

PASSING THE BATON

RAISING THE NEXT LEADER

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INTRODUCTION

The next generation of leaders is in the waiting. The baton has to be passed on to them. It is a generational thing.

But what if the baton is not passed. Tim Elmore puts it so well. He says “ One generation fails to pass on the resources to the next generation so that they can run their leg of the race...many are stranded at the starting blocks without a baton.” (1)

The baton must be passed.

Moses passed it on to the next man , Joshua. Eli was a spiritual father to Samuel (I Samuel 3:6). Elisha was prepared by his master , Elijah , for over a long period. And Elisha affectionately called his master “My father! My father!” (2 Kings 2:12b). Barnabas played a quick and speedy role of recognizing the potential in Paul by providing both a ministry partnership and an apprenticeship training for him. Jay Dennis sums it up well. He says that “The apostle Paul would not have his world-touching ministry had it not been for Barnabas’s constant encouragement” (2) And Paul in turn diligently and intentionally mentored his future generation of young pastors , Timothy and Titus. It has been suggested that Paul could have spent as much as fifteen years to mentor Timothy (3). Paul called Timothy and Titus as “ sons ” (I Tim 1:2 , Tit 1:4).

There was continuity in leadership. We have to keep in mind , as Andrew Fox puts it “ that a younger man will grow and eventually succeed his mentor. And soon he will himself develop, teach and train other young men to succeed him – from generation to generation.” (4)

Moses , Eli , Elijah and Barnabas helped their successors to rise to their place of influence.

It is obvious than that behind a successor there has been a visionary leader.

A study was made about some rich and powerful leaders and this is what is said , “ Even among the rich and powerful one striking thing was that almost all of them had at least one mentor who helped them develop and rise to their place of influence in their network...”(5)

PROBLEMS FACED BY THE LEADERSHIP

Moses , Eli , Elijah , Barnabas and Paul were discerning enough to see the need to raise up their own successors.

The issue of raising our next generation leadership is a critical one. If we lack the *sensitivity* to divine prompting as Moses had for Joshua’s takeover , the *readiness* to train our young leaders in “ Shiloh” as Eli did to Samuel , the *willingness* to drop the mantle on those who have faithfully served us as Elijah did to Elisha, the *big heartedness* to bring in those who might be more talented than us as Barnabas did to Paul , and the *intentional* approach employed by Paul to raise up his future pastors , then we will fail to

groom our future leaders. We can gloat over our accomplishments but we will miserably fail in providing the leadership for our succeeding generations.

Is there a problem in producing our next leaders? If there is, then what are the factors that might be perpetuating the problem?

1. THE LACK OF AN INTENTIONAL PREPARATION OF THE NEXT LEADER

It is possible that we might lack a deliberate intentional strategy to prepare our successors.

Mentoring can remain non-strategic and informal. It can lack a purposeful and focused strategy plan to train apprentices. Often trainees can be trained with a detached and distanced strategy. This leads to the training programme becoming more casual and informal, lacking proper monitoring and thorough supervision.

Trainees might be expected to tag along, observe and learn on their own. They might not be given proper directional supervision. Things like accountability, reporting, supervision and monitoring might not be seen as very essential. So mentoring can become occasional and passive and not intensive.

It has been suggested that there are three types of mentoring (6).

Three Types Of Mentoring

The first - *the passive type*.

It is more non-involved. It remains distant. It shows by life modeling.

The second – *occasional type*

It majors in the area of counseling, teaching and sponsoring.

The third - *the intensive type*.

Its approach is three fold – discipling, guiding and coaching. This third type anchors around relationship building. It is both intensive and intentional. It is very focused and organized.

2. PROPER MENTORING NOT IN PLACE

More than usual, mentoring might not be done properly. Proper mentoring procedures and methodologies might not be employed to enhance the quality of the mentoring job. This problem is compounded by either the trainer's lack of knowledge of the prime requirements involved in mentoring or the sheer lack of time and the proper resources to handle the situation at hand. Proper mentoring and fathering are prerequisites in leadership development. There is a great need for well prepared, properly fathered leaders.

But why is there a lack of fathers? Barney Coombs puts it rightly, "...there are many men pastoring churches today who themselves have never been fathered – either by their natural fathers or any spiritual fathers." (7) So the cycle is repeated. Fathering is

relational. And that's exactly what mentoring is all about. "Mentoring is a relational experience through which one person empowers another..."(8).

Leaving aside these negative factors that don't help the regulation and monitoring of a healthy mentoring situation, we have to face the fact that God is however serious about the matter of choosing the successor. One biblical incident that shows God's seriousness in the issue of the preparation of a successor should be taken up as a guide for selecting and training our successors.

It is found in Num 27:18 and Deut 1: 38. These two passages throw some light over the manner in which Joshua was appointed. It is extremely enlightening to read. It is a good educational reference to all in senior leadership. It contains basic divine instructions that need to be adhered to in the matter of preparing future leaders.

THE BATON PASSED TO JOSHUA

Num 27:18 and Deut 1:38 are brief texts on the appointment of Joshua. Brief they are, yet they contain some basic and vital information on the dynamics of leadership grooming.

1. Numbers 27: 18

"...Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him...Give him some authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him..."

There are three key words which we need to observe.

Firstly, the word "**take**."

It refers to the deliberate and conscious effort on the part of Moses to identify his next man. The next man must be located and set apart for the leadership take over. It involves a carefully planned decisive action on the part of Moses.

Secondly, the word "**lay**" your hand on him.

It refers to two things – (a) God conferring his blessings on Joshua and (b) Moses transferring his leadership to Joshua.

Passing the baton is basically an act of transferring leadership to the successor. And Moses did it so willingly and without envy. It can be very difficult for someone long in leadership to pass it on to his successor. Matthew Henry comments, "Envious spirits do not love the successors." (9)

Thirdly, the word "**give**." Moses was charged to give some of his authority to Joshua. It refers to giving the charge. The charge must be given to the successor. It cannot be held back.

So Numbers 27: 18-20 deal with the first three aspects of securing the successor. We need to move on to the next passage, Deut 1: 8, to get to the second part of appointing our successors.

2. Deuteronomy 1: 38

“ But your assistant , Joshua son of Nun , will enter it. Encourage him....”
There are another two key words , in Deut 1:8.

Firstly , the word “ **enter**.” It refers to Joshua entering into the next phase of leadership. He must not be restricted in anyway from making his way into the next phase.

Secondly , the word “ **encourage**.” The Hebrew word is “ chazaq.” It literally means “ to fasten upon” (10) It has the idea of strengthening. Moses was required to strengthen Joshua’s confidence in the takeover. It has also been pointed out that encouragement is one of the eight major empowerment functions of a mentor (11). It is a very essential prerequisite in empowerment. Stanley and Clinton also say that encouragement has three basic functions in leadership development (12). Firstly it imparts hope. Secondly it gives expectation and thirdly it gives way for future development. Those who fail to give the right kind of encouragement kill the spirit of their potential successors. But next level influencers constantly think about how to encourage others.

In summing up the two references , Num 27:18 and Deut 1: 38 , we can conclude that there were basically five steps involved in securing our successors:

1. Identifying the man.
2. Transferring the mantle
3. Giving the charge
4. Opening the way for the move
5. Encouraging the man

KINDS OF WRONG MENTORING

Many good successors are not secured along the way. They have not been prepared well. Good mentors produce good successors.

Sir Humphrey Davy

He was a distinguished chemist. When he was asked late in his life what he considered to be his greatest discovery , he replied , ‘ Michael Faraday.’ (13). Faraday was the son of a blacksmith. One day Sir Humphrey saw Faraday taking notes at his lectures and longing to study science seriously. He began to teach him. And he found in Faraday a brilliant mind that promised to do far better than his own achievements. He “ saw the gold inside the young man.” And he began to invest more in this young man.

Humphrey mentored him along the way. The result? Faraday became the famous chemist and physicist who discovered electromagnetic induction (14).

That was good mentoring. Intentional and intensive. It provides the right platform for potential people trainees to rise up to their place of influence.

But weak mentoring damages all good prospects of producing good successors.
What are the types of wrong mentoring?

1. Casual mentoring

The method employed is too casual and the approach is too distant. It is not interested in an intensive relationship. There is no serious monitoring and reporting. It is more non-involved.

2. Non- Focused

There is no focus and so there is no goal. The mentor has no seriously directed aims. The trainee is allowed to progress along the way , much on his own. There is no proper sense of bearing or direction. There is commitment but no direction. There is work but no properly directed vision.

3. Disorganised

There is a lack of organizational direction in mentoring. No plan. No strategy. No supervision.

All casual , non-focused and disorganized mentoring temper with the manner and method with which good successors must be secured. Poor mentors choose not to invest in people's lives. They instruct but not invest.

What causes poor mentoring?

REASONS FOR POOR MENTORING

1. Short-sightedness

How can a person invest in his successor if there is no futuristic vision? Successors are made. Short vision kills passion for good mentoring.

2. The Necessity Not Seen

More than often short vision people do not see the necessity to prepare their successors. They simply do not see it.

3. An Over-Domineering Spirit

Over-domineering people feel threatened by their successors. They can be so dominating that people below them just cannot come up. No way! They run the show. Others just assist. They love assistants who slog for them but they hate successors.

4. The Lack Of A Father's Heart

Fathers produce sons. A leader without a fatherly heart cannot produce a son. So we have sons in leadership who have not been properly fathered by their fathers. The father-son relationship has been either absent or minimal. For such leaders , relationship becomes unimportant. Leadership revolves around a work oriented relationship.

6. Busyness

This is another killing factor. There is no time to develop any intimate relationship. Distance becomes the preferred style.

WAYS OF PASSING THE BATON

There is a manner by which we successfully pass the batons to others.

1. The Baton Is Not There

How can one pass the baton when it is simply not there to pass!

Saul had nothing to pass on.

Whatever he had was taken away from him (I Sam 15: 26).

It is sad to see some who have nothing to pass on to those waiting on the line.

There is no vision or legacy to be left behind.

2. The Baton Is Dropped

This is a most pitiful thing. The baton drops. Hezekiah was a great king. (2 Chron 33: 2) But Manasseh his son could never take the baton from him. It just dropped from the hands of Hezekiah. He could not pass on his legacy to Manasseh much to the blame of Manasseh himself. So Manasseh was just stranded at his starting block! And he ran his leg of the race poorly.

We all remember the 1988 Olympics. Four of the fastest men in the world were poised at the start of the 4x100 meter relay. Runner Carl Lewis was expected to win another gold medal. “Yet , as the final leg of the race approached , the unthinkable happened. The Americans dropped the baton... it was a botched handoff” (15). And they lost. What a sad thing.

3. THE BATON IS NOT PASSED

It happened with Joshua , the valiant successor of Moses. Joshua himself was secured and trained by Moses. But he himself in turn could not train his own successor. Judges 2: 10 tells it all , “ ...another generation grew up , who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel.”

Another generation grew up. But there was no successor to Joshua. As a result the nation was plunged into anarchy. There was no continuity of leadership. A vacuum was created in the leadership realm. Was it because he was a warrior , lacking a father’s heart , that prevented him from mentoring his own man? We are not sure. Somewhere along the line Joshua failed to identify his own man. The consequence was disastrous.

FOUR VITAL QUESTIONS THAT LEADERS/MENTORS MUST ASK

1. Have I the next man?
2. Am I serious enough to prepare him?
3. Do I have a plan to develop him?
4. Am I willing to invest time in him?

PAUL'S STYLE OF MENTORING

Paul was a classic mentor. He knew how to secure his younger men and to propel them into leadership.

In Paul we can see three models of mentoring successors.

1. The Trainer

Paul was a good trainer. We can observe eight key strategies.

1) Apprenticeship training – Acts 16:5

Paul took young Timothy with him. His school of training was like a traveling Bible school. They worked together.

Stanley and Clinton point out that one of the four key strategies involved in helping potential leaders is to “co-work to increase confidence and credibility” (16).

Sometimes the second man is left alone for too long.

2) He provided the right climate for development.

He sent him to Thessalonica, Corinth, Philippi, Berea and finally to Ephesus where he learnt to handle a very difficult church.

3) He provided the empowering

Handling different church situations in Thessalonica, Corinth, Philippi, Berea and Ephesus were Paul's ways of empowering young Timothy.

He was empowered to deal with situations like exercising superintendence over false teachers, exhorting elders and correcting errant believers.

4) He believed in him

Though Timothy's handling of the Corinth situation was not a success, Paul did not discard Timothy. He believed in him to give him other situations to handle as the Ephesus situation.

Behind this was Paul's

- ability to see potential in Timothy
- tolerance with mistakes
- flexibility in handling failure situations
- patience where time and experience was needed
- ability to build up (17)

5) He gave open recognition

6) He gave significance

7) He stuck with him for almost fifteen years!

William Ramsey points out that when Paul took Timothy with him from Lystra, Timothy must have been only 20 years. And that when Paul left him in charge at Ephesus “we can

assume confidently that he was above thirty-five” (18). If this was the case than Paul had the patience to stick with Timothy for a pretty long period! It is on this basis that Paul could tell Timothy , “ You , however , know all about my teaching , my way of life , my purpose , faith , patience , love , endurance , persecutions , sufferings...” (2 Tim 3: 10).

2. The Father

Paul was more than a trainer. He was a father to Timothy. He affectionately called Timothy as “ my true son.”

1) Paul’s strategy was more focused on building a relationship. Timothy was not a mere assistant to Paul. He was a “son” to him. And for more than fifteen years he patiently built a fatherly relationship with his apprentice. Paul preferred the role of a spiritual father to anything else. The whole mentor- trainee system was built on a father-son relationship. Good sons in the ministry are those who have been built up by good spiritual fathers.

2) Paul as a spiritual father focused on the strengths and the potential hidden in a person. Timothy was young , timid and lacked confidence. Yet he persistently urged Timothy to anchor himself around the positive prophecies spoken over him (I Tim 1:18). He cast a positive vision into Timothy’s spirit. It positively:

- a. Helped to set the direction (Acts 16:1-3).
- b. Focus on the strengths (I Tim 1:18).
- c. Highlight the virtues (Phil 2:19-22)
- d. Give 100% encouragement

3. The Coach

Stanley and Clinton point out that the coach’s central thrust “ it to provide motivation and impart skills and application to meet a task or a challenge” (19).

Paul coached Timothy all the way through for the fifteen years , even up to the point of his charge over the Ephesus church. The two epistles that he wrote to Timothy were a classic example of coaching a novice in how to handle ministry. It was full of motivation , counsel on personal matters and personal support. Stanley and Clinton further point out the basic functions of a coach involved the following:

- 1) Imparting skills (frequently knowledge)
- 2) Imparting confidence
- 3) Motivating people to bring the best out of them
- 4) Model the principles
- 5) Observe the trainee in action
- 6) Evaluate to give feedback (20).

QUALITIES NEEDED FOR A LEADER

What are some of the basic qualities needed for a leader to train his successor?

1. Patience

Paul never gave up on Timothy in spite of Timothy's apparent weaknesses and short-coming. He persevered with Timothy.

2. Long-range View

Paul worked with Timothy with a long-range vision. The apprentice will eventually have to pastor churches.

3. Time

Paul gave Timothy the time to develop him into a leader. He gave this young man almost fifteen years of his mentoring!

4. Taking Risks

Timothy was timid and inexperienced. Yet Paul was willing to take the risk of investing in such a person. Putting him in charge of the difficult Ephesus church itself involved a lot of risks!

5. Accepting Responsibility

Paul took on the responsibility for Timothy. The two epistles that he wrote to Timothy were a reflection of his commitment to this effect. He took responsibility till the end.

QUALITIES WE MUST EXPECT FROM THOSE WHOM WE TRAIN

We have every right to expect certain qualities from those in whom we are investing time and effort. The man in training must have his spirit in tune with the senior man. A divided team will not pull through well. The senior man has every right to demand a standard from his trainee.

We must expect five basic things.

1. Perspective

They must be focused. Otherwise there will be a lack of determination to push on and come up.

2. Intimacy With Christ

This is fundamental. Without a proper intimate relationship with Christ everything else becomes man centered. The key to a fruitful spiritual life lies in one's intimacy with Christ.

3. Discipline

No one who is prepared for discipline can ever seek to rise to a position of influence. The potential leader must develop discipline in certain key areas of his life. Glaring areas of indiscipline can lead to his downfall.

4. Maintaining A Positive Learning Attitude

The trainee must seek to learn. Often an attitude mentors meet with those whom they are training is that of an unwillingness to learn. Sloppiness is a constant temptation.

5. Accountability

Trainees must be told that they are accountable. So proper reporting and monitoring must become part of the training process. An accountability system must be maintained so that they are properly supervised and monitored. Sloppy accountability helps to conceal hidden weaknesses and curtail the performance level.

SIX MISTAKES TO AVOID

Mistakes can become costly in our human resource investment programme. There are six mistakes we should avoid at all cost.

1. Wrong Selection

We have to be extremely careful in securing the right man. The wrong man can become a pain in the neck and a liability in the future. Some have even destroyed their senior man's ministry. If left unchecked they will leave their senior man bleeding!

Assessing potential leaders can become a very difficult task. But we need to check on essential things to ensure that we do not bring in the wrong person. We need not rush to secure our second man. The timing is important.

2. Being Too Domineering

No one can grow and develop under a high handed man. A domineering spirit kills any potential growth. It suppresses creativity, initiative and originality.

Domination, intimidation and manipulation are three marks of a leader bent on domineering.

3. Neglect

One of the most painful things for a man under training is the feeling of neglect and loneliness. Leaders can unintentionally neglect those whom they are training.

Lack of intimacy, warmth, personal support, counsel and a friendly spirit can cause feelings of neglect and rejection. If this situation continues it can become a case of casualty. Paul gave much personal support to his young pastors. He enquired of their health, raised concern over some personal issues, assured his personal support and affirmation and wrote to encourage. He kept in contact. He had a personal touch with his younger leaders.

4. Being Negative

Being unduly negative – critical, skeptical and cynical – destroys the spirit. There is always a temptation to quickly belittle and ridicule the man below. If they are not strong enough they will leave. Being too negative is a reflection of the leader's inability to tolerate mistakes. It has been pointed out in a survey that people who have been judged

for doing poorly suffer from three common reactions - the fear of being punished , worthlessness and isolation (21).

It is said that one of the strongest points of T.W. Wilson , the man behind Billy Graham was his positive spirit. Jay Dennis writes , He was always positive with people. He always blessed you , always encouraged you , he never got negative.” (22) He goes on say that “ He is so encouraging. He would make you think you could do more than you ever could , which makes you accomplish more.”

5. Poor supervision

This is one of the fundamental reasons for some to get discouraged and get downcast. Proper supervision is a mark of our true faithfulness to those whom we are training.

6. The Midpoint Sag

More often somewhere at the midpoint a sag takes place. Stanley and Clinton say , “Watch out for midway relational ‘sag.’ The mentoring relationship tends to lose its original zest at about the midpoint. ...keep frequent contact ” (23).

The relationship must not snap in between. It must be a progressive relationship of care , warmth , concern and partnership.

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