

Make it count – TEACH

November 2014 Newsletter



Experience: Still the
best teacher of all

Finding success with help
from a mentor

Ever feel like an imposter?
Take this quiz!

e-Thoughts



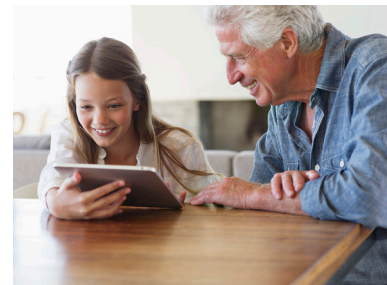
When it comes to learning
everyday lessons, there's no
better teacher than life itself...
More...



Who do you turn to when you
need help, advice or guidance?
Have you ever considered finding
a mentor? **More...**



Do you have the “imposter
syndrome”? Take the quiz and
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Three things I'm grateful for are...
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Getting help

Confidential support, information and resource referrals are available for a variety of concerns — both work and personal. Call for assistance for you, your household members or your adult children under age 26, whether they live at home or not. Call or visit us online today!



Experience: Still the best teacher of all

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When it comes to learning everyday lessons, there's no better teacher than life itself. Books, articles, the internet, TV and other resources are all helpful and informative. They can plant ideas and expand your thinking. But the most impactful life lessons often come from "doing."

Nothing replaces experience

You may know people who've broken a leg, visited a foreign country, had a serious loss, gotten married or divorced, or had a baby. But how about when it actually happens to you?

Listening, thinking and visualizing an event aren't the same as going through it yourself. Hearing someone else's experience can give you a chance to mentally rehearse what you might do. But being center stage and having to react is very different.

Experience teaches you lessons you can't learn any other way. For example, you can learn that:

- **There is no perfect.** The things we enjoy most in life may be great, but they're not necessarily flawless. And that's fine. It's an important wakeup call to learn to accept imperfections and "go with the flow." (Does this speak to the perfectionist in you?)
- **There's almost always a silver lining.** If you look hard enough, you can usually find a positive during a difficult time. For instance, a mistake can help you learn something you didn't know before. A loss may open up avenues to new relationships or opportunities. Instead of feeling hopeless at a bleak time, focus on finding the silver lining that's often just ahead. (Can you remember when you were able to see the silver lining in a tough situation?)

- **You can bounce back.** One of the most critical skills in life is resilience. And you may not even know you have it until you need it! No one travels through life without making mistakes and experiencing setbacks. It's the ability to bounce back that builds — and reinforces — strength and character. (Are there ways you've bounced back in your life so far?)
- **You're not alone.** Everyone travels over rocky ground at times. When you meet with adversity, reach out to others. You'll find they've probably been there too. Share your wisdom and experience and learn from theirs. (Can you think of times you've found strength from knowing others have stood in your shoes?)

Experience teaches you what you want... and don't want

We can only learn so much from the words and warnings of our parents and others. It's our own experiences that make the most lasting impression.

Experiences help us explore and get to know ourselves as individuals. They teach us about our strengths, feelings and thoughts. They help us see options, choose our paths and make us who we are.

Finding success with help from a mentor

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Who do you turn to when you need help, advice or guidance? It may be a coworker, family member or friend. But have you ever considered finding a mentor?

What is a mentor?

A mentor is an experienced person who helps someone with less experience (the “mentee”). A mentor can help the mentee develop skills and knowledge. The mentor is a trusted advisor who nurtures the mentee’s career and/or personal development.¹

Many of today’s most successful people have had mentors along the way. This includes Oprah Winfrey, Cal Ripken, Jr., General Colin Powell, Hillary Clinton, Bill Gates, Tom Hanks and many others.²

Where can you find a mentor?

Some companies and organizations offer mentoring. If your organization has this type of program, you may find a mentor right where you work.

You can also seek a mentor outside of work by asking someone you respect to take on that role in your life. Good mentors may include local business people, retirees, clergy and others in your non-work world.

What does a mentor do?

Mentoring is a low-cost — sometimes no cost — way to have a skilled person teach you. A mentor can:

- Coach you on a specific issue or skill
- Share resources and networks
- Challenge you to move beyond your comfort zone

- Give you objective advice and feedback
- Identify skills you may not realize you have
- Work with you to plan new goals

Getting the most out of a mentoring relationship

Here are some simple tips to follow if you’re interested in finding a mentor:

- **First, think about why you want a mentor.** Create some objectives ahead of time so you’ll know what you want to achieve from the relationship. More goals and ideas will come as the rapport builds.
- **Don’t wait for a mentor to come to you.** Instead, look for one — and be choosy. If your first pick doesn’t work out, move on and find another.
- **Learn to listen.** Ask questions. Then really listen to your mentor’s answers. Ask for clarification if needed.
- **You don’t have to limit yourself to one mentor.** You can have a few and learn different things from each. You might look to one for career help and another for personal issues.
- **If you want a mentor, be ready to be part of a relationship.** Effective mentoring depends on mutual trust and respect. It’s a commitment. Get the most out of having a mentor by spending time together so you can really get to know and understand each other well.

And remember: You might also consider becoming a mentor for someone less experienced than you. A mentor-mentee relationship can be invaluable to both parties!

¹management-mentors.com

²degreescout.com

Ever feel like an imposter? Take this quiz!

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Do you have the “imposter syndrome”? Take the quiz below and then read on to learn more.

Answer yes or no to these questions:

1. Do you secretly worry that others will find out you’re not as smart as they think you are?
2. Do you avoid challenges because you’re afraid you’ll fail and embarrass yourself?
3. When you succeed, do you think “I did okay, but only because it wasn’t as hard as I expected after all”?
4. Do you feel upset even by constructive criticism, seeing it as proof of your incompetence?
5. When you do a great job, do you think, “Phew, I fooled ‘em this time but I may not be so lucky next time.”
6. Do you believe that other people (coworkers or friends) are smarter and more capable than you are?
7. Do you live in fear of being found out or unmasked for being less than others think you are?

Mostly “no” answers?

Good for you! You know what you can do and you give yourself credit when you do it well.

Mostly “yes” answers?

You may suffer from the “imposter syndrome.” People who are plagued by such thoughts are usually smart, competent and accomplished. However, inside they feel like fakes. Anxiety and self-doubt keep them from enjoying their own successes. When they succeed, they often credit their achievements

to outside factors like luck or good timing. Or they decide afterward that what they accomplished wasn’t really that hard after all. They worry that “next time” they’ll fail and be discovered as frauds.

One famous person with imposter syndrome was poet and author Maya Angelou. She once said, “I have written eleven books, but each time I think, ‘Uh oh, they’re going to find out now. I’ve run a game on everybody, and they’re going to find me out.’”¹

Teach yourself to believe in you!

Here are some tips for dealing with imposter syndrome:

- **Learn to accept praise.** When someone says you did a great job, try not to diminish their praise. Instead of saying, “It wasn’t really that hard,” say, “Thank you” or “I really appreciate that.” Get into this habit. Start allowing yourself to hear and internalize good things. Stop putting yourself down.
- **Keep a list of your accomplishments.** List everything from speaking up at a team meeting to getting kudos for a big project. Use this list to remind yourself of your successes when you’re slipping into that painful imposter mode.
- **Delve into your emotions.** Consider talking to a trusted friend or a counselor. The imposter syndrome usually begins with childhood experiences. Talking to a trained counselor may help you uncover and deal with some of the basic causes of your fears.

¹[forbes.com](#)

e-Thoughts

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Our e-Thoughts feature provides close-up views on topics and areas of interest from everyday life.

Did you participate in the Ice Bucket Challenge last summer? I did. Actually, I had no choice since my grandkids "nominated" me just before they poured ice water over their own little heads! Now how could I refuse after that?

The Ice Bucket Challenge was fun. And it also raised a lot of money for a worthy cause.

Lately, I've heard about a new challenge. It's the Gratitude Challenge. You won't get an icy chill from it or find people recording it for social media. Still, it's a great undertaking.

Here's what it is: Each day, name three things you're grateful for. They have to be different each day — no repeats allowed. You can name them all at once at the end or beginning of the day. Or you can keep a running tally throughout the day.

For example, yesterday, I was grateful for 1) my family — for a million different reasons, 2) a delicious dinner prepared by a friend, and 3) my easygoing puppy. Today I'm grateful that 1) it's a sunny fall day, 2) I was physically able to take a long walk and 3) I'm feeling close to my brother because of feelings we shared this morning.

My guess is that this challenge isn't so much about how long you can go on naming three different things each day. It's really about making a habit of being appreciative, seeing the good and finding pleasure in the small stuff that makes up the everyday.

Give it a try. No buckets, no ice needed — just some awareness of the big and little things that make you smile.

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