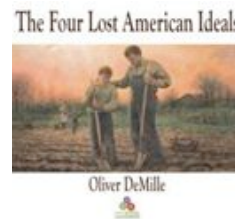
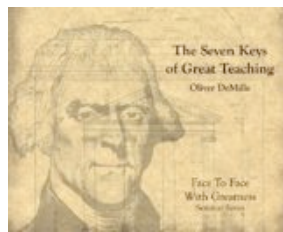
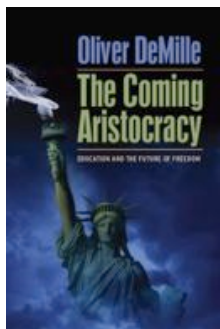
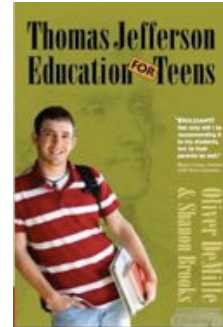
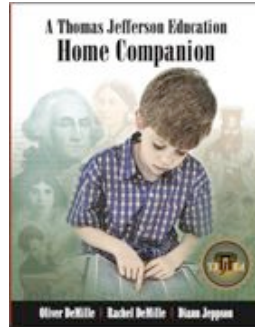
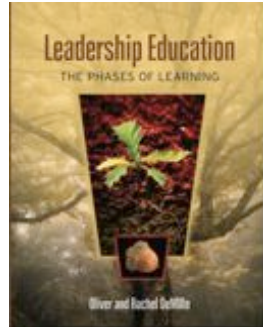
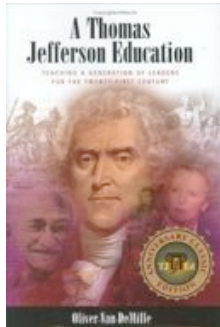




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“While reading your personal story, my heart soared with yours on that mountain top. I worried when Rick was sick. My memory raced back with yours as you mourned the loss of your friends and your place among your peers. I cried with you on those nights you cried yourself to sleep. My foot twitched with yours while you were sitting on that couch. My breath was held with all those students while waiting for your mentor to comment on your mission. You **do** make people feel it. You do make them taste, see, and smell it. You make it so real.”

—Merijane Bench, mother of six

“The night I sat down to begin reading your introductory chapters, it was already 10:30 p.m. I thought I would at least get started with it—at the most spend half an hour. Quite unexpectedly it ‘grabbed’ me and at 1:00 a.m. I finished it. When I went to bed I was alert and in deep thought. It led me to believe that if I follow these steps I will in fact have success in fulfilling my mission. Your stories portray real life difficulties and struggles with The Path and how you overcame them—showing the reader just what a mentor/mentee relationship looks and feels like. It is like seeing video clips of your experiences.”

—Angela Baker, mother of seven

# THE Student Whisperer

INSPIRING GENIUS

Oliver DeMille

Tiffany Earl



*The Student Whisperer*, First Paperback Edition.

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Authors' Note: Some of the details, names and identifying characteristics of people, events and stories in this book have been changed to protect privacy or to improve the literary flow.

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# Introduction

*by Oliver DeMille*

I stood in line for lunch at a large conference in Virginia where I had been a speaker earlier in the day. As I waited, I found myself conversing with a gentlemen and his wife. She let me know that he had come under duress—that she had been trying to get him to come hear me speak for several years. She had been trying to convince him to support the idea of Leadership Education for their children for even longer. As I recall, the man (an executive at a major international firm) had resisted because he felt that their schools were doing a fine job—and he was busy with his career and other community and family responsibilities.

“But as I listened to you today,” he said, “I saw what my wife has been trying to tell me. Our children have so much potential, and with just a few minor adjustments we can help them do so much better in school and career preparation.”

I wondered if he realized how “*not-minor*” some of the adjustments might be, but I didn’t contradict him. I asked, “What is your first step going to be?”

He warmed up to the conversation even more at this point, saying, “Actually, I was hoping to get a chance to visit with you. Would it be okay if I gave you a suggestion? It’s just an observation that I think might help those who attend your speeches.”

“I’d love it,” I said as I pulled out some note cards and a pen to capture the moment.

“Well,” he said, “In my work my main role includes helping business leaders clarify their core strategic advantage, and focus on those few things that make everything else flourish.” He explained more about how he did this.

“Yes...” I jotted down the ideas in my notebook: *Core competency, strategic advantage, and critical catalysts—the things that make everything else flourish...*

“It seems to me that great education, what you call Leadership Education, all hinges on one thing,” he paused. “If the mentor is inspiring—really inspiring—it all works. If not, it doesn’t.”

“That’s right,” I said, “In fact, that’s actually true in all education because...” I stopped, because I could see that he hadn’t finished making his point.

“So my suggestion is this: If you really want to help all these people adopt quality leadership education, you need to find a way to teach us all *how to inspire*. If we become inspiring mentors, this will work.

“But if we aren’t inspiring mentors, *nothing* else will work—no matter how closely we follow the guidelines of quality education, and no matter how hard we try. Inspiring is the critical element of great education and all successful learning.”

## **The Lineage of Mentors**

Aristotle and Alexander the Great. Bach and Mozart. Wythe and Jefferson. The great narrative of history and the pinnacles of human achievement can be chronicled through a lineage of mentors and their protégées. Great mentoring has been around for a very, very long time, but it is too often practiced only by the few—those truly great teachers and leaders who, either by innate gift or long experience, know how to get the very best out of others and help each of us achieve our highest potential. We have reached a point in history where every student needs such parents and teachers. We need help to become such leaders and to catch and pass on a vision of greatness and a cause worth living for.

We can’t pass on vision without mentoring. We can tell stories, and a few people might listen. We can take bold actions, and some people might admire us, or even try to follow our example. But to really pass on vision we must mentor protégés over a period of time.

Are you destined to be a mentor? Do you have a vision that matters?

Not all of your students will catch your vision, and a few people you don't personally mentor *will* catch your vision, but if you're not actively mentoring over a long period of time, your vision probably won't get passed on. If your vision is important, you need a mentor—and you need to *be a mentor*.

This book is designed to help you become a *great* mentor—a true Student Whisperer and leader at the highest level. It will also help you work effectively with such mentors as you pursue your goals and life mission. This book is part deep teaching of the vital principles of great Leadership Education, part self-help workshop, part example through parables, and part exploration of the great ideas that make mentoring and quality learning most effective at all ages.

### **What, Exactly, is a Student Whisperer?**

Defining great mentoring sometimes feels like trying to tell someone what salt tastes like, or how love feels. It is not easily articulated or explained to people who haven't encountered it, but we know it when we experience it.

The story of our mentors is the story of our lives; and the lineage of the mentors is the story of our generation—even our civilization. Fortunately, somewhere along the line, virtually all of us have experienced great mentoring—a time when we fell deeply in love with learning, or felt highly inspired to exceed ourselves or do hard things. Think of a time you had such an experience: Perhaps a person inspired you, or an event, a movie, a story, a piece of music, or something else. It can come in many forms. That feeling, that experience of wanting to change, to be better, to...*whatever* it was you felt—is what Student Whispering is all about.

### **Neither by Force Nor Chance**

Perhaps silver bells and cockleshells worked for contrary Miss Mary, but master gardeners do not “make” their gardens grow. And yet it is clearly not by chance or accident that they succeed. They understand the principles that govern their success, and they know their role in the process. Whether explicitly or intuitively, they understand natural



law and they orchestrate circumstances to cooperate with it for an optimal crop.

While it is possible to “cheat” Mother Nature in order to achieve a more uniform and marketable harvest, it just so happens that vegetables cultivated in an environment of pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers, preservatives and lengthy storage in unnatural conditions usually don’t taste as good or have the same nutritional density as those lovingly raised by the master gardener in rich soil. Those superficially “beautiful” vegetables with such a long shelf life and lovely, predictable shape and color are often not even able to reproduce. One might ponder long to consider all the layers of meaning in such a comparison.

Like a master gardener, a great mentor knows how to set the stage for transformational experiences—as often as they are needed. She knows how to create the environment where such feelings and experiences are frequent, how to use such experiences to help us discover and improve ourselves, and even how to repeat and reinforce such feelings so that our motivation and efforts are sustained. A great mentor cares—and she is effective.

### **Three Levels of Mentoring**

Students set out to learn by listening, studying, memorizing, applying and by utilizing these and other techniques to acquire and use knowledge profitably in their lives. Indeed, learning is a pre-level of mentoring that must never end. When a person learns well how to learn, she is capable of benefiting from mentors, and of becoming a mentor. There are at least three levels of mentoring, the first of which is **Teaching**. At this first level of mentoring, the teacher simply instructs students on how to use learning techniques to learn. When a person knows how to effectively help others obtain and retain knowledge, she is a teacher.

At a second level, **Mentors** go a step deeper. Like teachers, they help students learn—but they also help students connect themselves with the knowledge they obtain. Mentors help students see:

- Why they are learning
- How it relates and correlates
- How it can be used in the real world

Mentors don't just pass on knowledge and skills. They help students discover their life's mission and their inner genius, and then fully prepare for these.

Indeed, mentoring is much more than teaching. Teachers or professors transfer knowledge and skills. Mentors help students build knowledge, skills, purpose, self-discovery, self-mastery and impact on the world. Teaching, as defined here, is the process of facilitating student literacy and helping students meet pre-established standards. In addition to these important things, mentoring helps students personalize the knowledge and skills and use it to benefit self, others and the world.

As a third level of mentoring, **Student Whispering** does all of these things and more. Student Whisperers consistently mentor at an inspired level. They know how to invite in the spark of inspiration whenever it is needed, because they know how to deeply understand each student and help him discover things he doesn't even know about himself. They know how to ask questions and help others have experiences that bring floods of insight, motivation and inspiration.

Above all, Student Whisperers are experts at empowering others. Instead of taking students where the experts think they should go, Student Whisperers help empower mentees to know where they should go from the mentee's own understanding. They help bring out the leadership and genius in everyone they touch. They know the questions to ask of themselves, and of their mentees (which we will cover in great depth in coming chapters), to instigate meaningful progress.

While many Student Whisperers do these things naturally through instinct and intuition, others learn to do them by asking the right questions and taking the right actions. Neither type is superior, and each has its advantages and weaknesses.

For example, while the intuitive Student Whisperer can often make effective mentoring seem natural and effortless, she often relies on a

“magic” connection that somehow materializes with a mentee. Without further training, she may have no idea how to generate such a connection where it does not metaphysically appear—no matter how much she would like to, and even if the student is her own child. This book will help such a mentor to bridge that gap. Whether you are instinctual or explicitly trained, you will benefit from the lessons here.

In short, the difference between Student and Teacher is that the Teacher helps others learn knowledge and skills. The difference between Teacher and Mentor is that the Mentor helps learners individualize and personalize the knowledge and skills they learn with direct application to one’s personal genius, passion and missions in life. Student Whisperers do all that Teachers and Mentors do, and add the following dimensions: frequent sparks of inspiration, the ability to lead innovatively, the skill of taking wise risk, and the habit of tenacious implementation. This is leadership.

## **Inspiration**

Student Whisperers innovate, with every student and in each situation. They don’t settle for anything less than truly great educational experiences. They aspire for every study session, every class, each project and every day to be characterized by epiphany, tenacious progress, and deeply transformational learning. They want learning to be multi-faceted, profound and moving. They want study periods to take place in the energy of vibrant quality.

They believe that learning is inherently great, and that each learning experience should feel and be great. They shun the rote, institutionalized, average and mediocre. They believe in quality, excellence and passion. They know hard work is vital to success, and they also know that time spent in hard work is exponentially more effective when done in the flow of inspiration. Rather than, “Don’t work hard; work smart,” they teach and exemplify, “Work smart *hard*.”

The greatest teachers and mentors are therefore opponents of systemization, over-structured curricula and many objective measures created by experts—these things systematically shut down energy, passion and excellence. It is true that discipline is vital to progress

and excellence. There is a huge difference between flat, uninspired discipline that bores the creative mind, shuts down the heart-connection and consistently puts glaze on student eyes, and deep, passionately inspired rigor. The student in the latter circumstance continues to do the hard things even *when* they are hard—not just in order to measure up, but because he is truly in love with studying and zealous about the goals he means to accomplish through his efforts.

Skeptics may fear that this method might lead to chaos, inconsistency or indulgence. This of course belies the skeptic's core values of order, uniformity, and standardized requirements. They doubt that many students will really love learning, or that those who do love it will be disciplined to do the really hard work. Certainly there are some students who will fail in these ways—but some fail in *all* models of education. Yet, how can we suppose that a deep personal commitment and high level of inspiration will lead to *diminished* achievement on the part of the student? Indeed, we have personally witnessed this level of dedication and its amazing outcomes in thousands of students—of all ages.

As we have stated here and elsewhere: when a student is given the opportunity to gain an education, the ultimate responsibility for success or failure rests with him, and it is the role and obligation of the adults in his life to provide the best possible opportunity to gain that education.

Any rational consideration of the models of education must conclude that effective mentoring is *not* the factor that heightens the risk of failure. Any analysis of the data on bureaucratic/compulsory models leads us to challenge the assumption that the conveyor belt is an effective mitigation against the risk of failure. The fact is that where there is great mentoring, students are *less likely* to fail and *more likely* to get truly excited and do the hard work of achieving true excellence.

Find a great Student Whisperer who transcends the system by giving consistently personalized and inspired guidance, and you will find increased activity of students truly excelling and a significant number of them doing literally world-class work.

The thing that is often missing in education is greatness! Greatness is easily recognizable, but it often eludes empirical measurement and

rote policy. Greatness is the natural result of personalized, interactive quality with passion, discipline and inspired leadership. This is entirely learnable and duplicable, but it is nearly always sabotaged by too much systemization and institutionalism. Education needs greatness, and Student Whisperers are the experts on inspiring and bringing personal, powerful greatness to each student's learning.

## **The Highest Level: Student Whispering**

Student Whispering, the highest and greatest level of mentoring, includes three central things:

First, Student Whisperers know the voices that speak to the mind of each student. One thing we will cover in much more detail later is that each student struggles with the voices that propose to guide his education. For example, nearly every student frequently hears, among other voices, the voice of self-doubt from the Inner Critic. Student Whisperers are familiar with these voices. They know how to help students discern them, tune out the wrong voices and focus on the voices that facilitate true growth and success.

Second, Student Whisperers know how youth and adults typically respond to each voice, as well as many non-typical responses. They know how to Whisper because they know the other voices that are Whispering. More, they think about these constantly and know how to read student behavior and perceive which voices are winning the student's inner battle.

Third, Student Whisperers know the language of Whispering and how to communicate directly and effectively with students. Very few people have learned this language or use it to communicate with youth—or with others, for that matter. Student Whisperers use this language every day, and because of this they cut out unproductive and unnecessary trial and error and help students focus on what really matters to move more quickly and effectively toward superb learning.

For example, the authors have both experienced students who decide the key to their education is to demand numerous one-on-one meetings with their mentor. We have also worked with those who prefer

to be entirely self-contained and seldom interact with their mentor in any meaningful way. While typical mentors may decide to just work with the student's preferences in such cases, Student Whisperers go deeper. Student Whisperers spend literally hours pondering, writing and brainstorming what such students most need from their mentor.

Sometimes the result is that Student Whisperers help the “meeting, meeting, meeting” students become a bit more independent while they ask the self-focused learners to meet more frequently. This can leave the “meeting, meeting” student feeling ignored and the self-absorbed student feeling pushed. Often this is exactly what they need to feel, and over time their weaknesses are addressed and their strengths expanded accordingly.

In other words, being mentored by a Student Whisperer is not always comfortable, but it is profound and effective. Student Whisperers don't always tip their hand by showing the student exactly how they are mentoring, but they do spend significant time thinking and planning for each student or protégée and then implementing the plans to help each mentee truly succeed.

This may sound counter-intuitive, or even abstract, to non-Whisperers—which is one reason there are fewer great mentors than we need. Student Whisperers are paying attention to things most people ignore, and asking questions most people never consider. As a result, they are aware of things going on with students that others don't see.

Indeed, parents could become Student Whisperers in order to better understand their children. The same is true of every spouse, employer, friend, employee, citizen and leader. Human beings communicate so many things that aren't understood by others, and the point of Student Whispering is to explicitly attend to these communications.

In this book, readers will learn how to more effectively and consistently think, hear, speak and act like Student Whisperers. Student Whisperers are needed today, perhaps more than ever before. Every great education is influenced by at least one truly great Student Whisperer. The future of education—and of human achievement, prosperity and happiness—depends on having more of them.

## Two Books in One

This book is specially designed and organized with a dual purpose:

1. To help readers experience and recognize what it feels like to be greatly mentored
2. To concurrently outline the principles of great mentoring and help readers turn them into personal skills and even habits

The first part of this book (**Book One**, covering Chapters 1-5) is told as a personal narrative, and immerses readers in a series of life events as a student learns from her mentors and grows in the process. We hope readers *feel* what it is like to experience working with committed and demanding mentors as they go through Book One.

The second part (**Book Two**, comprising Chapters 6-16) contains information that is vital to becoming a great mentor (and to working with great mentors), and guides the reader through several exercises that help turn the concepts and principles of great mentoring into personal skills and strengths.

The authors have worked together (first in a Mentor-Mentee relationship, and later as colleagues) for nearly two decades—as many of the stories in Book One show. Oliver used the methods taught here in mentoring Tiffany and many other people, and Tiffany has applied and expanded on the same principles and methods in her mentoring through LEMI (The Leadership Education Mentoring Institute) for well over a decade.

Over the course of these many years, we have learned what works (and what usually doesn't) through direct mentoring, and vicariously through mentor-protégées. This book imparts what we have come to understand of truly great mentoring—what we call Student Whispering:

**Chapters 6-9** provide foundational information valuable for all mentors and those who are mentored.

**Chapters 10-13** help readers throw off past biases about teaching and establish a transformational foundation for great mentoring. Topics include:

- The two major balances (first between the Manager and the Artist, and second between the Warrior and the Healer)
- The various voices nearly all students listen to, and how to speak the language of each most effectively
- Seven key questions Student Whisperers ask about each mentee<sup>1</sup>
- How archetypes are central to great education and Student Whispering, and how to apply this knowledge as a mentor

**Chapters 14-16** deal with further transformation. This includes workshops on:

- How to get the most from *your* mentors
- How to become a great mentor
- How to plan your strategy of becoming a Student Whisperer so that it encompasses life as a place of learning...and more

## Special Thanks

We want to thank our respective spouses, Rachel DeMille and Rick Earl, for their deep involvement in and support for this book. Writing is a challenging endeavor, and our spouses and children have put up with a great deal as we've worked on this project. Beyond the role of spouse and partner, Rachel DeMille has read every word of this book multiple times and provided more suggestions, ideas and changes than we could ever count. This book would not exist without her efforts and expertise in Leadership Education. Many others have helped with this work, especially numerous readers and seminar participants who made suggestions and recommended changes, and we deeply appreciate their contributions.

We also thank our many mentors over the years who have taught, scolded, shared, instructed, demanded, pushed, laughed and even wept with us. We have gained so much from the on-going dance of mentors and the mentored. We feel so humbled and blessed to have worked with truly great Student Whisperers in our lives.

Finally, we want to thank you, the reader, for your interest in learning, improving and becoming a Student Whisperer. Whoever you are: we were thinking of you individually and warmly when we wrote this.



This book is dedicated to you. We hope you can feel how much we really mean this.

The world truly needs more Student Whisperers, and we are convinced that many who have great life missions can learn a great deal from the material in this book. It has been an educational experience and a labor of love for us to go through the many dozens of versions that brought us to this point. We hope it will help you in your own labors of love to truly make the world better. It is why we are all here, after all.



*Press on.  
“ Nothing in the world can take the  
place of persistence. ”*

-CALVIN COOLIDGE



# Mentors

*by Tiffany Earl*

I sat on the colonial-style sofa in the lounge nervously wiggling my foot. *Why am I nervous?* I thought. *I've known Oliver for years! He's my friend and my teacher. So why am I nervous?* I couldn't fool myself, though. I knew why I was nervous. This was my first formal non-academic mentor meeting.

I knew clearly how this could change my life. I knew what a difference mentors make. Take Isaac Newton, for example—the genius, Isaac Newton. Newton had been in and out of school until he was eighteen. There were times he left school to help with the farm, but he'd end up hiding so he could read and fill notebooks with his inventions, models and calculations.

By age eighteen he was at Trinity College—discouraged with his studies, friends and learning environment, and on the verge of giving up formal schooling forever and going home. The roadblock just seemed too big. He had tried over and over, without success, and this time felt like all the others.

Then he met Isaac Barrow—an eminent mathematician, philosopher and Greek scholar. Barrow recognized Isaac's capabilities and started mentoring him. Almost overnight Isaac Newton changed. Instead of being lackadaisical, he became an eager student who delved into Copernican theories, the writings of Galileo, the works of Kepler,

and the science of optics. Newton got on The Path and went on to give the world a deeper understanding of physics, invent a branch of calculus, and bring greater light and knowledge to the world around him.

I knew his story, as well as the stories of Thomas Jefferson and his mentor George Wythe, George Washington and his mentor Colonel Fairfax, and numerous modern business mentor stories like Andrew Carnegie, Sam Walton, Buckminster Fuller, Dexter Yeager, and Robert Kiyosaki. I knew that successful people get on The Path—which means that they start by getting a great mentor.

I wasn't kidding myself. I *knew* the power of a mentor, but it wasn't just that. I had high hopes. Being a stay-at-home mom who was working on my Masters and building a business wasn't necessarily the normal "mentee" stereotype. Nevertheless, I knew I needed a mentor, and I knew he was the one.

He knew me too. He'd seen my work, my dedication, my strengths and weaknesses; but how would he deal with my situation?

So here I sat, nervously waiting for my first formal mentor meeting.

I thought back to the past few weeks, to the events that had brought me here. The more I thought about it, the more I realized I had been preparing for this meeting for several years.



I looked up from the pile of bills and held back my tears. I had given up getting angry weeks ago—now I was getting emotional. The choking feeling I felt oozing its way up my throat made me feel sick inside. I clicked off the screen and leaned back in my chair.

"Rick, we are barely making it this month. In fact, there are some purchases we are going to have to put on hold."

My husband had run his own business for most of our marriage; and like most everything else, we shared the load.

I re-worked the numbers. I looked over our business strategy. At the time, we had two main clients who bought our manufactured kits

wholesale. I looked over our marketing plan. I studied our product line. I read through the business structure. I looked over everything. *What are we doing wrong?* I was grasping for straws.

*Should we put more emphasis on retail sales and improve our presence on the web? Should we raise our prices a little, both wholesale and retail? Or would that drive our buyers to our competitors? Should we pay our employees less, or lay off some of them? Should we create a new product? Should we buy the new rock-breaking machinery so we wouldn't have to break everything by hand? Should we network with some other businesses so we can move more product? Should we hire a better salesman?*

*Should we quit?*

I had asked about fifty “should-we’s” when I finally let out a huge sigh and shut the books. It was past midnight and any more efforts at solving our business crises would have to wait until morning.

Or so I thought.

I tossed and turned, and at 3:30 I finally got out of bed. I walked over to my dresser, fumbled around in the dark until I found my journal, and quietly exited my bedroom.

I found my way to the den, flipped the light on, sat in the easy chair, and leafed through my journal...

*Rick and I both believe we have a personal mission in life. Rick is an inventor at heart. He has what I call the ‘101 Ways To Do Anything’ talent. He loves the process of figuring out how to do something in more economical and technological ways.*

I flipped a few pages and kept reading,

*I’ve finally determined that even though Rick and I share our major goals and commitments about life, and even though we love each other dearly and support each other in all worthy endeavors, there are some things I feel extremely passionate about that aren’t his mission. They are my mission, and I must do them.*

I smiled as I read that, thinking about the time he rigged a copper-pipe water heater around our wood-burning stove to save on electricity

costs. He'd forgotten to account for the pressure of steam and finally took it down after it blew a hole through my hutch. Yes, we didn't necessarily have the same gifts and talents, but we both had something to give.

I flipped some more pages and resumed reading,

*In some ways I'm just like everybody else. I care what my friends think of me, I enjoy a really nice restaurant, and I think about what happens in the world.*

*In other ways, I'm not so similar. I must reach the youth. They have so much potential—and yet too few live up to it. They become disillusioned as they hit the “realities” of life. So many people in their later years still talk about high school or college as “the best years of their life.” How tragic. People don't live their dreams because they just don't know how.*

In another place I wrote:

*I always believed my teachers when they told us we could do anything we put our minds to. I believed my parents when they told me I had a purpose in life.*

I kept flipping pages and reading:

*There are some things I just KNOW—some things I desire so strongly that I can't keep myself from pursuing their course. There are even things that are as good as done even though I haven't begun them yet. I will help people know how to be happy, how to choose their dreams, how to accomplish their missions.*

I paused here and pondered, then looked back down. It was good to remember. I read on.

*I know that the kind of education I get is crucial to me accomplishing my personal mission . . . I know that I need to build a successful business in order to reach the people I feel called to reach . . . I know youth will sit up as I speak, and be changed . . . I know people will read and be changed, and make choices that will make all the difference . . .*

I stopped. I couldn't go on. I knew all these things. They seemed so

close, yet so far away. How was I going to accomplish them when Rick and I couldn't even get his business to produce a healthy income for our family?

I closed my journal, and as I did I thought about Abraham Lincoln. I thought about how he'd spent all night on his knees the night before he signed the Emancipation Proclamation. *He had a work to do*, I thought. I wonder how he felt when his business partner defaulted and Lincoln had to spend years repaying both halves of their business loan.

If he could overcome such challenges, so could I.

I thought of Robert Morris and how he financed the Revolutionary War at a critical moment in America's history, and how he spent the end of his life in debtor's prison instead of on a rich man's lane.

This is bigger than me, I thought. This isn't just about machinery, products, payroll, marketing and suppliers. This is part of the formula to help me accomplish my mission.

I opened my journal again and wrote:

*No matter the roadblocks, I will succeed! I will do whatever it takes to accomplish my personal mission. I will make the necessary decisions, engage the right people. I will write, I will speak, I will work with the youth, I will make the business successful.*



We loaded our small son into the pickup and headed up to Three Peaks. About eight miles in on the dirt road was an old mine on the mountainside—perfect for gathering lodestone, or magnetite. I loved “gathering days.” I rarely went with Rick anymore, but every once in a while I'd pack a picnic lunch and Rick would bring Jacob and me along.

Today I had something specific in mind. Today I wanted to get out of the house, away from the desk and telephone, out of the normal routine. I wanted to work *on* the business, *on* our lives, *on* the big picture.

Today I wanted some answers, and the beautiful hills behind Three Peaks would be perfect.

Rick took a five gallon bucket in his left hand, a piece of string with a paper clip tied to one end hanging out of his mouth, and a two-pronged pitch fork and shovel in his right hand. He headed up the mountainside.

We'd driven as far as we could with the truck and it wasn't more than a mile to the top.

Little Jacob grabbed his plastic shovel and bucket and followed his daddy. We gathered magnetite, Rick testing its strength with the paperclip. I asked Rick if he'd keep an eye on Jacob for a while. He would.

I headed energetically to the top of the hill. By the time I made it, I was gasping. I leaned over with my legs bent and my hands on my knees, breathing deeply.

It was beautiful at the summit and I sat down on a big white rock. I gazed around me. I could see down the mountainside where we'd parked the truck and I could see another mountain to the north of me. The truck looked small from here. *This is what I needed—to put life in perspective.* The clouds were bright and billowy. The ones to the south were dark gray storm clouds, but where I stood the sky was bright blue with a few fluffy white clouds.

I was here to clarify my vision and to decide some things. Somehow the outdoors and mountains can put things into perspective. The air is cleaner, the world is clearer, and God feels nearer.

I had one important question on my mind, and it was time I made a decision. I knew about The Path of All Success. For the past four years I had immersed myself in the classics in several fields and The Path was laced throughout each of them. It didn't matter if I was reading Plato, Confucius or Galileo, or listening to Mozart. It didn't matter if it was economics I was studying, or business law, or Shakespeare. In all of them, The Path was clear.

I knew what choice lay in front of me. Either way, I was at a crossroad and it was time to follow Frost's example and take "the road less traveled."

But could I do it? Because I *had* immersed myself in the classics—



walking the streets of France with Cosette and Jean Valjean, seeing the landscape of Russia with Prince Andre and Peter, sitting in the corner of the top floor of the library with Reuben and Danny's father—I knew it wasn't easy. Hamlet had to decide whether to ignore the ghost or test its origin. Once he made his choice, it didn't mean the rest was easy.

I knew this. I knew this choice was vital, but it didn't make easy what lay ahead.

I thought back to the many people who had made this choice and succeeded on The Path. *What gave them the strength to make this choice?* I wondered.

*What gave Gandhi the strength? What gave Churchill the strength? What gave Eric Liddell the strength? What gave Socrates the strength?* The list went on and on in my mind—and all at once I knew. Or to be more specific, I *remembered*.

I remembered what gave them the strength: It was the personal conviction that they each had a mission to fulfill. It was The Call. It was having a vision of what was expected of them, believing that they had a personal mission, and desiring to be chosen.

The Call. Ah, yes: *The Call*.

It would be really nice if I could tell you that an angel or something came to me, like Joan of Arc—but that didn't happen. What did happen is that as I sat there on the top of the hill looking out on the sweeping southwestern vista, I felt something. It wasn't the first time I felt it, nor the last. But it was *different* somehow. Different because intertwined with the feeling of having an important work to do was something else: a decision. The decision to pay whatever price was needed to accomplish my dream.

The Call came to me like I suppose it comes to a lot of people, packaged in the form of desire—desire to accomplish something really important . . . my unique contribution. The Call is recognizable as a sense of direction, the urge to commit to a course of action—be it as small as starting a fall garden or as great as organizing a school system in rural Africa.

I sat on the white rock and took a deep, cleansing breath. To get back on The Path was going to take some time. I had felt The Call years ago, but I kept hitting roadblocks—and every time I made the wrong choice, I either tried to work things out myself or I picked the wrong mentors to help. So I was always stuck in The Path of Mediocrity. I knew better, but here I was. *Again.*

I took another deep breath. “Okay,” I said aloud, “this time I’ll do it right. I’ll make this Vital Choice correctly. I’ll get the right mentor.”

*But it won’t be easy, I thought. I’ve tried easy—and it doesn’t work! I’m going to do this right. I’m going to go back in my mind to the beginning, back to the first time I felt The Call. Then I’m going to go through each time I came to a Roadblock and felt The Call, and I’m going re-experience them again, here, now. Then I’m going to look at the future honestly and make a different choice.*

I closed my eyes and let my mind float back to the first time I felt it—the time The Call came when I was thirteen years old...

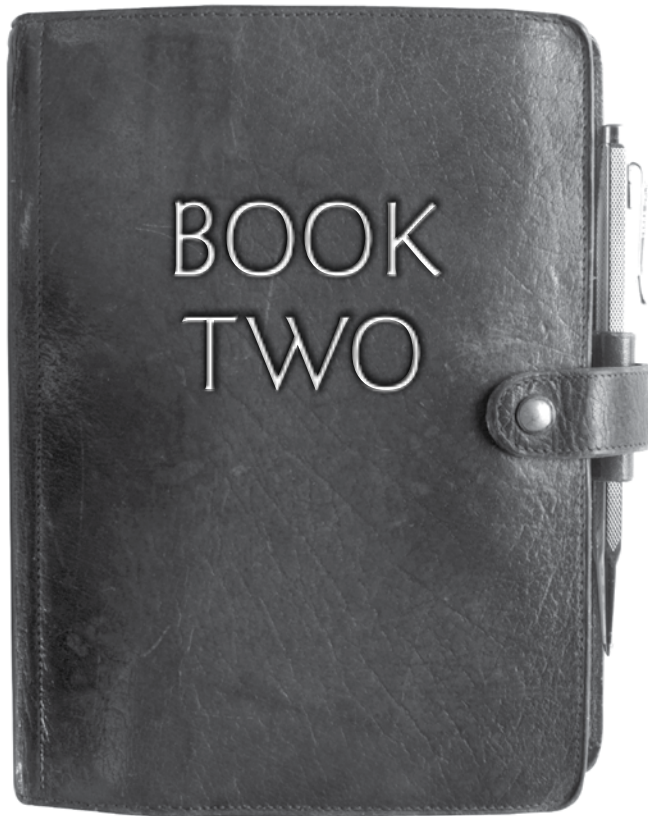


It was a rough time for me. It had been about two months since I lost several of my friends. I was searching for meaning in life, and I was questioning what it was that I really believed. I was trying to decide if Mom and Dad were on my side.

I slammed the door shut and threw my backpack onto the sofa. Mom looked up in surprise. I stalked off to my bedroom and slammed that door too. My mom never was one to be stumped over the literal. True, I’d broken rules on three accounts. I slammed the door, I didn’t put my backpack in its proper place, and I wasn’t very cordial. She knew this, but she also knew something deeper. She knew I was mad. But even more than that, she knew the anger was only covering up something deeper—*hurt*, maybe. She’d find out. She always did.

She came into my room and plopped on the bed beside me. She thought better than to lecture me about the doors and the backpack. She put her hand on my back and said, “Rough day?”

I just wanted her to go away—but only partly. If I *really* didn’t want



“*There are voices which we  
hear in solitude, but they grow  
faint and inaudible as we  
enter into the world.*”

—EMERSON

to progress according to (and in spite of) your strengths and weaknesses.

4. **Leadership Mentors**—Leadership Mentors guide you through the liberal arts, inspiring you to get a superb education that prepares you for leadership in your chosen life mission. They help you learn *how to think*. They guide and help you overcome Tests, Trials, and Traps along The Path.

Another name for this mentor is the Liberal Arts Mentor, or the Forgotten Mentor (since nearly all but the upper classes in our day have forgotten the link between great education in the classics and becoming leaders). The Leadership Mentor inspires you to understand human nature, culture, and the connection between human action and results. She helps you to see your own potential—your true inner genius—and to develop it.

5. **Mission Mentors**—A Mission Mentor has a similar “calling” or life purpose as you, and is therefore uniquely qualified to help you on the specific Path you have chosen. When a Mission Mentor formally accepts you it usually means you are ready for the gifts and challenges he will give to you that help you accomplish your mission. With Mission Mentors you may have the opportunity to become more than a mentee—you may grow into a protégé.
6. **Gurus**—These are spiritual mentors. Often they are found in scripture or through your church or deepest beliefs. For the more secular-minded, gurus are figures of admiration who teach you at your deepest levels. They are usually informal mentors, but at times, and depending upon your Path or beliefs, they can become formal mentors.
7. **Epiphanies**—Certain things in our lives provide special, powerful mentoring that changes us, gives us direction or clear correction, and truly inspires us far beyond the norm. Epiphanies can be people, experiences, events or other life happenings that touch, teach, inspire and greatly help us to grow. These are important and life-changing *mentoring experiences* that we all need.

## *Time to Record: "MY MENTORS" EXERCISE*



To remember the seven types of mentors better, complete the following exercise. To help your memory, we'll list these in a random order. In your *Whisperer Journal* (and leaving space for additional commentary after each mentor type and mentor name), write the names of the first few people (or experiences, etc.) you think of with each kind of mentor:

- ~ Mission Mentors
- ~ Parent Mentors
- ~ Epiphanies
- ~ Leadership Mentors
- ~ Gurus
- ~ Expert Mentors
- ~ Soul Mentors

Take a few moments each and list the top epiphanies you can think of that you learned from or with each mentor. You may find that some mentors will be included on more than one list.

*[If you skipped this exercise, we encourage you to go back and do it before proceeding on. Learning **about** Student Whispering is not nearly as powerful as engaging the process of becoming a Student Whisperer.]*

Now, once you have completed this exercise, review the combined list and ask yourself if these truly are the most important people and events of your life. If you missed some, add them to the lists. You will find that as you ponder on their influence on your earlier life, they still have much to teach you now about being a mentor.



# Trail Blazers

*by Oliver DeMille & Tiffany Earl*

**Y**ears ago, scholar Joseph Campbell outlined a fascinating pattern in his book titled *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. This pattern shows up wherever you see a hero—someone who must face terrible odds to accomplish some great task. It is well illustrated in Bruce Wilkinson’s *The Dream Giver*. It appears again in *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. We call this pattern “The Path of All Success,” or more often simply “The Path.”

People who achieve great success do so by persistently and successfully meeting the challenges on The Path. Their stories are found in ancient mythology, classic and modern literature, virtually all genres of fiction, great movies, the sacred writings of the world religions, the biographies of great men and women, the lives of successful business people, entrepreneurs, teachers, parents, and the stories of “regular people” who have paid the price of greatness. In fact, a fair definition of “success” is the completion of The Path. There are many paths of fear (failure, mediocrity, anger, pain, ignorance, hatred, etc.), and against all these stands The Path of All Success.

At any point along The Path, those progressing are linked in a partnership of traveler and mentor—and the mentor is linked as a traveler to a mentor further along than he. Remove either the mentor or the traveler and forward momentum is delayed or reversed. The goal of this book is to help you truly transform into a better mentee, and also

You may know a Call is received when you move toward a prospect, when you go beyond dreaming or thinking about it and take *action*.

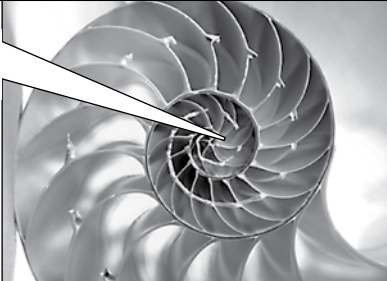
## The High

At the beginning of your undertaking, your energy and interest are high even though you really have very little clear or precise understanding of where you are headed or what it will require. But it feels great! You have felt a Call, made a choice—and now you are taking action!

This step on The Path is truly exhilarating, and it is a tragedy how few people make this a significant part of their life. It is true that difficulties will follow, but this is no reason not to enjoy the honeymoon!

If you have made a habit of passing on opportunity after opportunity in life, the excitement of acting on a Call will be wonderful. Have fun with it. You can receive many Calls throughout your life. Whatever your age, The Call is exciting and exhilarating—it feels good to know you want something and that you are going to take action to achieve it.

## Blaze...

TEST: THE CALL	
<h3>The Call</h3> <p>You are given the call; will you receive it?</p>	
<b>KNOW:</b> What your Call is now. Take some time to brainstorm this.	
<b>FEEL:</b> You have a specific purpose and deserve to be happy.	

## TEST: THE CALL

**VITAL CHOICE #1:** Accept The Call if it is right. Prepare and move toward it. Take Action! What do you feel you should do to take action?

**MENTOR FUNCTION:** God or the Universe lights your desire. It feels right; it resonates.

### *Time to Record:* THE CALL



- ~ Do you feel a Call right now?
- ~ If so, what is your Call right now?
- ~ Are you feeling more than one?
- ~ What action should you take?

*T*ake the time to brainstorm your thoughts and feelings. Use your *Whisperer Journal* or a composition notebook to record your thoughts and feelings on this.

## Test 2: Opposition

### ***Will you abandon the Call?***

At some point, inner voices, friends, loved ones, peers and others will question your involvement. You will be tempted to abandon The Call and do something else.

There is no mistaking this Test when it comes, because the excitement of The Call dies away and is replaced with frustration. *The honeymoon is over.*



you've experienced such a Test, you know. And though it's not polite to say so, this book would not be complete if we didn't say:

*If you haven't had one, you will.*

**Oliver:** But know this: the Ultimate Test is not a punishment; and unlike the previous roadblocks—which are now completely trivial—it is not a deviation from The Path. During those sleepless nights I found myself. Really, deeply. In a way I never imagined. I also found something much bigger than myself. I experienced and felt things...; well, I won't share them here—but they changed me. I can honestly say now that I am so grateful for the challenges—and even for the pain that brought them. Those who have experienced an Ultimate Test may sometimes, like me, wish to change the details; but they never want to surrender the resulting blessings. The blessings of that pain are indescribable, profound and above all other things I've experienced in my life.

No earthly mentor can really hold your hand as you pass an Ultimate Test. For that, you'll have to rely on higher powers, whether internal or external. It is helpful to know when such Tests come that others have gone this way and passed such Tests, and that you *will* be able to choose to pass it, no matter how hard it is. Also that passing such Tests brings great, truly incredible rewards. Suffice it to say that you *will* be faced with your Ultimate Test and you will make *your* choice.

**Blaze...**



## TEST 6: THE ULTIMATE TEST

**KNOW:** In order to give all you have back you must REMEMBER your allegiance and where you got The Call in the first place.

**FEEL:** You feel all alone. There seems to be no mentor besides God/the Universe. It feels like there is no one to help. TRUST. Seek higher power.

**VITAL CHOICE #6:** Remember your allegiance. Give everything you have. Give all you have back. By doing so you will ultimately and in time receive peace, become happy and full of love. The right choice will become clear. Choose it, no matter what it is.

**MENTOR FUNCTION:** The Universal Good, or God for believers, commissions you as an Emissary. You want to truly help others with all your heart. This becomes your focus in life.

### *Time to Record:* MY TESTS



*W*hat is the greatest Test you have ever faced in your life?

If you knew someone was about to go through that exact Test, what counsel would you give him?

Take the time to write this in your notebook or Whisperer Journal. It really matters!

Next time you face a life Test, go back and read the advice you just wrote; then follow it. The things you have recorded can mentor you in future times of challenge.

## Test 7: The Pressure Lets Up

### **Do you?**

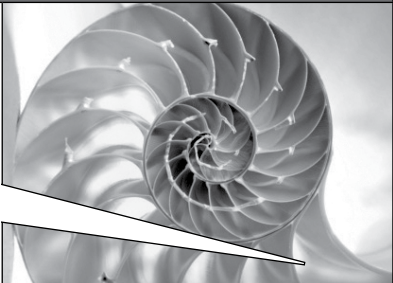
At this point on The Path, after you have experienced your Ultimate Test, you can more clearly see which paths and choices lead people to unhappiness. It is time to take a stand and fight against them and for what leads to happiness, peace, and life. Now enters the Mission Mentor. Your Mission Mentor has the same field of Call you have. She has been successfully doing what you want to do; and now that you are ready, she is willing to give you what you need in order to join her in the work.

Of course, you have to recognize her, and then receive gifts from her. These gifts often come as difficult assignments! Armed with the gifts your Mission Mentor gives to you, you can hardly fail. Still, a few people are so relieved at this point to be out of the pressure cooker that they want to take an eternal break.

**Tiffany:** For example, I remember being in labor and experiencing desperate feelings during ‘transition’—when all the prep-work was done and the baby was ready to be born. Just at this moment, there was a HUGE desire to just stop. Sound crazy? All I had to do then was push, and the baby would be born.

Just like the final stages of labor where the baby emerges and takes his first breath, Test 7 is challenging, but also often exciting and exhilarating. Most people sprint to the end. Others may walk, or crawl, but passing the Ultimate Test(s) changes a person forever. Such people finish The Path and achieve great success!

Blaze...

TEST 7: THE PRESSURE LETS UP	
<div>Pressure Lets Up</div> <div>Do you?</div>	
<b>KNOW:</b> Learn to use the tools, trust the mentor, fight the fight.	
<b>FEEL:</b> Prepared	
<b>VITAL CHOICE #7:</b> Act. Keep going. Press forward. Be happy fighting your fight. Fully engage!	
<b>MENTOR FUNCTION:</b> Your Mission Mentor gives you the necessary tools and weapons for the work ahead. Often this entails challenging assignments and more hard work. Sprint to the end, have joy in your work. Or, if you need to walk or even crawl, keep going! Smile. You have succeeded.	

## *Time to Record:* **MY BATTLES**



- ~ What were you born to fight for?
- ~ Are you doing it?
- ~ What battles should you engage right now?
- ~ How do the on-going vestiges of your Ultimate Test help remind you and strengthen you each day?

*T*ake the time to ponder, think about and write your answers to these questions in your *Whisperer Journal/notebook*.

When a person completes The Path (or more accurately, one full turn of The Path), she sees at least three things. First, she sees that there is so much more to do. It can be overwhelming after such a challenging journey to realize that she has barely scratched the surface, but it is also exciting that she can keep going and make such a difference for good in the world.

Second, she feels gratitude to those making such a difference for good in the world and who helped her on The Path—especially to partners and mentors.

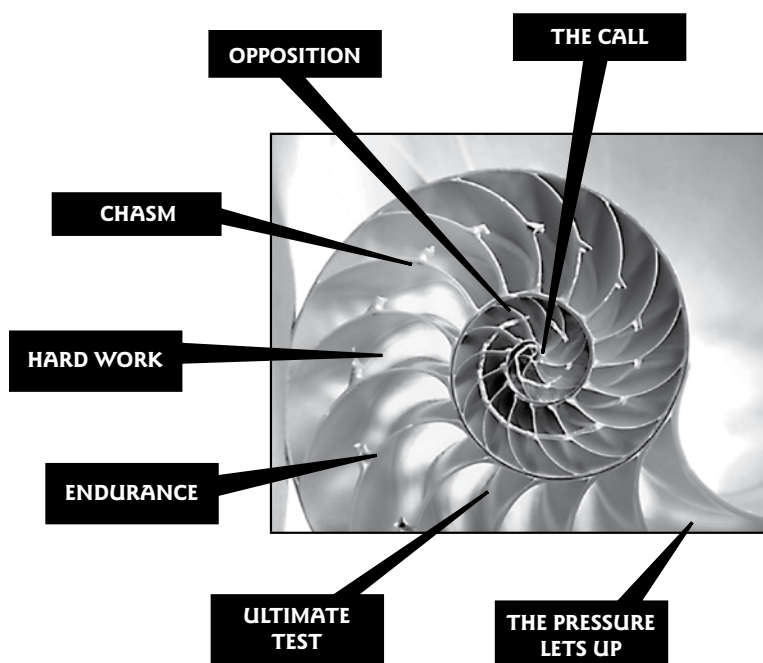
Finally, she wants everyone to experience The Path, the joy of success. She is saddened by those who refuse The Path, and excited to help mentees and protégés progress and succeed on The Path. Each time such a mentee or protégé completes a step of The Path, the mentor feels the exhilaration and joy once again.

In short, there is a Path of Success, and those who have taken it are taking it again. At the same time, they want to help those who are looking for The Path to find it.

This process, in all its levels and directions and individuals and

potentials, is called Mentoring. Or, if you want to really get technical, you can call it Life.

Notice that nearly every great novel, movie, epic, play or profound story from history illustrates The Path, whether in its ideal, or in the various ways in which we struggle to achieve. Now that you know what to look for, you can see it everywhere there is triumphant success or an epic failure. It is The Path of leadership, and our nation and world are in the midst of such struggles right now. So is each family and individual that is on The Path of All Success.





# A Whispering Language Lesson

*by Oliver DeMille*

**A**s a mentor, it is essential to know the other voices that are Whispering to your children and students. For those who understand these voices, there is virtually no generation gap. For those who understand these voices, there is no smugness or arrogance. For those who understand these voices, predicting your own behavior and that of your mentees is simple. For those who don't understand these voices, others are a mystery. Indeed, if you don't understand these voices, you are a mystery to yourself.

Everyone hears voices—not in an otherworldly or schizophrenic sense, mind you, but in a very natural way. We all experience dialogues in our mind. Those who govern these dialogues, who choose and guide their thoughts, understand the secret to success in life's goals. Those who are eavesdropping victims of whatever these mental dialogues dictate struggle to accomplish their dreams in life.

There is an old saying that “those who can't do, teach.” In leadership education, in mentoring and Student Whispering, the opposite is true. Those who *can* are the only ones able to really mentor. Student Whisperers understand the voices in their own mind, the prominent voices in the minds of their mentees, and how to persuasively communicate in the language of these internal dialogues. Because of this,



# The Whisperer's Dance

*by Oliver DeMille*

If your children, students, or colleagues were asked what kind of teacher or mentor you are, what would they say? Would they call you “easy-going, flexible, and relaxed,” or “structured, demanding, and pushy?” Or would they ask, “What teaching?” For example, in high school I had a teacher who sat in the back of the room at his desk and never taught anything. At the beginning of each semester, he handed out a flyer that said we should bring something to read or study to his class each day, and that anybody disturbing the quiet would be sent to the office.

The last day of class he handed out another flyer with spaces for us to fill out our name and the grade we felt we deserved for the class. That was it. He was a very popular teacher with waiting lists to be in his class.

The one time I saw him actually teach was a surprise. The superintendent walked in, unannounced, and stood for about fifteen minutes at the back of the room. When he first came in, our teacher stood up and told us all to put away our readings. Then he taught us a twenty-minute lecture on diagramming sentences. When the superintendent left, the teacher kept lecturing for about five minutes and then told us to go back to our reading.

This was a challenging message for me to grapple with: Did he not



value us as students? Did he feel the subject matter was not worth his/our time? Did he feel he had no business being a teacher? And why did he feel the need to “put on a show” for the authority figure? For some reason, he squandered his power for good; and yet, as a “teacher,” he left an indelible impression on our young minds.

If your students wouldn’t ask, “What teaching?” would they instead say that you are a Drill Sergeant, bossing every minute and controlling every second of studies? It is helpful to actually ask those you mentor this question. They will often answer it differently than you might think.

Yet, too often even the most earnest and committed mentor or parent struggles to meaningfully interact with her mentees. Understanding two axes and the quadrants they create is hugely empowering, and is sure to bring ready inspiration for those seeking to improve their mentoring.

This chapter will operate as a workshop. The information is essential for great Student Whisperers. I recommend that you do the full workshop. Those who do will learn more than those who skip the assignments.

**The Manager/Artist Balance**

Whether you’re caught in the Drill Sergeant vortex or struggling to know how to lead out meaningfully, consider now a key balance that Student Whisperers understand: the Manager/Artist Balance. The following graphic illustrates these characteristics.

Manager	Artist
Concrete	Abstract
Steady Progress	Ups and Downs
Avoid Crisis	Crisis Feeds Creativity
Planning	Following Moods
Follow Through	Creativity
Routine	Eclectic

## *Time to Record:* MY MANAGER/ARTIST BALANCE



*T*ake the time to consider each pair: are you more *concrete* or *abstract* in your mentoring? Do you promote *steady progress* or an organic cycle of *ups and downs*? Do you teach the student to *avoid crisis* or that *crisis feeds creativity*? And so on.


Of course, one of the skills of the Student Whisperer is to consciously manipulate this balance as you interact with and respond to each student's specific and changing needs. But as you are becoming agile in this process of personalizing the balance, you will find it helpful to know: What is your natural balance? What mix of these are you most comfortable following?

The question to ask yourself here is: **What is my default setting?** Write this question down and answer it in writing in your notebook. Also, copy this simple chart in your notebook and mark where on the line your balance tends to be:

Manager ————— Artist

Are you closer to Manager, closer to Artist, or do you tend toward one or the other? Or are you right in the center, balanced between Manager and Artist?

~ Now, ask yourself what your default mix of these *should* be? This is a very important question. Ponder and take the time to really consider if your balance is exactly what you think it should be or if you need to change it a little or even a lot. Write your thoughts in your Whisperer Journal.



mentor for each mentee by altering your Healer/Warrior balance to what the mentee needs.

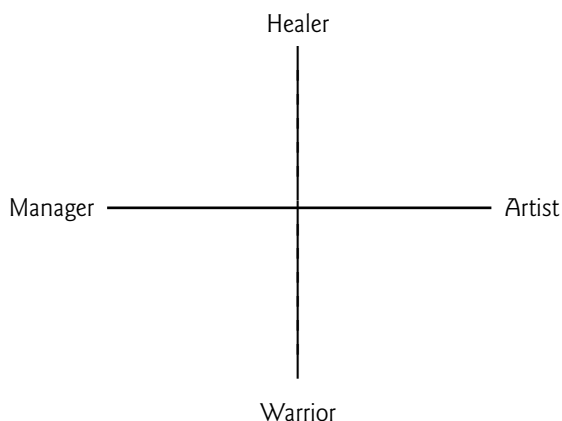
Take good notes on your thoughts about each mentee, and create a written plan for each mentee. Write all this in your Whisperer Journal. Leave room with each entry for additions from completing upcoming exercises.

Those who do this exercise will make thinking this way into a mental habit in a very short time. Once you have done this at least seven times (for your current and/or hypothetical mentees), your mind will naturally begin asking these questions, and others like them, whenever you mentor. Completing this exercise will significantly improve your subconscious and conscious Whispering habits and skills. It will make you think more like a Student Whisperer.

## **The Whispering Quadrants**

Great mentors draw on their gifts as Managers, Artists, Healers and Warriors. Like a sound engineer on an audio console, they are able to tone down or dial up any of these as needed by a specific student at any given time. Student Whisperers also know how to detect what blend a student needs. Most importantly, Student Whisperers automatically ask themselves what each mentee needs in every mentorial interaction and between mentor connections. Student Whisperers also know how to deliver what is needed in language the mentee understands.

Student Whisperers understand the overall balance of mentoring styles and the general needs mentees have in each Quadrant.



Each of the four Quadrants is different and important, and Student Whisperers may simultaneously have mentees in each.

### **Manager-Healer Quadrant**

When a mentee is in the **Manager-Healer** Quadrant (as defined by what he *needs*) he benefits from:

- A more relaxed schedule
- Slowing down and focusing on quality
- Finding more balance and happiness in life

He is likely quite efficient and even driven, but needs to do *fewer* things *better*. He needs to learn to be more effective and do projects that really matter in a way that are deeply important.

Students in the Manager-Healer Quadrant are commonly found to be:

- Transitioning from one phase to the next
- Students in early Scholar Phase
- Students who are renegotiating lessons missed from a previous phase, but who are not in a Hate of Learning or gravely out-of-sync



# Getting the Most from Your Mentors

*by Oliver DeMille & Tiffany Earl*

**M**entoring is an art. So is getting the most from your mentors. Our purpose here is to learn more about improving both of these essential and profound skills. People who succeed are successful on The Path, and nothing is more helpful on The Path than great mentoring.

Studying mentoring from the viewpoint of the *mentee* is very important to Student Whispering, and is the focus of this chapter. As mentors, we learn many things about mentoring by seeing the whole process from the mentee's perspective. In the next chapter, we will reverse viewpoints and study mentoring from the mentor's view. Both are elemental to understanding the whole process.

Let's take a moment and do some self-reflection. There are at least eleven lessons that are very helpful to anyone trying to work with a formal mentor—especially if this is your first time (or if you feel that you failed at it the last time). This functions like a workshop, and each assignment is designed to help you get more out of your mentored experience. For best results, do not move on until you have completed each exercise, as each lesson builds on the last. We recommend that you use your Whisperer Journal or notebook for this project.

Note that these lessons are “classic,” meaning they are worth studying over and over—because you learn more each time. If you ever feel frustrated with your mentor or your progress on The Path, you will almost always be able to find the solution by repeating these eleven exercises.

The first time through, do them at whatever pace feels comfortable and right to you. You can do them all in one day, one a week for eleven weeks, or anything in between. Just do them in order, and take the time to do each lesson well.

Once you have completed all of them, we highly recommend that you discuss them with your mentor(s).

Here are eleven of the great lessons of being a good **mentee**! Get out your Whisperer Journal and go to work.

### *Time to Record:* MENTEE LESSONS



**Lesson #1: Take Responsibility.** Your success or failure is ultimately *up to you*. Your role is to own your education and to learn everything the mentor knows that you need to know. Rate yourself on how well you do this, and list things you need to improve to get better at this.

**Lesson #2: Master the Mentor's Style.** Don't try to get your mentor to work with *your* style; master *hers*. This is so important! Rate yourself on how well you do this, and list things you need to improve to get better at this. Also, ponder what your mentor's style is. Write your thoughts.

**Lesson #3: Trust the Process.** Keep going even when it seems like it won't work, as long as the mentor says you're on track. Remember *The Karate Kid*—wax on; wax off.<sup>37</sup> Often the more talented or accomplished a mentee is, the more stub-

record. It is a form of Debriefing that will yield the most valuable insights of the whole exercise.

The rest of the material in this chapter will greatly help you as you seek to master the art of mentoring.

## Thirteen Mentoring Improvements

Following are thirteen key things that can help you immediately and significantly improve your effectiveness as a quality mentor. With each, please take time to consider how you can improve your mentoring with each person you mentor (list them by name, and then brainstorm and write how you might be a better mentor to each). Successfully completing this workshop will make you a Student Whisperer.

1. **Pass on a Legacy.** As a Formal Mentor, you are passing on a legacy, not just skills or information. There are various types of legacies, including: assets, position, confidence, vision, and many others. Vision is by far the most important of these.

If a mentee doesn't share your vision (e.g. of a great liberal arts education, or of your mission in the world, or of the role of martial arts or visual arts in a society, etc.), she is probably not the right mentee for you. Your mentees either need to catch the vision, or you need to release them to find other mentors. Vision is incredibly powerful, and contra-vision mentoring isn't really mentoring—it's indoctrination.

Write your thoughts and ideas for improvement with each mentee.

2. **Be a Mentor.** As we stated in the introduction: You can't pass on vision without mentoring. You can tell stories, and a few people might listen. But to really pass on vision you must mentor protégés over a period of time. Not all of them will catch your vision, and a few people you don't personally mentor *will* catch your vision; but if you're not actively mentoring over a long period of time, your vision probably won't get passed on. If your vision is important, you need to be a mentor.

Write your thoughts and ideas for improvement with each mentee.

3. **Develop a Cadre.** There are no perfect protégés—just like there

Aristotle wondered if there is anything greater than friendship. After studying soul mentors, parent mentors, The Path, the Spiral, marriage, children, gurus, epiphanies and all the other types of mentors, for us the question is resolved. Perhaps the great guru Yogananda said it most eloquently: "The best way to be successful in this adventure of life is to be your own friend."<sup>43</sup>

*Be your own friend.* The Path is there for you. You can consciously manage the voices that Whisper in your mind, and as you do this your ability to Whisper to those you mentor will improve. You can assess your life and make the choices that will spiral you toward increasing happiness. You can reach out and mentor others, helping them do the same.

When you are ready, the mentors will appear.

Look around. Mentors are everywhere. You are ready.





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## Endnotes

- 1 Whereas the term “mentor” derives from a proper name in a Greek story about a man, Mentor, who was a father figure and teacher to Telemachus, and the “-or” ending does not refer to one who takes a certain action (as in “spectat-or,” “jur-or,” “don-or,” “dictat-or”), the term “mentee” is a back formation.
- 2 See the original movie “Karate Kid,” where the martial arts master Mr. Miyagi has his protégée practice basic fundamentals through repetition by waxing a car, sanding a fence, etc.
- 3 Rick has since recovered completely.
- 4 Spoken by Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, Act I Scene 7.
- 5 See Descartes, *Replies* 7, *AT* 7:481.
- 6 See Descartes, *Prin.* 1.13, *AT* 8a: 9-10.
- 7 See Nichomachus, *Introduction to Arithmetic*, ch. 2.
- 8 See Dewey, *Experience and Education*, ch. 1.
- 9 See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Introduction.
- 10 See Dewey, *Experience and Education*, ch. 1.
- 11 See Suzuki, *Nurtured by Love: The Classic Approach to Talent Education*.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 See Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Theodore Roosevelt speech, National Convention of the Progressive Party, Chicago, IL, August 6, 1912.
- 18 See Demosthenes, *The Third Philippic*.
- 19 Patrick Henry speech, “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death,” March 23, 1775.
- 20 See Demosthenes, *The Third Philippic*.

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## About the Authors

**Oliver DeMille** is the author of *A Thomas Jefferson Education*, *The Coming Aristocracy*, *FreedomShift*, and other books on education and freedom. He is a popular keynote speaker for business, educational and civic events, and he is the founder of George Wythe University. He has mentored the great books and leadership education for twenty years, and writes a blog for the Center for Social Leadership. Oliver and his wife Rachel co-authored the book *Leadership Education*, and they are the parents of eight children. These books and many other resources are available at TJEd.org.

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Tiffany's works, including resources on key topics taught in this book, are available at [www.lemimentortraining.com](http://www.lemimentortraining.com).



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