

Influence:  
Living and Sharing  
a Life of Wisdom

# Influence: Living and Sharing a Life of Wisdom

What common trait of mentors is most critical?  
"Believing in" the person being mentored.

**It is hard to mentor people you don't "believe in" at their core.**

Those teachers, camp counselors and older friends who were mentors at one time or another all had the same basic characteristic: they believed someone could become all they wanted to be. This was the critical factor in their effectiveness.

To paraphrase: "They encouraged." Just think about it, the influencers were encouragers. That means it was not critics, not complainers, not rule-following brutally-honest truth tellers but encouragers that made an impact. This is not to say that a mentor doesn't critique or tell hard truths, but it does mean that hard truth is best received when shared by someone who believes in you.

Encouragement, believing in someone, helping them see the work God is doing and will do in their lives are powerful tools for influencing others.

Consider this anecdote that illustrates the principle:

*Recently at a youth camp for potential leaders, students were studying the book of Judges. Since several judges are mentioned in Hebrews 11, the staff decided to create their own Hall of Fame of the Faithful. The exhibit started with biblical characters and progressed slowly through to modern saints who are leaving their mark on the kingdom.*

*At the end of the exhibit the teams of students met to be escorted into another room. There, one by one, counselors (who knew the students' lives and testimonies) took each student aside and told them there was one more saint they wanted to tell them about. The counselors then began to describe the student as a saint, weaving in that student's story and testimony as they went. In every case, after only a few moments, the student realized who the counselor was describing.*

*The results were amazing. The students began to weep. For most of them no one had ever encouraged them in that way.*

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One of the counselors tried this on her 17-year-old granddaughter. Here's what she told her:

*I want to tell you about a young lady who really impressed me. She had her whole summer before her. But instead of boyfriends, shopping malls, laying out at the pool, and going to the movies, she chose to spend a month in India ministering to children at risk of human trafficking. She raised her own support and will endure a nightmarishly grueling plane ride in order to have the opportunity to face 100+o heat, 100% humidity, mosquitoes, spiders, all sorts of bugs . . . and eat food she won't like just for the chance to love and minister to kids who don't speak her language, don't smell clean, are not well educated, and have nothing to give her in return.*

As she shared this, her granddaughter sat up and slowly turned to look at her, realizing the “illustration” was about her. The moment she hugged her granddaughter and told her it was not just an illustration but also true was powerful for both of them, but more so for her granddaughter. If only a photo could have captured that realization that her grandmother “believed in” her.

Encouragement is a powerful tool in mentoring, perhaps the most powerful.

The principle is illustrated well in the New Testament by the Apostle Paul's last letter, written at the very end of his life to his beloved son in the Lord, Timothy. In this letter you can see that Paul and Timothy had a very close, personal relationship, that Paul “believed in” Timothy.

This letter stimulates an application question: “At the end of your life, what would you say to someone you had disciplined?”

## Directions

### OBSERVE

Read 2 Timothy 1:2-7 and 14, and draw a blue circle around each reference to **Paul** and a red box around each reference to **Timothy**.

## 2 Timothy 1:2-7, 14

- 2 To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.
- 3 I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day,
- 4 longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy.

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- 5 For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.
- 6 For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
- 7 For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.
- 14 Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.
- 

List what you learn about Paul and what you learn about Timothy.

PAUL

TIMOTHY

Looking at your list, note the things that would have encouraged Timothy.

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List below up to five people you count as a mentor, people who have influenced your life. Next to each name list specific ways they encouraged you by showing they “believed in” you.

MENTOR

ENCOURAGEMENT

1

2

3

4

5

## HOW CAN YOU FOLLOW THESE EXAMPLES?

How can you encourage people connected to your life that you believe in them?

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Even if you don't consider yourself a mentor or an influencer, you have people you connect with at some level. How can you encourage them?

Ask God to show you five people you know and believe you can influence. List their names below. Next to each name write down five *positive* things about that person.

Ask God to give you opportunities to engage that person and show them that you believe in them.

NAME	POSITIVE COMMENTS
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

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Now, find ways to encourage the positive things you see in their lives! Remember, when we engage others, we are talking to and interacting with someone God loves very much, who Christ died for.

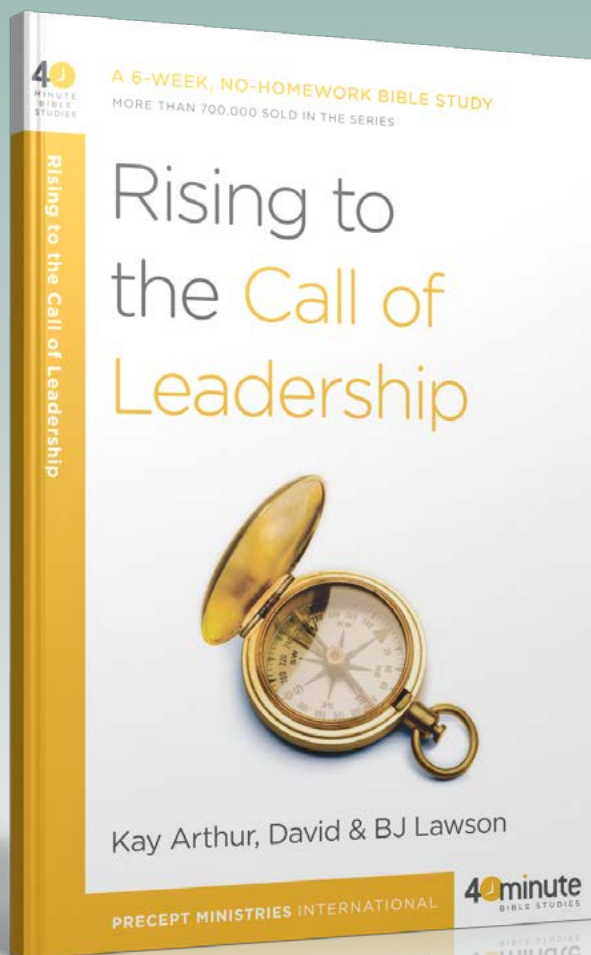
Jesus reserved His sharpest criticism for the religious who were unloving. Be careful to encourage and show love. Show those who God brings across your path that you believe in them.

*“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:23–25).*

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