



Thoughts from Linda:

## Mentoring Programs That Work

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This most practical book is written by an accomplished Learning and Design professional and is a very helpful guide for anyone desiring to establish or re-design a mentoring program inside an organization. It would also benefit mentors and mentees alike as it is filled with checklists and key success lessons for individuals, teams, and organizations as a whole in the mentoring field.

Jenn Labin is currently the Chief Talent & Diversity Officer at MentorcliQ. She has worked with a broad spectrum of organizations for over fifteen years, including large private-sector businesses, government/military operations, and higher-education institutions. Jenn has her BA from the University of Maryland Baltimore County in Digital Art and an MA in Instructional Systems Design. She has much practical experience and shares numerous frameworks and tools in this book. Baylor University uses it as a textbook in its advanced doctoral studies programs for educators.

I have always loved the story of the origin of the word, 'mentor.' It turns out that Mentor was the name of a friend of Odysseus who was entrusted with the education of his son, Telemachus, while he was engaged in the Trojan Wars of 1260-1180 BC. This story helps delineate the difference between a 'coach' and a 'mentor,' and as Jenn points out, numerous definitions have a wide range of subtle meanings. In her guide, she offers several ways to think about the definition itself and recommends that you build agreement on this fundamental element before starting anything.

She notes that all definitions can be distilled to the idea that mentoring is broad, covering both professional and personal issues. At the same time, coaching is task-oriented and focused on specific areas of performance--gaps as well as development opportunities. The book takes a broad view, making it practical for whatever definition your organization aligns around.

She introduces you to the AXLES Framework she developed for constructing mentoring programs, acknowledging that there currently needs to be more established methodologies in this space. The AXLES Model refers to 1.) Align to Purpose, 2.) Design the Experience, 3.) Launch the Program, 4.) Evaluate Effectiveness and 5.) Support the Participants.

She walks the reader through these phases and provides diagrams and images throughout, case studies to illustrate a variety of experiences and best practices, as well as a section called "Key Insights," which summarizes the 10 most important ideas of each chapter. Additionally, she has provided chapter exercises, allowing you to put these ideas into action.

The book contains seven chapters: Stories of Experience, Align to a Purpose, Design the Experience, Launch the Program, Evaluate Effectiveness, Support Participants, and Final Thoughts. Seven Appendices provide you with these tools: Alignment Tools, The Program Charter, Agendas for Launch Events, The Evaluation Plan, The Program Welcome Guide, A Template for Development Plans, and an excellent 9-Box Example as applied to Mentoring.

This is a textbook that is instructive and immediately applicable. The need for mentoring has only increased over these past few years as Boomers leave the workforce. Millennials, especially, have been asking for this development opportunity at work. There are 80 million Millennials in positions today, and we know their 'time in role' is shorter than in previous generations. They benefit significantly by having experience to draw upon and someone to help them through their challenges. Additionally, there are substantial benefits as emerging leaders are more likely to be loyal to the organization where they feel valued. We know that mentoring nurtures and deepens organizational commitment.

Mentoring also helps with diversity and inclusion, giving everyone an opportunity to learn from the diversity within an organization. She provides illustrations of peer mentoring and skip-level approaches as well.

Essentially, she lays out the case for establishing a well-thought-out program and executing it with an eye to effectiveness and measurement. There is an excellent section on the New World Kirkpatrick Model, which she explains and recommends.

She notes how mentors help mentees develop the capability, confidence, and competence to accomplish their goals. She emphasizes the many benefits of building the key relationships that provide the glue to hold organizations together in tough times and good ones as well.

If you are a mentor, a mentee, or an organizational professional considering such a program, this book will help you think it through and accelerate your success.