

Updated second edition



# GROWING YOUNG LEADERS

A PRACTICAL GUIDE  
TO MENTORING TEENS



**RUTH HASSALL**



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ISBN 978 1 80039 128 4  
First published 2009  
Second edition published 2022  
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0  
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Cover illustrations © Natalia/stock.adobe.com

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon CR0 4YY

# **GROWING YOUNG LEADERS**

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**RUTH HASSALL**



For Mum and Dad,  
with love and thanks for the strong  
foundation of faith you gave me to walk on,  
and for your ongoing love and support  
in each new season.

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## Foreword

I gave my life to Jesus Christ as a ten-year-old growing up in Uganda. The love, patience and advice of those Christian people close to me was vital to my spiritual growth.

Young believers have many pressures, challenges in the faith and temptations in today's society, so it is essential that they have good Christian leaders supporting and pastoring them. When it is applied well, mentoring can be an extremely useful tool in helping teenagers negotiate the dangers and pitfalls of life, as well as providing someone to share in their joys and encouragements. I was very fortunate to have been supported by Bishop Festo Kivengere, Canon Peter Kigozi and Mr Ken Saulez – the latter providing a home for me for five years!

I hope and pray that this book will help release the potential of our young people so that they become even greater disciples of Jesus Christ.

**Dr John Sentamu**  
**Former Archbishop of York**

## Introduction

It's been twelve years since I first wrote *Growing Young Leaders*, and much water has passed under the bridge since then and many things have changed. However, one thing that hasn't changed is my absolute belief in the effectiveness, significance and joy of mentoring young people.

It's been so encouraging to see many churches now offering some sort of mentoring programme for young people and seeing the benefit of it, recognising that while programmes are hugely important in the life of youth ministry, people matter more. It's adults committed to intentionally sharing time, life and the gospel with young people that ultimately make the difference.

I think it's worth highlighting at this point that this book on mentoring is written within a particular context. There are many different approaches to mentoring young people, but the focus of this book is mentoring young people for the leadership roles that they play, whether in church, in school or in their community. Having said that, hopefully the framework and guidelines set out here will be useful and offer support for a wider approach to mentoring.

My prayer, as with the first edition, is that God would breathe life into these words, and that, as a result, the lives of both adults and young people would be transformed for the sake of his kingdom as together we follow his call and leading.

*Ruth Hassall*

## Part I

# What do we mean by mentoring?





## 2

# Models of mentoring

*Our chief want in life is somebody who shall make us do what we can.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Although the word ‘mentoring’ is not directly mentioned in the Bible, we’ve now seen that the concept is a truly biblical one and is, in fact, connected with Jesus’ great commission to us to ‘make disciples’.

Furthermore, mentoring in the church context is unique because here the mentor does more than just passing on skills. Rather, this is spiritual leadership – a calling to lifestyle and faith formation and an opportunity to plant in the next generation the desire to be disciple makers themselves: leadership consultant John Mallison says, ‘It is quite awesome that the mentor as Christ’s representative makes disciples who are able to make disciples to teach others also! Producing a Christlike disciple who “can teach others also” is a formidable task.’<sup>1</sup>

The teenage years are such a significant time to be involved in young people’s lives. They are a time of growth and development, providing opportunities to help form values and set up a pattern for life. We should remember, though, that mentoring is an intentional relationship: it won’t happen by accident. The people involved need to be clear about why they’re meeting, and, while there is a large element of friendship involved, it remains a relationship with a purpose.

Mentoring is important because it’s a key way of sharing not just information but our whole lives, enabling others to see in action what it means to be a Christian leader and learn from it. As we’ve noted,

this is the relationship Paul had with Timothy. They would have travelled around together and Timothy would have seen Paul in action, preaching and teaching, and would also have been involved with him in setting up new churches. Paul wanted Timothy to remember all that he'd learnt, not just keeping it to himself but passing it on to others who were also involved in leadership.

What's great about mentoring relationships is that they can happen in a number of different contexts. The pattern set out in the Bible seems to be that as we reach out to someone ahead of us who will teach, encourage and inspire us, at the same time we should be stretching out the other hand to someone younger, either in age or in faith. Each one of us has plenty to learn from someone else, and plenty to offer someone coming up behind us.

## The mentoring network

At present I am involved in a number of mentoring relationships.

First, I am being mentored myself. My mentor is the person who consistently challenges me professionally, personally and spiritually. They are the person who has permission to ask me difficult questions about my life, and has my commitment to be honest about how things really are. We meet together once a month for about an hour and a half, and I can honestly say that that time is the most significant hour and a half of every month. It gives me the chance to reflect with someone else on the happenings of the previous few weeks, the state of my relationships, things that I think God has been saying to me and where I think he's leading me. I always leave feeling challenged to keep on being the person God has called me to be, encouraged and built up in my identity, and hugely humbled by the gift of time and focus that I have been given.

Second, I am currently mentoring a number of people who are involved in different forms of ministry. I meet with each of them about

once a month and we talk about key issues for them, predominantly to do with their work but also about their relationship with God. Although theoretically I am the one giving to them, I always come away feeling encouraged and inspired for my own life and work. It is such a privilege to be able to share in other people's lives, to hear their hopes, dreams and concerns and be part of praying for those issues.

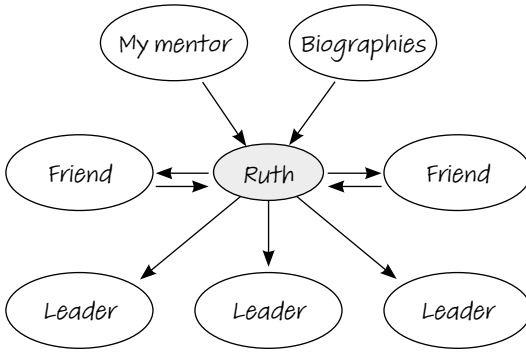
As John Mallison puts it:

I don't presume to know God's will for them. But it is a privilege to listen carefully to their joys and sorrows, to encourage and support them, to pray with them and for them, and to keep pointing them to Jesus as their reason for living, loving and serving... And in the whole process, I find that God has much to say to me, and that I too am enriched and encouraged.<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly, I meet with two friends on a regular basis. We have a meal together and take some time to read the Bible and pray for each other and for our church.

Fourthly and finally, I'm mentored by people I've never met and am highly unlikely to meet – Christian leaders whose biographies I read. Two such books that have inspired me in different ways are the autobiography of a Christian businesswoman, Carly Fiorina, and the biography of Amy Carmichael, a missionary to India. In her autobiography, Carly Fiorina tells her story of working within the business world and how she developed her leadership skills there; Amy's story of her life and commitment to following God into some really dark places has challenged me enormously. As I have spent time with these women, though not in person, I have learnt so much from them and feel encouraged to grow in my relationship with God and to use my gifts and skills to serve others.

At the moment, then, my mentoring network looks something like this:



We’re all called to be a mentor and to find mentors. The way to become a mentor is to develop a personal list of young people to watch out for. Be intentional in this: deliberately draw closer to someone and look for God-given opportunities to develop a mentoring relationship. And be intentional about finding mentors. Seek out spiritually mature people whom you admire and ask them to help you find a mentor.

## Images of mentoring

There are several helpful images that we can use to illustrate the role that a mentor plays in the life of a young person.

- **Coach:** A coach is someone who cheers you on in a race or match, critiques it with you afterwards and provides encouragement and pointers for the way ahead.
- **Guide:** A guide lays out options and choices for you, for the different paths you may want to follow. They point out possible dangers along each path but never tell you exactly what to do. This is important: as tempting as it may be, the mentor’s role is not to tell young people what to do but to help them gain the skills to make good decisions for themselves.



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**‘Waiting until people are in their 20s and 30s to start mentoring and training them in leadership is just too late...’**

**GROWING YOUNG LEADERS** offers practical guidance for all those mentoring 13- to 18-year-olds in a faith context, with a view to nurturing them towards leadership roles. Linked to the CPAS **Growing Leaders – Youth Edition** course, it also works as a stand-alone resource. It defines mentoring, analyses the necessary skills and attributes of a mentor today, encourages good practice, considers safeguarding and, above all, considers how to help young people identify their gifts and grow as Christian disciples.



**Ruth Hassall** is a speaker, trainer, author and coach with over 20 years’ experience of working with individuals, churches, organisations and dioceses.

*‘I hope and pray that this book will help release the potential of our young people so that they become even greater disciples of Jesus Christ.’*

**John Sentamu, former Archbishop of York**

*‘Growing Young Leaders is a fantastic tool. The kind of mentoring that it advocates and resources isn’t easy or fast, but it can produce profound results in young lives that will echo into eternity.’*

**Martin Saunders, Director, Youthscape’s Satellites Event**

