



## From One Hand to the Next

### *the importance of mentors*

Admirable teachers have progressed in life because they have been open to wisdom from many others. They have had the discipline to learn and listen to the lessons, then take the personally relevant knowledge and apply it to their own life. In turn, these teachers guide others towards their *own* self-awareness and potential. In doing so, they become mentors.

Mentors embody their own vision with integrity, truth, and consciousness, and want to teach others how to do the same. The archetypal mentor-student alliance is apparent in such relationships as those of Socrates and Plato, the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Deepak Chopra, and the same Yogi with George Harrison. Today we find similar mentor-student associations between pupils and teachers, physicians and patients, and metaphysical teachers and their followers. The mentoring dynamic exists in our careers, and in our emotional and spiritual lives, where others guide us with their expertise on our own path of self-discovery.

To reach greatness in any area, you need to have access to individuals skilled to take you part-way on your journey. When you reach the end of the road with one mentor, another will be there to guide you to your next phase of discovery. The mentoring journey is life-long, with knowledge interchanging throughout our lifetime.

One Canadian mentor. Dr. Bruce Hoffman MB., CHB., is a medical doctor and the Director of the Hoffman Centre for

Integrative Medicine. He is a leader in integrative medicine, having developed a revolutionary system that integrates traditional medicine and complementary therapies.

Dr. Hoffman is writing a book on a healing model, a program born out of a vision to influence people's health on an expanded scale. His perception transcends the conventional health philosophy, and encompasses scientific fact and natural health mechanisms, along with patient accountability and awareness.

Hoffman, himself, has learned from many great teachers including Deepak Chopra, John Demartini, Bert Hellinger and Indian University Professor and guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (later known as Osho). He has been inspired also by Roger Loveday, a high school teacher in South Africa, who taught him to question the validity and veracity of information that came his way.

"The first person who really influenced me was Roger Loveday, my English and History teacher, when I was 15. He had a unique way of teaching because he was very critical of our 'two-dimensional' high-school system. He discarded the traditional way, teaching us about history, culture and art in a distinctively creative manner." In Roger's classroom, Bruce awakened to his sense of having a greater purpose. He had what he describes as a "*Satori* experience sitting in the back of his classroom one day" ... an epiphany, an awakening moment when his consciousness shifted from his mind to his soul. He suddenly understood aspects of his life with his heart, rather than his head. From that

by Denise McTighe (with Kathleen Davidson)

*"To recognize another's inwardness is to have seen the sacred."*

-Peter Koestenbaum



moment on, his perception of reality deepened beyond that which is available only to the five senses.

Dr. Hoffman believes that he was guided by his mentors to become a physician, even though he fully expected that he would become a poet and an artist. His mentors taught him to find the career that would both sustain and inspire him, then pursue hobbies like poetry, to enrich his life.

Dr. Hoffman sees that a mentor is further along the path than the student. He has knowledge that the student does not, and can bring order to the student's sense of chaos. Mentoring is different than teaching – a teacher imparts knowledge, while a mentor embodies it -- a profound, living example for the apprentice. An individual, not fully grounded on his own path, cannot effectively guide a student in developing his own vision.

Although we respect the knowledge of mentors, we must also acknowledge their humanness and fallibility in order to avoid idealizing them. This is precisely what makes the mentor-student relationship a mutual responsibility – the mentor must remind his scholar that he, too, is learning, and the student must accept and remember this. Otherwise a protégé may deny his own talents and values, believing that those of his mentor are superior.

Dr. Hoffman mentors those patients who are interested in utilizing his knowledge to foster their personal transformation through emotional and physical balance, increased self-

awareness and self-care. Through his own apprenticeship with mentors like Osho and Deepak Chopra, Hoffman has established some of the core tenets he passes along. His vision of increasing awareness in a others (and one day a larger majority through his writing and research) was guided by his mentors, whose wisdom helped him become established in his field.

Hoffman says each of mentors has helped *uniquely* to solidify his goals and vision. And that's the way it should be. Dr. John Demartini, his current mentor, appears to confirm this belief. In studying with Demartini (former chiropractor, best-selling author, and philosopher), Hoffman has come to believe that with new insights about your life from a variety of mentors, you can live out your highest truth and advance considerably toward self-actualization – the ultimate goal of humankind.

Dr. Hoffman mentors others to reach their optimum level of health and consciousness just as many great teachers have given him the gift of their time and wisdom – mentoring, from one hand to the next.

And then there is David Irvine, the founder and keynote speaker of David Irvine Inc., and best selling author of *Becoming Real: The Journey to Authenticity* and *Simple Living in a Complex World*. A visionary in helping others recognize their own genuineness, David shows people how to inspire their lives and the lives of those around them, by expressing their "authentic" selves. David

*continued on page 28*

sees that a truthful mentoring relationship can be transformational for both the student and the mentor, and so it should be.

Focusing on honest communication, David guides leaders to explore their inner selves, to become attuned to the needs of their organization, and to the needs and talents of their employees. With enjoyment and enthusiasm, David enlightens others about self-awareness, just as he was taught in various forms by his inspirational mentors.

There are mentors for all avenues that are important to us -- our spirituality, career path, marriage and family. So David recommends being specific about the areas in which we want mentoring. From there, it is easier to determine who would be the best person for our quest. To begin the process, "I have people identify their top five values," says David.

Just as Dr. Hoffman believes his destiny was to become a physician to help patients on their path to better health, David Irvine believes he has been called to be a teacher who helps others find and express their genuine abilities and attain their meaningful goals – to lead others to be authentic. David goes into every mentoring or teaching situation believing strongly that each person has a significant calling -- whether it is to be a teacher, parent, medical doctor, artist, athlete, or software design engineer. Mentoring is one of the more powerful ways we have of learning how to effectively achieve our destiny.

It makes a significant difference if we are proactive in seeking out the mentors best

suited to who we are and where we are going. "We need to seek support for our missions (e.g. read a book or ask an expert or see a spiritual advisor), and actively create situations where we can learn from those who will give their time and knowledge," advises David.

David reiterates that the protégé needs to be aware of the mentor-student interrelationship. He needs to ask, "Is my mentor helping me to find my own power and identity, or is he just expecting me to follow in his footsteps?" Following a mentor too closely is disempowering and counter-effective to achieving one's *own* vision.

In designing a mentoring strategy David says; "you have to be very intentional about it. I get very concerned about organizations that create mentoring programs where people are *assigned* to mentors. In my view it just does not work that way. The whole mentoring experience has to come from you knowing what you want, identifying what mentor is appropriate for you right now, and then having the mentor accept you willingly as a student."

And the best mentor is one with whom you *eventually* become friends, and perhaps for whom you then become a mentor. Reciprocal ownership of the mentor-student connection may not be immediate, but must develop to sustain the genuine development of the student and support the later reciprocal transfer of knowledge. David has had the privilege of being schooled by mentors who brought him closer to his

true self, and now he reciprocates his knowledge and wisdom. In turn, he uses his insights and the example of his life to inspire others in the development of their authenticity. He gives others opportunities to discover and foster their own visions and to live a more stimulating and fulfilling life. "It is an honour to be asked to mentor," says David.

"I think mentoring is about helping others to filter and refine their vision." In everyday life we can get caught up in creating what society tells us is important. A mentor helps a student look into his "soul", because the authentic knowledge is there. A person's soul knows what to discard to get to the core of one's identity and calling. Who someone *is* genuinely and the nature of his destiny are not accidents of life. A mentor knows this and encourages the student to be true to himself. David sees the development of his mentoring as a lifelong process, and he knows it is his calling to teach, guide and support others on their personal paths to fulfillment.

Indeed, he accomplishes his purpose - through public speaking, writing, and most of all, living his life authentically and with integrity. David is an inspiration for those who are seeking their dreams and desires, and a model for those who want to pass their knowledge and abilities to the next student ... mentoring from one hand to the next. ■

#### SOURCES

Bruce Hoffman: [www.hoffmancentre.com](http://www.hoffmancentre.com)  
David Irvine: [www.davidirvine.com](http://www.davidirvine.com)

The whole mentoring experience has to come from you knowing what you want, identifying what mentor is appropriate for you right now, and then having the mentor accept you willingly as a student.