

What is a Mentor?

Marriage mentoring involves the pairing of a new or younger married couple with an older, more experienced married couple for the purpose of modeling, encouraging, and helping the younger couple grow in marital intimacy.

- Mentors create a safe, warm, and grace-filled relationship with their mentorees with the goal of growth and maturity.
- Mentors model healthy (not perfect) marriages, including the marital and relational skills that make such marriages possible.
- Mentors model practical roles, behaviors, and attitudes of being a “husband” and “wife.”
- Mentors model a commitment to Christ-likeness as the ultimate expression of love and the royal road to successful marriage.
- Mentors challenge and motivate mentorees to move to greater levels of intimacy.
- Mentors listen deeply. Their best work is done with their ears, not their tongues.
- Mentors share themselves—victories and struggles, seasons of love and estrangement, strengths and weaknesses. Confession and transparency are the mentor’s stock-in-trade.
- Mentors “normalize” the relational struggles and anxieties of their mentorees as they share their own stories.
- Mentors help mentorees set and keep goals.
- Mentors guide mentorees to helpful resources as needed.
- Mentors provide periodic opportunities for review, evaluation, and accountability of the mentorees’ marriage.

What Mentors are *Not*

- Paragons of marital virtue and bliss (mentors are not only flawed, they are eager to be honest about their flaws)
- Fonts of all wisdom and knowledge (mentors have successful marriages not because they “know it all,” but because they’ve learned the value of perseverance and constant learning)
- A substitute mother or father (mentors are keenly interested in others but not responsible for them; their commitment is to encourage, not to adopt)
- “On call” for every little crisis (mentors have lives of their own; their time is valuable)
- Marriage counselors (mentors model; they don’t fix, direct, or—as much as possible—give advice)

MARRIAGE MENTORING SELF-TEST

For each statement below, indicate the response that best identifies your beliefs and attitudes. Keep in mind that the "right" answer is the one that best expresses your thoughts at this time. Use the following code:

- 5 = I strongly agree**
- 4 = agree**
- 3 = I am undecided**
- 2 = I disagree**
- 1 = I strongly disagree**

- ___ 1. Giving advice has little to do with good mentoring.
- ___ 2. I can accept and respect people who disagree with me.
- ___ 3. I can make a mistake and admit it.
- ___ 4. I look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.
- ___ 5. I tend to trust my intuition even when I'm unsure of the outcome.
- ___ 6. I don't need to see immediate and concrete results in order to know progress is occurring.
- ___ 7. Who you are in mentoring is more important than what you do.
- ___ 8. My presence frees others from the threat of external evaluation.
- ___ 9. In a tense emotional situation I tend to remain calm.
- ___ 10. I know my limits when it comes to helping others.
- ___ Total Score

Total your responses to determine the degree to which you have the qualities necessary to be an effective mentor:

- 40-50 You are well on your way to being an effective mentor; take special care to maintain the qualities you have.
- 30-39 You have what it takes to be effective, but you will need to groom some traits that are important for mentoring.
- below 30 Seek out another's advice and counsel to assess your strengths more accurately.

Expectations for Marriage Mentors at Otter Creek

- Make a commitment to a mentoree couple (we'll pair you with a willing match) for a period of not less than six months.
- Conduct yourself with Christ-likeness and the highest standards in all your interactions with your mentorees.
- Commit 1-2 hours a week to your younger couple (this can take a variety of forms: meeting for coffee, time in your home, phone conversations, social outings, reading and preparation for interactions, time in prayer for or with your mentorees, etc.)
- Pray for your mentorees on a regular (preferably daily) basis.
- Set up an initial interaction (preferably in your home) that will permit sufficient time and privacy to get to know each other (specifically, hearing the story of their marriage and sharing your own)
- Get together individually (husband with husband, wife with wife) to explore personal areas for growth and goals for the marriage
- Work out a schedule for interaction over the six month period (e.g., one evening together a month; one coffee a month with husband and husband, wife and wife)
- Celebrate the end of the six month commitment by setting up a situation where you can congratulate the growth you've witnessed, encourage some "next steps," and convey a vision of your mentorees' relationship in the future.
- Report to [Ministry Leader] (via e-mail or phone call) on the progress of your mentoring relationship at least twice during the six month commitment