**Why I Mentor**

I am a convert. I converted to a liberal education, or to a life of studying great things. I hope that all mankind will someday convert to doing a liberal arts education. History shows that societies that are converted to a liberal education are the societies that abound in freedom, prosperity, and peace. The origin of a liberal education comes from an education fit for a freeman, as opposed to that of the slaves. The freeman must know how to govern his house and take his proper role in society. This still holds true, in principle, today.

The purpose of a liberal education is intellectual ability, as opposed to technical or professional skill. It is to study literature, history, philosophy, and languages in a way that stretches the brain, that creates more ability to think broader, and that which enables him to reason deeper. Aristotle said that a Statesman has no “profession” but is knowledgeable in every profession.

The common American phrase, “freedom is not free” packs a lot of truth because it takes a lot of work. It falls right in line with another common phrase, “the best things in life are not free.” *Not free* indicates a cost, it requires work, and it implies time—meaning it is not an instantaneous gratification. Euclid succinctly put it to his pupil, Alexander the Great, “There is no royal road to geometry” when met with difficulty in math. I reiterate that there is no short cut to a liberal education—as the producer of freedom. The cost required in labor and time must be met, or else the product cannot be kept. How long would a car manufacturer stay in business if they only cared about taking the easy way out? Who would want to have surgery done by a Doctor who took shortcuts in his preparations and education before actually operating? Or would you want a manufacturer and surgeon who are meticulous in every detail to be able to produce their very best?

There is a reason that freedom has been one of the focal points throughout history—being of great value as one of the “best things in life.” The peoples that achieve, or draw closest to, freedom have a general theme, a widespread liberal education of the people.

 Liberal Education is a simple, but challenging, progression—when done proficiently that is. It draws out the natural success and greatness of individuals. It enables minds to challenge the axioms that are the societal *norm*. The beaten path no longer has to be The Path to follow, but whichever path that is wanted. A brain and mind that have been liberally educated is ready for any problem that comes its way because it is intelligent, thoughtful, and keen; ever ready for what lies ahead.

The liberal arts world is a very large and daunting one when facing it alone. A guide, a guru, or a mentor (however you wish to call him) is needed to aide navigation through this massive sea of knowledge. The first step towards unleashing inner greatness is to find that guide, or mentor. Finding your first mentor is the easy part. You need not look farther than exactly where you are; for God is there. God should be the first and foremost life-long mentor you have. Who could be a better mentor than He who knows all things and not only that, but He who knows you *best* and knows your needs *best*? Besides, studying the greats does not make mankind impervious to vice and weakness, but coupling that study with God magnifies and instills the good within us. The next step is to find your second mentor. There is no need to stress over this task, with God as your mentor he will aide you in your search throughout your entire life. With God’s guidance, look for someone who you respect and wish that you could know what they do. And then you take the leap of faith, boldly face them, and ask if they will impart their knowledge with you. Throughout life many guiding mentors will come and go, each contributing a new flare, a new taste, a new perspective. It doesn’t matter if they remain for the long haul or just for one visit. There is almost always benefit to be had from those with more experience than ourselves. Even the most educated of men still have mentors; there will always be someone somewhere who knows more about something than we do. Take Socrates as an example. With one of the greatest educations. And as such, he recognized just how little education he actually had. Isn’t that exciting? That there will always be room to grow.

Mentors are essential in filtering out the unnecessary from the necessary and to help find what is best right now. Looking over lists and lists of classics and suggested readings pile up and can seem to never end. Besides the mountains of great books to sift through is the complication of finding books that are beneficial right now or beneficial later. There are is a great deal of studies that are not for the faint of heart and often should only be taken on once the reader has a sufficient foundation and understanding to work on. Trying to learn Algebra before understanding the basics of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division is ludicrous. It would leave a bitter taste and displeasure, even to the most adamant student, where there could have been joy and success. If only the student would have known to study something else first. Not having studied in all the fields makes it hard to know what is not known, and what should even be sought after.

The problem, though daunting, leaves for a simple answer. A good mentor who has God’s direction and has traversed the path before is well equipped to delegate the best stepping stones. In this manner the mentor can facilitate excitement and love of learning. He can enable the successful passing of obstacles. He can then leave an impression not just with his single pupil, but on all those with whom the pupil comes in contact. The impact becomes multi-generational instead of merely a “trend of the decade.”

Every human being will be a mentor; as a parent, a friend, or simply as someone somebody looks up to; God allows everyone the opportunity to share our gifts and talents with others. Everyone has a unique gift to contribute. Think of who you are influencing in the world today, for better or for worse. Ponder on how you can influence each of these for the better, as Socrates once said, “Strive to be what you wish to be thought to be.” What do you need to change? What do you need to know? Think of who could aid you in becoming the best mentor you can be.

I am a convert. I hope that all mankind will someday convert. If only everyone knew the simplicity in discovering their greatness, then the world would take a sharp, but natural, turn towards freedom, prosperity and peace. Simply pick up a book and start your studies. Simply ask someone to guide and mentor you. I mentor simply because I desire others to unleash their greatness and move the cause of freedom.

Audience: Introducing those I am mentoring, and those I would like to mentor, to a liberal arts education.