Managers as Mentors
Building Partnerships for Learning

Chip R. Bell and Marshall Goldsmith

Author of Wired and Dangerous
Author of What Got You Here Won’t Get You There
“Continual learning is a key to effective leadership because no one can know everything there is to know. Managers as Mentors is a practical yet powerful book for helping leaders make continual learning a valuable addition to their strategy.”

— MIKE KRZYZEWSKI
Head Coach, Duke University Men’s Basketball
2010 NCAA Champions

“Mentoring is the highest of the teaching arts, and in this new edition of Managers as Mentors Chip Bell and Marshall Goldsmith have skillfully crafted the essential handbook for all those who are trusted advisors to aspiring leaders.”

— JIM KOUZES
coauthor, The Leadership Challenge and Executive Fellow of Leadership, Leavey School of Business, Santa Clara University

“Managers as Mentors will be the indispensable handbook of managers/leaders across the sectors.”

— FRANCES HESSELBEIN
President and CEO, The Frances Hesselbein Leadership Institute
Former CEO of the Girls Scouts of the USA

“Managers as Mentors outlines simple, easy-to-follow steps so that the mentoring role becomes comfortable and doable—even for the busiest managers.”

— DR. BEVERLY KAYE
co-author, Help Them Grow or Watch Them Go
CHIP R. BELL is a senior partner with the Chip Bell Group and has worked as consultant, trainer, and speaker to a number of major organizations. As a highly decorated infantry unit commander with the elite 82nd Airborne during the Vietnam war, Chip went on to join the faculty of the Instructional Methods Division of the Army Infantry School, and served as an adjunct instructor at Cornell University, Manchester University (UK), and Penn State University. He has authored or co-authored nineteen books, including Wired and Dangerous (with John Patterson) and Managing Knock Your Socks Off Service (with Ron Zemke), and his articles on training and learning have appeared in numerous professional journals.

MARSHALL GOLDSMITH, Ph.D is the million-selling author or editor of thirty-two books, including the New York Times and Wall Street Journal bestsellers MOJO and What Got You Here Won’t Get You There. His books have been translated into twenty-eight languages and become bestsellers in eight countries. Marshall teaches executive education at Dartmouth’s Tuck School and frequently speaks at leading business schools. Among his other books are the AMA Handbook of Leadership, The Organization of the Future 2, and The Leadership Investment, all three of which are American Library Association-Choice award winners for academic business books of the year.
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Mentors

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Managers as Mentors

Third Edition, Revised and Expanded

Chip R. Bell and Marshall Goldsmith
Contents

Beginning Our Journey 1

Part 1  Mentoring Is . . . 17
  1 Panning for Insight: The Art of Mentoring 19
  2 Mentoring in Action: The Act of Mentoring Up Close 35
  3 Assessing Your Mentoring Talents: A Self-Check Scale 43
  4 CASE STUDY Every Knock’s a Boost: An Interview with Mark Tercek, CEO of The Nature Conservancy 51

Part 2  Surrendering—Leveling the Learning Field 55
  5 Kindling Kinship: The Power of Rapport 59
  6 The Elements of Trust Making: “This Could Be the Start of Something Big!” 67
  7 The Person in the Mirror: Mentor Humility Creates Protégé Confidence 75
  8 Inside the Mind of the Protégé: When Fear and Learning Collide 79
  9 CASE STUDY Fail Faster: An Interview with Liz Smith, CEO of Bloomin’ Brands 87

Part 3  Accepting—Creating a Safe Haven for Risk Taking 91
  10 Invitations to Risk: Acceptance as a Nurturer of Courage 93
  11 Socrates’ Great Secret: Awesome Queries 99
  12 The Ear of an Ally: The Lost Art of Listening 107
  13 “Give-and-Take” Starts with “Give”: Distinguished Dialogues 113
  14 CASE STUDY Simply Listen: An Interview with Deanna Mulligan, CEO of the Guardian Life Insurance Company of America 121

Part 4  Gifting—the Main Event 125
  15 Avoiding Thin Ice: The Gift of Advice 129
  16 Reporting on Blind Spots: The Gifts of Feedback and Feedforward 135
  17 Linking Proficiency to Purpose: The Gift of Focus 145
  18 The Bluebirds’ Secret: The Gift of Balance 149
  19 Inviting Your Protégé to Enchantment: The Gift of Story 155
  20 CASE STUDY Grace under Fire: An Interview with Joe Almeida, CEO of Convidien 163
Part 5  Extending—Nurturing a Self-Directed Learner  167
21  Beyond the Relationship: Ensuring the Transfer of Learning  169
22  “If You Want Something to Grow, Pour Champagne on It!”  175
23  Managing Sweet Sorrow: Life after Mentoring  179
24  CASE STUDY Fly High, Dive Deep: An Interview with Fred Hassan, Managing Director of Warburg Pincus, LLC  183

Part 6  Special Conditions  187
25  Unholy Alliances: Mentoring in Precarious Relationships  189
26  Arduous Alliances: Mentoring in Precarious Situations  197
27  CASE STUDY Respect Everyone: An Interview with Frances Hesselbein, CEO of Frances Hesselbein Leadership Institute  205

Part 7  The Mentor’s Toolkit  209
Tool #1:  Quick Tips for Mentors and Protégés  211
Tool #2:  Mentoring Competence Measure  213
Tool #3:  Mentoring FAQs  216
Tool #4:  More Reading on Mentoring  220
Tool #5:  Elements of a Learning Plan  221
Tool #6:  The Eagle: An Inspirational Story  222

Notes  223
Bibliography  225
Thanks  228
Index  229
About the Authors  000
Beginning Our Journey

What is mentoring? At its most basic level, it is simply the act of helping another learn. However, the relationship between helper and helpee changes significantly when performed as a learning partnership rather than the traditional teaching “parentship” (master teaches apprentice).

The concept of mentoring as a learning partnership is one rather foreign to many. They rely on the stereotypical approach, using their expertise to teach rather than facilitate; demonstrate instead of enabling discovery. Lecturing to their protégés, they leave them temporarily capable but unwise in the long run. What comes from a capability-adding approach is only compliance; however, what emanates from a wisdom-building approach is creativity—the foundation of innovation. Competitive organizations today need “learning entrepreneurs.” Today, curiosity almost always trumps conformity.
Words like “mentor” and “coach” are sometimes used to mean the same thing. Here is our distinction: Coaching is a part of the leadership role specifically aimed at nurturing and sustaining performance. Mentoring is that part of the leadership role that has learning (competence, proficiency, skill, know-how, wisdom) as its primary outcome. Granted, learning impacts performance, and that in turn impacts the accomplishment of important goals. You will encounter this definition more than once.

The words we use for the players in the mentoring partnership are chosen more for convenience than for any other reason. “Mentors” are people (especially leaders) who engage in deliberate actions aimed at promoting learning; “leader,” “manager,” or “coach” would serve as well. Mentors do not have to be in a superior power position. One might easily be mentored by someone who possesses the needed skill or competence but is several levels below in the pecking order.

Some organizations find the label “mentor” to have special negative baggage, often the result of ill-fated mentoring programs. “Learning coach” is often a solid substitute. Likewise, “protégé” refers to the primary beneficiary of the mentoring effort; “associate,” “subordinate,” “colleague,” “mentee,” “partner,” or “follower” could be used. As long as we are clear on whom we mean, the labels can be changed to fit individual preferences and situations.

The main thing to remember is that this book is grounded in a partnership philosophy. It has no secrets aimed at making you look good to an unknowing subordinate, and we hope you will share it with your colleagues and associates and protégés. The more you know about how to mentor, the better the mentoring relationship will work for you. The same is true for the protégé. Some have found discussing the book helpful in improving the process of mentoring. Do what works for you.
Beginning Our Journey

Managers As Mentors, ReVISITED

We are big fans of new. We rarely go to the same restaurant twice, even if it was a great experience. The concept of a time-share—returning each summer to the same condo—leaves us absolutely cold. Why, we won’t even eat leftovers unless the only other option is to skip a meal!

This is the third edition of this book. You would think we would abhor the idea of spending time on the “leftover” version of a book. But we were excited by the opportunity! This edition is not a warmed-over version of yesterday’s dish, served up with a different sauce on the side. We think you’ll discover it has enough new and different ingredients not to be considered a leftover at all; rather, it is a completely new experience.

This new version is different in a number of ways. There are many chapters in this edition not found in the first or second. We have learned a lot both from the feedback of readers of the second edition and from participants in the mentoring workshops we have conducted and keynote speeches we have delivered. They helped us crystallize our thinking and enabled us to get a lot clearer on concepts that were somewhat vague in the second edition. We are grateful for the learning they provided us.

You will discover soon that Managers as Mentors is crafted around a mnemonic—SAGE—that forms the structure of the mentoring experience as we see it. Surrendering (S) is all about actions that make mentoring a power-free experience. We have learned that power, authority, and command—or at least the protégé’s perception of these traits in the mentor—can doom the mentoring experience to a perfunctory dialogue... sans risks, sans spirit, and sans discovery.

Accepting (A) in the SAGE model focuses on the value of a safe, nontoxic relationship. When the protégé believes he or she is in a relationship that is not dangerous, growth-producing risk and experimentation are more likely to occur. The perception or pre-
diction of danger is related not to physical harm but rather to the emotional damage caused by rebuke, judgment, or criticism—all of which yield a loss of protégé self-esteem in front of an important person. Why is this important? Without risk there is no learning; without experimentation there is no progress.

Gifting (G) is positioned as the main event in mentoring. Many mentors start their mentoring relationships with a gift of advice, feedback, or focus. However, when offered as the first step in the relationship, the act of bestowing such gifts risks their being at best undervalued, at worst ignored, resisted, or rejected. If Gifting follows Surrendering and Accepting, it is more likely to be experienced by the protégé as a sincere gesture and a valued contribution worthy of attention, tryout, and effort.

Extending (E) in the SAGE is about the creation and nurturance of the protégé as a self-directed learner. It is also about ways to extend the learning of the protégé beyond his or her relationship with the mentor. Essentially, it is shepherding the transfer of learning.

Why Mentoring Is Important … Today

Organizations scramble to attract and retain skilled employees. Mentoring can be a powerful weapon useful in winning the war for talent. And both the flattening of organizations and the transformation of the role of boss have left many managers in an identity crisis. Having risen up the hierarchy by virtue of their command and control skills, they enter a world where bossing is now about coaching and partnering. This book offers a new perspective on roles and competencies for bosses as an alternative to what it has meant historically to be in charge.

Organizations have always operated in a competitive arena. Whether vying for a share of an economic market, a share of the customer’s loyalty, or a share of the resources doled out by some governing body, organizations operate in a contest mode. In today’s
race, the winners are those that prove themselves more adaptive, more innovative, and more agile. These are the organizations populated by employees who are always learning, led by managers who are always teaching. So at a macro level, this book is about achieving organizational success.

When *Managers as Mentors* first came out, the concept of the “learning organization” was new and popular. Peter Senge was the new management guru, and his groundbreaking best-seller, *The Fifth Discipline*, was required reading for all contemporary, forward-thinking executives. We have today moved past the fad stage of a learning organization.¹ The landscape of enterprise now is shaped by the dearth of talent, the pace of change, and the transformation of what it means to be in charge—all operating against the backdrop of a challenging economy. This new landscape has put “helping employees grow” at the top of the list of critical success factors for all managers. Consequently, this book is more important today than it was when it first appeared in hardback in the fall of 1996.

As mentoring has grown in importance since then, so have the specifications for mentoring tools. Managers today want proficiency without having to buy into a program. They seek helpful resources and techniques, not hindering rules and policies. Explorations of philosophy and theory might be tolerated after hours, but in the middle of challenge and the heat of contest, managers shun any instruction not immediately transferable to their everyday practice.

**Mentoring as an Art**

The mentor is a teacher, a guide, a sage, and foremost a person acting to the best of his or her ability, in a whole and compassionate way in plain view of the protégé. No greater helping or healing can occur than that induced by a model of compassion and authenticity. Mentoring is about being real, being a catalyst, and being some-
times a kind of prophet. It is therefore far more art than science. It is about personal power, not expert or role power. The most powerful and most difficult part of mentoring is being who you are.

This is not to imply that a mentor must be some kind of superhero without flaws, doubts, or the capacity for making mistakes. Fundamentally, mentoring is about growing—mentors growing with protégés, protégés growing with mentors. The core of a mentoring relationship is more about a mutual search than about imparting wisdom. As a collective pursuit, mentoring works best when mentors are focused on building, not on boasting.

The anthropologist Carlos Castaneda used the word “magical” to describe his unique mentoring relationship with the Yaqui medicine man Don Juan—and truly there is a magical quality to the mentoring process when it takes on a life of its own and leads mentor and protégé through an experience of shared discovery. The challenge of helping another see things in a new way has had many labels down through the centuries. Biblical writers used fishing analogies to capture the spirit of mentoring magic and told of removing scales from eyes. The philosopher Ram Dass referred to it as “a dance.” Buddha said, “One should follow a man of wisdom who rebukes one for one’s faults, as one would follow a guide to some buried treasure.”

Mentoring magic cannot be a solo performance. It is not a one-way, master-to-novice transaction. To be effective and lasting, it must be accomplished through a two-way relationship—the synchronized efforts of two people. The synchrony and synergy of mentoring are what give it a dance-like quality. They are also what make it magical.

This is not the first book on mentoring—nor the last. But from what we have seen, it is the only one we know of that is grounded in a true partnership philosophy. Our take on mentoring with a partnership philosophy is this: Assume that all your future employees will be independently wealthy, headstrong, purpose-seeking volunteers who love to acquire learning but hate to surrender liberty.
This book is also about power-free facilitation of learning. It is about teaching through the power of consultation and collaboration rather than constriction and assessment. It views learning as an expansive, unfolding process rather than an evaluative, narrowing effort. It is a song about unfolding—one in which the last few stanzas have yet to be written. It is the instruction book on how to perform synchronized magic.

This is not a philosophy book, although it is grounded in very specific convictions: that the principal goal of mentoring is to create a self-directed learner, that the primary tool for learning is discovery, and that the most effective context for reaching that goal is a learning partnership. This is a workbook, filled with ideas, suggestions, how-to’s, and resources. If it ends up dog-eared, underlined, and passed around, it will mean that we have succeeded in making it a practical book—perhaps even a fun book as well as a soul-searching one. It is intended to be a tool for a critical component of the leader’s responsibility—helping another learn and grow.

We wanted you to have a preview of coming attractions. Below are thumbnails showing the organization of the book.

Part 1: Mentoring Is…

Chapter 1: Panning for Insight: The Art of Mentoring outlines what mentoring is (and is not), describes mentoring traps to avoid, and offers perspectives on how to make the mentoring relationship effective. This chapter also provides an overview of the mentoring model used to structure the book.

Chapter 2: Mentoring in Action: The Act of Mentoring Up Close has a simple and singular purpose: to present the feel and drama of mentoring. Often participants in coaching and mentoring classes ask, “Could you show a movie of what solid mentoring looks like, so we could know it when we see it?” This chapter attempts to provide the screenplay for such a movie. It will be a case to which
we return throughout the book to make key points about the mentoring partnership.

Chapter 3: Assessing Your Mentoring Talents: A Self-Check Scale is the chapter with the self-scoring instrument. Since several chapters have sidebars that apply the results of this instrument, we recommend that you read this chapter and do the self-check before going on to other chapters. Read chapters 1 through 3 first, then select whatever chapter fits your need. You are welcome to photocopy the instrument if you would rather not write in the book.

Chapter 4: Case Study: Every Knock’s a Boost. Throughout this edition of *Managers as Mentors*, we provide case examples of well-known leaders describing their experiences as the protégés to effective mentors. The first case study is an interview with Mark Tercek, CEO of The Nature Conservancy. The Nature Conservancy is the leading conservation organization working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. Before joining The Nature Conservancy, Mark was a managing director at Goldman Sachs, where he played a key role in developing the firm’s environmental strategy. He holds an MBA from the Harvard Business School.

Part 2: Surrendering—Leveling the Learning Field

Chapter 5: Kindling Kinship: The Power of Rapport makes the point that the way the mentoring relationship begins can strongly influence how effective it will be later. This chapter provides both perspectives and techniques for getting the mentoring relationship off to a solid start.

Chapter 6: The Elements of Trust Making: “This Could Be the Start of Something Big!” shows how the quality of the mentoring relationship hangs on the success the mentor has in nurturing, communicating, and engendering trust. Using the style of the late great
comedian Steve Allen as a prototype, the chapter outlines practices important to trust building.

Chapter 7: The Person in the Mirror: Mentor Humility Creates Protégé Confidence focuses on ways to narrow the emotional distance between mentor and protégé. This chapter, written exclusively by Marshall, outlines power-reducing techniques to create a level playing field for a mentoring relationship to be productive.

Chapter 8: Inside the Mind of the Protégé: When Fear and Learning Collide. One of the greatest barriers to learning is fear. Most leader-follower relationships have some element of anxiety, given the ever-present existence of position power (in the case of a boss) or expertise (in the case of a peer) or both. Likewise, most organizations still spend a lot of energy on evaluation, testing, and judging—all potential anxiety producers. This chapter examines ways to make a mentoring relationship a safe haven from apprehension for the protégé, thus a healthy environment for learning.

Chapter 9: Case Study: Fail Faster. This chapter offers an interview with Liz Smith, CEO of Bloomin’ Brands. Bloomin’ Brands is one of the world’s largest casual dining companies, with more than 1,400 restaurants in forty-nine states and twenty-one countries and territories. The company owns such familiar brands as Outback Steakhouse, Bonefish Grill, and Carrabba’s Italian Grill. Before assuming leadership at Bloomin’ Brands, Ms. Smith was president of Avon Products, Inc. She holds an MBA from Stanford University.

Part 3: Accepting—Creating a Safe Haven for Risk Taking

Chapter 10: Invitations to Risk: Acceptance as a Nurturer of Courage. The process of moving from novice to mastery is clear. The protégé must embrace the risk of making errors and even ending in failure. To take such a risk, particularly in the presence of another,
requires courage. And it is thus a key task of a mentor to communicate the kind of acceptance that will create a safe environment in which the protégé can experiment.

Chapter 11: Socrates’ Great Secret: Awesome Queries focuses on the power of asking questions that foster a protégé’s feeling of acceptance. Fair-weather questions at a family reunion, for instance, leave you with a very different feeling than do the questions that demonstrate sincere curiosity. Everyone knows how to ask questions, but good mentoring uses inquiry as a tool to enrich the relationship while facilitating insight and discovery. Mastering the techniques in this chapter can benefit all interpersonal relationships.

Chapter 12: The Ear of an Ally: The Lost Art of Listening focuses on the importance and power of cultivating acceptance through listening. The initial temptation may be to skip this chapter, saying to yourself, “I know how to listen!” Try to resist. Readers of previous editions indicated that this chapter may be the most powerful one in the book because it offers a much deeper and richer definition of listening than generally discussed in how-to communication books.

Chapter 13: “Give-and-Take” Starts with “Give”: Distinguished Dialogues is not a chapter about questions and answers. Rather, it offers interpersonal tools on how to make a discussion more of an insightful (full of insight) conversation. This chapter takes Socrates’ secret (chapter 11) to an advanced level of application, complete with techniques for restarting a stalled or sidetracked discussion or stopping a discussion that has become unproductive.

Chapter 14: Case Study: Simply Listen. This is an interview with Deanna Mulligan, CEO of the Guardian Life Insurance Company of America. The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America is a Fortune 300 company founded in 1860 and the fourth-largest mutual life insurance company in the United States. Prior to joining Guardian in 2008, Ms. Mulligan was founding partner of DMM Management Solutions, LLC, a life insurance consultancy. She was
a principal at McKinsey and Company, where she additionally served as co-leader of the North American Life Insurance Practice. Ms. Mulligan holds an MBA from Stanford University. She was listed by *Fortune* as one of the 50 most powerful women in U.S. business.

**Part 4: Gifting—The Main Event**

**Chapter 15: Avoiding Thin Ice: The Gift of Advice.** Most people think the main thing mentors do is give advice. But if done inappropriately, advice giving is one of the most dangerous actions a mentor can take. This chapter provides techniques for giving advice while minimizing resistance.

**Chapter 16: Reporting on Blind Spots: The Gifts of Feedback and Feedforward.** While advice is tricky to deliver without prompting protégé resistance, giving feedback is even more difficult. The by-product of advice poorly given is resistance, the reluctance of the protégé to value the information. However, the by-product of feedback inadequately delivered is resentment, a sense of bitterness on the part of the protégé that the mentor has a perspective unattainable by the protégé. Chapter 17 focuses on ways to make your comments count.

**Chapter 17: Linking Proficiency to Purpose: The Gift of Focus** makes the point that adult learning must have a sense of rationale if it is to ensure the protégé’s motivation and interest. This chapter outlines several approaches to anchoring learning in a fashion that guarantees relevance and purpose.

**Chapter 18: The Bluebirds’ Secret: The Gift of Balance** explores the role of balance in fostering growth. One of a mentor’s most challenging dilemmas is to find a balance between providing guidance and giving the protégé freedom. The “when to hold ’em, when to fold ’em” challenge is especially tricky as the protégé approaches competence and independence. This chapter is written exclusively by Chip.
Chapter 19: Inviting Your Protégé to Enchantment: The Gift of Story acknowledges the power of storytelling as a teaching tool. Most people count a parent, grandparent, or elementary school teacher as their earliest mentoring relationship. Lessons learned at an elder’s knee were often laced with a “Let me tell you about the time I…” instructive tale. Whether labeled a parable, anecdote, fable, or yarn, stories can foster insight and discovery like no other tool.

Chapter 20: Case Study: Grace under Fire. This is an interview with Joe Almeida, CEO of Covidien. Covidien is a global healthcare products leader dedicated to innovative medical solutions for better patient outcomes. It has a market cap of over $26 billion. Before joining Covidien, Mr. Almeida was a director of manufacturing in American Home Products’ Acufex Microsurgical division, an engineering manager of Johnson & Johnson’s Professional Products division, and a management consultant at Andersen Consulting (now Accenture). Mr. Almeida holds a bachelor’s degree from Escola de Engenharia Maua in São Paulo, Brazil.

Part 5: Extending—Nurturing a Self-Directed Learner

Chapter 21: Beyond the Relationship: Ensuring the Transfer of Learning. The mentor’s responsibility for the partnership does not end at the outer edge of the relationship. Successful mentors must look to ensure that what is learned makes a difference. This means remaining ever vigilant for barriers and obstacles that diminish the efficient transfer of learning.

Chapter 22: “If You Want Something to Grow, Pour Champagne on It!” A key part of the mentor’s role and responsibility is to provide affirmation to their protégé. Affirming is more than a pat on the back. It includes advocating for the protégé, valuing their
achievements as well as their effort, and anchoring their nurturance to a larger vision.

**Chapter 23: Managing Sweet Sorrow: Life after Mentoring.** Almost every mentoring relationship eventually comes to an end. The protégé outgrows the wisdom of the mentor; the protégé’s learning needs shift to an area requiring a different mentor; the protégé or the mentor moves to a new role or place. How the relationship ends affects the readiness of both to establish new mentoring relationships. The parting is a potent platform for continuing growth.

**Chapter 24: Case Study: Fly High, Dive Deep.** This is an interview with Fred Hassan, managing director of Warburg Pincus, LLC. Warburg Pincus, LLC, is a global private equity firm with offices in the United States, Europe, Brazil, China, and India. Established more than forty years ago, Warburg Pincus has invested more than $40 billion in over 650 companies in more than thirty countries around the world. Mr. Hassan, a native of Pakistan, was chairman of the board of Bausch & Lomb. Prior to that, he was CEO of Schering-Plough from 2003 until November 3, 2009. He holds an MBA from the Harvard Business School.

**Part 6: Special Conditions**

**Chapter 25: Unholy Alliances: Mentoring in Precarious Relationships.** Most of this book is concerned with traditional mentoring relationships. This chapter examines some unique ones. Starting with mentoring situations in which mentor and protégé are equal—that is, peers—the chapter offers insight to situations in which mentor and protégé are enough “different” to potentially impact how the relationship is managed.

**Chapter 26: Arduous Alliances: Mentoring in Precarious Situations.** As relationships can be precarious, so can situations. This chapter looks at three unique complexities: mentoring in today’s
“Time’s up!” fast-paced work world, mentoring when protégé and mentor work in different places or have only intermittent contact, and mentoring with the assistance of technology.

Chapter 27: Case Study: Respect Everyone. Our final interview is with Frances Hesselbein, CEO of the Frances Hesselbein Leadership Institute. Established in 1990 as the Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management, the Frances Hesselbein Leadership Institute furthers its mission to strengthen and inspire the leadership of the social sector and their partners in business and government by connecting the public, private, and social sectors with curated resources and relationships to serve, evolve, and lead together. Ms. Hesselbein served as the CEO for the Girl Scouts of the USA between 1976 and 1990. She is a winner of the Presidential Medal of Freedom (the highest award that can be given to a U.S. civilian) and is the recipient of twenty honorary doctoral degrees.

Part 7: The Mentor’s Toolkit

Tool #1: Quick Tips for Mentors and Protégés is the one part of the book in which we offer suggestions for the protégé as well as the mentor. Think of this as your mentoring crib sheet.

Tool #2: Mentoring Competence Measure is a short instrument that gives you a quick read on your strengths and improvement opportunities as a mentor. Be honest and you gain food for reflection.

Tool #3: Mentoring FAQs came from countless workshops we have conducted. We select the questions most frequently asked from participants about how to be a great mentor.

Tool #4: More Reading on Mentoring is a list of our favorite books on mentoring. You will find a much more extensive bibliography at the end of the book.

Tool #5: Elements of a Learning Plan offers a simple structure for a learning plan many mentor-protégé relationships have found useful
in providing organization to their work. Use it, adapt it, and make it yours.

**Tool #6: The Eagle** is a poignant story we included for your inspiration. It reminds us to appreciate the many powerful lessons we can learn from nature around us.

### How to Get the Most from This Book

Most books are written to be read from beginning to end. This is not one of them. However, you will benefit from initially reading the introduction and first section (chapters 1 through 3). Chapter 3 contains a self-scoring instrument referred to in several chapters throughout the book. To derive the greatest learning from those later chapters, complete and score this instrument first.

Before reading any chapter, start with a goal. Select a relationship you seek to improve, a skill you want to enhance, or a mentoring problem you want to solve. Choose the chapter that seems best suited to addressing that relationship, skill, or challenge. As you read the chapter, make notes on how you might apply the techniques you find.

We hope you prosper from and enjoy this book. We would very much appreciate your feedback on its usefulness, as well as your ideas on ways it might be improved in future editions. You will find our addresses at the bottom of the last page. Drop us a note or give us a call. Happy mentoring!

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