

MILLENNIUM—Leadership Capsules for the 21st Century

Capsule #3—The Leader as Mentor

Facilitation and Self-Study Guide

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Looking to the Millennium

I remember 1970. I had just graduated from high school and was getting ready to head off to university. Leaving home seemed a wonderful adventure and I was filled with awe at the opportunities and anxiety at the uncertainty. I remember thinking how significant it was that this huge milestone in my life had fallen at the beginning of a new decade.

I also remember thinking that in 3 more decades—an eternity, it would be the end of the millennium. I thought of how funny it would be to be part of the graduating class in the year 2000. What would they be called? The class of zero?

And now, here we are. Eternity didn't really take very long at all. But in those thirty years it seems that everything has changed.

We used to pop popcorn on the stove. My children find this idea fascinating. “Why didn't you use the microwave?” they ask. We all worked in office buildings or factories. Now many of us run businesses in our homes or telecommute. We used to get a job and keep it forever. In 1970 people in the United States were amused by the little cars coming out of Japan and derided their quality. In 1970 there was no CNN. In 1970 there was no cellular telephone industry. In 1970 no one owned a home computer. A Macintosh was an apple—the kind you eat. The world was clearly divided into the good guys (us) and the bad guys (remember them?).

A millennium feels like something really big. Historically, that's been true. In the first century, paper was invented in China. It has taken 2000 years for us to develop a better medium for recording information. Around the same time, the city of London was founded by the Romans. Events happened of such tremendous historical and spiritual consequence that they still have a profound impact on our lives today.

So it is with those familiar feelings of awe at the opportunities mixed with anxiety at the uncertainty of it all that I look ahead at the millennium on whose doorstep we stand. Things will be profoundly different. They already are. Changes in how we do what we do happen at speeds that are mind-numbing.

Our organizations face these same forces. They are scrambling to redefine themselves so that they will remain relevant in a world that is in a state of constant, rapid flux. Charting the course, setting the mission, sharing a vision, opening to new learning have become the key skills that leaders need. But what does that mean on a day to day basis? How does being a LEADER change how you hire people? Or fire people? Or provide feedback? Or coach your team?

We need to create bridges between where we are coming from and where we are going. That is the purpose of this series. MILLENNIUM—Leadership Capsules for the 21st Century is 7 short bridges linking management functions and leadership skills. Each 15 minute capsule is a thought provoking discussion of the issues managers, supervisors, team leaders and others playing a leadership role in their organizations face daily. They can be used as part of a comprehensive learning experience or as refresher material to revisit concepts already explored. They can be presented in a facilitated classroom setting or as part of a self-directed study program. They are versatile tools designed to support a wide range of learning situations.

In my collaboration with a team of extraordinary leaders, I've learned a tremendous amount while producing MILLENNIUM. I hope you will find the series as rewarding to work with as I have.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robt Rosell." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R" and a small "Rosell" following.

Robert Rosell
Producer

How to Use this Guide

Program Format

MILLENNIUM—Leadership Capsules for the 21st Century contains seven different programs:

- #1 Leadership Is . . .
- #2 The Leader as Coach
- #3 The Leader as Mentor
- #4 Providing Performance Feedback
- #5 Beginning Employment Relationships
- #6 Ending Employment Relationships
- #7 In Compliance

The material in the MILLENNIUM capsules looks at the practical skills that are necessary to be a leader in today's complex and ever changing world. It introduces viewers to the all-important notion that each of us, at one time or another, no matter what our position in an organization, must be leaders in the 21st century. Throughout the series, experts provide us with practical ideas about leadership, and help us prepare for the realities of leading in the next millennium. The material in this booklet supports the video capsule you will be using.

Using the Guide

The material in MILLENNIUM is complex and requires a good amount of reflection, and a willingness to practice known and new skills. For that reason each of the booklets is divided into three parts:

- Part One Reflecting on the Material Covered in the Leadership Capsule
- Part Two Discussing the Capsule
- Part Three Working with the Material Presented in the Capsule

The support material can be used in three different ways: for self-study, for team presentation and discussion, or for direct facilitation.

Self-Study Approach

If you are using this material for self-study, the best way to benefit from the topic being covered is to turn to Part One of the booklet and complete the exercises. Most of the exercises presented help you explore the topic through your own experiences and ideas. Continue with this approach by viewing the entire video capsule. Following the video, reflect on the questions in Handout 5 of the Guide, comparing your own ideas with those expressed by the experts in the video. You may prefer to continue by reading through Part Two, which is a synopsis of comments presented in the video. Move onto Part Three and complete the exercises.

Team Approach

A team would do best by following the self-study method outlined above. Each team member could individually complete the exercises presented in Part One, and then view the video together. Following seeing the video, the team could engage in a discussion of the material. This discussion can be facilitated by the questions and responses offered in Part Two. The team can elect to complete the follow-up exercises and activities in Part Three individually or as a group.

Facilitation Approach

If the MILLENNIUM series is used as a training, the method of how to use this book would vary slightly to those outlined previously. The facilitator of the training should view the video capsule first. Following the viewing of the video, (s)he can review the exercises in Part One. A decision can be made about how or if any of these exercises would be incorporated in the training presentation for the capsule. As a part of constructing the training design, the facilitator can elect which questions would be used for discussion. These can be found in Part Two. In the same way, the exercises offered in Part Three can be reviewed, and a decision made as to which ones would be incorporated into the training.

All exercises, activities, and discussion questions are sequentially presented to follow the presentation of the material in the video capsule. All printed materials for all three formats is contained in this booklet. Handouts for participants are located throughout the booklet.

The only additional materials needed for exercises and activities are either a black or white board or flip charts for writing observations or recording information from brainstorming or other activities.

Discussion Questions for the Capsules

A list of discussion questions is presented in the booklet. This page can be copied and distributed to participants when the program is being used for training. Part Two contains a summary of material covered in the program as it relates to these questions.

Handouts and Photocopying Rights

Handouts pages that are part of the training are located throughout the program booklets. There are approximately three to five activities contained in “Part Three: Working with the Material” section of each program booklet. Trainers need only to decide which of the activities and exercises would be relevant for individual distribution, and have copies made. With the purchase of the MILLENNIUM—Leadership Capsules for the 21st Century series, Quality Media Resources, Inc. grants you license to make as many copies of this guide or the handout pages as you need for your organization. However, copying the videos is illegal.

Bibliography for MILLENNIUM

The bibliography includes works that relate to leadership and working in the 21st century. It is not a definitive list, but rather is intended to assist individuals or teams of workers who are interested in expanding their understanding and knowledge about leadership, and related leadership topics for the 21st century workplace.

MILLENNIUM—

Leadership Capsules for the 21st Century

Capsule #3—The Leader as Mentor

Part One: Reflecting on Mentoring

Capsule #3 in the MILLENNIUM series is about being a mentor. Concepts covered in the material include the following:

- Mentoring in the 21st century organization.
- Analyzing the role of the mentor.
- Uncovering and working with some of the activities of being a mentor.
- Working on skills that are a part of the mentoring process.
- Realizing the relationship between leadership and mentoring.

Reflecting on Personal Ideas

How often have you set out to do something, and wondered, “Am I doing this correctly?”. Wouldn’t it be wonderful to have someone who had done something similar to what you are doing to ask questions of, to share ideas with, or help lessen the frustration and worry associated with getting the job done? That someone could be a mentor. Each of us has the capacity to mentor. We all have wisdom to share, and a gift of experience tied to understanding to give someone else.

Mentoring is about helping. It is different than coaching. In the act of mentoring, the mentor is almost like an overseer—listening, reflecting with the mentee, asking pertinent questions, dialoguing about and searching for the answers. Many of us have had mentors, and perhaps didn’t even realize that they were serving that function for us. Often there comes a time in parenting when a mother or father moves from the coaching position to one of being a mentor. At times, even teachers can assume the role of a mentor. However, most frequently mentoring occurs at work, and between two people—one usually being in a junior position.

The exercises below are intended to help you build your skills, and the skills of your mentee. Most relate to thinking about and working with the mentoring process, and the process of breaking down barriers. The former can give us more flexibility in helping both our mentee and ourselves grow in new directions, and the latter helps in removing the obstacles that often impede our success.

The Mentor Survey

Handout 1

As a mentor, your mentee will be looking to you for ideas. You are a model to them. In today's fast-paced, technological society, organizations are struggling to find ways to interact with the future. You are your mentee's link to the future. The following series of questions has been designed to help you reflect on your thinking on a number of different concepts. All of these concepts are issues that can provide a foundation for thinking in a new way—to generate a twenty-first century mind.

1. What skills will you personally need to develop to be able to succeed in the future?
2. In what kinds of situations have you found yourself most comfortable with the status quo? Why would you avoid change in these situations?
3. What strategies do you use to avoid allowing stress to make you sick? Do they work?
4. In what ways are you currently opening your perspectives, and challenging your beliefs or assumptions?
5. What are some of the reasons that work teams or working in a group generally produce more innovative and effective solutions to problems?
6. What are the barriers, within your personality, that limit your ability to think about the future?

What Skills Do You Bring to the Mentor Process?

Handout 2

Answering the questions above is good preparation for this next exercise. Below is a list of skills that are valuable to the mentoring process. Write down the strengths that you possess in each skill area. Obviously, you will be stronger in some areas, and weaker in others. After having concluded with this initial portion of the exercise, select two of the skill areas where you want to increase your capacity for mentoring. Write out a plan of action on how you will work on building your skills in these areas.

Mentoring Skill Areas

Strengths in this Skill Area

Listener

Guide

Ally

Advocate

Catalyst

Truth teller

Interpreter (of the
organizational culture)

Communicator

Diplomat

Model

Skill Area One

Skill

Plan of Action

Skill Area Two

Skill

Plan of Action

Rethinking Our Thinking

Handout 3

When a mentor spends time with a mentee it usually doesn't take too long before a dilemma is introduced into the conversation. In this case, the mentor's role is to be a listener, helping the mentee frame the problem, helping them step outside their own shoes to look at the problem through different eyes. Einstein warned us that problems cannot be solved with the same mindset that generated them. What is required is a new perspective, even multiple perspectives, to assess not only the situation at hand, but to question the thinking process underpinning the issues that, in turn, drive our problems.

Below are a series of questions that relate to how you can help your mentee think about his/her thinking? Write out ideas you may have that relate to each question. Add additional questions to the list provided.

- How can you get to know the ways your mentee thinks?
- How can you help expand the ways in which they think?
- How can you help them define problems and move towards possible solutions?
- How can you help them believe in their own thinking?
- How can you offer them encouragement in the problem solving process?

Rules to Break

Handout 4

At times mentoring is helping people think about difficult situations. When we contemplate problems or difficult situations, we visualize familiar patterns which then form our frames of reference and understanding. However, all too often our over reliance on these patterns forms the core of our thinking, rather than remain just one among many strategies for thinking. Self-imposed boundaries keep us from envisioning creative alternatives.

Following are just a few of the locks that keep us from experimenting with solutions outside of our customary patterns of thinking. Read through them and write down how you can unlock each of the locks. As you do each one, think about a person you will be mentoring. How can you share this exercise with them? Create your own personal list of mental locks.

Mental Locks

- Only being right is acceptable
- Logical thinking is the master of all problem solving
- Rules exist to be followed
- Practicality is rational
- Play is for children
- Only specialists have insight into their areas
- Clarity is perceiving the situation correctly
- Competence is seriousness
- Erring is wrong
- Creativity resides deep in the minds of a select few

Part Two: Watching the Capsule

Watch the video in its entirety. The questions below have been provided to help you center a discussion around the concepts it presents. When necessary restructure and add to the questions in order for the discussion to best suit your own organization.

1. Who is a mentor?

A mentor is a person who takes an interest in another person's well being—learning and career—and helps them think about their experiences, their hopes or what's ahead of them in their future.

Mentors are people who are somewhere where the mentee is not, but possess the knowledge and experience that can help the mentee get to where they want to go. A mentor is an experienced individual who leaves behind a legacy in an organization for other employees and leaders.

2. What is the role of the mentor?

The mentor acts as a guide, a sponsor, an ally, an advocate, a coach, a teacher, a role model, a confidant, a friend, and a catalyst to the mentee.

3. What does a mentor do?

A good mentor helps understand and interpret the culture in which the mentee works, the rules of the game, what will get a person in trouble, and pave the way for things that will help the mentee get ahead. The mentor is also there to support the mentee and to help them work through problems or opportunities.

4. What are some of the activities a mentor and mentee might undertake?

People tell stories, share experiences from mentor to mentee. The mentee may relate stories or dilemma's they experience currently. It is important that a mentor talk about everyday meetings, decisions made, relate how decisions are made, share insights into the politics of getting something done. These types of exchanges are vital for the mentee because they aren't usually taught in any other way. The mentor and mentee might meet over lunch or after work—whenever is mutually convenient.

Mentor's can also share ideas about good sources for increasing the mentee's skills. These can be books, films, workshops, articles, or seminars.

5. What is the relationship between the mentor and mentee?

There must be complete trust between mentor and the mentee or disclosure won't result in sharing and collaboration between the two. A good mentor creates an environment encouraging the mentee to discuss his/her concerns, and encourages disclosure with honest dialogue directed towards mutual growth of both mentor and mentee.

6. What are the skills and personal qualities of a good mentor?

There are a number of qualities that a mentor needs to possess. They need to:

- Listen with their heart, as well as with their ears.
- Make clear their intention to serve the mentee.
- Self disclose from their own experience and perspective.
- Act as a coach, a diagnostician and as a communicator.
- Value diversity.
- Act respectfully.
- Act with a sense of humor.
- Tell the truth.

7. What conditions are needed to support effective mentoring?

There should be no fear of the mentor or mentee encroaching on each other's territory. The contract between the mentor and the mentee is critical. It needs to be without competitiveness, and open to success. The mentee's manager should be in support of the relationship. The organization should foster a culture where mentoring is a normal part of how people relate to each other.

8. How do you initiate a mentoring relationship?

The relationship can be initiated by either the mentor or the mentee. Sometimes an objective third party can help in arranging for the relationship. To initiate the mentorship is to start the conversation, talk about what it means.

Mentoring relationships do not last forever. They are often very intense for 3–5 years. Both people need to be conscious of when the relationship is no longer useful.

9. What is the relationship between leadership and mentoring?

Mentoring is a way for leaders to leave their legacy. Mentoring is an important aspect of leadership and an excellent way to build the capacity of the individual and that of the organization. It's an investment in people.

10. What does a mentor get out of a mentoring relationship?

Mentors and mentees get the same thing out of the relationship—learning. A mentor can learn from a mentee. This allows for the mentor to become more aware and a better leader. Mentors also get the satisfaction of helping another person succeed.

Part Three: Working with the Material

The activities that follow are intended to help improve your mentoring capabilities. They can be done individually or used with a team of individuals who are exploring questions that relate to the mentoring process.

The Men of Hindustan

Handout 6

A child's poem tells the story of six blind men from Hindustan. They had heard that a king from a far off kingdom was coming to visit their village. He would be riding on an elephant. "An elephant, what is an elephant?," asked one of the men. "I wonder what an elephant is like?," said another. No one knew what an elephant was like.

"When the king comes we will see," said another. And so they did. As the king entered the village, each man left his hut and what he was doing and ventured over to touch the elephant as the king rode by. The first held the trunk of the elephant. The second, the tusk. The third, an ear. The fourth, wrapped his arms around the leg. The fifth, felt the main body of the animal, and the sixth, grabbed hold of the tail.

After the king had left, the men came together. They all were bubbling over with having seen the elephant. "O' an elephant is the most unusual animal," said the first man. "He is soft and smooth, long, and very slow." "No, you are wrong," said the second who had felt the tusk of the animal. "An elephant is not a big animal. He is short, and not soft at all, but very hard." "You are both wrong" said the third. "An elephant is like a leaf, but much bigger, he is flat and very thin." The fourth man who had felt the elephant's leg, said, "I don't understand you three, an elephant is like a tree. Tall and straight."

The fifth man who had touched the elephant's body, proclaimed that an elephant was like a wall, and the sixth said the animal was like a rope. They argued among themselves. Each trying desperately to convince the other of what he had seen.

Fortunately along came a passerby who listened in on the conversation. "Let me help," she said. "You are all right." "How can that be?" asked the men. "An elephant is made up of all the parts you each touched," replied the woman.

Questions for Reflection

1. How is the passerby a mentor?
2. In what way would a skillful mentor have helped solve the problem that the men were having in a different way?
3. What was the immediate result of the woman helping the men? What is the long term result?
4. What is the moral learned from this story?

Changing How We Act and Think

Handout 7

In Samuel Beckett's play, *Waiting for Godot*, the three principal characters exchange the dialogue below:

Estragon: Perhaps he could dance first and think afterwards, if that isn't too much to ask him.

Vladimir: Would that be possible?

Pozzo: By all means, nothing simpler. It's the natural order.

Beckett was reacting to our society, and how frequently we act before we think. The questions below are designed to help you think about the mentoring process as being something different than Pozzo's prediction about how human beings act.

Questions for Reflection

1. How does mentoring help the mentee become more reflective about his/her thinking?
2. What is the intended end result of mentoring?
3. How does mentoring challenge the old notion of doing what you are told?
4. How can mentoring be both a creative and a reflective process?
5. How do both mentor and mentee benefit from the process?

Learning from the Mentee

Handout 8

Up till now we have been mostly talking about the benefits of the mentoring process as it relates to the mentee. However, there is another important side to consider in this equation and that is how the process is also a benefit to the mentor. The quote below was taken from Margaret Mead. During the last years of her life, Mead spent a good amount of her time and energy talking about how young people and older people should come together. The younger bringing a new vision, and the older person bringing experience and maturity to a given situation.

Today, nowhere in the world are there elders who know what the children know, no matter how remote and simple the societies are in which the children live. . . . It is not only that parents are no longer guides, but that there are no guides, whether one seeks them in one's own country or abroad. There are no elders who know what those who have been reared with the last twenty years know about the world into which they were born.

Take a few moments and think through what you as a mentor would gain in the mentoring process?

- How would your skills be enhanced?
- How would your thinking be broadened?
- How would your perspectives be expanded to see things differently?
- How would your sense of responsibility be widened?
- Other?

Psychological Human Needs

Handout 9

Ultimately the mentoring process is an exchange between two people that helps each person enhance and develop a number of characteristics that are a part of our human needs. The list below names a number of those needs. Some are more important than others, but nonetheless, each has a relationship to the mentoring process. Use this list to talk about the mentoring process with your mentee. It is a good way to get to know your mentee in a different way. By sharing this list together, it gives you an opportunity to share your thoughts and ideas on each of the characteristics, as well as to speak directly to those characteristics that are important to you.

Achievement

Challenge

Creativity

Friendship

Imagination

Independence

Learning

Participation

Recognition

Respect

Security

Self-Expression

Self-Fulfillment

Self-Respect

Sense of Meaning

Questions for Watching the Capsule Handout 5

1. Who is a mentor?
2. What is the role of the mentor?
3. What does a mentor do?
4. What are some of the activities a mentor and mentee might undertake?
5. What is the relationship between the mentor and mentee?
6. What are the skills and personal qualities of a good mentor?
7. What conditions are needed to support effective mentoring?
8. How do you initiate a mentoring relationship?
9. What is the relationship between leadership and mentoring?
10. What does a mentor get out of a mentoring relationship?

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