become* the world. (p. 5)

Reflecting on the meaning of this statement brought two thoughts to my mind. One was that the aim of all research, whether in the natural or the human sciences, is to "know the world in which we live." And every research project has to be guided by a question. After all, if Newton had not questioned the phenomenon of the apple falling down to the ground instead of "falling" upwards, he would not have discovered the law of gravity. However, van Manen is not referring to questions about natural phenomena but rather about human phenomena. He says that

Whereas natural science tends to *taxonomize* natural phenomena (such as in biology) and causally or probabilistically *explain* the behaviour of things (such as in physics), human science aims at

explicating the meaning of human phenomena (such as in literary or historical studies of texts) and at *understanding* the lived structures of meaning. (van Manen, 1990, p. 4)

A second thought triggered by the previous statement was that, beyond the challenge of being capable of a "type of reflection," I now had to learn "to *be* in the world in a certain way." It sounded even more challenging "to *become* the world." I was not quite sure what all this really meant but I decided that it could not be easily described in words otherwise van Manen would have attempted to do so. This reminded me of a note that one of my instructors wrote to me about my reflective writing, challenging me to "look behind the mirror so that you can come to see the hidden forces that shape the self and the world you describe." At the time, I was quite lost and somewhat frustrated with my inability to grasp the meaning of what was being asked of me. I wrote back to her saying, "no matter how much I think about what it takes to be able to see these 'hidden forces,' I cannot figure it out." However, I knew instinctively, and through my instructor's patient feedback, that there was an element of apprenticeship to the practice of phenomenological writing.

As my understanding of phenomenology deepened, I became increasingly aware that it belonged to a category of research that stood far apart from the two other methods that I had considered earlier in my search for a method, namely, grounded theory and case study. According to van Manen (1990),

[Phenomenology] differs from every other science in that it attempts to gain insightful descriptions of the way we experience the world pre-reflectively, without taxonomizing, classifying, or abstracting it. So, phenomenology does not offer us the possibility of effective theory with which we can now explain and/or control

the world, but rather it offers us the possibility of plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world. (p. 9)

When I read that "phenomenology . . . offers us plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world," I asked myself who were the "us" referred to in this statement? Would I, the researcher, be the only one to benefit from this study? Would the participants in my study also benefit from this study? And what about the readers of this work? Could I present my study in such a way that would make it meaningful and beneficial to the general public and not just to those who have an academic interest in this type of study?

I realised that it was important to understand that "phenomenology does not offer us the possibility of effective theory with which we can now explain and/or control the world." I realised also that I should refrain from theorizing about my research question and not seek to find evidence that confirms my theory about the nature of mentoring. This reminded me of my instructor's advice to remain open to what I might learn from this study. Yet, I needed to find out more about the methodology of human science research in order to design my study.

During a course on qualitative research methods, I had come across phenomenological studies that seemed to be quite structured and used methodologies developed by others in the field (Colaizzi, 1978; Moustakas, 1994). I had considered using one of these methodologies for my data analysis. However, in *Researching Lived Experience* (van Manen, 1990, p. 3), I read, "preoccupation with (objective) method or technique is really antithetical to the spirit of human science scholarship." Van Manen (1990) attributes this insight to the philosopher Gadamer. He explains that,

The methodology of phenomenology is such that it posits an approach toward research that aims at being presuppositionless; in other words, this is a methodology that tries to ward off any tendency toward constructing a predetermined set of fixed procedures, techniques and concepts that would rule—govern the research project. (p. 29)

He adds, "In a serious sense there is not really a 'method' understood as a set of investigative procedures that one can master relatively quickly. Indeed it has been said that *the method of phenomenology and hermeneutics is that there is no method!*" (pp. 29-30).

So, this was a research method with no method! This was totally new to me. I felt that I was being challenged to approach research in a very different way. The question that hit me right away was, how do I design my study without a method to guide me? Fortunately, van Manen provided the answer to this question although it seemed to mean that it would be much more difficult than simply following a given procedure. He says:

While it is true that the method of phenomenology is that there is no method, yet there is tradition, a body of knowledge and insights, a history of lives of thinkers and authors, which taken as an example, constitutes both a source and a methodological ground for present human science research practices. Thus the broad field of phenomenological scholarship can be considered as a set of guides and recommendations for a principled form of inquiry that neither simply rejects or ignores tradition, nor slavishly follows or kneels in front of it." (van Manen, 1990, p. 30)

After reading the above passage, it became clear to me that not only would I have to study van Manen's book thoroughly, but to also deepen my understanding of this type of research by reading other well-known authors in the field of hermeneutic phenomenology.

The more I read about hermeneutic phenomenology, the more I realised that I had entered a field of research that had its own definition for long-established concepts and notions that were fundamental to research in general. This is what van Manen (1990) has to say about the meaning of "objectivity" and "subjectivity" in the human sciences:

Phenomenological research and writing is a project in which the normal scientific requirements or standards of objectivity and subjectivity need to be re-conceived. . . . "Objectivity" means that the researcher is *oriented* to the object, that which stands in front of him or her. Objectivity means that the researcher remains *true to the object*. . . . "Subjectivity" means that one needs to be as perceptive, insightful, and discerning as one can be in order to show or disclose the object in its full richness and in its greatest depth. Subjectivity means that we are *strong* in our orientation to the object of study *in a unique and personal way*—while avoiding the danger of becoming arbitrary, self-indulgent, or of getting captivated and carried away by our unreflected preconceptions (p. 20).

So, I had to develop my capacity to be more "perceptive, insightful, and discerning." I also had to be careful not to get captivated and carried away by my "unreflected preconceptions." But what exactly were "unreflected preconceptions?" Were they preconceptions that I was unaware of? What was the process of becoming aware of my unreflected preconceptions like? Now I had become aware of one more thing that I needed to learn to do in preparation for this study.

As I continued to read *Researching Lived Experience*, I came across further explanations of what it was like to do hermeneutic phenomenological research. van Manen (1990) says that in this type of research,

It is not enough to simply recall experiences I or others may have had with respect to a particular phenomenon. Instead, I must recall the experience in such a way that the essential aspects, the meaning structures of this experience as lived through, are brought back, as it were, and in such a way that we recognise this description *as a possible experience*, which means *as a possible interpretation* of that experience. This then is the task of phenomenological research and writing: *to construct a possible interpretation of the nature of a certain human experience*. (p. 41)

I found it amazing that whereas generalizability is often one of the main concerns of other research methods, human science research seemed to make no claim to it. In fact, I was impressed by the modesty of its claim "to construct a possible interpretation of the nature of a certain human experience." It was even more amazing to find out that "phenomenology does not allow for empirical generalizations, the production of law-like statements, or the establishment of functional relationships. The only generalization allowed in phenomenology is this: Never generalize!" (van Manen, 1990, p. 22).

Statements such as these helped to deepen my understanding of this methodology. As my understanding deepened, I felt two processes at play in my heart and in my mind. One was a feeling of awe and wonderment at a field of human research that seems to have spiritual characteristics. It is so because it recognises the unique nature of human beings as conscious beings capable of a level of understanding unrivalled by any other species on earth. It does not trivialise human experience or look for ways to reduce it to little chunks of data. The other was a feeling of immense gratitude for having found a research methodology that, I felt, fosters the researcher's spiritual growth. Looking for meaning

is, to me, akin to meditation. When I want to deepen my understanding of a certain phenomenon I meditate about it.

The Random House Dictionary of the English Language (Urdang & Flexner, 1969) defines "meditation" as "thought; reflection; contemplation." As a Bahá'í, I have learned that meditation is an integral part of prayer. When I pray, I supplicate my Creator to bestow upon me greater understanding and to help me to develop my spiritual qualities. I believe that wisdom and understanding go hand in hand with our spiritual development. Each one enhances the other. Although van Manen (1990) makes it clear that "phenomenological human science is a western research method which should not be confused either with certain 'mystical' or eastern meditative techniques of achieving insights about the 'meaning of life'" (p. 23), I do not think he means that our moral convictions and spiritual values are irrelevant to our ability to do hermeneutic phenomenology. In fact he says, "human science research is rigorous when it is 'strong' or 'hard' in a moral and spirited sense" (p. 18). Van Manen goes on to explain that "a rigorous human science is prepared to be 'soft,' 'soulful,' 'subtle,' and 'sensitive' in its effort to bring the range of meanings of life's phenomena to our reflective awareness" (p. 18). These are terms that I associate with the qualities of the soul.

There were other characteristics of human science research that appealed to me. Van Manen (1990) says, "Phenomenological human science is not external, top-down, expert, or contract research. It is done *by* rather than *for* the people, as critical theorists would say" (p. 156). In other words, this type of research should not be used to evaluate a project or to determine what needs to be changed or improved. A non-

evaluating study enables the researcher to work with the participants in a non-judgemental, non-threatening manner.

Reflecting about my own research, I concluded that the mentors and protégés in this study should in no way feel that I am trying to determine whether they are being "good" mentors or protégés. And the school that I planned to work with should not expect me to come up with a list of proposals that would help make its mentoring program more effective. I would participate in the mentoring program as a mentor not only to deepen my understanding of the experience of being a mentor, but also to become one of the people in the program.

While I was writing this chapter, I came across a paragraph from my research proposal (Adlparvar, 2000) that made me aware of how my understanding had evolved in the course of this study. I had written:

A better understanding of the nature of the mentoring relationship could result in improving the training of mentors. It is expected that mentors who are more conscious of the transformational aspect of mentoring would be more effective in their functions.

Influenced by my new understanding of hermeneutic phenomenology, I could no longer relate to these words. I could now see that "improving the training of mentors" and "helping mentors to be more effective in their functions" belonged to other types of research. It was becoming clear to me that a phenomenological study could not be used to achieve goals such as these. Referring to the aim of this type of research, van Manen (1990) says:

To *do* hermeneutic phenomenology is to attempt to accomplish the impossible: to construct a full interpretive description of some aspect of the lifeworld, and yet to remain aware that lived life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal.
(p. 18)

At first glance, this statement seems to suggest a very ambitious goal for this type of research: "to attempt to accomplish the impossible." Yet, on further analysis, it seems to say that even if I were an expert in hermeneutic phenomenology, I could never expect to produce a work that could claim to have made clear, once and for all, the nature of the mentoring relationship. This statement is a clear acknowledgement of the complexity of life, which stems from the complexity of the human being. In hermeneutic phenomenology, my aim is not to attempt to simplify a complex phenomenon for the sake of my own understanding and that of the reader. My aim, in this hermeneutic phenomenological study, is "to construct a full interpretive description" of the nature of the mentoring relationship, which I believe to be "more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal" (van Manen, 1990, p. 18).

Explication of My Personal Assumptions

As the reader will have noticed, I have made a point of sharing some of my understandings, beliefs, assumptions, and presuppositions in relation to this study. I have done this not only to help the reader to understand me, the researcher, better, but also to "try to come to terms with [my] assumptions, not in order to forget them again, but rather to hold them deliberately at bay and even to turn this knowledge against itself, as it were, thereby exposing its shallow or concealing character" (van Manen, 1990, p. 47).

Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology who was also a mathematician, used the term "bracketing" to describe "the act of suspending one's beliefs in the reality of the natural world in order to study the essential structures of the world" (van Manen, 1990, p. 175).

This concept is also referred to as "phenomenological reduction."

Although Husserl believed that it was possible for the researcher to use phenomenological reduction as a means of eliminating all presuppositions from her approach to a phenomenon, it is generally accepted that a complete reduction is impossible (Colaizzi, 1978). The researcher is, however, expected to make clear to herself and to the reader her interest in, and relation to the phenomenon being studied.

I will continue to share my assumptions and beliefs with the reader throughout this work. At this point, I would like to mention one of my fundamental beliefs about the mentoring relationship. I believe that mentoring is meaningful to the extent that there is empathy and caring in the relationship, especially on the part of the mentor. This belief comes from my own experience as a protégé and from my recent experience as a mentor. I will make a point of not sharing this belief with my participants either directly or indirectly (through leading questions). I will also be conscious of this when analysing the data in this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

Research Method

This study was based on the mentoring program of a private residential school on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. This program was originally intended to include the participation of all the students at the school who would be matched with a mentor of their choice from among the school's staff members. All members of the staff selected as mentors were expected to participate in the program. I found out about this program from reading some papers written by the school principal about the philosophy and goals of this program, which was intended to help the process of the students' personal growth and the development of their capabilities in the area of interpersonal relationships.

Implementation of the Mentoring Program

After I joined the program, it was decided to make participation in the program optional for both students and staff. I was appointed to a coordinating committee that would design the program, train staff who volunteered to be mentors, explain the program to the student body and encourage them to sign up and indicate their preference for a mentor, match students with their mentors, monitor the program, and support mentors through periodic communication and meetings to discuss their experience.

We ended up having the participation of twenty mentors made up of academic and non-academic staff, and 48 students representing Grades Seven to Twelve, both male and female, and both residential as well as day students. I, myself, being the only non-staff mentor, ended

up mentoring two students, a girl from Grade Eight and a boy from Grade Seven. We also knew, through a school counsellor who was on the coordinating committee, that among the students participating in the program there were some that were dealing with challenges in their personal life, whether social, emotional, psychological or academic. The nature of these challenges was not disclosed to the committee members or the mentors.

The committee decided to allow mentors to get to know their protégés on their own, without giving them any background information on the student whether from the counsellors or the teachers. Of course, because this was a small school, many mentors already knew their protégés and both mentor and protégé were given the chance to accept or reject the person with whom they had been matched either at the outset of the program or anytime during the course of the year.

Two other important features of this program were that (1) confidentiality was guaranteed to the students such that the mentor did not discuss anything that they knew about their protégé with a third person without the protégé's approval. The only exception to this was based on the moral and legal responsibility of the mentor to report to the administration anything that would pose a clear threat to the student herself/himself or to others. And, (2) the students knew that the school and the mentor did not have an agenda for the protégé, whether manifest or hidden. They were told that this program was designed only to support them and challenge them to work toward the goals that they themselves shared with their mentors.

Outwardly, the program was fruitful to the extent that our mentors and students were committed to their relationship. Some of the

relationships did not go very far and although they were to meet on a weekly basis, in the time allotted for extra-curricular activities, many ended up meeting less frequently and some dropped the relationship altogether. We found that most mentors did not attend the meetings designed to support them, primarily because of time challenges. Some of the relationships, on the other hand, turned out to be very fruitful, as attested by the mentors and the students themselves, and some of them even became known to other staff and students. My own mentoring relationships, although we met quite regularly, did not develop into the kind of relationships that I had hoped and expected.

In the second year of the program, a similar number of mentors and students participated in the program. This time also I was matched with two students but only accepted one because of time constraints. This experience turned out to be similar to my previous mentoring relationships in the sense that it did not meet my expectations.

Participants

Towards the end of the second year, I selected two of the mentors, one male and one female, each of whom had a fruitful relationship with two protégés, again one male and one female, to participate in my study. One of the mentors was a teacher and the other was a school counsellor. Two of the protégés were in Grade Ten and the other two were in Grade Twelve. Altogether there were six participants representing four relationships. This selection was not done randomly. I had selected fruitful relationships based on the satisfaction expressed by the mentors.

Data Collection

The data collection for this study was done through one-on-one semi-structured interviews. I interviewed each participant and recorded each interview on audiotape. I asked both mentors and protégés to speak about their mentoring experience and about the development of their relationship. I asked them the following questions:

- Could you please describe your relationship with your mentor (or protégé)?
- Could you please describe some of the changes (if any) that you and your mentor (or protégé) have experienced in this relationship?
- Do you believe that you have benefited from this program? If so, please explain in what ways you benefited from your mentoring experience.
- Is there anything else that you would like to share with me about your mentoring experience?

These questions were generally intended to be as open-ended as possible in order to allow the participants the greatest latitude in expressing themselves. They were complemented with other questions that arose spontaneously from the content of the participants' statements. The third question was designed to trigger statements related to the influence that the mentor and protégé had on each other. I transcribed all the interview recordings verbatim and used them for my analysis and interpretation of the nature of mentoring.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

As I indicated in Chapter Three, my data analysis evolved from a step-by-step procedure recommended by Colaizzi (1978), to one that incorporated elements from the works of Moustakas (1994) and van Manen (1990). I started out by reading each interview transcript carefully "in order to acquire a feeling for them, a making sense out of them" (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 59). Then, I went through the following steps in analysing the data, which were divided up into three stages:

First Stage of Data Analysis

1. I listed every expression relevant to the mentoring relationship for each participant. For example, "It was pretty cooperative with the talking." (This statement was taken from an interview with one of the protégés.)
2. I sorted the relevant expressions of each participant into common clusters of themes such as "Description of Relationship" or "Protégé's Actions."
3. I reworded some expressions to present them "in more exact descriptive terms" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121). I then checked the rewording of expressions used by the mentors with each of them for validation. (Both mentors approved my rewording of their statements.)
4. I formulated a meaning for every relevant expression using "creative insight" and taking the leap from what participants "say to what they mean... never sever[ing] all connection with the original protocols" (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 59).

Second Stage of Data Analysis

5. I created a reconstructed story for each relationship by using the original expressions of both the mentor and protégé as well as the formulated meanings of those expressions (see Chapter Five). "If the research involves in-depth conversational interviews with certain persons, then these interviews may be reworked into *reconstructed life stories*" (van Manen, 1990, p. 170).
6. I checked each reconstructed story with the original transcription in order to validate them. This was achieved by asking: "(1) Are they expressed explicitly in the complete transcription? (2) Are they compatible if not explicitly expressed?" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121).
7. I developed relevant themes (ninety-nine in all) from each of the reconstructed stories (see Chapter Five). In doing this, I was guided by the following explication given by van Manen (1990):
 Phenomenological themes may be understood as the *structures of experience*. So when we analyse a phenomenon, we are trying to determine what the themes are, the experiential structures that make up that experience. It would be simplistic, however, to think of themes as conceptual formulations or categorical abstractions. (p. 79)
8. I grouped together the themes extracted from all the reconstructed stories and identified the essential themes (33 of the 99). "In the process of apprehending essential themes or essential relationships one asks the question: Is this phenomenon still the same if we imaginatively change or delete this theme from the phenomenon?

Does the phenomenon without this theme lose its fundamental meaning?" (van Manen, 1990, p. 107)

9. In the case of the mentors, I interviewed both of them for a second time and shared with them their own reconstructed stories and the relevant and essential themes derived from all the reconstructed stories, and asked them to comment about the validity of the stories and the themes:

The researcher can go back and again to the interviewee in order to dialogue with the interviewee about the ongoing record of the interview transcripts. The hermeneutic interview tends to turn the interviewees into participants or collaborators of the research project. (van Manen, 1990, p. 63)

Third Stage of Data Analysis

10. I developed two exhaustive descriptions from the reconstructed stories of each relationship: one reflecting the experience of mentors and the other reflecting the experience of protégés (see Chapter Five). "The exhaustive description of the phenomenon is as unequivocal a statement of the essential structure of the phenomenon as possible" (Riemen, 1998, p. 280).
11. I examined systematically each one of the essential themes (see Chapter Six). According to van Manen (1990), these themes become the hermeneutic tool by way of which the phenomenon under study can be meaningfully understood. The next major part of the study may take the form of examining systematically the various themes that each narrative (reconstructed life story, anecdote, interview, reflective response, hermeneutic reading, etc.) or set of narratives, reveals. (p. 170)

Explication of the First Stage of Data Analysis

As I explained earlier, I started this stage with an attempt to “acquire a feeling for” and “to make sense out of” the data that I had collected. This exercise included identifying every expression that was relevant to the phenomenon of interest, sorting them into common clusters of themes, rewording some of them in more exact descriptive terms, and formulating meaning for each and every relevant expression. I did this by using word-processing software, which enabled me to go back and add, remove, reword, or reclassify each expression, as I became more familiar with the data.

In this first stage of my data analysis, I kept the data from each interview separate. As I processed the data through each subsequent step of analysis, I recorded it in a separate electronic file. Figure 2 shows my step-by-step transformation of the data. (In Appendix A, the reader will find the data from my interview with Melanie, one of the four protégés in this study.)

Revision of Common Clusters of Themes

After completing the first stage of data analysis, which ended up being a long and painstaking process, I decided to have a second look at the common clusters of themes. I had identified fourteen clusters which I labelled as follows:

- Description of Relationship (DR)
- Circumstances of Protégé’s Life (CP)
- Circumstances of Mentor’s Life (CM)
- Protégé’s Needs (NP)
- Outcome for Mentor (OM)
- Protégé’s Beliefs (BP)

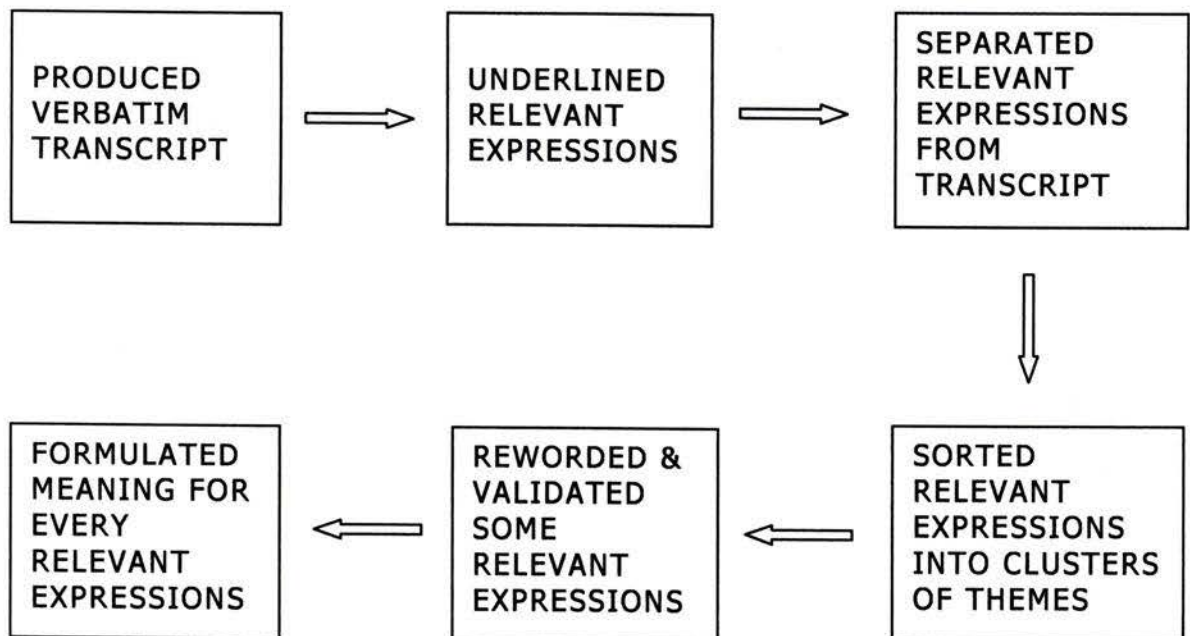


Figure 2. Flowchart showing the first stage of the processing and analysis of data

- Mentor's Beliefs (BM)
- Protégé's Traits (TP)
- Mentor's Traits (TM)
- Protégé's Actions (AP)
- Mentor's Actions (AM)
- Protégé's Reaction to Mentor's Actions (RP)
- Mentor's Reaction to Protégé's Actions (RM)
- Empowerment of Protégé (EP)

In the first stage of analysis it became evident that the data from each transcript corresponded to at least 11 of the 14 common clusters. Although I was able to fit all the relevant data into these clusters, I did not feel confident about proceeding with my data analysis. I wondered if I had done a proper job of identifying data that was truly relevant.

I also knew that my objectivity in analysing the data was compromised by my own beliefs and presuppositions. For example, it was clear to me that I was looking for statements that indicated the "empowerment of protégé." In fact, the term "empowerment" was itself something that I associated with mentoring even before conducting my interviews in this study. When I asked the participants if they had benefited in any way from their relationship I was hoping that they would say things that indicated that they had been "empowered." They all said that they had benefited from their mentoring relationship and some of their statements could be seen to indicate empowerment of the protégé. I felt that I needed to deepen my understanding of hermeneutic phenomenology before continuing my data analysis. So I went back to reading *Researching Lived Experience* (van Manen, 1990). As I read this book, I looked for anything that would help me to distinguish relevant

expressions from those that did not belong to a phenomenological description of the mentoring experience. One statement by van Manen (1990) was particularly useful. He says, "the aim [of phenomenology] is to construct an animating, evocative description (text) of human actions, behaviours, intentions, and experiences as we meet them in the lifeworld" (p. 19).

From this statement I knew that those clusters that were related to the participants' actions and reactions were relevant, and so were those that were about the mentoring experience itself. But I had to decide if statements related to the circumstances of the participants' lives, their beliefs, traits, and needs, the outcome for mentors and the empowerment of protégé should still be considered relevant. Statements by mentors about their beliefs could be considered to reflect their intentions but I was not quite sure that they did.

So I looked carefully at the statements under the cluster I had called "Mentor's Beliefs." I realised that many of them expressed the mentor's own ideas about the nature and purpose of mentoring. For example, one of the mentors said: "Just one very simple thing with mentoring that is really nice is where do most people in this world get an hour to—their hour—they can spend it however they want. They can ask questions; they can share with you; they can do whatever they want. But it's their hour to receive full attention." Other statements in this cluster indicated the mentor's understanding of what the protégé was going through during their relationship and their internal reaction to it, such as, "maybe because I guess I see in her such a great potential, it was very tempting to be more assertive about 'Oh, why don't you try this and try that.'"

Although the statement in the first example helped me understand the mentor's outlook on mentoring, I could not see how I might use it in the description and understanding of her mentoring experience. However, the statement in the second example, because it described an internal process experienced by the mentor, was useful in my understanding the essence of the mentoring experience. Nevertheless, I could not see the usefulness of identifying themes under the common theme of "Mentor's Beliefs." Therefore, I decided to remove it from my list of common themes after relocating some of the relevant expressions within other clusters.

Up to this point, I had done my best to let the data speak for itself by trying to bracket all my presuppositions, theories and beliefs about the nature of mentoring. I had gone through the first stage of my analysis without looking around for ideas from studies similar to this study. But now I felt that I needed to draw on other studies on this topic in order to improve my analysis of the data. However, I was not sure if this would be in the spirit of hermeneutic phenomenological research. My doubts were dispelled after reading the following passage by van Manen (1990, p. 76):

Clearly, a human science researcher may benefit from studying how other human science scholars have addressed and brought to text their understandings of selected pedagogical topics. In this way, a phenomenological study of a topic of our interest may suggest different ways of looking at a phenomenon, or reveal dimensions of meaning which we had hitherto not considered. The question is whether one should turn to such phenomenological human science sources in the initial or in the later phases of one's research study. If one examines existing human science texts at the very outset then it may be more difficult to suspend one's interpretive

understanding of the phenomenon. It is sound practice to attempt to address the phenomenological meaning of a phenomenon on one's own first. However, sooner or later one must test one's insights against those who belong to the tradition of one's subject of study. And it is then that a researcher becomes aware of as yet unformulated or unsuspected specifications and dimensions of meaning. In this way the work of others turns into a conversational partnership that reveals the limits and possibilities of one's own interpretive achievements.

So, I decided to enter "into a conversational partnership" with books such as *The Tact of Teaching* (van Manen, 1991), *The Authentic Teacher* (Moustakas, 1966), and *On Becoming a Person* (Rogers, 1961) to help my understanding of the pedagogical relationship. Although the last of these three books was not written by a phenomenologist, I believe that Carl Rogers has succeeded in deepening our understanding of the human phenomenon.

In *The Tact of Teaching* van Manen (1991) discusses the nature of the pedagogical experience. I found this to be very helpful. Van Manen's description of and insights into the pedagogical relationship helped me in restructuring and regrouping the clusters of themes. I started by eliminating two clusters because of their irrelevance to the pedagogical relationship. These were

- Circumstances of Mentor's Life (CM), and
- Protégé's Traits (TP)

I did this on the basis that the circumstances of the mentor's life should not have a direct bearing on the nature of the mentoring relationship. Pedagogical responsibility (a term borrowed from van Manen, 1991) makes it necessary for the mentor to not allow his or her own life's circumstances to influence the mentoring relationship. As for the

protégé's traits, although it would be expected to influence the nature of the mentoring relationship, it should not be the focus of this study. This research seeks to uncover the essence of the nature of the mentoring experience. It is, therefore, important to keep clear of incidental factors in relation to this experience.

As I continued to analyse the remaining clusters of themes, I decided to remove two more clusters. These were:

- Circumstances of Protégé's Life (CP), and
- Protégé's Needs (NP)

Based on my new understanding of the pedagogical relationship, the circumstances of the protégé's life are explored and analysed by the mentor in his or her effort to understand and get to know the protégé better so as to be able to ask "pedagogically important questions" such as: "What is this situation or action like for the child?" And, "What is good and what is not good for this child?" (van Manen, 1990, p. 145). So, although the protégé's needs and his or her life circumstances are important for the mentor to know and understand, analysing these specific circumstances and needs will not help to deepen our understanding of the nature of the mentoring relationship.

At this point, I had nine clusters of themes left. I continued to analyse these clusters. I kept one as it was, added two new clusters, and regrouped others, ending up with eight clusters in all:

- Description of the Mentoring Relationship (DR) (Same as before)
- Pedagogical Responsibility (PR) (A new cluster)
- Pedagogical Intention (PI) (A new cluster)
- Pedagogical Qualities (PQ) (Previously called "Mentor's Traits")

- Mentor's Actions (AM) (Now includes "Mentor's Reaction to Protégé's Actions")
- Protégé's Response (RP) (Combines "Protégé's Reaction to Mentor's Actions" and "Protégé's Actions")
- Influence of Mentoring on the Protégé (IP) (Combines "Protégé's Beliefs" and "Empowerment of Protégé")
- Influence of Mentoring on the Mentor (IM) (Previously called "Outcome for Mentor")

The two new clusters, "Pedagogical Responsibility" and Pedagogical Intention" are based on concepts used by van Manen (1991) in his discussion of the nature of the pedagogical relation. Pedagogical responsibility refers to the moral responsibility that the teacher or mentor "bears for the welfare and the development of the child" (pp. 68-69). For example, when the mentor says that "it opened up the question of: Okay, how do you support these kids... I mean it's just that it's a lengthy process," (statement made by one of the mentors in this study) we know that the mentor is pedagogically responsible.

The concept of pedagogical intention is closely linked with pedagogical responsibility. To explain this concept, van Manen (1991) says:

The pedagogical relation is an intentional relationship between an adult and a child, in which the adult's dedication and intentions are the child's mature adulthood. It is a relation oriented toward the personal development of the child—this means that the pedagogue needs to be able to see the present situation and experiences of the child and value them for what they contain; and the pedagogue needs to be able to anticipate the moment when the child can participate in the culture with fuller self-responsibility." (p. 75)

For example, when one of the mentors in this study says that he is resigned to the outcome because he is confident that his protégé "will be okay and it will be picked up, you know, in some way," we know that the mentor has pedagogical intention. I will now give a brief explanation of the reasoning behind the other changes made to the common clusters.

I found that van Manen (1991) uses the term "pedagogical qualities" when referring to the essence of an educator. He says, "the essence of an educator does not lie in technical expertise but in a complex of pedagogical qualities" (p. 81). The term "pedagogical qualities" sounds more elegant than "mentor's traits" and has a connotation of excellence in relation to pedagogy. Therefore, I renamed "mentor's traits" as "pedagogical qualities."

I decided that it was not necessary to separate the "mentor's actions" from the "mentor's reaction to the protégé's actions." Therefore, I combined the two clusters into one.

Using the same reasoning as above, I combined the two clusters called "protégé's reaction to mentor's actions" and "protégé's actions" and called it "protégé's response." Van Manen (1991) refers to this concept when he says: "But only when such intentions are responded to by the young person can the pedagogical relation come into existence" (pp. 75-76).

As I mentioned earlier, I felt that the term "empowerment" used to identify one of the clusters reflected my own presuppositions about mentoring. Also, it has a connotation that there is only one way that the protégé is influenced through mentoring, namely, in an "empowering" way. So, I decided to use the more neutral and perhaps more objective term "influence." And, more significantly, this term was the main focus of

my original question that led me to this study. Therefore, I renamed "Empowerment of Protégé" as "Influence of Mentoring on the Protégé" and which included "Protégé's Beliefs" about the influence of mentoring on the protégé.

And finally, I renamed "Outcome for Mentor" as "Influence of Mentoring on the Mentor" because "outcome" seemed to have a connotation of something expected by the mentor in return for his or her efforts, whereas "influence" could be something that was unexpected.

At this point I felt satisfied with the common clusters of themes and proceeded to re-sort all of the relevant expressions, along with the rewording of some of these expressions and their formulated meanings, into these clusters. After completing this process, I was ready for the second stage of my data analysis.

Explication of the Second Stage of Data Analysis

I started this stage of my data analysis by combining the relevant expressions of each participant and the meanings formulated for them, to create a reconstructed story for each mentoring relationship, first from the description of the protégé followed by the description of the mentor. I did this by following the guidelines provided by van Manen (1990) for producing a lived-experience description:

- (1) You need to describe the experience as you live(d) through it. Avoid as much as possible causal explanations, generalizations, or abstract interpretations. For example, it does not help to state what *caused* your illness, *why* you like swimming so much, or why you feel that children *tend* to like to play outdoors.
- (2) Describe the experience from the inside, as it were; almost like a state of mind: the feelings, the mood, the emotions, etc.

- (3) Focus on a particular example or incident of the object of experience: describe specific events, an adventure, a happening, a particular experience.
- (4) Try to focus on an example of the experience which stands out for its vividness, or as it was the first time.
- (5) Attend to how the body feels, how things smell(ed), how they sound(ed), etc.
- (6) Avoid trying to beautify your account with fancy phrases or flowery terminology.

It is important to realise that it is not of great concern whether a certain experience actually happened in exactly that way. We are less concerned with the factual accuracy of an account than with the plausibility of an account—whether it is true to our living sense of it (pp. 64-65).

When I encountered these suggestions, I wished that I had shared them with my participants to help them in their description of their experience of mentoring. I knew that this would have made their descriptions much richer. Nevertheless, I felt that the data provided by my participants reflected a genuine sharing of their mentoring experience with me, the researcher, for which I was very grateful. In addition to the suggestions given above, van Manen (1990) offers specific guidance to the researcher in processing the data. He says, "the researcher needs to be attuned to the tendency of subjects to include explanations and interpretations with their descriptions of lived experience" (p. 66). I now realised that explanations and interpretations made by the participants, interesting as they may be, should not be included in my reconstruction of their description of lived experience.

As I wrote the reconstructed stories of my participants, I discovered that the themes associated with these stories were starting to reveal themselves. This was an exciting moment for me. I had carefully

studied van Manen's copious explanation of themes (not to be confused with common clusters of themes) and now they seemed to come out of my writing on their very own. The concept and use of themes in human science research is found in the analysis and interpretation procedures proposed by different authors. Both Colaizzi (1978) and Moustakas (1994), who have developed well-known procedures for phenomenological research, incorporate themes in their methods. However, I found van Manen's (1990) description of themes to be the most useful. In the following statement he describes themes metaphorically:

Phenomenological themes are not objects or generalizations; metaphorically speaking they are more like knots in the webs of our experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus lived through as meaningful wholes. Themes are the stars that make up the universes of meaning we live through. By the light of these themes we can navigate and explore such universes. (p. 90)

Other researchers have referred to themes as "meaning units" or "structures of meaning." Regardless of the term used,

Making something of a text or of a lived experience by interpreting its meaning is more accurately a process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure—grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of "seeing" meaning. Ultimately, the concept of theme is rather irrelevant and may be considered simply as a means to get at the notion we are addressing. Themes give control and order to our research and writing. (van Manen, 1990, p. 79)

It is important to note that themes are used "simply as a means to get at the notion we are addressing" and that "they give control and order to our research and writing." Van Manen (1990) also explains that,

(1) *Theme is the experience of focus, of meaning, of point.* As I read over an anecdote I ask, what is its meaning, its point?

- (2) *Theme formulation is at best a simplification.* We come up with a theme formulation but immediately feel that it somehow falls short, that it is an inadequate summary of the notion.
- (3) *Themes are not objects one encounters at certain points or moments in a text.* A theme is not a thing; themes are intransitive.
- (4) *Theme is the form of capturing the phenomenon one tries to understand.* Theme describes an aspect of the structure of lived experience. (p. 87)

As I wrote each reconstructed story, I took the themes that revealed themselves in the story and put them in parentheses following the text to which they corresponded (see "Reconstructed Story of Melanie's Mentoring Relationship" in Chapter Five). After checking each story with the original transcription for validation and making the necessary modifications, I listed the themes corresponding to that story.

After completing this process for all the stories, I had collected ninety-nine relevant themes. The large number of themes produced in this work may seem surprising to some researchers, specially considering the relatively small amount of data collected from the interviews. It will, however, become clear to the reader that no attempt was made to influence the outcome or number of themes. Throughout this work, my aim was to be true to the data and allow it to speak for itself.

I proceeded to sort these themes according to the common clusters of themes that I had created in the first stage of my data analysis. Not surprisingly, I found that all the themes fit perfectly into these clusters. At this point, it became apparent to me that the concepts of pedagogical responsibility and pedagogical intention were intimately linked to each other and to pedagogical qualities. All these terms referred to a way of "being" of the mentor and were an intrinsic aspect of who he or she was.

Therefore, before going to the next step of identifying those themes that were essential to the nature of mentoring, I combined all the themes that belonged to these three common clusters.

Determining the Essential Themes

In Step Eight of my analysis of data, I determined which of the ninety-nine themes extracted from the reconstructed stories were essential. Van Manen (1990) explains that although differentiating between essential themes and incidental themes is "the most difficult and controversial element of phenomenological human science" (p. 106), it is necessary to do so for the purpose of clarity. He says that,

Not all meanings that we may encounter in reflecting on a certain phenomenon or lived experience are unique to that phenomenon or experience. And even the themes that would appear to be essential meanings are often historically or culturally determined or shaped. (p. 106)

From the above statement, it became clear to me that, as the researcher, I had to be careful not to include themes that had a historical or cultural basis. In a different context, van Manen (1990) explains that "from a phenomenological point of view we are not primarily interested in the subjective experiences of our so-called subjects or informants, for the sake of being able to report on how something is seen from their particular view, perspective, or vantage point." Since I had not clearly explained this to my participants during our interviews, I had to identify and exclude statements based on "their particular view, perspective, or vantage point" from the reconstructed stories, and the incidental and essential themes.

Another important criteria in my determination of essential themes was based on the following statement:

From a phenomenological point of view, we are less interested in the factual status of particular instances: whether something happened, how often it tends to happen, or how the occurrence of an experience is related to the prevalence of other conditions or events. For example, phenomenology does not ask, "How do these children learn this particular material?" but it asks, "What is the nature or essence of the experience of learning (so that I can now better understand what this particular learning experience is like for these children)?" The essence or nature of an experience has been adequately described in language if the description reawakens or shows us the lived quality and significance of the experience in a fuller or deeper manner. (van Manen, 1990, p. 10)

In order to create a description that shows the reader the lived quality and significance of the experience of mentoring and being mentored, I selected thirty-three essential themes that best reflected that experience. In doing this, my concern was *"to discover aspects or qualities that make [mentoring] what it is and without which [mentoring] could not be what it is"* (van Manen, 1990, p. 107).

At this point, I went back and interviewed each mentor separately for a second time and shared with them their own reconstructed stories and the relevant and essential themes derived from all the reconstructed stories, and asked them to comment about the validity of the stories and the themes. Both interviews were audio taped. On seeing the partial findings of this study, both mentors were visibly excited. They read their stories reconstructed by me with great interest and did not want any changes made to them. They both commented on how well the stories reflected their experience of mentoring. They had some insightful comments about the themes, especially about the essential themes. I

explained to them the process and thinking behind the selection of the essential themes and then the opportunity to comment on the inclusion or exclusion of each essential theme. Remarkably, both mentors were in full agreement with my choice of essential themes and did not suggest any changes except for the rewording of a few themes. Their comments have been incorporated into the discussion of the essential themes (see Chapter Six). These interviews concluded the second stage of my data analysis.

Explication of the Third Stage of Data Analysis

Developing the Exhaustive Descriptions

This was perhaps the most fluid part of my data analysis. As I put together the essential themes extracted from the two sets of participants (protégés and mentors), I found that they fit together naturally in the form of an exhaustive description of the nature of mentoring. All I needed to do was to modify the order in which the essential themes originally appeared so as to improve the natural flow of each exhaustive description.

After completing the two exhaustive descriptions of mentoring based on the data from the protégés and the mentors, I realised that the language of the narrative improved by putting them in the voice of the protégé and the mentor, respectively. Reading the exhaustive description in this form seemed closer to the actual experience of the mentoring relationship. In Chapter Five, the reader will find the exhaustive descriptions presented in the third person as well as the first person.

Systematic Examination of the Essential Themes

When it came to the systematic examination of the essential themes (see Chapter Six), I felt that I had reached the greatest depth of this exciting voyage. I imagined myself diving deep into the ocean of understanding, collecting molluscs on the ocean floor in the hope of finding the pearls of wisdom and sharing them with my reader. As a note of interest, Daloz (1999) says that Erikson (1950) was the only well-known developmentalist who dared to use the word “wisdom” in his works. I have used it because wisdom has a clear definition—“knowledge of what is true or right coupled with good judgement” (Urdang & Flexner, 1969)—and it is what I pursue in life and in this study. I want to understand the *true* nature of the lived experience of *true* mentoring.

Interpretive analysis has been by far the most difficult and challenging part of this project. It required an attempt to capture the meaning of the significant statements shared by the protégés and mentors in this study; a deep reflection on the concepts embedded in the essential themes; retrospection into my own experience as a student, teacher, mentor, and parent; and a careful study of the works of others who have been engaged with this topic, whether as phenomenologists, educational philosophers, psychotherapists, teachers, or mentors. I had to decide what was a sufficient and fair treatment of each essential theme without leaving out some of its essential elements. Above all, I had to express my reflections in a language that would not be too cumbersome to read.

CHAPTER FIVE

Findings

In this chapter, I will share with the reader the reconstructed stories of all my participants. In the first story, the reader will find the themes related to the text written in parentheses to show how these themes were derived. These have been omitted from the other three stories so as to maintain the flow of the story and not to distract the reader. Each story is followed by the themes revealed by that story. Each theme has been categorised within one of the eight clusters of themes developed in the first stage of analysis, indicated by two letters in parentheses. The following list shows the questions that were used to categories the themes into common clusters:

- Description of the Mentoring Relationship (DR)
 - What is the protégé's experience of the mentoring relationship?
 - What is the mentor's experience of the mentoring relationship?
- Pedagogical Responsibility (PR)
 - How does pedagogical responsibility manifest itself?
- Pedagogical Intention (PI)
 - How does pedagogical intention manifest itself?
- Pedagogical Qualities (PQ)
 - What are the pedagogical qualities of the mentor?
- Mentor's Actions (AM)
 - What do the pedagogical actions of a mentor look like?
- Protégé's Response (RP)
 - How does the protégé respond to the mentor's pedagogical actions?
- Influence of Mentoring on the Protégé (IP)

In what respect is the protégé influenced through mentoring?

- Influence of Mentoring on the Mentor (IM)

In what respect is the mentor influenced through mentoring?

At the end of this chapter, I will present the essential themes followed by two exhaustive descriptions based on these themes—one reflecting the experience of mentors and the other reflecting the experience of protégés. Please note that I have used pseudonyms for my participants in order to maintain their anonymity.

Reconstructed Story of Melanie's Mentoring Relationship

Protégé's Experience

For Melanie, in the beginning, her mentor was "just a teacher." "It was just, you know, 'Hello,' class, and leave." She realised, very soon, that this teacher "looked out for me and asked me every time how I was doing." "He was my teacher and he knew that I had biology, chemistry and math to deal with and so he knew that I'd probably have to, like, stay up late the night before. So, everyday he came at snack or lunchtime to see if, you know, like 'how many hours of sleep did you get last night?' and, you know, 'did you eat breakfast?'" (The teacher/mentor is interested in the protégé's well-being.)

"As the year went by," Melanie "kind of opened up to him" because she felt that "it was easy to talk to him." And he seemed to sense what she was going through. "He knew when I had problems he could see it from my face." At that time, Melanie's personal situation was such that sometimes she had no one else to talk to except her teacher. "At times where friends or other people weren't there, the family they were busy, I didn't have time to talk to them, he was there right after class and I

would go and talk to him." (The mentor fills the protégé's need for someone to talk to.)

Trust has always been an important issue for Melanie. "I don't really trust anyone in the beginning." As her trust in her teacher grew, they "became closer" and their relationship turned into a friendship. "I kinda thought about him as a friend and not so much a teacher any more." (The mentor is a friend.)

Melanie knew that her mentor would always be there for her when she needed him. "He always made sure that I knew that his office was always open for me to go to him anytime." (The mentor is always there for his protégé.) "Like I had this problem I didn't know what to do with it and I couldn't really talk to anyone. None of my friends were around at the time. It was exams. They were all busy. And I couldn't make a decision and I was really stuck. And so I went and I talked to him." (The protégé seeks the mentor's help.) Gradually, the relationship between Melanie and her mentor developed to the point that the sharing and supporting became a two-way thing. Sometimes "we were both kind of together, talking about our problems." (The mentor engages in self-disclosure.)

Melanie's trust in her mentor grew to such an extent that she "completely knew that I could talk to him anytime I wanted about anything, and he would keep it to himself." In their sessions together, her mentor "would just listen and maybe advise me, which is what I really wanted." (The mentor sometimes offers advice.) Melanie did not just want an empathic listener: "I definitely needed advice not just someone who just listens and says: 'Oh, that's great; good for you; sorry; so that's what happened.'" (The protégé appreciates the mentor's

advice.) She was looking for advice and guidance. "I needed some advice to see if I'm going the right way or wrong way." And when her mentor offered guidance, she took it and acted upon it: "If he hadn't given me that advice and if I hadn't listened to him a lot of things would have been different." (The protégé acts on the mentor's advice.) Her mentor's support was most crucial in those moments when "I couldn't make a decision and I was really stuck." (The mentor gives his support when the protégé needs it.)

In those crucial moments, Melanie "saw the level of caring." "He actually cared." (The mentor is caring.) Her mentor was sensitive to her needs and challenges. "He knew when I had problems, I guess, like he could see it from my face." (The mentor is perceptive.) He had created an atmosphere of trust and open communication in their mentoring relationship so that Melanie "felt comfortable talking to him." (The mentor creates an atmosphere of trust and open communication.) Melanie's mentor was non-judgemental. "He wouldn't really judge what I would say to him." (The mentor is non-judgemental.) "When I was just completely about to give up on something he told me that there's always hope." (The mentor gives hope to the protégé.)

Looking back on their relationship, Melanie explains that "in the beginning of the year I didn't know him at all. As time went by the level of friendship was a lot closer." Melanie's relationship with her mentor continued to grow beyond a normal friendship until it acquired a spiritual dimension. "There was a connection between us [in the sense that] we both believed in God . . . [which] brought us together—closer even more." (The mentoring relationship is a spiritual companionship.)

Themes

- 6-1 The teacher/mentor is interested in the protégé's well-being. (PQ)
- 6-2 The mentor fills the protégé's need for someone to talk to. (AM)
- 6-3 The mentor is a friend. (PQ)
- 6-4 The mentor is always there for his protégé. (PQ)
- 6-5 The protégé seeks the mentor's help. (RP)
- 6-6 The mentor engages in self-disclosure. (AM)
- 6-7 The mentor sometimes offers advice. (AM)
- 6-8 The protégé appreciates the mentor's advice. (RP)
- 6-9 The protégé acts on the mentor's advice. (RP)
- 6-10 The mentor gives his support when the protégé needs it. (AM)
- 6-11 The mentor is caring. (PQ)
- 6-12 The mentor is perceptive. (PQ)
- 6-13 The mentor creates an atmosphere of trust and open communication.
(AM)
- 6-14 The mentor is non-judgemental. (PQ)
- 6-15 The mentor gives hope to the protégé. (AM)
- 6-16 The mentoring relationship is a spiritual companionship. (DR)

Mentor's Experience

This relationship was not part of the formal mentoring program of the school. At first the mentor and Melanie just had "a teacher-student relationship." As her teacher, the mentor perceived that Melanie's "opinion of herself was so low, and every time there was some sort of challenge in a mark or whatever... she would start to go into this sort of self-hate thing that just really wasn't working." (The teacher/mentor is perceptive.) The mentor approached Melanie with the intention of helping her overcome this psychological hurdle which he saw as "the biggest

thing that was getting in the way of her learning." (The teacher/mentor is pedagogically responsible.)

"Near the beginning it was . . . brief contacts. We'd just talk and I would mostly just encourage her. . . with a word here and there." Sometimes, "after class I'd ask her to hold back for a second because I could see in her face that she needed some encouragement. So I'd talk with her a bit and give her some encouragement." It was "from the encouragement" that "she would come back with specific things that she wanted to talk to me more about." (The teacher/mentor has the ability to create mentoring situations.)

The mentor was happy to see that "it fit when I started to ask her questions in the classroom—when we started to talk or when I encouraged her, then it just started to build." "The relationship deepened over time and became more easy." Melanie "would come to me when she was having difficulties." "When she needed to talk to somebody... she would come and speak with me." Sometimes, "she would say 'do you have any time, could we go and talk?' And often I could right away but sometimes, you know, we'd make an appointment for later on." (The mentor is generous with his time.)

When they talked, the teacher, who by now had assumed the role of mentor, "would listen to her, encourage her and support her," because "there was decisions that she was trying to make." (The mentor combines good listening with encouragement and support.) The mentor was concerned about Melanie's well-being, and was aware of the challenges that she was facing at that time in her life. On one occasion he felt the need to "break confidence with a professional (a school counsellor)" to seek help in supporting Melanie, so he took her to see the counsellor.

(The mentor is aware of his own limitations.) (The mentor uses all the available resources to support the protégé.) At first, he was concerned that this experience might have an adverse effect on their relationship but he found that "it actually deepened the relationship—it didn't ruin it." He attributes this to the fact that by the time this incident took place "she trusted me to know that I was trying to act in her best interest", concluding that "at the beginning that might not have been possible." (The mentor acts in the best interest of the protégé.)

Reflecting back on their relationship, the mentor relates that "it was interesting [be]cause it was really quite spontaneous and it did come out of the role of being a teacher." (Through pedagogical awareness, the teacher/mentor becomes sensitive to the situation of his students.) "It fit the need for what had to happen for her and for me too, I guess, because as a teacher in the classroom, I don't like to see someone suffering." (The mentor/teacher is sensitive to his students' suffering.) The mentor knows that building trust is crucial to the development of this kind of relationship, which comes with a special reward: "I know that once that trust is built that we have a deep friendship and a deep caring, and I know that it's reciprocal. I feel just as cared for as I care for her." (The mentor feels that his deep caring for the protégé is reciprocated.)

Themes

- 7-1 The teacher/mentor is perceptive. (PQ)
- 7-2 The teacher/mentor is pedagogically responsible. (PR)
- 7-3 The teacher/mentor has the ability to create mentoring situations.
(PQ)
- 7-4 The mentor is generous with his time. (PQ)

- 7-5 The mentor combines good listening with encouragement and support. (PQ)
- 7-6 The mentor is aware of his own limitations. (PQ)
- 7-7 The mentor uses all the available resources to support the protégé. (PR)
- 7-8 The mentor acts in the best interest of the protégé. (PR)
- 7-9 The teacher/mentor is sensitive to the situation of his students. (PR)
- 7-10 The mentor/teacher is sensitive to his students' suffering. (PQ)
- 7-11 The mentor feels that his deep caring for the protégé is reciprocated. (RP)

Reconstructed Story of Lynn's Mentoring Relationship

Protégé's Experience

Lynn began this mentoring relationship with expectation and enthusiasm: "When I started last year I came in like willing to share everything." Over time, this relationship has become a place where she is able to talk about "stuff that's happened," where she has "so much to tell her (the mentor) about certain situations," and one that is "really fun" and sometimes even "climactic." Lynn and her mentor have become so close that now she doesn't have to spend as much time explaining things to her: "The relationship, it has a strong base so now when I talk about stuff it's kind of most of the time clear why something is happening."

This relationship is important to Lynn because it focuses mostly around her life at school so that when she's not at school, she's able to deal with the other issues in her life. "Here I'm talking with her (my mentor) about a lot of school stuff, which is a big part of my life, whereas I wouldn't really want to bring it up in other times with other

people as much." Lynn has developed complete trust in her mentor and does not have any trouble discussing personal issues with her. When they meet she tells her "everything about every situation."

Reflecting on the outcome of this relationship Lynn believes that "it's really helped me to learn that like adults aren't like against the youth (chuckles) and umm . . . yeah, that's like one of the main things I'm really thankful for." As a result, now "I have more appreciation for all of the other staff and my relationship with the staff I know has grown... like a lot more with my teachers." She feels that through her improved interaction with adults in the school environment she is able to set a good example for her peers. "I think it kind of rubs off."

Themes

- 3-1 Mentoring is fun. (DR)
- 3-2 A mentoring relationship is like a friendship. (DR)
- 3-3 Mentoring at school enhances school life for the protégé. (IP)
- 3-4 Once trust has been established, the protégé opens up to the mentor.
(RP)
- 3-5 Mentoring helps to reduce the generational gap for the protégé.
(IP) (DR)
- 3-6 Mentoring motivates the protégé to set a good example. (IP) (DR)

Mentor's Experience

In the beginning of this relationship, Lynn started out by testing the ground before opening up fully to her mentor. "When we first started meeting . . . I'm sure she held a lot of stuff back. . . . She had to see if I could be trusted and she had to see if I would cast judgement." After some time, the protégé started to share very personal matters with her mentor and they were able to deal with the issues at a deeper level. The

mentor perceived that Lynn continued to be wary about what she disclosed and continued to test the ground for some time until she developed more trust in the relationship. The mentor calls this process "crossing the hurdle."

Nowadays, when they get together ("we meet at a certain time on a regular basis"), Lynn and her mentor are quite relaxed and there is no pressure or expectations on either side. The mentor uses a medicine wheel approach to see how Lynn is doing overall. First she inquires about her physical condition: "What's your health like? What's your sleeping patterns like? Are you eating healthy? How's your exercise?" Then she asks about Lynn's mental state. Next she inquires about other aspects of her life: "What she's doing to nurture herself spiritually and also, you know, what's happening for her socially or emotional interactions and that type of thing." Sometimes they may not have anything to say to each other. "There are some days when there's really not much to talk about and so . . . I just say: 'Well, it sounds like all is well and you're kind of filled to the brim.' So I just call it to a close." At other times, "the whole thing will be her excitedly telling me about this and this and this thought that she's had, this plan that she has; and it's really amazing."

At times the mentor finds it "very tempting to be more assertive" when trying to help Lynn deal with the issues that she brings to their sessions together. But she prefers to exercise self-restraint because "it just didn't seem the nature of our relationship was really for me to push her in one direction or another." She gives her protégé constant support and encouragement, reassuring her that when she's ready to do the things that she talks about, she'll be able to make the right choices and

do them all. Sometimes, when relevant, the mentor shares some of her own experiences with Lynn and offers her specific suggestions such as participating in a specific program at the school that would further her development.

For the mentor, this is "a very cordial relationship" where "there's a lot of honesty." She offers her protégé a safe place where she feels accepted and supported. "The nature of our relationship was such that this was a place for her to come here and try on ideas." Lynn has become more and more open and trusting and is able to talk about the issues that she's grappling with. "She is very purposeful in what she saves up to bring here," to the point that "I feel like she drives, in a sense, where we're gonna go." The mentor finds that Lynn has developed significantly in the course of this relationship. She has gone from being fearful of doing the things that she would like to do, to having the courage to try out those same things. "I've really been happy that she's been able to have so much courage about trying things." "After she got into this mentoring relationship then she started to avail herself of other opportunities." For the mentor it's very exciting "to see that not only has she (Lynn) taken advantage of the mentoring but she's also involved herself in other kinds of healthy types of activities."

The mentor has observed a sharp contrast between counselling other students (as a school counsellor) and this mentoring experience. When she's counselling, "I sometimes feel like I'm really pulling them along and I'm doing most of the work. But in this particular relationship I really feel that there's a real equal exchange in that, you know, I'm being as enriched by listening to her and how she is processing things and how she is handling things."

In this relationship, the mentor finds herself often in the role of the learner rather than the person imparting knowledge and understanding. "As the mentor, you know, there is some assumption that I know something and maybe I do; but it's . . . like I'm the learner a lot in this relationship with her." For example, "when she (Lynn) shares about acting . . . I'm the learner and she's mentoring me, sort of."

The mentor finds that getting to know Lynn has changed some of her assumptions about people and has helped her to adjust the way in which she relates to others. "She and I are different, very different." "I'm kinda the conservative type and she's the real liberal type." The mentor has learned that personal differences don't have to be an obstacle to loving and appreciating others. She talks about "the enjoyment I have in watching her and have seen the process that she's been in." "I look forward to seeing her." "I have grown to know and love this girl."

In her final reflections about this mentoring experience, the mentor is full of positive feelings. "I've seen our relationship grow." "It's not a challenge." "I really enjoy it."

Themes

- 1-1 Once trust has been established, the protégé opens up to the mentor. (RP)
- 1-2 The mentor takes interest in every aspect of the protégé's well-being. (PI)
- 1-3 The mentor helps the protégé understand the importance of attending to all of her needs—physical, mental, spiritual, and social/emotional. (AM)
- 1-4 *In the mentoring relationship, there's no pressure on the mentor and protégé to "perform."* (DR)

- 1-5 The mentor takes pleasure in the protégé's excitement. (PI)
- 1-6 The mentor is careful not to impose her own values on her protégé. (PR)
- 1-7 The mentor gives her protégé constant support and encouragement. (PR)
- 1-8 The mentor shares personal experiences and offers suggestions as a way of guiding her protégé. (AM)
- 1-9 The mentor creates an atmosphere that feels safe and accepting for the protégé. (PR)
- 1-10 The mentor allows the protégé to set the agenda. (AM)
- 1-11 Mentoring gives courage to the protégé (IP)
- 1-12 Mentoring is enriching to the mentor. (IM) (DR)
- 1-13 The mentor is open to taking the role of learner. (PI)
- 1-14 Mentoring influences the mentor's way of relating to others. (IM)
- 1-15 The mentor develops an affection for her protégé. (DR)
- 1-16 The mentor enjoys the mentoring experience. (DR)

Reconstructed Story of Ron's Mentoring Relationship

Protégé's Experience

Ron knew his mentor both as a teacher and as a men's group facilitator prior to developing a mentoring relationship with him. In the men's group there were "nine guys just sitting around . . . we'd go around in a circle, we'd talk about stuff and he (his future mentor) would be the facilitator of it." "Then, the next year the mentoring thing came up so I asked for him as my mentor and, you know, he accepted me."

Before the men's group and the mentoring experience, Ron and his mentor had a typical "teacher-student relationship," in which "I hand him

my work, he gives me a grade," because "he was my teacher for two classes." "As time went on me and my mentor became more like friends." "[Our] relationship was like a friendship more than a teacher-student relationship." From this point on, Ron found that "I could relate to him when I was in my classes," whereas most of the other students did not have the courage to express themselves freely with him. "Because he was like my friend, so I could just tell him how I felt about the way he was teaching." "If I had a problem with anything he was teaching I would tell him." "I learned from him actually a lot better than most of the other students, which made it a lot easier on me." "In my bio class it made it ten times easier for me to learn from him [be]cause I kind of knew where he was coming from."

"[Our relationship] developed into a friendship more than anything." "I could go talk to him about anything . . . about stuff that was going on in my life because he was like a confidant." "We had a good relationship, so I felt like I could trust him." "I could trust him with anything I felt like telling him." "I would go talk to him about stuff instead of like my other friends, sometimes."

Sometimes, Ron and his mentor "would talk about career stuff." But "it wasn't limited to career—everything, other relationship advice, like you know, I have a problem with this guy, this other guy and he's helping me out with this." Also, there were "things coming up in my life that I had to think about putting aside for the next year, you know, stuff like that." Ron appreciates how his mentor "helped me explore all the other options to make sure that I was making the right decision." "He just listens to me and it makes it a lot easier . . . I can just say anything." His mentor helped him by "giving me another point of view

on" things. "For me his advice and stuff would actually, it's helped me a lot in finding, in looking, you know, searching." "It has aided me a lot in deciding, you know, following my heart more. . . ."

Ron has a deep sense of appreciation for his mentor's understanding, guidance and support. His mentor "knows that I need to talk about something." In "everything that we talk about I usually get some amazing advice from him." "Whatever decision I made he would support me with it." "He gave [me] the utmost support." When, towards the end of their relationship, Ron had to make a very important, yet difficult, decision, his mentor "helped me, gave me the strength to do it." Ron feels that through his mentor's help he has found his path in life and become more mature. "He's aided me a lot in following what I wanted to do, following the path that I should be [on]. . . ." "I'm still searching for what I would like to do" but "I learned a lot from him." "[My mentor used] his maturity to help make my maturity grow."

Themes

- 5-1 The mentor creates mentoring situations for his students. (AM)
- 5-3 The mentoring relationship is like a friendship. (DR)
- 5-4 The mentoring relationship enhances learning. (DR)
- 5-5 The mentor is a confidant. (PQ)
- 5-6 Mentoring is about trust. (DR)
- 5-7 The mentor offers advice. (AM)
- 5-8 The mentor helps his protégé to explore life's options. (AM)
- 5-9 The mentor is a good listener. (PQ)
- 5-10 Mentoring helps the protégé to listen to his own heart. (DR) (IP)
- 5-11 The mentor provides his protégé with understanding, guidance and support. (AM)

5-12 The mentor is attuned to his protégé. (PI)

5-13 Mentoring makes the protégé stronger. (IP)

5-14 Mentoring does not take the protégé to his destination; it shows him the path and prepares him for the journey. (IP)

Mentor's Experience

For the mentor the men's group was the place where Ron "originally started opening up to me." He had perceived in Ron a desire "to explore himself and to grow and to find out what kind of things he was doing and patterns he was in." After establishing their mentoring relationship, the mentor found that Ron "was so open to growing," and that "he just wanted to keep going, keep learning." They "would set aside a time . . . where I sat and listened to him and sometimes give suggestions and sometimes ask questions and things like that." Ron "was really always eager to try new things and take them out into the school environment and come back and sort of talk about it."

The mentor helped Ron to reflect on and analyse his own situation and the implications of his actions. "It was just over and over again bringing to light sort of what was happening [be]cause there was some stuff that he just didn't see that he was doing and he became more and more aware of it. And that was good."

Occasionally, the issues that Ron brought to his mentor were of a serious nature. "Sometimes . . . it was crisis kind of stuff" and "it was *like a therapy session in some ways.*" "I'd just try to help him breathe and connect to himself, and things like that." Ron was also seeing a school counsellor at the same time. With his protégé's knowledge, the mentor and the counsellor discussed ways to support him, which turned

out to be very beneficial to him. "He was sort of getting supported from both sides and he was just flying."

As time went by, the mentor found that his role within the relationship was shifting. "It grew and changed. Where at first it was more of like a counsellor to later where it was more like . . . an uncle or something like that, you know, someone that feels okay to just . . . state the way that they're thinking about stuff." In the role of "an uncle", the mentor found it easier to be quite frank with his protégé. Sometimes, the mentor would say to Ron: "Look, I don't think, you know, this is very good."

On one specific occasion, Ron "was gonna make a decision that really would have been poor for him." And "I was saying: 'Look, I really think that you're making a dumb mistake if you do this.'" However, for the most part, the mentor would try to help his protégé to see things for himself. "I don't usually say what I'm thinking is the best course of action. I usually let them do that more."

Towards the end of this relationship, Ron and his mentor participated in a school hiking trip. During this trip the mentor observed his protégé's interaction with his peers and other adults. He was somewhat disappointed to see that in his interactions with his peers, Ron did not reflect the things that the mentor expected him to have internalized by then. "He was having trouble, I think, with the application of it with his peers." "He was open with adults but when it came to his peers he was acting really differently than my experience was with him."

As a result of this experience, the mentor became aware of the importance of taking the time to observe his protégé's social interactions, especially with his peers. He realised that this enabled him to better

understand what was really happening in Ron's life than relying only on the thoughts and emotions shared by Ron. "I didn't really see that until I went on a trip with him." He learned that peer pressure makes it difficult for young people to externalize some of their new awareness, and that by observing the protégé in action, the mentor can identify the more serious challenges faced by the protégé and help him overcome them. He also came to the conclusion that supporting a young person in their development takes time. "For it opened up the question of: Okay, how do you support these kids . . . I mean it's just that it's a lengthy process."

After this trip together, Ron and his mentor were both very busy with the final exams and graduation and were not able to get together again. Although the mentor regrets not being able sit down and talk to Ron about this issue, he is, nevertheless, resigned to the outcome because he's confident that his protégé "will be okay and it will be picked up, you know, in some way."

For the mentor, mentoring is a spiritual experience in which the mentor helps his or her protégé to reach the ultimate goal of connecting with God through connecting to self. In this relationship, his protégé was able to connect to himself: "I think he was able to connect to himself and to me that's the goal: It's that connecting to self so that he can connect with God. That he could do in the presence of an adult or with the aid and help of an adult."

However, Ron's connection to self was not permanent. "When he got out into a situation where there was other people around, I think he had a more difficult time connecting to himself. So he was sort of acting from other patterns and not necessarily seeing what he was doing." In

his interactions with his peers, Ron "was losing some of that awareness because he wasn't connected to himself in those moments."

At this point, Ron is still in the early stages of his spiritual development and he will continue to grow to the extent that he's able to make a deeper connection with himself and with God. "What I've seen is the beginning parts of the process . . . he needs to learn how to connect with himself anyway he can."

Themes

- 8-1 The mentor perceives the protégé's desire and potential for growth. (PR)
- 8-2 Mentoring helps the protégé's social development. (DR) (IP)
- 8-3 Mentoring helps to raise the protégé's self-awareness. (IP)
- 8-4 Mentoring is like therapy.) (DR)
- 8-5 The mentor uses all the available resources to support the protégé. (AM)
- 8-6 The mentor's role transforms according to the dynamics of the relationship. (DR)
- 8-7 The mentor is sincere. (PQ)
- 8-8 Mentoring enhances the protégé's capacity to make the right choices. (DR) (IP)
- 8-9 The mentor takes an interest in the protégé's life. (PR)
- 8-10 Mentoring seeks to apply learning to everyday life. (DR)
- 8-11 The mentor seeks to understand his protégé through conversing and observing. (PR)
- 8-12 The mentor is committed to the protégé's well-being. (PI)
- 8-13 The mentor is optimistic. (PQ)
- 8-14 Mentoring is a spiritual experience. (DR)

- 8-15 Mentoring helps the protégé to connect to himself. (IP)
- 8-16 The influence of mentoring is not always present in the protégé's way of being. (IP)
- 8-17 Mentoring prepares the protégé for the long journey of life. (DR)
(IP)

Reconstructed Story of Jeremy's Mentoring Relationship

Protégé's Experience

For Jeremy, their mentoring relationship was "a really good one." It "was fun to be able to talk to her" and "it wasn't a bore to have to go in and talk." In their sessions together, "it was pretty cooperative with the talking." "If I had a problem I'd talk and when I'd finished I'd give her the time to think about it and provide some feedback, advice on what I was having any problems with." "She had a lot of good advice to give." "It was really nice to be able to talk to someone who . . . knows how to listen well."

Using her good listening skills, the mentor helped Jeremy to talk about his problems and to unburden himself. "It got better as time went on" because she "began to understand the way I thought out problems." "You know how it's nice to talk to someone who knows how to listen well . . . someone who knows how to provide a lot of reinforcement and umm . . . suggestions, because I like suggestions as to things I should do."

Jeremy's mentoring experience "helped keep me off the edge," and "it really helped to get [my problems] off my shoulders." "I believe that if I hadn't had anyone to talk to, to share my feelings and problems with, it would have all stayed bottled up inside and boiled, and every once in a

while I'd probably have let it out in large bursts as a form of anger, perhaps violence . . . not violent violence but I mean, you know."

After a few sessions, Jeremy's mentor identified some of his reoccurring problems and provided him with useful feedback and advice. She also helped him improve his communication skills. "I improved my communication skills. Those improved, I'd say, quite a bit."

Overall, this mentoring experience was very positive for Jeremy. "It was great for me."

Themes

- 4-1 Mentoring is fun. (DR)
- 4-2 The mentor is a good listener. (PQ)
- 4-3 The mentor provides feedback and advice to her protégé. (AM)
- 4-4 The mentor helps the protégé to unburden himself. (AM)
- 4-5 The mentoring relationship is a safe place for the protégé to share his problems. (DR)
- 4-6 Mentoring helps the protégé to release his pent-up emotions. (DR) (IP)
- 4-7 Mentoring helps the protégé to improve his communication skills. (DR) (IP)
- 4-8 The protégé appreciates the mentoring experience. (RP)

Mentor's Experience

In this relationship, the mentor considers herself to have been the main source of support for her protégé. "I [was] sort of a refuge for this person." She was eager to accept Jeremy as her protégé, because in her role as school counsellor, she knew that he needed support in dealing with certain issues, such as bullying by some of his classmates.

Jeremy's mentor told me that Jeremy "was not well-befriended" and that "when he first came [to me] he was really like hopeless." "I felt like things could be remedied somewhat," and "I certainly felt he could get some relief by problem-solving." The mentor did not think Jeremy "really trusted much in adults," but "he was just really desperate." He went to her because "he had nowhere else to go."

The process of building trust in their relationship took some time. "I think it took a while for him to really trust me enough so that then he would begin to bring out issues that were kind of puzzling him or troubling him." The mentor knew, from her earlier contact with Jeremy, that he had not developed his problem-solving capacity and "wanted to see if I would solve [his problems for him]." "Like if he mentioned something, if I would just jump out there and go 'Oh, I'll take care of that.' Or 'that's not gonna happen.'" "If it really wasn't at a crisis stage," the mentor would encourage and help Jeremy to sort out the problem himself and tell "him that I thought that he was capable of doing that." Another way in which the mentor helped her protégé was to tip off his teachers as to what was going on with him so that they could be more vigilant.

"As time passed and we got to know each other I think the relationship became more of one about consulting about things . . . instead of waiting for things to come to a crisis." By this time, Jeremy and his mentor had established a habit of meeting regularly. Occasionally, when he was having problems that merited counselling, he would come and see her outside of their established mentoring sessions. "I could definitely say that when he would come at times outside of our appointments, he'd come to the door, sometimes he'd be in tears or

whatever it was, those were counselling." So, in this relationship, the mentor switched back and forth between her roles as mentor and counsellor.

Even as an experienced counsellor, she sometimes found it difficult to accompany Jeremy in moments of great distress. "I don't enjoy working through situations like that, in which I know that a young person is faced with a pretty difficult situation." She found that she had to deal with the empathy/sympathy question that is faced by those engaged in helping relationships. "It's always a challenge in a relationship to have a defined boundary between what belongs to the person and what belongs to you."

As the relationship developed, the mentor "did less intervention." Eventually, "it became much more balanced [in the sense that Jeremy] could see more positive things in his life" and "he would have lots of great things to share." From that point on, "there was a balance there between . . . problem-solving [which sometimes required intervention] and consultation and sharing and so forth."

During their encounters, the mentor created an atmosphere where Jeremy felt accepted by her and knew that she would celebrate his victories with him. "He would have lots of great things to share and he would have victories and different interests in things." And she showed a willingness to participate in the discussion of any topic chosen by her protégé, regardless of her own interest in the topic. "There would be times when we'd really spend a lot of time talking about motorcycles."

Toward the end of their relationship, Jeremy's enhanced problem-solving skills and greater self-confidence were reflected in his improved social skills. "It seems that he became more resourceful about solving some of his problems and also he saw himself as a more capable student."

"He certainly was becoming more comfortable with his peers and more accepted," and was "just beginning to kinda open up just a little bit to people, to adults—to other adults." Jeremy was still limited in his "ability to access the world of adults . . . but the potential is there" for further development.

Themes

- 2-1 The mentor is a refuge for the protégé. (PR)
- 2-2 The mentor understands the situation of her protégé. (PQ)
- 2-3 The mentor wants to lend a helping hand to her protégé. (IM)
- 2-4 Mentoring is about trust. (DR)
- 2-5 The mentor is sensitive to her protégé's situation. (PR)
- 2-6 Mentoring is about encouragement and building self-confidence. (DR)
- 2-7 The mentor employs all available resources in supporting her protégé. (PR) (AM)
- 2-8 The mentor is also a counsellor. (AM)
- 2-9 Mentoring requires clearly defined boundaries. (DR)
- 2-10 Mentoring brings out the positive in the protégé's life. (IP) (DR)
- 2-11 The mentor celebrates her protégé's accomplishments. (AM)
- 2-12 Mentoring helps to develop the protégé's social skills. (DR) (IP)

Essential Themes

As explained in Chapter Four, in order to create a description that shows the reader the lived quality and significance of the experience of mentoring and being mentored, I selected the essential themes without which mentoring could not be what it is. These essential themes are presented here under the common clusters to which they belong. The

essential themes extracted from the protégés' statements are shown separately from those extracted from the mentors' statements.

From the Protégés' Statements

Description of the Mentoring Relationship

- Mentoring is about trust.
- The mentoring relationship is a safe place for the protégé to share his problems.
- The mentoring relationship is like a friendship.

Pedagogical Qualities of the Mentor (Includes Pedagogical Responsibility and Pedagogical Intention)

- The mentor is a good listener.
- The mentor is attuned to his protégé.
- The mentor is non-judgmental.
- The mentor is caring.

Mentor's Actions

- The mentor helps the protégé to unburden himself.
- The mentor provides his protégé with support.
- The mentor gives hope to the protégé.
- The mentor offers guidance.

Protégé's Response

- The protégé seeks and appreciates the mentor's caring.

Influence of Mentoring on the Protégé

- Mentoring helps the protégé to listen to his own heart.
- Mentoring does not take the protégé to his destination; it shows him the path and prepares him for the journey.

From the Mentors' Statements

Description of the Mentoring Relationship

- Mentoring is about growth.
- Mentoring is about encouragement and building self-confidence.
- The mentor has a dynamic role.
- Mentoring requires clearly defined boundaries.

Pedagogical Qualities of the Mentor (Includes Pedagogical Responsibility and Pedagogical Intention)

- The teacher/mentor understands and is sensitive to the situation of his students.
- The mentor perceives the protégé's desire and potential for growth.
- The mentor is committed to and takes interest in every aspect of the protégé's well-being.
- The mentor is always open to taking the role of learner.

Mentor's Actions

- The mentor creates an atmosphere that feels safe and accepting for the protégé.
- The mentor acts in the best interest of the protégé.
- The mentor celebrates her protégé's accomplishments.

Protégé's Response

- Once trust has been established, the protégé opens up to the mentor.
- The protégé reciprocates the mentor's deep caring.

Influence of Mentoring on the Protégé

- Mentoring brings out the positive in the protégé
- Mentoring helps to raise the protégé's self-awareness and to connect to himself.

Influence of Mentoring on the Mentor

- Mentoring is enriching and educational to the mentor.

Exhaustive Description of Mentoring

The essential themes were used to create the exhaustive description of mentoring as shared by the protégés and the mentors in this study. The two exhaustive descriptions presented here attempt to describe the essential structure of mentoring. It is important to point out that, although these are called "exhaustive descriptions", "a phenomenological description is always *one* interpretation, and no single interpretation of human experience will ever exhaust the possibility of yet another complementary, or even potentially *richer* or *deeper* description" [emphasis in original text] (van Manen, 1990, p. 31).

An Exhaustive Description of Mentoring Derived from the Experience of the Protégés

Mentoring is about trust. It is a safe place in which the protégé can share her feelings and problems with someone who is like a friend. The mentor is a good listener. He is attuned to his protégé and intuitively knows how to interact with her. The protégé knows that her mentor cares deeply for her and does not judge her or her actions. Using his good listening skills, the mentor helps his protégé to talk about her problems and to unburden herself. He provides her with support. When his protégé is just about to give up on something the mentor gives her hope and reassurance. He helps his protégé to explore life's different options and make good choices. The protégé appreciates the mentoring experience and seeks her mentor's help. Mentoring helps the protégé to listen to her own heart. Mentoring does not take the protégé to her destination; it shows her the path and prepares her for the journey.

An Exhaustive Description of Mentoring in the Voice of the Protégé

Mentoring is about trust. It is a safe place in which I can share my feelings and problems with someone who is like my friend. My mentor is a good listener. He is attuned to me and intuitively knows how to interact with me. I know that my mentor cares deeply for me and does not judge my actions or me. Using his good listening skills, my mentor helps me to talk about my problems and to unburden myself to him. He provides me with the utmost support. When I am just about to give up on something my mentor gives me hope and reassurance. He helps me to explore life's different options and make good choices. I appreciate the mentoring experience and seek my mentor's help when I need it. Mentoring helps me to listen to my own heart. Mentoring does not take me to my destination but it shows me the path and prepares me for the journey.

An Exhaustive Description of Mentoring Derived from the Experience of the Mentors

Mentoring is about growth. The mentor perceives her protégé's desire and potential for growth. It is also about encouragement and helping the protégé to develop his self-confidence. The mentor creates an atmosphere that feels safe and accepting for the protégé. Once trust has been established in the relationship, the protégé opens up to his mentor. In mentoring, the mentor has a dynamic role which shifts according to the requirements of the mentoring moment. The mentor is also a teacher, a counsellor, a friend, an aunt, or an uncle. Mentoring requires clearly defined boundaries where the mentor distinguishes between what belongs to the protégé and what belongs to her. She understands and is sensitive to the situation of her protégé. The mentor is always open to taking the role of learner. She is committed to and

takes interest in every aspect of her protégé's well-being. The mentor always acts in the best interest of the protégé. Mentoring helps to raise his self-awareness and enables him to connect to himself. It brings out the positive in the protégé and prepares him for the journey of life. The mentor celebrates her protégé's accomplishments. The protégé reciprocates the mentor's deep caring. The mentor finds mentoring to be enriching and educational.

An Exhaustive Description of Mentoring in the Voice of the Mentor

Mentoring is about growth, and I am perceptive to my protégé's desire and potential for growth. It is also about encouragement and helping my protégé to develop his self-confidence. As a mentor, I create an atmosphere that feels safe and accepting for my protégé. Once trust has been established in our relationship, my protégé opens up to me. When I am mentoring, I have a dynamic role which shifts according to the requirements of the mentoring moment. As a mentor, I am also a teacher, a counsellor, a friend, and sometimes an aunt to my protégé. Mentoring requires clearly defined boundaries where I have to distinguish between what belongs to me and what belongs to my protégé. I am open to taking the role of learner. I understand my protégé and I am sensitive to what he is going through. I am wholeheartedly committed to and interested in every aspect of his well-being. I always act in the best interest of my protégé. Mentoring helps to raise his self-awareness and enables him to connect to himself. It brings out the positive in him and prepares him for the journey of life. I celebrate my protégé's accomplishments and my protégé reciprocates my deep caring. I find mentoring to be truly enriching and educational.

CHAPTER SIX

Discussion

Phenomenology is, on the one hand, description of the lived-through quality of lived experience, and on the other hand, description of meaning *of the expressions* of lived experience. (van Manen, 1990, p. 25)

The findings presented in Chapter Five were the "description of the lived-through quality" of mentoring. The reconstructed stories gave us a glimpse of the experience of mentoring for the protégés and the mentors in this study. The themes extracted from each story provided us with a deeper understanding of each lived-through experience. Those themes that were considered to be essential to the structure of mentoring provided the threads for the fabric of the exhaustive descriptions of mentoring.

In this chapter, I offer to the reader the "description of meaning of the expressions" of the lived experience of mentoring, in the form of a systematic examination of each one of the essential themes identified in this study. These essential themes are "the hermeneutic tool by way of which the phenomenon under study can be meaningfully understood" (van Manen, 1990, p. 170). I will present them in the same order as before, reflecting on the meaning of each essential theme, drawing on my own experience of mentoring and on insights from other works. I will also include comments made by the mentors in my second interview with them in which we discussed their reconstructed stories and the themes of this study. In my writing in this chapter, I will attempt to make "a distinction between appearance and essence, between the things of our

experience and that which *grounds* [emphasis added] the things of our experience" (van Manen, 1990, p. 32).

Although I have attempted to avoid duplication of themes from the statements within each group, whether protégés or mentors, certain fundamental themes may seem to be repeated when comparing the two groups. This should be seen as an indication of the validity of the themes themselves, considering that they are derived independently from the statements of both mentors and protégés.

Discussion of Essential Themes from the Protégés' Statements

What is mentoring about?

Mentoring is about trust.

Three of the protégés talked about the importance of trust in their relationships. Ron said: "We had a good relationship, so I felt like I could trust him." Melanie said: "At the end I completely knew that I could talk to him anytime I wanted about anything and he would keep it to himself. So trust was really important." And Lynn said: "I have so much trust for [my mentor]."

It is clear from the above statements that these protégés are referring to *their* trust in their mentors. It would be reasonable to expect that in each case, the mentor had to win the protégé's trust. This is what Pestalozzi (as cited in Bollnow, 1989b) said about his relationship with the neglected and distrustful children he met in Stans: "Above all I wanted and needed to win the trust and attachment of these children. Grant me these and I could expect everything else from them" (p. 17). Daloz (1999) writes about how one of the mentors in his study *evokes* the trust of her protégés. He explains that "it is not that [the mentor]

pries into [her students'] lives so much as that she simply evokes the kind of trust that calls her students' stories out" (p. 209).

We may say, then, that in a mentoring relationship, the mentor needs to win or evoke the trust of the protégé. But how does the mentor evoke the trust of the protégé? Since it is clear that both mentors in this study had the trust of their protégés, it would seem that we should find the answer in the qualities and actions of these mentors. Later in this chapter, we will have a close look at the essential qualities and actions of mentors.

And what about the mentor's trust in the protégé? Is it possible to have a mentoring relationship in which the mentor does not have trust in the protégé? In this regard, Bollnow (1989c) says:

Of no less importance is the trust given to the child by his or her living environment and especially by the child's educators because this too is necessary for his or her proper development. . . . By this trust the child will truly become reliable, sincere, and devoted. The child is forming himself or herself according to the picture the educator has about the child and according to his or her trust in it. . . . If they deny this trust then they deprive the child of the stamina for all its good resolutions. . . . This trust is the basic constitution, the atmospheric condition of all education. (pp. 37-42)

The mentor's trust in the protégé manifests itself in different ways. One of these is through self-disclosure. When the mentor is willing to risk vulnerability by revealing her humanness, or as Daloz (1999) would say, "show her clay feet," the protégé understands that the mentor trusts him. The male mentor in this study engaged in self-disclosure as attested by his protégés. Melanie said: "[Sometimes] we were both kind of together, talking about our problems." And Ron said, "And you know he

would talk about his stuff too." It was clear from the context of these statements that the protégés were indicating to me, the researcher, that there was mutual trust in their mentoring relationships. It is not clear that the female mentor in this study also engaged in self-disclosure.

Daloz (1999) believes that self-disclosure is an important aspect of mentoring, not because it indicates the mentor's trust in her protégé, but because it evokes the protégé's trust and promotes equality in the relationship. He says,

Self-disclosure from the mentor seems to play a crucial part in the full evolution of a mentorship from hierarchy toward symmetry. Often flayed and vulnerable, the student needs to know that he can trust his teacher. In the early stages of development, authority is enough, but as the student grows, his willingness to trust an authoritative mask without knowing what lies behind it dims. He comes increasingly to ask, "Who are you? What lies behind that façade? Can I really trust you?" If the reply is inappropriately muted, if the mentor is unable or unwilling to doff the mask and attempt to answer the question, things begin to die. The relationship grows hard and eventually cracks. (p. 170)

Based on the findings of this study, self-disclosure is important but not essential to mentoring. As in all human relationships, the way that the protégé and mentor interact and relate to one another would probably determine whether the mentor is willing and finds it necessary to engage in self-disclosure, and whether the protégé interprets the absence of self-disclosure as lack of trust. Certainly, there are other ways in which the mentor can show that she trusts her protégé. When the mentor maintains her confidence in the protégé regardless of the many times that he has

disappointed her, he knows that she trusts him. When the mentor does not seek to verify what the protégé shares with her, he knows that she trusts him. When the mentor attributes good intentions to the protégé's actions, he knows that she trusts him.

It seems appropriate to close our discussion of this theme by referring to what Carl Rogers (1961) says about the effect of his attitude in his relationship with his clients. He says, "It has been my experience that when my attitude is conditional, then he cannot change or grow in those respects in which I cannot fully receive him" (p. 54).

The mentoring relationship is a safe place for the protégé to share his problems.

Mutual trust is a preliminary requirement for establishing a safe environment in which the protégé can share his problems and concerns. However, apart from trust, the protégé needs to experience the mentor's openness and caring before opening up to her. Once these conditions are established the protégé is able to release all of his pent-up emotions. This is evident in Jeremy's statement about being able to share his problems with his mentor, which "really helped to get [my problems] off my shoulders" and "helped keep me off the edge."

Bollnow (1989b) believes that "the foremost precondition for a pedagogical atmosphere is the existence of a sheltering environment . . . from which the supportive feelings of trust and safety can radiate" (p. 12). This experience of safety is, perhaps, the most valuable gift from the mentor to the protégé.

On this theme, one of the mentors commented that "there needs to be a safe environment, physically safe environment" because "you can't do mentoring in the middle of a classroom, for example, with people sitting

around, it's not safe." We can infer from this statement that the mentor is referring to those moments when the protégé needs intimacy in the sense of "privacy, especially an atmosphere of privacy suitable to the telling of a secret" (Urdang and Flexner, 1969, p. 699).

The mentoring relationship is like a friendship.

The theme of friendship came up over and over again in the interviews with the protégés. Ron explained that as time went on, his relationship with his mentor "developed further into a friendship," and although his mentor was also his teacher, their "relationship was like a friendship more than a teacher-student relationship." Melanie, whose mentor was also her teacher, said that as their relationship developed, "I kinda thought about him as a friend and not so much a teacher any more." Referring to the effect of time on their relationship, she said, "The friendship built up more." Although Lynn did not use the term "friendship" when referring to her mentoring relationship, she indicated the closeness to her mentor by saying that "the relationship, it has a strong base so now when I talk about stuff it's kind of most of the time clear why something is happening."

The special significance of the above statements is that it is not typical for high school students to refer to their teachers and counsellors as their friends. When they do, it indicates that they have a special relationship with this person beyond the normal "teacher-student relationship."

In my second interview with each mentor, one of them commented about the theme of teacher as friend. He said that the mentoring relationship is like a friendship mostly from the protégé's point of view because the protégé is generally on the receiving end of the relationship.

But it is not a friendship in the traditional sense of the term where there is a balanced give and take between the two sides. Mentoring is mostly a one-way relationship where the mentor gives and the protégé receives.

In that same interview, I explained to the mentor that, when seen in the context of another essential theme about the changing role of the mentor, this theme really means that in those moments when the mentor is not fulfilling the role of teacher, counsellor, uncle, or aunt, then he is seen by the protégé as a friend. The mentor agreed with this understanding.

What are the pedagogical qualities of the mentor?

The mentor is a good listener.

What does Jeremy mean when he says that his mentor "knows how to listen well?" This is how he himself explains it. He says that in their sessions together, "it was pretty cooperative with the talking." "If I had a problem I'd talk and when I'd finished I'd give her the time to think about it and provide some feedback, advice on what I was having any problems with." "She had a lot of good advice to give." "It was really nice to be able to talk to someone who . . . knows how to listen well."

It is interesting to note that he says, "I'd give her the time to think about it." So, one aspect of the mentor's good listening, as implied by Jeremy, is that *he* had control of the dynamics of their conversations. He talked and she listened. When he was finished talking, his mentor would "think about it and provide some feedback, advice on what I was having any problems with." So, "to listen well" is more than mere listening. It includes giving the speaker the perception that he is in control of the conversation; it means that the one listening is clearly interested and

thinking about what she is hearing; it also means that she "provides some feedback" and advice for the speaker.

Van Manen (1991) describes good listening at an even deeper level. He says, "the teacher is able to listen for and perceive the state of intellectual, emotional, and moral development of a young person" (p. 86). Although Jeremy was probably not aware of this, this is most likely what his mentor did as she listened to him talk about his problems. And what is significant for the purpose of this study, is that van Manen expects "the teacher" (meaning *all* teachers) to have this ability. I believe that most teachers instinctively know this and they either have this ability or develop it through teaching experience. That is why experienced teachers tend to be good mentors. No wonder that Ron says this about his mentor: "He just listens to me and it makes it a lot easier . . . I can just say anything."

The mentor is attuned to his protégé.

The basis for this theme is Ron's statement about his mentor who "knows that I need to talk about something." It is also based on Melanie's statement who says that her mentor "knew when I had problems I guess; like he could see it from my face." In fact, she makes this statement about her teacher before he became her mentor.

This theme refers to the attentiveness of the mentor to the changing mood, demeanour, facial expressions, etc., of his protégé. It is about his perceptiveness of what his protégé is going through at any one moment. It reflects his deep-rooted interest in his protégé's well-being. But most importantly, it refers to a way of being of the mentor that is felt and perceived by the protégé. It is important to remember that these statements are based on the perception of the protégés. They are not

saying that their mentor *told* them that he knows when they have problems or need to talk; rather they *know* that he knows from the way he *is* with them.

In *The Tact of Teaching*, van Manen (1991) writes about pedagogical understanding, which he describes as "the ability to become aware of the inner life of the young person" (p. 87). Pedagogical understanding is achieved through non-judgmental listening. This concept is explored further in the discussion of the next theme.

The mentor is non-judgmental.

Van Manen (1991) says that "the adult must be able to listen in a way that is non-judgmental, not directed to the adult's interest" (p. 87). He explains that,

The adult . . . needs to be able to listen to the child in an open, warm, and receptive manner. Young children and older youths communicate their feelings and self-understandings about their lives in a variety of ways, and it is the task of pedagogical understanding to encourage children to express themselves, to talk about anything that concerns them, and to let them know that their feelings are acknowledged and respected. (p.87)

Melanie says that her mentor "wouldn't really judge what I would say to him. He would just listen and maybe advise me which is what I really wanted. I needed some advice to see if I'm going the right way or wrong way. I definitely needed advice not just someone who just listens and says: 'Oh, that's great! Good for you! Sorry! So that's what happened.'"

What Melanie seems to be saying is that good, non-judgmental listening does not mean that the mentor reacts by only making empathic responses. She expects to receive advice and guidance "to see if I'm

going the right way or wrong way." This may be surprising to some of us who might believe that non-judgemental listening means that the listener must refrain from helping the speaker out of her confusion. Apparently this is not the case. I feel, however, that the indispensable condition for this type of interaction is the protégé's trust in the mentor and knowing that her "feelings are acknowledged and respected." In other words, that the mentor is caring.

The mentor is caring.

In explicating the previous theme, which is stated in the negative, namely, "the mentor is *not* judgmental," we ended up by equating it with a positive statement "the mentor is caring." Now we will explore the meaning of being caring. Melanie explained to me that in the most crucial moments when she needed someone to turn to, she would go to her mentor because she "saw the level of caring."

"What does it mean to care?" Noddings (1984) asks in her book, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. She explores this question at length and in considerable depth. She says,

As I think about how I feel when I care, about what my frame of mind is, I see that caring is always characterized by a move away from self. . . . If one of my students is having difficulty, I may experience the engrossment and motivational displacement of caring. Does this caring spring out of the relationship I have formed with the student? Or, is it possible that I cared in some meaningful way before I even met the particular student? . . . At bottom, all caring involves engrossment." (pp. 16-17)

She goes on to explain the concept of engrossment in caring and the caring attitude.

The one-caring, in caring, is *present* in her acts of caring. Even in physical absence, acts at a distance bear the signs of presence:

engrossment in the other, regard, desire for the other's well-being. . . . The caring attitude, this quality of disposability, pervades the situational time-space. So far as it is in my control, if we are conversing, I remain present to you throughout the conversation. (p. 19)

Noddings offers a concept of pedagogical caring based on engrossment and displacement of motivation, which she compares with what "Buber has described as an I-Thou encounter; that Marcel has described with 'disposability'; that Mayeroff has described as identification-with-recognition-of-independence" (pp. 179-180). She explains that in pedagogical caring,

I do not need to establish a deep, lasting, time-consuming personal relationship with every student. What I must do is to be totally and nonselectively present to the student—to each student—as he addresses me. The time interval may be brief but the encounter is total. (p. 180)

Van Manen (1991) believes that caring is indispensable to the existence of a pedagogical relation. He says, "If the child does not experience the adult's actions and intentions as caring in a pedagogical sense, then the adult obviously does not have a pedagogical relation with this child" (p. 78). He also says, "To be able to act thoughtfully with children we need to be animated by the love and care for children that makes a pedagogical relationship possible" (p. 180). Based on these statements, a "successful" mentoring relationship is itself evidence of a caring relationship between mentor and protégé. This was certainly the case with the mentoring relationships of this study. It is clear from the protégés' statements, such as "he actually cared," that they experienced their mentor's intentions and actions as caring in a pedagogical sense.

Daloz (1999) shares with us what one of the mentors that he interviewed had to say about the meaning of love and caring in a mentoring relationship. Daloz says,

Bob is quick to agree that love plays an important part in his work. By this he means a sense of concern and caring that he feels matters if a mentor-student relationship is to work at its best. It is important, he says, because it allows him to see the student as a total human being rather than simply a mind to be trained. It lets the mentor acknowledge the reality of the student's "problems or concerns in that particular phase." "But," he adds, "you also have to care enough to let them go." (p. 165)

What do the pedagogical actions of the mentor look like?

The mentor helps the protégé to unburden himself.

At first glance, this theme seems to be a rewording of the theme about the mentoring relationship as a safe place for the protégé to share his problems, which we addressed earlier. A closer look, however, will reveal that the concept of helping a young person to unburden herself or himself goes beyond providing them with a safe place in which to share their problems. It has to do with an attitude and practice that is generally considered to belong more to the field of psychotherapy than pedagogy. It raises the question of whether helping someone in this way is a pedagogical action, and if it is part of pedagogical responsibility. In other words, would a mentor or teacher be expected to relate in this way to her students?

This, of course, is a controversial question. While many teachers and school systems would argue that the teacher's job is only to teach and to deal with the learning needs and difficulties of her students, others would say that the teacher and the school are responsible for the overall well-being of all their students. Whereas the first group would

relegate this duty exclusively to the school counsellor, others would approach the student and use their listening skills, non-judgmental attitude, and deep caring to help him unburden himself. Being wisely conscious of their own limitations, they would refer the student to the school counsellor only when their own capacity to help proves to be insufficient to do justice to his needs.

I would also like to share Daloz's (1999) response to this question. Speaking as a long-time teacher and mentor, he says that some of us Fear that paying attention to our students' development verges too much on psychotherapy. "What if we surface deep problems in our students—or ourselves? We're not trained for that." True. Anna Freud (1935) notwithstanding, teachers are not and probably should not be trained in psychotherapy; clearly we need to know when we are out of our depth. But simply listening with compassion and insight to the pain and struggles of our students is not psychotherapy. To share our common humanity with another person is a gift of birth, not of training, and the capacity to care for and about our students is available to all of us. Through the recognition that careful listening affords by creating a space where our students can name their struggles, mentors can help students heal. As Bill Perry used to say, "If my pain has not had a place to live, how can I let go and move on?" Is it too much to ask that we accompany our students in this way? (pp. 240-241)

In this study we have seen what happened when Melanie's teacher perceived that her "opinion of herself was so low, and every time there was some sort of challenge in a mark or whatever . . . she would start to go into this sort of self-hate thing that just really wasn't working." He approached Melanie and started to help her overcome this psychological hurdle which he saw as "the biggest thing that was getting in the way of her learning." He said that he did this "out of the role of being a

teacher." This anecdote is especially significant because it happened before there was a mentoring relationship between Melanie and her teacher. In fact, their mentoring relationship was an outcome of this caring action of the teacher.

Jeremy tells us how grateful he is to his mentor for helping him to talk about his problems and to unburden himself. He says that this "got better as time went on" because she "began to understand the way I thought out problems." "You know how it's nice to talk to someone who knows how to listen well." To sum up our discussion of this theme, we may say that helping the protégé to unburden herself is not only an essential characteristic of mentoring but could also be considered a necessary pedagogical quality.

The mentor provides his protégé with support.

Ron has a deep sense of appreciation for his mentor's support. "Whatever decision I made he would support me with it." "He gave [me] the utmost support." Melanie's mentor's support was most crucial in those moments when "I couldn't make a decision and I was really stuck." She knew that her mentor was always there for her when she needed him. "He always made sure that I knew that his office was always open for me to go to him anytime."

It is clear, from these statements, that the mentor's support for the protégé is indispensable. The term "support" is referred to extensively in the mentoring and helping relationships literature. But what is support, really? What is it in essence? Daloz (1999) dedicates many pages of his book, *Mentor*, to explore its meaning. He says,

The notion of *support* refers to those acts through which the mentor affirms the validity of the student's present experience. She

lets him know through her empathy with his feelings or comprehension of his words that he is well understood. (Daloz, 1999, p. 206)

So, to support the protégé the mentor affirms the validity of his present experience by letting him know that he is well understood. She does this through her empathy with his feelings and comprehension of his words. It seems that this is taking us back to good non-judgmental listening that is motivated by a deep caring for the protégé. It is interesting how we seem to be going around in a circle when talking about the pedagogical qualities and actions of a mentor. This may be because pedagogical qualities and actions are all inter-related. It seems difficult to discuss one quality or action without referring to another or several other pedagogical qualities and actions. Let us look at a further elaboration of the notion of support by Daloz (1999). He says, "Support is the activity of holding, of providing a *safe place* where the student can contact her need for fundamental trust, the basis of growth" (p. 209).

The "activity of holding" is an analogy that refers to the physical holding of an infant baby by the mother. Daloz says that Erikson (1950) and later Winnicott (1965) explained that the baby learns to trust when it is held well by adults. But the act of holding is followed by letting go. Thus the baby experiences, and needs to experience, holding and letting go in a manner that reinforces its sense of trust in its environment. So the adult who is in a caring relationship with the young one needs to know that "there is a time to hold and a time to let go. In that knowing, says Winnicott, in our sensitivity to our children's needs for being held and being free, lies our gift to their growth" (Daloz, 1999, p. 185). Through the analogy of holding, Erikson, Winnicott, and Daloz help us

understand that to support means that the mentor "confirms the [protégé's] sense of worth and [helps] her see that she is both OK where she is and capable of moving ahead whenever she chooses" (Daloz, 1999, p. 209).

The mentor gives hope to the protégé.

"When I was just completely about to give up on something [my mentor] told me that there's always hope." In this statement, Melanie touches upon one of the essential elements of mentoring. It would be interesting to imagine our reaction if she had said instead, "When I was just completely about to give up on something my mentor told me that there was *no hope*." I know that I would probably have fallen off my chair during the interview. For, although I have tried to bracket my presuppositions and biases throughout this research, I could not imagine a mentoring relationship that was not founded on hope. Bollnow (1989c) says, "Hope is the ultimate foundation of our soul" (p. 52).

Now for the mentor to *give* hope to his protégé, he needs to *have* hope for her. But we may ask, "What makes a mentor have hope for his protégé?" Let us look for the answer in the following explanation given by van Manen (1991):

We can only hope for children we truly love, not in a romantic sense, but in the sense of pedagogical love. What hope gives us is the simple avowal: "I will not give up on you. I know that you can make a life for yourself." Thus hope refers to that which gives us patience and tolerance, belief and trust in the possibilities of our children. Children who experience our trust are thereby encouraged to have trust in themselves. Trust enables! Trustful hope is our experience of the child's possibilities and development. This trust enables the child to trust his or her own possibilities and development. (p. 68)

Once again we seem to have entered the circle of pedagogical qualities. So hope for the young person comes from pedagogical love that manifests itself through patience and tolerance, belief and trust in the potential of the protégé. From Melanie's statement and from our own experience in life we know that hope is most needed when we are experiencing a crisis and we are about to give up. The mentor, therefore, is always there when the protégé is going through a crisis. He gives her hope and sustains her strength to face the challenges of life.

The mentor offers guidance.

Mentors are guides. They lead us along the journey of our lives. . . . They embody our hopes, cast light on the way ahead, interpret arcane signs, warn us of lurking dangers, and point out unexpected delights along the way. (Daloz, 1999, p.18)

When I go back and listen to the recording of my interview with Ron, the enthusiasm with which he talks about his mentoring relationship reminds me of the sparkle in his eye every time he mentioned his mentor. During our interview, I could clearly see that this young man related to his mentor as someone who had given him an invaluable gift that he would keep and honour for the rest of his life. And I could say the same of all the other protégés that participated in this study. There was a clear sense of thankfulness in their attitude towards their mentors. I really felt that these young souls were now ready to go out and face the world and all its challenges. It was as though they were now prepared to embark on the journey of life. Although their mentor and guide would not be there to accompany them on this journey, he had given them the guidance that they needed in order to have a safe and delightful trip.

The metaphor of mentor as guide goes with the metaphor of life as a journey. Another theme from this study which will be discussed at the

end of this section is "Mentoring does not take the protégé to his destination; it shows him the path and prepares him for the journey." The mentor is like a guide who accompanies the protégé during the first leg of the journey, or in some cases in the middle of the journey. For those travellers who are fortunate enough, he appears at a time when they feel lost and unprepared to continue the journey. He shows up unexpected, and brings with him a map and all the provisions the traveller needs to make it safely to his destination. Unfortunately, he will not accompany the traveller to the end of the journey but he assures her that she will make it there on her own. Speaking as a mentor, Daloz (1999) has this insight to share:

Like guides, we walk at times ahead of our students, at times beside them; at times, we follow their lead. In sensing where to walk lies our art, for as we support our students in their struggle, challenge them toward their best, and cast light on the road ahead, we do so in the name of our respect for their potential and our care for their growth. (p. 244)

In this study, it is evident that the mentors guided their protégés in those moments when they needed guidance. Ron says that there were "things coming up in my life that I had to think about putting aside for the next year, you know, stuff like that." He appreciates how his mentor "helped me explore all the other options to make sure that I was making the right decision." Ron's mentor helped him by "giving me another point of view on" things. "For me his advice and stuff would actually, it's helped me a lot in finding, in looking, you know, searching." In their sessions together, Melanie's mentor "would just listen and maybe advise me which is what I really wanted. . . . I needed some advice to see if I'm

going the right way or wrong way." Jeremy sounds grateful when he says that his mentor "had a lot of good advice to give."

How does the protégé respond to the mentor's pedagogical actions?

The protégé seeks and appreciates the mentor's caring.

This theme refers to the protégé's general attitude of responsiveness to the mentor caring. I have wondered whether it is really essential for the protégé to respond to the mentor's caring. Noddings (1984), who is well-known for her writings on caring in schools says,

The cared-for is essential to the relation. What the cared-for contributes to the relation is a responsiveness that completes the caring. This responsiveness need not take the form of gratitude or even of direct acknowledgement. Rather, the cared-for shows either in direct response to the one-caring or in spontaneous delight and happy growth before her eyes that the caring has been completed. (p. 181)

What would mentoring look like if the protégé does not show in direct response to the mentor or "in spontaneous delight and happy growth" before his eyes that she appreciates his caring? Let us imagine a mentoring relationship similar to those of this study; in other words a relationship that is part of a mentoring program in a school environment.

Nina, a Grade Nine student, was matched with the mentor of her choice and they agreed to meet for half an hour every Wednesday after school. By now, they have had three sessions together, which Nina and her mentor attended dutifully. The mentor is not Nina's teacher and did not know her well before taking on this responsibility. He has tried to get to know her better by asking her to talk about herself, her family, her experience at school, etc. Nina seems to appreciate the mentor's effort to get to know her and is open to talking about herself and her family. On

his part, the mentor has tried to give Nina an idea of himself as a person by talking to her about his background, his family, his interests and hobbies, etc.

When they meet for their fourth session, Nina rushes into the room, ten minutes late. She apologises for this delay and explains that she had forgotten about their meeting. She explains that fortunately she remembered about the session when one of her friends mentioned about going to see his mentor a few minutes earlier. The mentor accepts her apology and they spend the next twenty minutes talking about things such as Nina's heavy school load and why it is that teachers assign so much homework at this particular school. The mentor knows that Nina is a bright student and has been doing well since the beginning of the school year. He is perplexed about her attitude towards homework but does not go any deeper into the matter with his protégé.

The following week, something important comes up for the mentor that coincides with their mentoring session on Wednesday. He calls up Nina on Tuesday night and apologises for not being able to meet with her the following day. The week after that, the mentor goes to the school looking forward to seeing his protégé after two weeks. While he is waiting for Nina, he imagines that this time they would have more things to talk about because of the longer period between meetings. At the same time he is starting to feel anxious about their relationship because it doesn't seem to be developing in the way he had expected. His protégé does not seem to be able to confide in him by sharing things at a deeper level. He is not sure if this is because of her young age or her personality. At the same time, he cannot help but wonder if it is due to his inability to win her trust.

He looks at his watch. It is now 4:10 p.m. and there is no sign of his protégé. Maybe she was sick today and did not come to school. Or perhaps something came up for her at the last minute and she was not able to contact him in time. At 4:20 p.m. he leaves the school, wondering what happened to Nina. On the long drive home, he tries to overcome a nagging feeling that things are not going well with his protégé. He tells himself to stop worrying about it. Surely Nina had a good reason for not showing up today. There is probably a message on his phone to explain why she missed the session.

There is no message from Nina and the mentor does not hear from her until the following Wednesday. He does not call her before their next session because he does not want to put her on the spot. However, he gets the feeling that Nina is not very committed to this relationship.

This time, Nina is punctual. The mentor greets her warmly and Nina responds with a smile. She is quiet. The mentor gently enquires about her absence last week. Nina responds with her head down and in a low voice that she forgot about it. The mentor asks her if she would like him to call every Tuesday evening to her remind of their meeting the next day. Nina seems embarrassed and says that she will try not to forget again. The mentor asks her about school. Nina complains that the teachers are unfair because they give her "so much" homework. She is "so happy" that it is almost winter break and that she will get to rest from all the work that they give her at school. And she cannot wait to go home to see her family because she misses them "so much."

Nina and her mentor continue to meet after winter break but their meetings are interrupted by two weeks of spring break followed by a two-week trip of her mentor. During the last two weeks of school Nina

asked if they could suspend their meetings so that she has more time to study for her exams. Her mentor agrees to do this and wishes her the best in her exams, saying that he knows that she will do well. Nina nods and thanks her mentor. As he drives home that day, the mentor cannot help but wonder about what exactly was missing in his relationship with Nina.

When asked to talk about her mentoring experience, Nina says that her mentor is a nice man and he is very polite. "He always smiled and asked me how I was doing. He asked me about school, if I missed my family, what I want to do when I grow up, and that kind of stuff." She says that it was good to have a mentor but that "I always have so much homework to do and I never have enough time. When we met, I was always distracted thinking about my homework. One time, I was so busy doing my homework that I forgot about our meeting. He didn't mind that I forgot. He always asked me to tell him if I needed help with anything but I didn't really need his help. Once I told him about this problem that I had with my roommate who was very messy and always left her dirty clothes on *my* bed. I told him that I was fed up of telling her not to do that but she never listened. He told me to go talk to my dorm parents about it. I did that but nothing happened. See, my mentor comes from outside and he doesn't know much about the school. He wanted to help me but he really couldn't. So I didn't tell him any more about my problems. Next year I'm going to ask for a mentor who knows more about the school and can help me when I have problems."

When asked to talk about his mentoring experience, the mentor says that Nina is a smart girl and is very sociable. "She was a good student and was always concerned about getting her homework done. We

started out by talking about ourselves. She told me that she loved her brother and her parents, and that she missed them a lot. I told her that I had kids that were now older than her and missed not having them at home any more. Although our relationship lasted for about seven months I don't feel that I really got to know her that well. There seemed to be a barrier in our relationship that we were not able to remove. I felt that seeing her for half an hour a week was not enough for us to get to know each other well. I tried to help her to open up to me but she never really did. Once she told me about a problem with a roommate, and I tried to help her by suggesting a way out but she never brought it up again. I really felt that she did not need me. Sometimes I felt that she would rather be doing her homework or studying for exams during that half hour after school."

What comes across clearly from reading about this imaginary mentoring relationship is that there was not a strong bond between the protégé and her mentor. It is obvious from the story and their statements that they are both caring in nature, but somehow they were not able to bring this quality in a strong way into their relationship. It is reasonable to expect that the onus for creating such a bond be on the mentor. However, the question of interest here is can there be a meaningful and supportive relationship if the mentor is caring but the protégé does not seem to appreciate his caring? I expect that the answer to this question would depend on each mentor or teacher's personal experience with her own pedagogical relations. My own response would be that it certainly makes the relationship more meaningful and fruitful. Noddings' (1984) response would be that it is essential to the pedagogical relation. She says,

The student has his greatest effect on the relationship as the one cared-for. If he perceives the teacher's caring and responds to it, he is giving the teacher what she needs most to continue to care. As the infant rewards his caring mother with smiles and wriggles, the student rewards his teacher with responsiveness: with questions, effort, comment, and cooperation. There is some initiative required of the cared-for. (p. 181)

In this study, the protégés clearly expressed a sense of appreciation for their mentor's caring, which, as we shall discuss later in this chapter, was felt and well received by their mentors. Melanie explained to me that when she desperately needed support, she would go to her mentor because she "saw the level of caring." "Like I had this problem I didn't know what to do with it and I couldn't really talk to anyone. None of my friends were around at the time. It was exams. They were all busy. And I was . . . I couldn't make a decision and I was really stuck. And so I went and I talked to him." And Jeremy told me how much he appreciated his mentoring experience. Towards the end of our interview, with a big smile on his face, he said, "It was great for me."

In what respect is the protégé influenced through mentoring?

Mentoring helps the protégé to listen to his own heart.

What does it mean to listen to one's heart? Is it related to intuition? What do I understand when Ron tells me that mentoring has helped him in "following my heart more?" Why do I consider this an essential theme of mentoring? If it is essential, why is this notion not discussed in the mentoring literature?

We generally associate the heart with emotions (or affect) just as we associate the mind with rationality (or cognition). As humans, we are both rational as well as emotional beings. In other words, we are

thinking and feeling beings. I believe that these two aspects of our being are the manifestations of our soul. It is these two aspects of our being that distinguish us from animals. Just as we use our rationality to discover scientific truth, we use our intuition to discover spiritual truth.

When Ron tells me that mentoring has helped him in following his heart more, I understand him to be talking about his spiritual awakening. I know this because he also tells me that his mentor's advice has "helped me a lot in finding, in looking, you know, searching." It is quite common these days to hear people talk about "searching." They are looking for something that is missing in their lives. What they are looking for is spiritual fulfilment.

The reader is justified to think that a thesis in educational psychology is not the place to bring up the notion of spirituality. If I ask why not, you may say that spirituality, like love, is hard to define and to conceptualise and therefore, does not lend itself to scientific study. That is true. However, I believe that we do not need to be able to define spirituality in order to know that our spiritual development is an indispensable aspect of our overall development. Therefore, a study that explores human growth cannot ignore spiritual growth, and mentoring that facilitates the growth of young people cannot ignore their need to listen to their heart.

I believe that the mentoring literature generally stays away from spirituality because it tries to adhere to concepts that are academically acceptable. Leaving out such an essential aspect of mentoring cannot help our understanding of its essence. True mentoring does not focus on training the mind while ignoring the heart and the soul.

Mentoring does not take the protégé to his destination; it shows him the path and prepares him for the journey.

This theme, stated as a metaphor, is another way of expressing the metaphor of the mentor as guide, which I discussed earlier. The reason that I have mentioned it again is because it appears to be an essential aspect of how mentoring influences the protégé.

As we have seen in Chapter Two, there are many references in the mentoring literature on the influence or outcome of mentoring. As Daloz (1999) says, "The question for us as teachers [and mentors] is not whether but *how* we influence our students. It is a question about relationship: *Where are our students going, and who are we for them in their journey?*" (p. 5). "How we influence our students" was the question that motivated this study. Therefore, any theme that addresses this question is of great interest to me and, most certainly, to all educators. Let us see if we can explore the metaphor of life as a journey and mentoring as the preparation for that journey at a still deeper level.

Daloz (1999) uses Dante's (1952) *The Divine Comedy* to understand mentoring. In this famous work, Virgil is Dante's guide and companion on their journey to inferno. Referring to Virgil as Dante's mentor, Daloz explains, "Virgil begins by *engendering trust, issuing a challenge, providing encouragement, and offering a vision* for the journey." (p. 31) Although in this story the mentor, as guide, takes his protégé to their destination, most mentors in real life do not accompany their protégés until the end of the journey of life. However, before bidding farewell to their protégés, mentors provide the young and inexperienced traveller with a vision of what this important journey entails. I like to think that this vision is a spiritual one. It awakens the protégé's understanding of

herself as potentially noble in nature and character and capable of travelling a long distance on the road towards spiritual fulfilment. When Ron says that his mentor "aided me a lot in following what I wanted to do, following the path that I should be [on]," we know that he is now prepared to continue his spiritual journey on his own.

Discussion of Essential Themes from the Mentors' Statements

What is mentoring about?

Mentoring is about growth.

Daloz (1999) claims that "the idea of growth is inextricable from the idea of mentor" (p. 204). Let us examine this claim. Coming from an experienced mentor, this statement alone could be taken as conclusive evidence that mentoring is *all* about growth. We will, however, not take his word for it but will refer instead to what the mentors in this study had to say about growth.

The concept of growth came up again and again in my interviews with the mentors although it did not always refer to the phenomenon of the protégé's growth through mentoring. The mentors also talked about the growth of their mentoring relationships and their own growth in those relationships. None of this would be surprising to anyone who has experienced a pedagogical relationship whether as a parent or as a teacher. We need to perhaps widen the circle to include all those who have experienced a meaningful relationship of any sort. The implication of this is that we could modify the above statement by Daloz to say, "the idea of growth is inextricable from the idea of being in relationship," which would obviously include mentoring, teaching, parenting, friendship, etc. In fact, growth is so fundamental to any type of human relationship

that to say otherwise would most likely generate a reaction of astonishment and disbelief.

Since we have already explored the meaning of growth in Chapter One, there does not seem to be much else to say about it except to refer to how Ron's mentor described his tremendous desire to grow. He was visibly excited when he told me that Ron "was so open to growing." "He just wanted to keep going, keep learning." "[We] would set aside a time... where I sat and listened to him and sometimes give suggestions and sometimes ask questions and things like that." "[Ron] was really always eager to try new things and take them out into the school environment and come back and sort of talk about it."

Mentoring is about encouragement and building self-confidence.

Jeremy's mentor knew, from her earlier contact with him as the school counsellor, that he had not developed his problem-solving capacity and "wanted to see if I would solve [his problems for him]." "Like if he mentioned something, if I would just jump out there and go 'Oh, I'll take care of that.' Or 'that's not gonna happen.' "If it really wasn't at a crisis stage," the mentor would encourage and help Jeremy to sort out the problem himself and tell "him that I thought that he was capable of doing that."

What is the relation between encouraging the protégé and the development of his self-confidence? Clearly, encouragement helps us to develop our self-confidence. And when encouragement is combined with trust and confidence in the protégé, something magical takes place. The protégé feels that his capacity to grow and develop is recognised and begins to believe in himself. Bollnow (1989c) explains this very well. He says,

If a person is aware of our confidence in him or her, then our confidence tends to encourage and improve this person's particular ability. The person who feels that we have confidence in him or her increases his or her self-confidence and will try to justify (already unconsciously) our confidence. (p. 38)

In other words, confidence begets self-confidence. This theme is closely related to the theme about trust, discussed earlier in this chapter. We know that trust and confidence go together. According to *The Random House Dictionary*, "confidence implies conscious trust because of good reasons, definite evidence, or past experience" (Urdang & Flexner, 1969, p. 1412). Although this is a good definition in the general sense, we have seen from our earlier discussion of trust that a mentor trusts her protégé even in the absence of "good reason, definite evidence, or past experience." A more appropriate term for this attitude would be "faith." Although faith is also "confidence or trust in a person or thing," it is defined as "belief that is not based on proof" (p. 475). This is what the protégé needs from the mentor. If the mentor were to withhold her trust from her protégé until she was given good reason and definite evidence, she might never develop trust in her protégé.

The mentor has a dynamic role.

This study revealed that the mentor has a dynamic role which shifts according to the requirements of the mentoring moment. The mentoring moments described by the mentors indicate that sometimes they were filling the role of a counsellor dealing with deep personal issues brought up by their protégé. At other times, the mentors interacted with their protégé as a friend, chatting, listening and generally enjoying their time together. Being in a school environment, it was sometimes necessary to help their protégé in the role of a teacher,

advising her on her school work or giving her academic and career counselling. On other occasions, the mentors felt like an aunt or an uncle, "someone that feels okay to just state the way that they're thinking about stuff."

Why is this an essential aspect of mentoring? It is essential because it explains that the mentor is not rigid, dry and impersonal. She is flexible, open, and friendly. In fact, not only is the mentor's *role* dynamic, but also the mentor herself is dynamic. A dynamic person is energetic, enthusiastic, and full of life. She has agency, which means that she is in a state of action, of exerting influence. How else could a mentor hope to have a positive influence on her protégé? How else could she hope to see her protégé develop into a dynamic and enthusiastic being, excited about life and eager to make her mark?

Mentoring requires clearly defined boundaries.

All those engaged in helping relationships are faced with the need to establish a clear boundary between themselves and the other person in the relationship. As a helping relationship, mentoring is not exempt from this requirement. The risks of being part of a helping relationship that does not have a clearly set boundary are well known to us. In this study, I found that even as an experienced counsellor, Jeremy's mentor sometimes found it difficult to accompany him in moments of great distress. "I don't enjoy working through situations like that," she said to me, "in which I know that a young person is faced with a pretty difficult situation." She added, "it's always a challenge in a relationship to have a defined boundary between what belongs to the person and what belongs to you."

Here, the mentor is referring to the famous empathy/sympathy dilemma faced by counsellors, teachers, ministers, nurses, mentors, and almost everyone who is in a close relationship with another person. The risk of being too conscious of this boundary is that it can get in the way of developing an authentic relationship, one which allows a healthy bond to develop between the two people in the relationship. In this culture, there is "a general suspicion . . . toward dependence and close relationships outside the boundaries of the immediate family" (Rhodes, 2002, p. 67). The influence of neo-Freudian psychotherapy in which "the therapist remains a neutral, detached presence" (p. 68) continues to dominate our thinking.

I will never forget a discussion in a counselling course that I took a few years ago. We were talking about appropriate therapist-client interaction. At one point, our instructor said that a counsellor should never meet with her client outside their sessions. This seemed so bizarre to me. I asked the instructor, "What should I do if my client invites me to a cup of coffee after our session together?" Her response was, "You should politely turn down his invitation." She went on to explain that to accept the cup of coffee would go against the psychotherapists' code of conduct.

Fortunately, mentors are not subject to this code of conduct, and hopefully will never be. In the extensive mentoring programs offered by Big Brothers Big Sisters, mentors are expected to spend time with their protégé in social settings. They are encouraged to develop a genuine relationship with their protégé. How else could the mentor manifest his caring for his protégé? Rogers (1961) says,

The more that the client perceives the therapist as real or genuine, as empathic, as having an unconditional regard for him, the more the client will move away from a static, fixed, unfeeling, impersonal type of functioning, and the more he will move toward a way of functioning marked by a fluid, changing, acceptant experiencing of differentiated personal feelings. The consequence of this movement is an alteration in personality and behaviour in the direction of psychic health and maturity and more realistic relationships to self, others, and the environment." (p. 66)

I am not suggesting that an authentic mentoring relationship can only develop in natural settings and that the mentor and protégé *have to* spend time together outside of their sessions. I am suggesting that given the opportunity to interact in different environments, the protégé and mentor get to know each other as real people, with their particular idiosyncrasies. They may or may not like what they see in the other person but they do get to know him or her better. In fact, this is precisely what Ron's mentor shared with me after having experienced a school hiking trip with his protégé. He said that he was able to understand Ron much better when he saw him interact with his peers. He believes that mentors should carefully observe their protégés in their social interactions so that they can be of greater help to them.

What are the pedagogical qualities of the mentor?

The teacher/mentor understands and is sensitive to the situation of his students.

In the context of the "pedagogical situation," van Manen (1991) defines "situation" as "the totality of particulars with respect to which one must act" (p. 71). It is on the basis of this definition that understanding and being sensitive to the situation of the protégé is seen as an essential aspect of mentoring. For it is inconceivable that the

mentor can act appropriately without being able to understand and be sensitive to the protégé's situation.

In this study, it is clear that the mentors are perceptive and sensitive to the situation of their protégés. Jeremy's mentor told me that Jeremy "was not well-befriended" and that "when he first came [to me] he was really like hopeless." She did not think Jeremy "really trusted much in adults," but "he was just really desperate." He went to her because "he had nowhere else to go." As her teacher, Melanie's mentor perceived that "her opinion of herself was so low, and every time there was some sort of challenge in a mark or whatever. . . she would start to go into this sort of self-hate thing that just really wasn't working."

The mentor perceives the protégé's desire and potential for growth.

In Psychology, perception is defined as "a single unified awareness derived from sensory processes while a stimulus is present" (Urdang & Flexner, 1969, p. 985). More generally, it is defined as "the act or faculty of apprehending by means of the senses or of the mind." It is also defined as "cognition; understanding; and intuitive recognition" (Urdang & Flexner, 1969, p. 985). Husserl, who is considered to be the father of phenomenology, "designated . . . perception as the very heart of the life-world" (Langer, 1989, p. xiv). In her commentary on Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962), Langer says,

Merleau-Ponty points out that all knowledge takes place within the horizons opened up by perception, that the primordial structures of perception pervade the entire range of reflective and scientific experience, and that *all forms of human co-existence are based on perception* [emphasis added]. (pp. xiv-xv)

Both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty make powerful statements about the faculty of perception. Of course, we may disagree with them but this

is hard to do because to be in-the-world is to perceive. To perceive is to be conscious of the life-world. Who could argue with that? There is, however, as in all human faculties, a difference in our levels of perception. This is generally due to differences in our innate capacity to perceive as well as the different degrees to which we have developed our potential capacity to perceive. To say "the mentor is perceptive" does not imply that she possesses a unique capacity. It simply means that the mentor has a well-developed sense of perception. But to say that "the mentor perceives the protégé's desire and potential for growth" implies that it is possible to be oblivious to another person's unexpressed desires and feelings, and to their potential for growth. Can we, as teachers and mentors, develop our perception so that we can become sensitive to the needs, challenges, aspirations, hopes, and the potential of our students?

Van Manen (1991) believes that we can. He says,

Pedagogical perceptiveness relies in part on a tacit, intuitive knowledge that the teacher may learn from personal experience, or through apprenticeship with a more experienced teacher. . . . A teacher who senses that a child has certain difficulties in dealing with a problem may not be able to identify exactly on what clues the perceptive understanding was based. The tacit or intuitive nature of our bodily skill and bodily knowledge is learned in subtle ways by attuning ourselves to the concrete particulars of situations. (p. 208)

How does "pedagogical perceptiveness," as van Manen calls it, enable us to become aware and supportive of our student's realisation of his or her potential? He explains that we need to develop and use our "pedagogical tact," which requires combining our pedagogical perceptiveness with caring.

Pedagogical tact does what it does by exercising a certain perceptive sensitivity as well as by practising an active and expressively caring concern for the child. . . . Pedagogical tact relies on our ability to sense what the needs are of a child and also the possibilities for this particular child. This means that pedagogical tact can only work when the pedagogue's eyes and ears search in a caring and receptive manner for the potential of a child, what this child can become. (p. 172)

Van Manen's words are echoed in the Bahá'í perspective of education, as explained by Daniel Jordan (1993). He says,

From a Bahá'í point of view, true education refers to a drawing out or a development of potential to the fullest extent possible. Unfortunately, much of contemporary education is concerned only with a presentation of information rather than a drawing out of potential. (p. 19)

When a mentor helps her protégé grow and develop toward his potential, she becomes a witness to the transformation of the young person. This transformation is accompanied with excitement and joy for both the protégé and mentor.

Feeling oneself becoming the best of what one can potentially be constitutes the highest joy. It promotes a sense of self-worth, obviates the need for expressing hostility, and guarantees a compassionate social conscience. (p. 13)

This is what Ron and his mentor experienced. Referring to how Ron benefited from the support of both his mentor and the school counsellor when he needed it most, the mentor says, "[Ron] was sort of getting supported from both sides and he was just flying."

The mentor is committed to and takes interest in every aspect of the protégé's well-being.

In his book *On Becoming a Person*, Rogers (1961) explains that the term *helping relationships* refers to relationships in which "one of the

parties has the intent of promoting the growth, development, maturity, improved functioning, improved coping with life of the other" (pp. 39-40). He adds that in this type of relationship,

One of the participants intends that there should come about, in one or both parties, more appreciation of, more expression of, more functional use of the latent inner resources of the individual. . . . The relationship between teacher and pupil would often come under this definition, though some teachers would not have the promotion of growth as their intent. (p. 40)

I ask myself, how is it that "some teachers would not have the promotion of growth" of their students as their intent? Unfortunately, it is a fact of life in most schools that teachers are so overwhelmed by the sheer volume of work and the number of students they come face to face with on a given day (especially in a high school setting) that it is impossible for them to give the needed one-to-one attention to each of their students. But what Rogers refers to is not the actual time and attention that the teacher gives to each student. He is talking about the teacher's *intent*. What he has in mind is how the teacher relates to his or her students *internally*. Van Manen (1991) calls this "pedagogical intent." He explains that pedagogical intent is "an orientation to the good, to what is good for the child" (p. 17). Although Rogers' statement seems to be a passing remark about how some teachers relate to their students and he does not go on to analyse this in his writing, he is stating a fact about the reality of the relationship between some teachers and their students.

What this study reveals is that mentoring is about pedagogical intent. Without it mentoring would not be mentoring. In other words, pedagogical intent is an essential aspect of mentoring. It is essential

that, through pedagogical intent, mentoring be “aimed at strengthening as much as possible any positive intentions and qualities of the child” (van Manen, 1991, p. 19). Van Manen claims that pedagogical intent is an essential aspect of teaching too. He gives a vivid example of how a physical education teacher can violate the pedagogical intent of the teacher-student relationship by caring more about winning a game than about the physical and emotional well-being of his students.

How does the mentor’s interest in and commitment to every aspect of the protégé’s well-being manifest itself? In the reconstructed story of Lynn’s mentoring relationship as described by her mentor (see Chapter Five), we read that when they get together the mentor tries to create an atmosphere that is calm and relaxing. The mentor uses a medicine wheel approach to see how Lynn is doing. She inquires about her physical condition, her mental state, “what she’s doing to nurture herself spiritually,” and “what’s happening for her socially or emotional interactions and that type of thing.” Although this approach is an indication of the mentor’s genuine interest in the protégé’s well-being, it also serves to make the protégé aware of the importance of attending to the different types of needs in her day-to-day life.

The mentor is always open to taking the role of learner.

This theme was identified by one of the mentors to be essential to mentoring. Although this theme originally referred to those moments when the mentor is with the protégé and is open to learning from her, I was shown that there is another aspect to taking the role of learner. This is how the mentor explained it to me in our second interview:

I think that sums up the idea of what’s going on in there and when coming outside. Because it may be that there’s nothing that they

learn in that moment, in that time. But if they're open to it then, when they leave that room they can learn and grow from it. If they didn't, like if they actually weren't open to that then it would mess up (Chuckles) the relationship. Because it would close up the person's heart, basically. In the relationship they would slowly have to pull away, you know, if they weren't open to experiencing their own life at the same time as they're guiding the other.... I think that it's essential...with that idea that the person has to take care of their own emotional, physical and mental well-being at the same time as they're doing this [for the protégé], or else it will backfire.

In other words, the mentor always has to be aware of the need to attend to his own well-being so that he can attend to his protégé's welfare. This is akin to saying that a nurse needs to keep herself in good health if she wants to continue to nurse a sick person back to health.

There is another concept implied in this theme that has to do with the role of the mentor as a model for the protégé. The most effective way to influence another person is to reinforce one's words with one's actions. How can a mentor who smokes in or out of the presence of his protégé convince her of the benefits of giving up smoking? Or to take another example, how can the mentor teach her protégé to keep an open mind if he himself exhibits close-mindedness?

Much has been written about the importance of modelling at school and in the home environment. (Noddings, 1992; Tappan, 1998) In our own lives, we've surely experienced the effect of modelling both by those who have influenced us and by those whom we have influenced. Yet, it seems that we constantly find ourselves engaged in behaviour that does not reflect thoughtfulness, or to use van Manen's words, *pedagogical* thoughtfulness. For when I yell at my eight-year-old son for being too

loud in the house, I am not modelling the behaviour that I want him to learn.

A mentor cannot afford to be careless in this respect. He has a moral responsibility to be the best that he can be in relation to his protégé. Apart from behaving according to the norms dictated by the teachers' code of conduct, he has to reflect deeply on the way that he expects to influence his protégé. If he wants her to learn to be caring, he has to be caring. If he wants her to develop self-confidence, he has to have self-confidence. If he wants her to be open to learning, he has to be open to learning, and so on and so forth.

What do the pedagogical actions of the mentor look like?

The mentor creates an atmosphere that feels safe and accepting for the protégé.

The concept of a safe atmosphere where the protégé feels accepted and supported by his mentor was discussed in the first section of this chapter. We will now discuss this concept in the context of the mentors' experience of mentoring.

Lynn's mentor described her relationship with her protégé as "a very cordial relationship" where "there's a lot of honesty." She added that "the nature of our relationship was such that this was a place for her to come here and try on ideas." As I listen to the recording of the interview that contains these statements, I can vividly recall the satisfaction and enthusiasm with which the mentor spoke. Although I did not see her together with Lynn at any time prior to or after our interview, I could sense that she had a very positive attitude towards her—an attitude of unconditional acceptance.

What does it mean to have an attitude of unconditional acceptance? How often do we experience an attitude of unconditional acceptance? Is it a common experience in a school environment? Is it reasonable to expect this from teachers and mentors? Moustakas (1966) believes that unconditional acceptance of the student is not only reasonable but also essential for the healthy development of the young person. He says,

Relations must be such that the child is free to recognise, express, actualise, and experience his own uniqueness. Teachers help to make this possible when they show they deeply care for the child, respect his individuality, and accept the child's being without qualification. To permit the child to be and become is not to promote selfishness, but to affirm his truly human self. (p. 33)

Although the need for acceptance is inherent in us throughout our life span the young person's need for acceptance and caring is critical to his self-concept and self-esteem. . "Every child wants to be accepted as a person, to feel that others care for him" (p. 42). "The child must feel that what he says is worthwhile. Then he can look at himself more completely and more fully explore his attitudes towards others" (p. 43).

The mentor acts in the best interest of the protégé.

This theme may sound so elemental that we might think, "But of course, how could a mentor not act in the best interest of the protégé?" Asking this question would itself prove that this is an essential theme of mentoring, but one that is not generally mentioned in studies on mentoring. Were it not for a clear reference made to it by one of the mentors, it might have escaped my attention as well.

In describing his relationship with Melanie, her mentor explained to me that at one point he realised that she needed professional

counselling, which he was not qualified to give. In fact, he experienced the same situation with Ron, his other protégé. In both cases, the mentor approached one of the school counsellors with the knowledge of his protégé, and asked her to assist them, which the school counsellor did. At first, the mentor was concerned that this experience might have an adverse effect on his relationship with his protégé but he found that "it actually deepened the relationship—it didn't ruin it." He attributes this to the fact that "she trusted me to know that I was trying to act in her best interest."

Actually, this anecdote illustrates two other themes of this study. One is that the mentor is aware of his own limitations; and the other is that the mentor is committed to and takes interest in every aspect of the protégé's well-being. As we have seen, there is a close interconnection between the essential themes revealed in this study. With regards to the mentor acting in the best interest of the protégé, it is appropriate to recall the concept of pedagogical intent, which van Manen (1991) describes as "an orientation to the good, to what is good for the child" (p. 17).

The mentor celebrates her protégé's accomplishments.

This theme is related to the essential theme, "Mentoring is about encouragement and building self-confidence," yet it goes beyond that. Celebrating the protégé's accomplishments is as much about attitude as it is about action. This was evident in the mentor's recounting of how Jeremy "would have lots of great things to share and he would have victories and different interests in things." The mentor was happy to talk about any topic chosen by her protégé, regardless of her own interest in

the topic. "There would be times when we'd really spend a lot of time talking about motorcycles."

This attitude manifested by the mentor is much closer to that of a parent who is willing to indulge her child's every whim and fancy than that of a school counsellor who is generally expected to counsel the student toward mental and emotional stability. It is clear from the reconstructed story of Jeremy's mentoring relationship that his mentor often worked with him as a counsellor dealing with important personal issues, yet she did not lose perspective of her role as his mentor.

How does the protégé respond to the mentor's pedagogical actions?

Once trust has been established, the protégé opens up to the mentor.

In the beginning of their relationship, Lynn started out by testing the ground before opening up fully to her mentor. "When we first started meeting. . . . I'm sure she held a lot of stuff back. . . . She had to see if I could be trusted and she had to see if I would cast judgement." After some time, the protégé started to share very personal matters with her mentor and they were able to deal with the issues at a deeper level. The mentor perceived that Lynn continued to be wary about what she disclosed and continued to test the ground for some time until she developed more trust in the relationship. The mentor calls this process "crossing the hurdle."

In the first section of this chapter, we discussed about trust as a fundamental element of mentoring. Although we revisit trust through the present theme, our focus is more on the evidence of trust in the relationship—the opening up of the protégé—and the process that leads to it. The internal process experienced by Lynn and perceived by her mentor is intrinsic to a mentoring relationship. It is at the heart of all

relationships. However, its full development to the point where complete trust is established between the two sides depends on the ability of the mentor to hold in trust what the protégé shares with her in confidence and not use it to cast judgement on her. It is my assumption and belief that a mentoring relationship will not bear fruit unless and until this "hurdle" is crossed. It is also my firm belief that when a mentor and her protégé describe their relationship as "successful," they have already crossed this hurdle.

The protégé reciprocates the mentor's deep caring.

Earlier in this chapter, we discussed about the caring of the mentor and the protégé's appreciation of that caring. Now we explore what it means for the protégé to *reciprocate* that caring. Along with the process of building trust in the relationship comes the process of bringing caring into it. Clearly, the onus is always on the mentor. The mentor has to win the protégé's trust and the mentor brings caring into the relationship. When the protégé perceives the mentor as caring, she reciprocates his caring. Melanie's mentor tells us that he experienced his protégé's caring. "I know that once that trust is built that we have a deep friendship and a deep caring, and I know that it's reciprocal. I feel just as cared for as I care for her."

Interestingly, in my second interview with Melanie's mentor, he questioned whether this theme about the protégé reciprocating the mentor's deep caring is an essential one. I asked him, "How would you respond to a situation as a mentor where you deeply care for the protégé and you don't sense that reciprocating act, so that the protégé is indifferent to your caring?" He responded, "I think that at that stage in their life they may just need to have that loving, have that ear, even if

they're not able to sort of come back with that...that doesn't mean that it's not mentoring." So, I asked, "It wouldn't affect your relationship?" And he replied, "Yeah, of course, it would affect the relationship but it wouldn't paralyse it. It would just mean that would be one of the issues in building up the relationship but it wouldn't mean that there wouldn't be a relationship, I think."

I was moved by the mentor's response. He seemed to be telling me that he would not give up on his protégé regardless of her ability or disposition to reciprocate his caring. I wondered if most other mentors would have the strength to maintain their relationship under these circumstances. I also wondered if there really was a difference between appreciating and reciprocating the mentor's caring. In our earlier discussion, I equated the protégé's appreciation of her mentor's caring with her responsiveness in the form of asking questions, exerting effort, making comments and being cooperative (Noddings, 1984). It seemed to me that it was possible for the protégé to appreciate caring without reciprocating it. So, was it essential for the protégé to reciprocate the mentor's caring? If so, what did the protégé's caring for the mentor look like?

I found that Bollnow (1989b) speaks of the young person's love and adoration for the teacher or the significant adult in these terms:

The child's love is . . . that total, natural attachment and emotional attraction to those who are close. Love belongs to the realm of self-evident and fundamental conditions of human life, while in the pedagogical relation it acquires the special form of that "upward glance"; it is that totally trusting, all believing love. It signifies, in particular, the relationship to the parents and often, in a special sense, to the mother. . . . Adoration is clearly to be distinguished

from love. Adoration lacks the immediate warmth and taken-for-grantedness of love. It is already a stance apart, an objective observing and therefore a cooler (not necessarily less intense) relationship. Adoration appears pedagogically especially in the relationship to the teacher. . . . Sentiments of adoration (admiration, devotion, veneration, adulation) are necessary characteristics of a productive educational environment. . . . Children tend to want to learn, but they are prepared to learn without resistance only from a teacher who deserves their respect and adoration. . . . The feeling of adoration awakens in the child a desire to stand victorious before the honored person and to be acknowledged by this significant person. That is a strong motivation to strive harder. It is a powerful, forward-pushing force. There awakens at the same time the need for an inner agreement or correspondence with the interpretations and ideals presented by the teacher or this significant adult, and this leads to the process of appropriation. Yes, much of what is initially taken to be merely affection for the teacher will later on still be fruitful. *Thus the adoring affection opens the child to the influences of the educator.* [emphasis added] (pp. 33-34)

What I understand from Bollnow's explanation about love and adoration, is that a young person may not love her teacher in the same way that she loves her parents. However, she can develop sentiments of "admiration, devotion, veneration, and adulation" for her teacher. In fact, the benefit of these sentiments go right back to the young person herself in the form of "a strong motivation to strive harder." Seen in this light, when the protégé reciprocates the mentor's caring, it not only serves to motivate the mentor but also to motivate the protégé herself. Bollnow's last statement is the key to understanding the significance of the protégé's affection for her mentor. The mentor can truly influence his protégé only when she relates to him with caring and affection.

In what respect is the protégé influenced through mentoring?

Mentoring brings out the positive in the protégé's life

This theme may be seen to refer to both the protégé's growing awareness of the possibilities and opportunities available to him, as well as an awakening to the potentialities latent within him. Jeremy's mentor says that as their relationship developed, "it became much more balanced [in the sense that Jeremy] could see more positive things in his life" and "he would have lots of great things to share." Referring to her other protégé, the mentor says that "after she (Lynn) got into this mentoring relationship then she started to avail herself of other opportunities." For the mentor it is very exciting "to see that not only has she (Lynn) taken advantage of the mentoring but she has also involved herself in other kinds of healthy types of activities."

Daloz (1999) explains what mentors do to bring out the positive in their protégé's life. He says,

They inspire a sense of worthy purpose. For young adults in particular but also for older adults seeking a new direction, the mentor holds the promise of something greater, of a new, fuller, even *wiser* participation in the world. (p. 244)

In order to awaken her protégé to the potentialities latent within him, the mentor needs to be aware of her own potential as mentor.

If we are to realise our own potential as mentors, our work is to help our students see beyond the status quo and dare to imagine a more adequate world. We do this not merely by helping them gain critical purchase on the headlong rush of the culture, but more, by helping them form a moral centre, a basis for commitment grounded in recognition of our shared interdependence with all of life. (p. 245)

With regard to helping others in their process of transformation, Jordan (1993) says, "We have to accept others not for what they presently are but also for what they can become; otherwise, we impede their process of transformation and keep them from becoming their own true selves" (p. 25). He believes that,

To achieve deeply meaningful relationships with other human beings, we have also to accept the unknown possibilities within them, for that acceptance constitutes one important source of their courage to become. In more personal terms, if you do not accept the unknown possibilities in yourself, you will not be able to establish anything more than superficial relationships with other human beings, and you will not be able to help them develop their potential nor yourself to develop your own. (p. 26)

Mentoring helps to raise the protégé's self-awareness and to connect to himself.

The process of developing self-awareness and connecting to oneself may be considered either as a psychological or a spiritual process. Regardless of how it is viewed, this process is necessary if we want to have a more fulfilling and rewarding life. Ron's mentor helped him to reflect on and analyse his own situation and the implications of his actions. "It was just over and over again bringing to light sort of what was happening 'cause there was some stuff that he just didn't see that he was doing and he became more and more aware of it. And that was good."

For the mentor, mentoring is a spiritual experience in which the mentor helps his protégé to reach the ultimate goal of connecting with God through connecting to self. Reflecting back on his perception of Ron's spiritual progress, the mentor says, "I think he was able to connect to himself and to me that's the goal: It's that connecting to self so that he can connect with God. That he could do in the presence of an adult or

with the aid and help of an adult." He believes that Ron is still in the early stages of his spiritual development and he will continue to grow to the extent that he is able to make a deeper connection with himself and with God. "What I've seen is the beginning parts of the process . . . he needs to learn how to connect with himself anyway he can."

In what respect is the mentor influenced through mentoring?

Mentoring is enriching and educational to the mentor.

Our students teach us about ourselves—sometimes more than we want to learn. The experience can be at once confirming and humbling, for not only do they teach us our strengths but also our limits. (Daloz, 1999, p. 245)

This theme is about the "spin-off" of mentoring, as put by one of the mentor participants. It is about the satisfaction of being a witness to the growth of our protégé. And, as Daloz says, it is about increasing our knowledge of our strengths and weaknesses. But above all, mentoring prods the mentor to engage in the same process of internal search that she facilitates for her protégé. In other words, mentoring facilitates the mentor's growth. I would like to close this discussion with the words of one of the mentors from our second interview.

There is a huge influence, at least to me, in that when I walk out of that office I have to think about what went on and I have to kind of reflect on how was I? What did I say? What did I hear them say? What was that like for me when I was younger? You know, all these different things come up and I have an opportunity to grow and to learn. And that is true of any relationship, any conversation. But because it's more intimate then it's like even deeper. Questions can arise. If someone's making a life choice between going here and there it's going to bring up every time I made a life choice that was big, and thinking about that. So, there's influence. There's influence that way and sort of a prodding to continue learning about myself.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Closing Remarks

When you listen to a presentation of phenomenological nature, you will listen in vain for the punch line, the latest information, or the big news. As in poetry, it is inappropriate to ask for a conclusion or a summary of a phenomenological study. (van Manen, 1990, p. 13)

The above quotation should help the reader understand why this last chapter is not titled "Conclusions" as is the norm in thesis writing. I will, however, examine whether the aim of this study was accomplished, address what I consider to be its limitations, explore its implications for the role of teachers, and offer some recommendations for future research on the teacher-student relationship.

Poetry is usually addressed more to the heart than to the mind. A beautiful poem has the capacity to touch our hearts and uplift our spirits. Alas, I do not have the ability to write poetry, yet this research and writing is the closest that I have come to producing something that is directed as much to the heart as to the mind. My hope is that by now it is clear to the reader that this work was not carried out solely as an academic pursuit. What truly motivated this project was my need to embark on a spiritual quest—one that would help my transformation from student to teacher. Fortunately, I came upon a research methodology that lends itself to this type of quest. For, as van Manen (1990) explains, Phenomenological research projects and their methods often have a transformative effect on the researcher himself or herself. Indeed, phenomenological research is often itself a form of deep learning, leading to a transformation of consciousness, heightened perceptiveness, increased thoughtfulness and tact, and so on. (p. 163)

Having arrived at the end of this project, I ask myself questions such as: To what extent have I experienced a transformational effect through this project? Has it heightened my perceptiveness? Am I now more thoughtful and tactful than before? Are the pedagogical qualities and actions of a teacher manifested in me? Are these any different from those of one worthy to be called a mentor?

What I have realised as a result of this quest is that I do not have the answer to most of these questions. And I expect that they will remain unanswered until the end of my life unless those with whom I stand in a pedagogical relation help me in finding the answers. For who would be better qualified than my own children and students to tell me whether I now manifest more thoughtfulness and tactfulness in relation to them?

The aim of this study was to construct a full interpretive description of the nature of the mentoring relationship. It is evident that this goal was achieved through the exhaustive description of the mentoring relationship and the interpretation of the essential themes drawn from the reconstructed stories of our participants. This enabled us to obtain a deeper understanding of the nature of mentoring. However, the true motivating force behind this project was to understand the nature of the influence between teacher and student so that I could become more heedful in my role as an educator. Has this objective been achieved? I believe that the answer to this question will become evident by examining the pedagogical qualities and actions of the mentor discovered in this study and asking: Are these pedagogical qualities and actions any different from those of the teacher?

In order to simplify this exercise, I will list the essential themes from this study relating to the pedagogical qualities and actions of the

mentor taken from the statements of all the participants replacing the word "mentor" by the word "teacher", and the word "protégé" with the word "student".

Pedagogical Qualities of the Teacher

- The teacher is a good listener.
- The teacher is attuned to his student.
- The teacher is non-judgmental.
- The teacher is caring.
- The teacher understands and is sensitive to the situation of his students.
- The teacher perceives the student's desire and potential for growth.
- The teacher is committed to and takes interest in every aspect of the student's well-being.
- The teacher is always open to taking the role of learner.

Teacher's Actions

- The teacher helps the student to unburden himself.
- The teacher provides her student with support.
- The teacher gives hope to the student.
- The teacher offers guidance.
- The teacher creates an atmosphere that feels safe and accepting for the student.
- The teacher acts in the best interest of the student.
- The teacher celebrates her student's accomplishments.

As we examine these qualities and actions in the light of the role of the teacher, we can clearly see that they describe the essence of what it means to be a teacher. Since we could easily extend this list to include every other virtue known to us, it is evident that a true teacher is the

embodiment of all worthy human attributes. It is not surprising that the founders of the world's great religions are considered by their followers to be true educators whose mission is to raise us to higher levels of being and consciousness. The qualities, the actions, and the words of these Educators have inspired and influenced our lives and cultures more than any other single factor. Should not all educators seek to emulate them and follow their example?

I am extremely indebted to my participants for helping me to deepen my understanding of what it means to be a teacher. I will make it a personal goal to manifest all of these qualities and actions in all of my interactions with my students. This study has confirmed my belief that mentoring is an integral part of teaching. Since I have come to a deeper understanding of my role as an educator, I can truly say that the aim of this study has been achieved. I leave it to the reader to determine if these qualities and actions are worthy of her attention as a teacher.

Limitations of this Study

At this point, as is expected, I will address some of the limitations of this study. A qualitative mode of inquiry is not bound by some of the requisites of a quantitative methodology such as the random selection and minimum number of participants, triangulation, and statistical analysis of the data. Yet I hope that the reader has witnessed that human science research is every bit as rigorous as other methodologies. It is also very honest about its claim to validity. As van Manen (1990) says,

Human science research as writing is an original activity. There is no systematic argument, no sequence of propositions that we must

follow in order to arrive at a conclusion, a generalization, or a truth statement, because that would be to see writing itself as technical method. Its claim to validity as a method of demonstrating truth would be by virtue of itself as method. . . . (p. 172)

In other words, it is left to the reader to determine the validity of this method of exploring a phenomenon. As to the generalizability of its findings,

Phenomenology always addresses any phenomenon as a possible human experience. It is in this sense that phenomenological descriptions have a universal (intersubjective) character (van Manen, 1990, pp. 57-58).

The key test of its generalizability is if its findings resonate with the reader. If you believe that the nature of mentoring as made known through this study confirms and complements your previous notions about this phenomenon, then you may say that its findings are generalizable. Van Manen (1990), however, cautions us that,

The challenge of human science research is that the experiential situations may be drastically different. Thus it can be misleading to use one research study as a model for application in another research environment. (van Manen, 1990, p. 166)

Thus, it is important to recognise that certain elements of the findings of this study are specific to the context of a school setting similar to that of this project.

Another major influence on the results of any qualitative study is the researcher herself or himself. It is not hard to imagine that another researcher could have and would have arrived at a different set of findings even if he or she had worked in the same setting and with the very same participants. To take this notion one step further, even given the same data and using the same methodology, different researchers

would be expected to produce different findings. That is not only because of differences in judgment, capacity, presuppositions, prior experience, etc., but also because we are dealing with an intangible, or as van Manen (1990, p. 88) would say, an "ineffable" concept. This is what distinguishes the human sciences from the natural sciences.

The human being is, by all accounts, the most advanced and complex species on this planet. Despite great advances in the understanding of the human mind, we are still at the threshold of unravelling its myriad marvellous mysteries. Hence, any attempt at understanding what it holds and how it interacts with the heart to manifest qualities such as compassion or humour is bound to leave us somewhat confounded and not in full agreement.

Implications for the Role of Teachers

When I asked my daughter-in-law, who is a trained teacher, to give me feedback on my writing, she wrote me a note regarding the theme of friendship between teacher and student. In this note, she writes that friendship "is not encouraged, particularly in teacher training," although she herself believes that "this research shows how that element needs to be there in order to make a significant impact on the student's life" (E. Hastings Adlparvar, personal communication, April 21, 2003). In a discussion about this note, we explored how teacher training is influenced by the way educational institutions react to the interactions between teachers and students and by a desire to make teachers more "professional". Unfortunately, nowadays it seems that it takes one negative experience, such as a lawsuit against a teacher who has gone too far in befriending a student, to create a district-wide policy that

teachers should not befriend their students. If laws regarding pedestrian safety were enacted in a similar fashion, all vehicles would have been banned after the death of Henry Bliss, the first American pedestrian casualty, killed in 1899 by an electric taxicab (Vanderslice, 2001).

I would like to propose that the principles guiding teacher training programs and teachers' code of conduct be thoroughly reviewed and modified in the light of one overriding principle. This principle is that children thrive in a caring and nurturing environment. Of course, just as a plant thrives when given the right combination of light, nutrients, water, and pruning, the challenge facing educators is how to provide each child with the right combination of love, guidance, instruction, and discipline.

I would like to think that this study challenges teachers to see themselves in the role of mentors. I also hope that it opens the eyes of teacher educators to the importance of training teachers to be mentors. The core of this training would be to help educators recognise and develop all the important pedagogical qualities that lead to the right pedagogical actions. It would also train them to regularly practice retrospection so as to refine and strengthen those qualities. The foundation of these qualities is a moral character. To the extent that we, as teachers, recognise that educating a child requires a deep commitment to our own moral development, we will be successful in this difficult but incredibly rewarding enterprise.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although the explicit purpose of this study was to understand the nature of the mentoring relationship, its implicit goal was to make a

contribution to the understanding of our role as teachers and how we influence our students. For researchers who have discovered the benefits of hermeneutic phenomenological research in education, I would recommend a study that begins by training practicing teachers in the principles that guide this methodology. These teachers would then become the participants of a study of their own pedagogical qualities and actions. The researcher(s) would also include some of these teachers' students as co-participants in the study. All participants would be trained in the art of writing phenomenologically about their experiences as teachers and learners. They would be asked to write about incidents that were experienced by both teacher and student. Once this writing is analysed, the researcher(s) would interview the participants about the findings. The research method developed in the present study may be useful for analysing the data of similar future studies. Of course, it is expected that no specific method in hermeneutic phenomenological research would be applied without being modified to meet the needs and characteristics of the project at hand.

I anticipate that studies such as the one proposed would not only have a deep impact on the participants and the researcher(s), but would also enrich our experience as teachers and learners. While the present work may not possess the quality described below by van Manen (1991), it is my sincere wish that future works will.

A pedagogical text needs to possess an inspirational quality together with a narrative structure that invites critical reflection and possibilities for insight and that leads to a personal appropriation of a moral intuition. (p. 9)

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APPENDIX A

Interview with Melanie

Researcher: Okay, so we're not going to refer to any names. Okay, so I'll ask you about your mentor or your relationship with your mentor. So, my first question for you is: Could you describe your relationship with your mentor?

Melanie: Well, first he was just a teacher sort of. Our relationship started out like that first. And as the year went by I saw how . . . I kind of opened up to him because uhh . . . just because I don't know I felt it was easy to talk to him and so we became closer.

Researcher: And how did it develop? How did that go on from there?

Melanie: Uhh . . . well, every now and then . . . every time . . . he knew when I had problems I guess. Like he could see it from my face or he always kind of watched out for me and looked out for me. He just asked me most of the time how I was and what I was doing and how I'm doing with my studies, what time I went to bed the night before to see if I'm you know doing okay or not. And then it just . . . the friendship built up more and I went up to him if I had any questions or if I had problems to talk to him. So, he also did the same thing actually, sometimes, so we both kind of were together talking about our problems or I don't know. He kind of looked out for me and asked me every time how I was doing.

Researcher: Could you describe to me some of the changes, if any, that you experienced in your relationship with your mentor?

Melanie: From the beginning to the end?

Researcher: Yeah! Like what process you went through, what changes of any sort?

Melanie: Well, I . . . changes that I've . . . in our relationship sort of was that u I don't really trust anyone in the beginning if I you know . . . so at the end I completely knew that I could talk to him anytime I wanted about anything and he would keep it to himself. So trust was really important and umm . . . just the sense of the friendship that built was really strong in the beginning it wasn't really sort of . . . yeah so I kinda thought about him as a friend and not so much a teacher any more. In

the beginning it was just you know "hello class" and leave but it changed kind of . . . it was more like a friendship--very close.

Researcher: Uhh . . . do you believe that . . . and this might sound like a silly question: Do you believe that you benefited from this relationship and could you explain in what ways you benefited from it?

Melanie: Actually yeah, definitely because there was just some point in time where I had no idea like I had this problem I didn't know what to do with it and I couldn't really talk to anyone. None of my friends were around at that time. It was exams. They were all busy. And I was . . . I couldn't make a decision and I was really stuck. And so I went and I talked to him. If he hadn't given me that advice and if I hadn't listened to him a lot of things would have been different. And definitely he helped me through a lot of problems and made me make the right choices and definitely he . . . when I just completely about to give up on something he told me that there's always hope and you know yeah, definitely a benefit, for sure. So at times where friends or other people weren't there, the family they were busy, I didn't have time to talk to them, he was there right after class and I would go and talk to him. So, definitely.

Researcher: Well, I've asked you the . . . we are done with the first three questions and this is the last question. And I would like to basically ask you if there is any aspect of the mentoring relationship that I haven't asked you or that you haven't addressed. Anything special about it that you think would be useful for you to share with me. (Melanie: Hmm . . .) And again, I'm not asking you for specific things. You don't have to describe any specific circumstances. Just generally in terms of what the relationship meant to you and maybe some of the elements of this relationship. You've mentioned trust (Melanie: Yeah!) and you've mentioned friendship. Was there any . . . could you qualify it in any other terms or give me another description?

Melanie: Umm . . . (long pause) umm . . . I think a lot of times the [Bahá'í] Faith was really involved. I had to umm . . . I actually signed my card after I was talking to him which . . . he signed his card last year or somewhere around . . . I think Faith, when we had conversations together Faith came up a lot so both of us I think we . . . I don't know . . . I guess this is not between us two but there was a connection between us sort of like this that we both believed in God and a lot of stuff about Faith kind of brought us together closer even more because we believed in a lot of things--similar things--so a lot of things in common we had. I can't think of hmm . . . (long pause) I don't know basically just I know in

the beginning of the year I didn't know about all and as time went by just . . . yeah, all I can think of the level of friendship was a lot closer, yeah.

Researcher: Now you said something earlier to me before we started this interview that originally you had a different mentor as part of the structured program . . . the structured program at Maxwell but you ended up not pursuing . . . you didn't go very far in that relationship and you ended up choosing as your mentor somebody who had not been assigned to you as part of the program. (Melanie: Yeah!) Could you give me uhh . . . some idea of how that happened and why it happened?

Melanie: Well I said before that this person kind of watched out for me a lot; like he knew . . . cause he was my teacher and he knew that I had like . . . I had biology, chemistry and math to deal with and so he knew that I'd probably have to like stay up late the night before; so everyday he came at snack or lunchtime to see if you know like "how many hours of sleep did you get last night?" and you know "did you eat breakfast?" so just . . . I saw the level of caring . . . he actually cared and you know got . . . made me really you know comfortable talking to him and he always made sure that I knew that his office was always open for me to go to him anytime. So basically I felt comfortable talking to him. If I didn't . . . if I can't feel comfortable I can't talk to them right? So, just . . . we were both very open and he wouldn't really judge what I would say to him. He would just listen and maybe advise me which is what I really wanted. I needed some advice to see if I was going the right way or wrong way. I definitely needed advice not just someone who just listens and they're all: "That's great; good for you; sorry; so that's what happened; or you know it's just good to get some advice from other perspective and yeah. . . .

Researcher: I want to thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. I really appreciate it and we'll be in touch.

Melanie: Okay, thank you!

APPENDIX B

Letter to Parents/Guardians

Dear Parent or Guardian:

My name is Bijan Adlparvar and I am a Master's student in Educational Psychology at the University of Victoria. My area of interest is the teacher-student relationship and I am presently studying the nature of the mentoring relationship under the supervision of Dr. Honore France in the Department of Foundations of Educational Psychology.

Mentoring is the process through which a mentor, who is generally a person with expertise in a certain field shares that experience with another person, called the protégé, who is interested and able to benefit from it. The quality of the relationship between a mentor and a protégé determines the degree to which the latter benefits from this experience. A great deal of research has been conducted in the field of mentoring, generally as part of a structured mentoring program. Mentoring has been and continues to be widely used in large business corporations, public and non-governmental social programs, and in educational institutions.

In the field of education it is commonly used to help incorporate new or inexperienced teachers by offering the more veteran teachers as their mentors. It is also used to enhance the capabilities of gifted children, to attend the developmental needs of at-risk students, and to motivate potential dropouts to stay in school.

As you are already aware, (Name of School) has recently launched a mentoring program in which your child has voluntarily chosen to participate as protégé. The purpose of this program is to attend the transformational needs of the students which is over and above the attention which is normally accorded them by their teachers and dormitory staff (in the case of resident students). The mentors in this program have also offered their time voluntarily because of their genuine interest in the progress of the students at Maxwell School.

This is a unique opportunity for studying the mentoring relationship in the context of a program that has not been attempted before, or at least has not been reported in the literature of this field. It is expected that due to the nature of the program, the relationship between the mentor and the protégé will be of a profound nature, and a study of it will reveal

phenomena that are not normally encountered in other types of mentoring.

In order to do this, we need the participation of a few mentors and their respective protégés. Your child has indicated an interest in participating in this study subject to your consent. The study involves the conducting of a few sessions in which each participant will be interviewed individually about his or her mentoring experience. These sessions will be recorded on tape (audio only) and their content will be analyzed. The sessions will be held at the participant's convenience so as not to interfere with their scheduled and personal activities.

The participant is free to interrupt any session for personal reasons, or to withdraw from the study without prior notice. Withdrawal from the program will have no consequences of any nature for the student. All data collected will be confidential, with names being immediately replaced by numbers. The data will be viewed only by me and Dr. Honore France, and the written thesis paper and results will not contain any identification of individual participants.

If you are willing to allow your child to participate, please fill out Part A of the attached consent form. If you are not willing to allow your child to participate please fill out Part B of the form. Consent forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet separate from the rest of the data, and will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact either Dr. Honore France at 721- 7858 or myself, Bijan Adlparvar, at 360-1224. Thank you.

APPENDIX C

Consent Forms

Mentoring Program Study

**Parent/Guardian
CONSENT FORM**

Please sign either A (Approval) or B (Denial of Approval)

A: Approval

I, _____ parent of _____

give permission for him/her to participate in the Mentoring Program Study that will be conducted at during the 1999/2000 school year as described in the accompanying letter.

I understand that my approval can be withdrawn at any time.

_____ (Signature)

Date: _____ Phone #: _____

B: Denial of Approval

I, _____ parent of _____

do not give permission for him/her to participate in the Mentoring Program Study that will be conducted at during the 1999/2000 school year as described in the accompanying letter.

_____ (Signature)

Mentoring Program Study

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

Please sign either A (I AGREE) or B (I DO NOT AGREE)

Name: _____ (Age: ____) (Boy__ Girl__)

A: I AGREE

Based on the information given to me by Bijan Adlparvar, I agree to participate in the Mentoring Program Study. I understand that should I change my mind or feel uncomfortable about taking part in this project, I can withdraw at any time.

I understand that IN NO WAY will my safety be jeopardized, and that my privacy will be fully respected. All the material relating to me will be kept confidential and can be destroyed upon my request.

I also understand that IN NO WAY will my schoolwork, my mark, or my report card be affected if I decide to withdraw from this project.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

B: I DO NOT AGREE

I have decided that I do not want to take part in the Mentoring Program Study. I am under no obligation to give any reasons for my decision and I understand that my privacy will be full respected.

I also understand that IN NO WAY will my schoolwork, my mark, or my report card be affected if I decide to withdraw from this project.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Mentoring Program Study

ADULT CONSENT FORM

Please sign either A (I AGREE) or B (I DO NOT AGREE)

Name: _____

A: I AGREE

I agree to participate in the Mentoring Program Study that will be conducted at during the 1999/2000 school year as described in the accompanying letter.

I understand that my approval can be withdrawn at any time.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

B: I DO NOT AGREE

I do not agree to participate in the Mentoring Program Study that will be conducted at during the 1999/2000 school year.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

VITA

Surname: Adlparvar

Given Name: Bijan

Place of Birth: Tehran, Iran

Educational Institutions Attended:

Hagazian College	1972-1974
University of Guelph	1975-1975
University of Ottawa	1975-1978
Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas	1979-1984
University of Victoria	1997-2003

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B. Sc.	University of Ottawa	1978
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Title of Thesis:

Understanding Mentoring that Facilitates Growth in a High School Setting

Author

Bijan Adlparvar

July 16, 2003