Chapter 5: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF MENTORSHIP LITERATURE

In the previous chapter I reflected on various aspects of the study. In the reflection on traditions of interpretation I decided that it was necessary to consult literature on the main topic of this research, partly because is it central and important to this research and partly because it is the main theme from the stories. Due to the fact that the world of coaching is interlinked with the world of mentorship, we will also look at literature about coaching.

In many theses, literature studies precede the research process. In our positioning literature follows the stories listened to and described. The reason for this is that within our approach the moment of praxis is the starting point. The narrative of the research process leads us to the literature or text. In practical theological terms, the context leads us to the text and back to the context.

The literature about mentorship and coaching and all its facets is enormously comprehensive. The contexts differ immensely from the context of the programme and to my knowledge there is very little literature available that relates to this particular context of this research.

Therefore this chapter will narrow the literature used to the literature that is somehow related to the programme. There are various books and sources that were mentioned by someone in the programme or brought to the programme by a mentor. There is the literature that I use in the programme for training. There is literature used in other church mentoring programmes that is known and can at least relate to the context of the church. There is also literature on coaching suggested by the scholars from the interdisciplinary conversation.

The aim of this chapter is to give a brief overview of some of the literature available to us on mentorship and coaching. This forms part of describing the context of mentorship and the various traditions of interpretation that exist, without claiming that this is all of it. The literature is a voice or narrative that helps to thicken the description that is made in this study.

All the voices will be weaved together in the final chapter.

1.   *Mentoring and coaching: tools and techniques for implementation* - Meyer and Fourie

Meyer and Fourie (2006:1) start their book by explaining that the concept of mentoring comes from the Greek mythology:

> In Homer's Odyssey, Mentor was the teacher of Telemachus, the son of Odysseus. Mentor was not the average teacher…Mentor was more that a wise teacher – he was half god and half man, believable and yet unreachable. Mentor was the union of both goal and path: wisdom personified.

This introduction helps us to understand that there is a balance between goal (which is emphasised in some of the business contexts of mentorship) and path (which is emphasised in the programme of this study).

They explain further that mentorship is not only about information but also about formation. A mentor according to Meyer and Fourie is someone that has the skill to form someone and guide them for when the mentor is gone.

They make a distinction in their book between mentoring and coaching which might be useful to us. From the reflection and interpretation thus far there are many views of mentorship Even from the context of the business world. Meyer

and Fourie write from the context of a work environment and define mentorship as follows:

> Mentoring can be described as a dynamic and reciprocal relationship in a work environment whereby a more advanced and wise career incumbent (mentor) helps a less experienced person who had developed potential (mentee – who is no this direct subordinate) develop in some specified capacity (Meyer & Fourie 2006:2).

In this definition we hear some things that resonate with our reflection thus far:

- It is a dynamic relationship (where a lot of emphasis is placed on the relationship that is reciprocal).
- There is a context defined.
- There is the idea that an expert helps someone who is less experienced.
- There is development or growth.

It is clear from their discussion on the definition that mentoring is about a lot more than just advice.

They define coaching as follows:

> Coaching is the systemically planned and direct guidance of an individual or group of individuals by a coach to learn and develop specific skills that are applied and implemented in the workplace, and therefore translates directly to clearly defined performance outcomes that are achieved over a short period of time (Meyer & Fourie 2006:5).

This definition seems to resonate a lot more with the language used during the interdisciplinary discussion we had. Coaching is very specific and for a certain period of time. There are very clear aims and structures that can be measured.

The approach of Meyer and Fourie's book is set within the world of mentoring and coaching in the business world. There are certain aspects to their approach that help to take certain important aspects of mentoring and coaching into account within this context.

Further notes on their approach that are significant for our study:

- They differentiate between coaching and mentoring (p 9).
- They do not understand a mentor to be a "wise old man" but that in the research conducted in the business world, younger people become mentors (p 9).
- In the implementation of a mentoring or coaching programme they place a big emphasis on measurable outcomes (p 170).
- They say that the most important aspect of the process is explaining the crucial understanding of the value of relationships (p 39).
- They say that there will always be various roles mentors and coaches play. These roles are for instance: father, mother, adviser, inspirer, developer, role model, networker, listener, et cetera. These roles seem to overlap and function at the same time (p 41–51).
- In the same way a mentee also plays certain roles like learner, reflector, researcher, et cetera (p 53–60).
- In terms of the mentors/coaches they list certain knowledge, skills and values that a mentor or coach must have or show potential in to become a mentor or a coach (p 84).

In the planning of a mentoring programme they list various obstacles that can be problematic. Lack of commitment is one of them (p 164). The lack of training, measurement and good communication are others. From their approach it is clear that a programme needs to be well-structured and planned in order to work within this context. When one reads through the book you do however see an

inclination towards the view that there are different types of mentorship and different types of programmes. These play into the design of such a programme in that context.

They do however place a great emphasis on the identification and training of mentors (p 173). In this context they encourage managers or existing leaders in the company to be selected and trained as mentors. They want the process of matching to be as natural as possible. Where there are existing relationships this should be used and mentees have the freedom to choose from the pool of mentors that are available. The relationship is the guiding factor in this process.
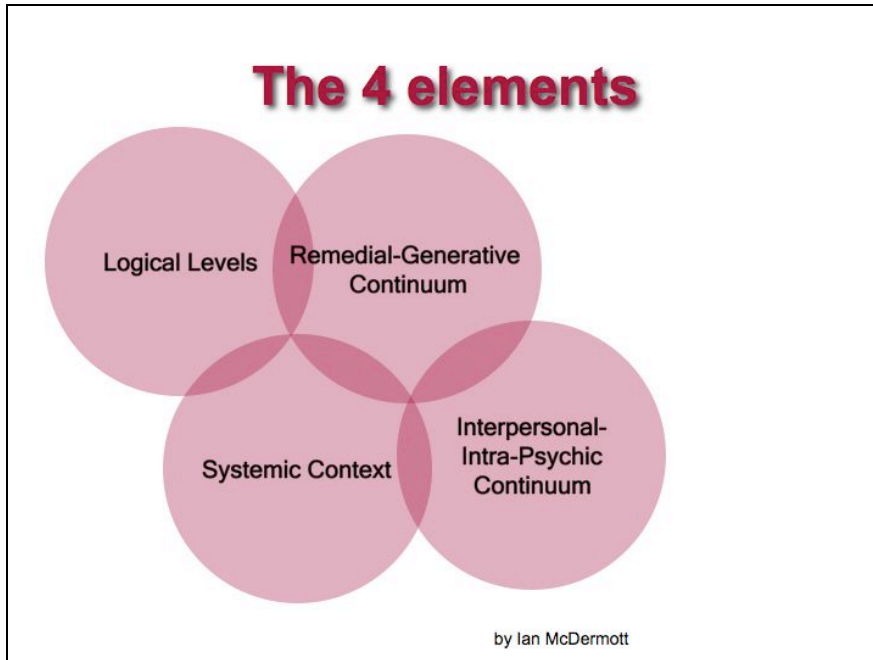
The book gives further suggested ideas towards training and guidelines for mentorship and coaching.

2.   *The coaching Bible* – McDermott and Jago

This book is used in the programme as a guideline or a tool to use during conversations. The mentors in the programme that listen to the principles of McDermott and Jago's approach, are always positive about it. It gives them a starting point or an instrument to handle mentorship.
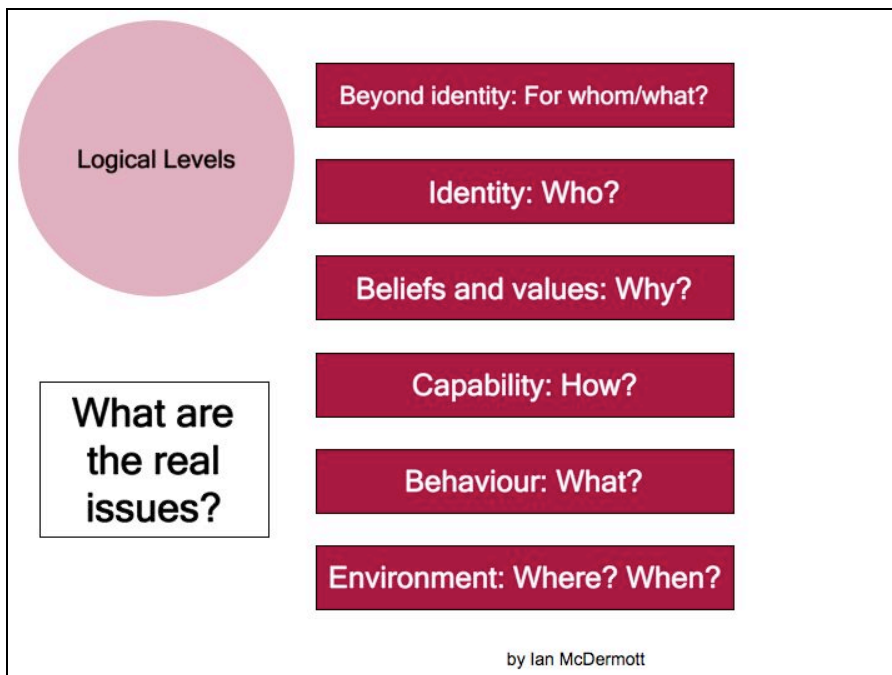
This book also gives definitions and discussions on mentoring and coaching. It is also set in the business environment and focuses on creating skills for coaches. For our purposes here we will look at the approach or model that is proposed in the book with regards to coaching. This model is called Multimodel coaching.

Multimodel coaching works with four elements that aim to help the coach to understand and identify what the focus of the coaching should be (McDermott & Jago 2005: 29)**.**

The 4 elements

Logical Levels — Remedial-Generative Continuum — Systemic Context — Interpersonal-Intra-Psychic Continuum

by Ian McDermott

These four elements are explained as follows:

Logical levels

Logical Levels

Beyond identity: For whom/what?

Identity: Who?

Beliefs and values: Why?

Capability: How?

Behaviour: What?

Environment: Where? When?

What are the real issues?

by Ian McDermott

While listening to the person that is being coached it is important to ask on which level the focus of the coaching should be. Is what we are talking about on the level of behaviour? For instance, if a person fails to behave in a certain way at work this needs to be rectified by the coach. The intervention can be on the level of behaviour only, unless the coach finds out that the person does not believe in the values of the company or something else is causing him/her to fail in terms of his or her behaviour. Then the intervention needs to be on a different level.

Remedial-generative continuum
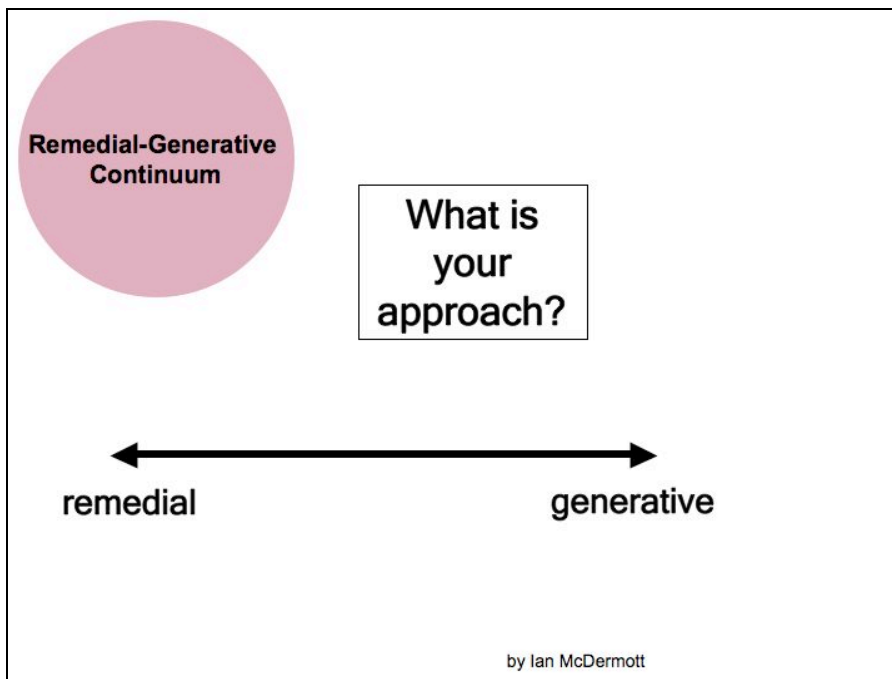
Within this model the approach you take towards the coaching can vary between remedial (to remedy the situation) and generative (to generate new possibilities). This is seen as a continuum on which the coach must decide which approach he/she is taking. In certain situations a coach can just work towards the remedial side, in another towards generating new possibilities and sometimes both.

Systemic context

Systemic Context

Do I see patterns or just events and forces?

$1 + 1 = >1$

by Ian McDermott
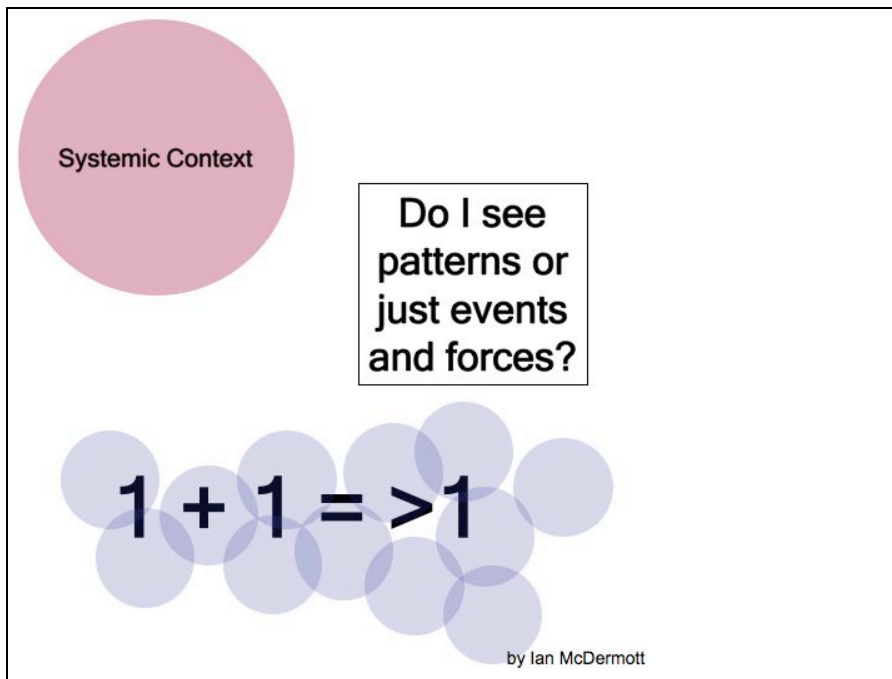
The third element that is used in this model is to reflect on the systemic context. This context usually includes relationships but also the culture of the company or context that the coaching is taking place in. What is the systemic context? How does it influence the person being coached and what are the effects of this particular systemic context within this situation. Do any patterns emerge in the coaching process that help with focussing the coaching process?

Interpersonal-intra-psychic continuum

Is the issue within the client or between him and others?

Interpersonal ⟷ Intra-Psychic

by Ian McDermott
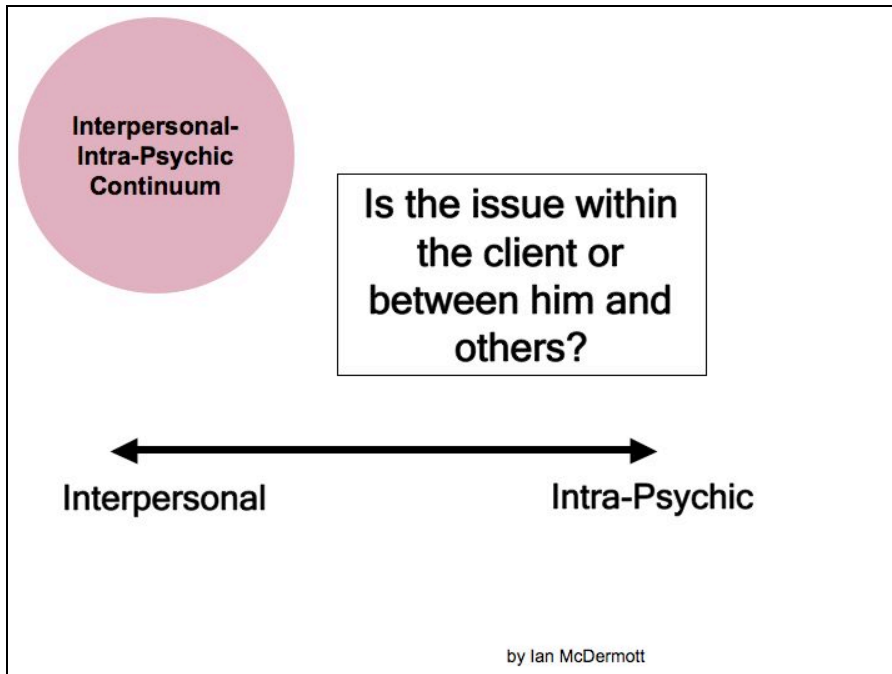
In this final element of the model the question is raised whether the focus of the coaching should be on the client (person being coached) him/herself or should the focus be on the relationships s/he has with others, or both. This should help the coach to know how to approach the coaching process and focus the aims of the conversations.

Notes on this approach

Again the context of this approach is very important to take into account as well as the fact that they are working with coaching per se. This book is focussed on helping with the training of coaches and mentors and is therefore focussed a lot on content.

From this book the following is clear:

- Coaching is a very specific approach that has a specific aim and outcome.
- There is an inclination in this approach not to have a logical few steps to follow when someone is coached, but rather to place an emphasis on the complexity of coaching. There are no "boxes" you can put people in. Various elements work together and a coach needs to develop skills to understand these various elements.
- Coaching is focussed.

3.   John Maxwell

John Maxwell is known for his popular works on leadership from a church and Christian perspective. Some of these works include mentorship as a part of the process of developing leaders. His context is American and his books are sold in Christian and non-Christian outlets in South Africa.

There are two books here that touch on the subject of mentoring that will be briefly discussed.

In his book, *Developing the leaders around you* (1995), he speaks about coaching a team of leaders. In this section there are certain aspects of coaching that come to our attention (p 151–179):

- Coaching in the context of a team of leaders is the focus in this section of his book.
- Coaches must develop the right people to become leaders.
- A coach knows people well.
- A coach must be good with problem-solving.
- A coach aims for success and winning.
- The leaders must respect the coach.
- A coach must have certain skills.

In his book, *Becoming a person of influence* (1997), he speaks specifically about mentorship in chapter 6–9 (p 121–197)

Each chapter uses a different focus or metaphor for mentorship:

1. An enlarger of people
2. A navigator
3. Someone who connects with people
4. Someone who empowers people

Maxwell starts off his discussion on mentorship by describing it as an investment in the future of others (Maxwell 1997:124). He uses the metaphor of enlarging people within the context of the book's title: *A person of influence*. A person of influence is someone who enlarges those around you. You look for people who show potential and who you can influence and then you ask them if you can become their mentor. If they allow you to be their mentor you take them through the enlarging process by focussing on certain aspects and experiences as described by Maxwell. In this sense you are busy creating other enlargers who then influence other people again. This approach is the opposite from what we have been discussing. It is also not in the context of a formal programme.

The second metaphor he uses is that of a navigator. A mentor is a person of influence who becomes their enlarger. Then he/she helps the mentee to navigate in his/her life. This process is based on the idea that the mentor helps the mentees to discover where they need to go and help them plot the course to help them get to that point. Along this course you need to keep on re-evaluating where you are and where you are going. A good mentor helps with this process.

The third metaphor he uses is explained as follows:

> Connection is a very important part of the process of mentoring others…
> When you navigate for others, you come alongside them and travel their

road for a while, helping then handle some of the obstacles and difficulties in their lives. But when you connect with them, you are asking them to come alongside you and travel your road for your and their mutual benefit (Maxwell 1997:165).

He explains what he means by comparing the mentor to the locomotive who connects with other train cars and once they are connected to the locomotive they start moving. Then Maxwell gives nine steps for connecting with people.

The final metaphor deals with empowering others. A person of influence helps others to grow to their full potential and be successful. In order to achieve this there are a few qualifications of an empowerer that need to be present in order to empower. One Maxwell (1997:185) lists is position. Then Maxwell gives steps in the process of achieving this empowering.

Critical notes on Maxwell

To me Maxwell's work lacks depth and is extremely fundamental in its approach and epistemology. It is also modernistic in the way that it gives outlined steps and easy answers that would lead to a certain end result that seems to be same for all: success.

The metaphors used by Maxwell are useful to an extent. They help us to understand certain important roles a mentor can play. They do however give the impression that the mentor is the powerful one and the "locomotive" without which the mentees will not be able to reach their full potential. This seems presumptuous. Maxwell overplays the mentor's abilities more than in the other approaches that we have seen.

4.   *Mentoring* – Bob Biehl

Biehl has a very specific understanding to mentoring:

> Mentoring is a lifelong relationship, in which a mentor helps a protégé reach her or his God-given potential (Biehl 1996:19).

He says that ideally mentorship is not the same as coaching. It is a lifelong relationship with someone very significant in your life. The person who is your mentor is someone you enjoy, you like and you look up to. It is someone you chose or who chose you and you both decided that you are committed to this relationship. This relationship is foremost an informal relationship that you have formalised by naming it and asking permission to be mentor and protégé. The aim of the mentorship relationship is to help someone reach her or his God given potential. God has created everyone special and with potential. A mentor helps someone to discover this – whether it is something simple or becoming a world leader. It doesn't matter.

Biehl feels that there are certain things mentorship is not and that the term should not be used except for this "pure" understanding of the term. Mentoring is not discipleship. It is something else than discipleship in the Bible he says. It is not a master-apprentice or coaching relationship. It is also not being the big brother of the family. Biehl also feels that mentorship is not the same as modelling (p 35). There are always elements of modelling in which the mentor models certain characteristics or values, but the protégé must not become the mentor but reach his own potential in God.

He says that matching a mentor to a protégé is something that must come naturally and takes time. One cannot force a lifelong relationship but needs it to grow into trust to the point where it is formalised.

He goes on to discuss common questions that arise from mentoring and deals with practicalities.

Notes on Biehl's book

Biehl seems to balance the relationship between mentor and protégé by putting it within the framework of a lifelong relationship that develops naturally. This way the protégé and the mentor are involved in the process and respect each other.

Again the context of his book is from the perspective of mentoring as something important in general Christian living. It is an invitation to anyone to join the programme. He does however say that not all personalities make good mentors due to the fact that some people are too egoistic to focus on someone else.

The positive thing about his approach is the idea that mentor is not in the relationship to force him or herself onto the protégé, but to help the protégé become who they need to be.

The question can be asked if this definition is the only "pure" understanding of mentorship. Anything else must be called something else, because mentorship is life-long. Otherwise it is not truly mentorship.

5.   *Mentoring future leaders* – Learning Link International

This course is currently used in the Dutch Reformed Church to train mentors. These mentors are pastors who volunteer to become mentors for other pastors in the church. Pastors who join the programme can select a mentor for a certain period of time (usually one and a half years) from the pool of mentors that has been trained.

The material was bought from a developer company called Learning Link.

In this course a distinction is also made between mentorship and coaching. They use the following definition for mentoring:

Mentoring is a development process where a successful, experienced person shares knowledge, skills and experience with an inexperienced person. The mentor and protégé work together to identify and achieve the protégé's goals (Learning Link International 2005:4).

Here we also see that the idea of the mentor as the experienced and successful person is strong. When you read through the material there is however a strong move from a hierarchical approach as a mentor to a more participatory approach in which the protégé's input is of equal importance. The course also says that a mentor can be a lifelong relationship or a periodical intervention (p 10).

The course starts by clarifying terms, definitions and expectations. Metaphors are used as examples in how mentorship functions from various roles. Various case studies are used to explain key-concepts.

Coaching is explained in the course as a job-specific relationship in which specific skills are transferred. It is not the same as mentorship, although there are sometime elements of coaching in a mentorship relationship.

The material also says that organisations are moving from traditional to mentoring-based organisations (p 17). In the explanation mentoring are more related to words like empowered, collaborative, innovative, learning, development and quality, as opposed to words like hierarchical, top-down, rigid and resistance to change. Mentorship is understood in this context as something that is not traditional.

This is enhanced by the way the course focuses on moving from telling to listening, planning to consulting, directing to guiding, dictating to participating, et cetera (p 19).

In terms of matching mentors to protégés the course teaches that this is usually a spontaneous event (p 29).

A mentor has various roles and, depending on the circumstances, these roles differ. The emphasis is also on relationships that are built on trust and integrity. Some of the qualities attributed to a mentor are listed as follows (p 6, part 2):

- Trustworthy
- Caring
- High expectations
- Prepared
- Transfer knowledge and skills
- Positive
- Reassure people
- Patience
- Sense of humour
- Committed
- Available
- Set challenges

These are almost like values rather than certain criteria that qualify you to become a mentor. In this programme any person can develop into being a mentor by working on these qualities and growing themselves.

The rest of the course also deals with mentorship aspects like communication skills, mentee's expectations and other practical guidelines to help you become a good mentor.

Notes

This material represents a compilation of a lot of various definitions that we have discussed before. It is not so business-orientated in terms of context but leaves room for different contexts in various organisations that include volunteer organisations and churches. A lot of the material is still based on the input from the business world and the definitions from that context. The case studies used are also from this context.

This material is "middle of the road" in the way that mentorship is defined. It is not defined in terms of total expert-protégé hierarchical terms, and also not totally informal or equal partnerships. It places an emphasis on naturally developed relationships that are built on certain values. Mentors must also grow in their own qualities to become better mentors.

6. *Coaching to excellence* – UCT Graduate School

The Centre for Coaching's material is extremely professional and developed to train coaches for the business world who are of the highest standard. This material has endless references and is used in a two-day course, training with high impact.

The material starts with understanding the human being (Centre for Coaching 2004:4). This forms the basis of the coaching process; being aware of yourself and the people you coach. The way you see a human, impacts on your way of learning, your identity and the way you interact with others.

The course takes the participants through the process of understanding coaching and the whole process that takes place in a coaching relationship.

Coaching is defined as follows:

> Coaching is more than being an accountability partner that supports someone in reaching their goals or a disciplinarian who changes

someone's unwanted actions. Coaching is a skilful methodology for developing self and others so the people are more effective and fulfilled. It involves the development of increasing competence in the person being coached. Coaching is about building the client's ability to observe and select appropriate action (Centre for Coaching 2004:7).

In terms of mentoring the course understands the mentor to be the person who has superior knowledge and not the coach. The mentor must fit into the culture of the organisation. Coaches help the person being coached to develop him or herself (Centre for Coaching 2004:9).

The material goes into the detail about how people learn, the way people change, the way coaches need to conduct conversations and the process of developing a person. There is a certain flow in coaching in which the relationship is the foundation.

In this material processes are broken down and explained in diagrams and tables. Various types of coaching conversations are typified and explained.

The skills and qualities of a coach are listed as follows (Centre for Coaching 2004:27-28):

Skills:
- Speaking
- Listening
- Resolving breakdowns
- Assessing
- Designing

Qualities
- Rigor

- Creativity/Flexibility
- Self-consistency
- Patience

The coaching conversation is further explained by understanding the structure of interpretation. A five-element model is proposed in which this is done (Centre for Coaching 2004:40).

The material clearly shows that coaching is a very specific process, for a specific timeframe in which a coaching relationship is used to develop people in very specifics ways.

The context here is very different to our context, but it helps to understand this context in order to interpret the voices of the scholars from the coaching world.

7.   *Tuesdays with Morrie* - Albom

In the first chapter we used this book and its narrative as a metaphor for research. This narrative also serves as a metaphor for mentorship.

This is the true-life story of a young professional man, Mitch, who later in his life met up with his old college professor, Morrie. Morrie had developed the fatal illness ALS. Mitch heard about his illness when Morrie was interviewed on national television by a talk show host. Morrie spoke about his life and how it felt to be dying.

Mitch decided to visit Morrie and see him after many years of no contact. He was warmly received and these visits were repeated. They agreed that Mitch would come and visit every Tuesday.

The book is written in "lessons". The idea developed that Mitch would keep track of their conversations and make use of Morrie's stories and life lessons later on. The result was this book, which became world-famous.

Mitch was discontented with his life. He had all the success that anyone could dream about, but he was unhappy. Morrie was at the end of his life and had never been so happy and influential. The conversations would be Morrie's stories and lessons on life. He would tell these in such a way that in the conversation this wisdom had a life-changing effect on Mitch. These conversations would include topics like love, family, money, marriage and culture.

The relationship we find in this book reminds of mentoring. It was not formal, nor was it structured (except for seeing each other every Tuesday). It was a man called Morrie, who had life experience and wisdom, and had conversations with another man, called Mitch, who was living his mid-life in a successful way. They learned from each other and together they both gained from the relationship.

We also learn about mentorship from this relationship, although it is not written as a handbook on mentorship but on life.

8. Biblical narratives

In the programme there are references to many of the Biblical narratives that serve as metaphors for mentorship relationships. I discuss the main two narratives here: one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament.

8.1 Samuel and Eli

In 1 Samuel 3:1–10, we find the following narrative:

[1] The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

[2] One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. [3] The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. [4] Then the LORD called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." [5] And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called Me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

[6] Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

[7] Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

[8] The LORD called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. [9] So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.' " So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

[10] The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

(Provided by International Bible Society [IBS-STL-Global] © Copyright 1984)

Samuel was a young boy who worked in the temple under Eli to serve the Lord with his life. This was common practise in the culture of the day. The Lord called Samuel in the night. Samuel did not recognise the Lord's voice and thought it was Eli. He went to Eli, but Eli said that he did not call him. After the third time Eli relised that it was the Lord that called him and instructed him how to reply if it

should happen again. When Samuel did this, the Lord gave him a new message that follows in the next few verses.

There are some themes that come from this narrative that correspond to the idea of mentorship:

- In this text one sees the idea that an older man with wisdom instructs and helps a younger man into the practice of priesthood and the ways of the faith.
- The Lord calls Samuel in the night and not Eli, which represents the dawning of a new generation or time in Israel. The Lord calls a young man into service. For Him it is not about age.
- Eli helps Samuel (who has never had the experience of being called by God, especially in a time where God seemed to be silent) to hear God's voice and how to respond. Without the "mentoring" of Eli, Samuel would not have been able to grow to this new level of hearing's God's voice so quickly.

If one listens to the various voices in this chapter, some might argue that this was coaching; some might argue that this was discipleship or even just spiritual guidance. It will depend on the language you use or the way you understand mentorship.

There is one element in this story that we have not read about: the mentor helping the mentee to discern God's voice in their life. This is a beautiful spiritual act. It is not without brokenness and struggle. One could call it a fragile intervention from Eli's side.

8.2   Paul and Timothy

The narrative of Paul and Timothy is well known in the New Testament. Two letters were written by Paul to Timothy to encourage him. The letter started with the following words in 1 Timothy 1:1-2:

> [1]Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,
>
> [2]To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Provided by International Bible Society [IBS-STL-Global] © Copyright 1984)

One of the well-known instructions of Paul was written in 1 Timothy 4:11–16:

> [11]Command and teach these things. [12]Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. [13]Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. [14]Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.
>
> [15]Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. [16]Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

(Provided by International Bible Society [IBS-STL-Global] © Copyright 1984)

Timothy is a young leader in the church. He is leading a congregation in Ephesus. His father was a Greek and his mother and grandmother were Christians. Paul writes to him from Macedonia and later from prison in Rome. The reason for his letters was in the first place his relationship with Timothy and to encourage him in his leadership position. He had to teach and remind him

about certain aspects of organising the congregation as well as certain theological principles that he had to uphold against false doctrine that was accepted in the congregation.

Paul also encouraged him not to let people look down on him because he was young. He wrote to him to keep pure and live out his calling and be true to God.

Again there are some themes that come from this narrative that resonate with the idea of mentorship:

- In this narrative we see a relationship between an older church leader and a younger church leader. The one is more experienced than the other.
- Paul gives advice, specific instruction and also encourages Timothy in various ways.
- Due to the circumstances this is not a conversation but letters. Timothy just receives them.
- Paul does not encourage Timothy to become like Paul, but to stay true to God and follow Him.

This metaphor can also be labelled within different roles depending again on your understanding of mentorship or coaching or spiritual guidance. We learn something about the way Paul encourages Timothy in this narrative to focus on his own calling, gifts and to be true to God.

9.   IN CLOSING

This chapter flows from the interpretations of our stories, the traditions of interpretation and the interdisciplinary voice that was listened to in chapter 4.

In this closing section I want to draw certain lines from the voices in this chapter that can help to summarise this part of the research narrative:

- There are various definitions for mentorship from the different books mentioned.
- Mentorship can be a long-term relationship or a shorter-term relationship.
- There are certain elements of how mentorship is understood that are dominant in most of the literature:
  - The emphasis placed on a mentor being someone who has more life experience or expertise than the mentee.
  - There isn't a prescribed age for a mentor.
  - Mentorship always has a reciprocal aspect to it that is called reverse mentoring by some.
  - Mentorship has to do with growth in various forms
- Mentorship are not the same as coaching (or certain other modalities like therapy or accountability partners).
- Roles overlap in mentorship.
- There is more than one metaphor used to describe mentorship.
- Programmes need to be structured well when formal mentorship is part of the context. In certain contexts (like business) measurability is important.
- Some understandings of mentorship is very set and specific, others are more open and inclusive.
- The context within which the mentorship takes place is intricately linked to the way mentorship is understood and practised.
- Most of the literature discussed in this chapter emphasises a natural approach to matching mentors with mentees, but still they attach significance to who the mentors are. Some programmes let the mentees select from a pre-screened group of mentors.
- The Christian literature adds the dimension of a mentor helping a mentee to reach his/her potential in God and to help them to grow in certain spiritual disciplines and attributes.

- There are various tools and models that can be used to help with understanding and conducting mentoring conversations and processes.
- Mentorship is more than giving advice.
- Having a meaningful and positive effect on the mentee is one of the aims of mentorship.
- The relationship is the basis and foundation of mentorship in most of the literature.

In the next chapter we will aim to make suggestions that point beyond the local by bringing all the voices together from the study.

Chapter 6: DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS THAT POINT BEYOND THE LOCAL

In the previous chapters we have described and listened to the narratives of mentorship from a local congregation. The co-researchers have been given the opportunity to reflect on their stories and make interpretations of their own. Various other voices were brought into the research narrative to help thicken the descriptions that were made and developed as the process unfolded.

Developing the interpretations and alternative understandings is not a process that works in a linear form. When narratives are listened to and described, the process of developing alternative interpretations already takes place. In this chapter I will try and formulate them and write them in a form, which could point beyond this local situation. This will be done in the form of suggestions. The aim of these concluding remarks is not to give the impression that all questions that were formulated during the process are answered. Neither is it claimed that these suggestions or this research process is final.

In the beginning I set out to make good and thick descriptions of the narratives in this moment of praxis. In this process I aimed to come to a greater understanding of mentorship in this context. We want to develop this understanding in this chapter into a meaningful contribution that points beyond this local context.

1. MANY VOICES

During the research process we listened to many voices. These voices can be grouped together as follows:

- The programme of mentorship as listened to by means of Hanlie's narrative.
- The co-researchers.
- The scholars listened to in the interdisciplinary conversation.
- Literature.

The moment of praxis in this study is the mentorship programme in the local congregation of Lynnwood. The primary voices that were listened to were the co-researchers who told the narratives of mentorship from this context. From this voice we expanded the research narrative to include the scholars and the literature.

It is important to understand that the narratives from this praxis is the primary voice.

2. CONCLUDING REMARKS

A lot of the themes that came from the narratives have been discussed in each chapter. It is not necessary to repeat those discussions here. I do however deem it appropriate to make a few concluding remarks on the themes that arose from the study. These remarks are not conclusive per se, nor will all the questions about mentorship be answered. The aim is to describe the greater research narrative after finally listening to all the voices mentioned.

2.1. The understanding of mentorship

It is clear from this study that mentorship is a field that extends over a landscape of various contexts, disciplines and applications. Within this landscape there are various views and interpretations of the various aspects of mentorship. From

this study the following aspects became clear as the most general from all the voices. I discuss each of them in summary.

2.1.1 The basic foundation of mentorship

In listening to all the voices one soon realises that there are many differences. There is certainly not a conclusive idea on mentorship from all the voices. Some might claim their views as ultimate and universal, but they are not accepted as such in all contexts.

Within the positioning of the study I have not set out to find such a universal understanding. The postfoundational approach is not anti-foundational or non-foundational. It only steers away from a fundamental approach where there are no room for context, the local and other voices. Within a social constructionist approach knowledge is constructed between various voices in a particular context.

With this in mind, I take the step of suggesting three things as a basic foundation for mentorship as experienced from this context and informed by all the voices in this particular study. These were the most important aspects of mentorship that all of the voices agreed upon. There are variations on their understanding, but they are prevalent in all the narratives:

- Relationship
- Growth
- Mentors and mentees add to each other's lives

The *relationship* forms the most important building block of mentorship. This relationship is different from other types of relationships. It is not the same kind of relationship as in therapy, coaching, family, social engagements or friendship. Although the relationship overlaps with these relationships, there is a certain

content given to it that makes it a mentorship relationship. In most cases this relationship is formalised and named. The content and ideas about mentorship might differ, but the relationship stays the focal point in all the approaches and views. This relationship can be filled with various characteristics like approachability, trust, openness, integrity, and many others.

The aim or value of mentorship lies in *growth.* This growth is seen in various ways and is described from different contexts. The growth is sometimes the aim and sometimes the by-product of the relationship. In all the narratives we find growth. All the different voices also agreed on growth as being the primary foundation and reason for mentorship.

The last element of mentorship that is agreed upon in this study is the fact that this relationship is reciprocal. Even when the mentor is seen as an expert and the one who transfers knowledge and skills to a mentee, all would agree that both participants in the relationship add value to each other's lives.

2.1.2 The definition of mentorship

In this study we are not so concerned about a final definition for mentorship that can be upheld as universal, as is the case in many of the sources that we had consulted. We have learned that being clear about your understanding of mentorship is extremely important. This narrows the gap between expectations and the way mentorship is conducted.

This definition must be decided upon from each context. The programme we have studied defined mentorship as follows:

> Mentorship in DRC Lynnwood is a year long, semi-structured process in which a mentor provides conversation along the journey of a mentee. The mentor was chosen by the mentee on the grounds of a potential trust relationship wherein reciprocal learning, guiding, the forming of meaning

and the sharing of stories can take place. The mentorship takes place within the different contexts and guidelines of the programme of the congregation (NG Lynnwood Course material 2007) (Translated. Appendix C)

The question remains if there are cases where people call a relationship a mentorship relationship, but according to a particular definition it is not mentorship. Who decides that this is not mentorship and why would it be a problem if the people call it this way?

From a social-constructionist view, the community in which mentorship has been defined will be the community that needs to help people understand mentorship in a particular manner and if necessary help to find new and better language to describe their particular relationship if it can add value to their relationship.

We conclude that defining mentorship and having a clear understanding about it is important. Various voices and disciplines can be used in the process of defining it in the particular context. If done responsibility the other voices should be listened to.

2.1.3 The process of matching a mentor and a mentee

Various processes are available to us regarding this aspect of mentorship. We have heard viewpoints about all the different ways in which this process can take place:

- A completely natural process where a person chooses his/her own mentor.
- A structured process where mentors are chosen and selected by the organisation and assigned to mentees.

- A combination of the above in which mentors are selected and chosen first. The mentees can then choose their own mentor form the pool of available mentors.

It is important however to note that not all people seem to be good mentors. This is not only because the lack of knowledge, skill or values; but also because they lack time and commitment.

Again the local context of the community's understanding of mentorship, together with the aims of the programme should be the guide in determining and designing a good process that fits their context.

2.1.4 The design of a mentorship programme

This aspect of mentorship is one that took up a lot of space in the study. Various voices and approaches are available to us in terms of designing a mentorship programme. A few important questions must guide someone or an organisation starting on this journey:

- How do I understand mentorship?
- What do we hope to achieve through this programme?
- How does this impact on the way the programme is designed?
- What other voices and literature can help in this process?
- Which voices can be listened to during this process?
- What is our context and how does it make this programme unique?

In the third section of the chapter I suggest an approach to mentorship that can assist further in this discussion.

2.1.5 Characteristics and descriptions of a mentorship relationship

It has come to our attention during this study that there are many characteristics and descriptions of a mentorship relationship. Some lists exist in the literature that helps us to understand this. I will refrain from making lists here.

From our context there were only a few that stood out from the narratives that I name here in summary:

- A relationship must have commitment from both sides in order to work. This implies time to be spent together as well as creative ways of communicating.
- It is clear that there will be various roles in mentorship relationships. For this reason the understanding of mentorship must be clear. Expectations about roles or anything arising from different roles in the relationship that can add anxiety to the relationship must be avoided. Ethics plays an important part in discerning facts about relationships and roles.
- Openness, spontaneity, being comfortable and being surprised were all terms used in the descriptions of relationships from our narratives.

2.1.6 Content and approaches to mentorship conversations

From the various voices it is again clear that many approaches to this subject exist. Good content and helpful guidelines and tools for conversations help people to understand mentorship better and feel secure within the relationship. The same principles mentioned in the design of the research also apply here. These guide the content and the way in which mentors are trained.
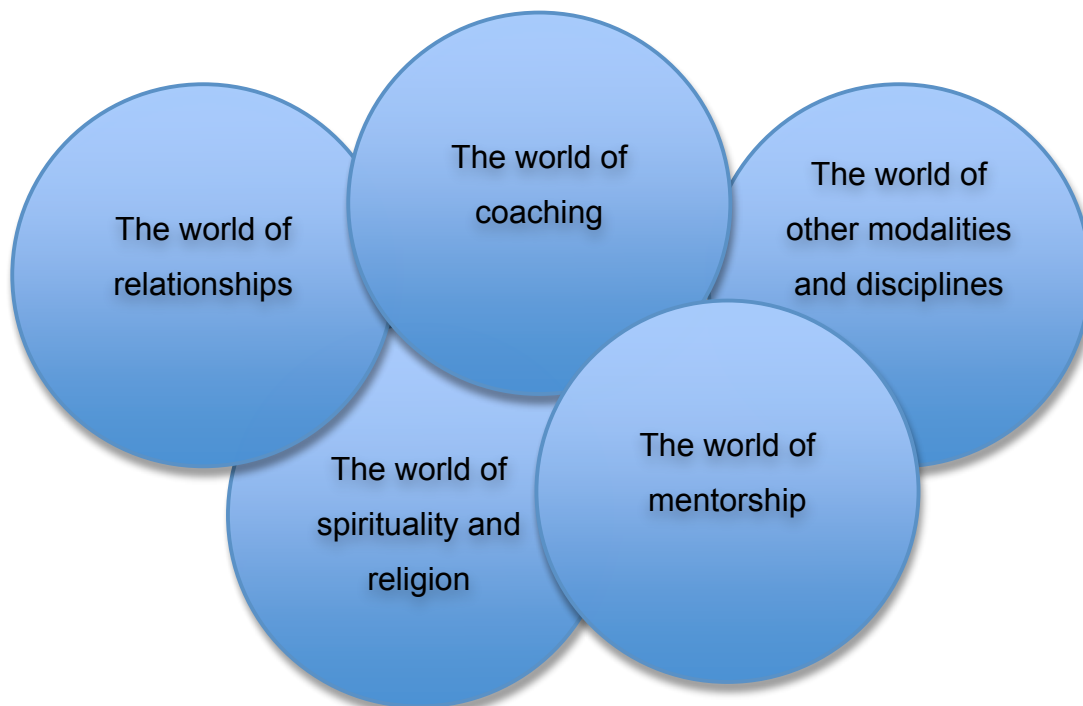
2.2. The importance of language

One aspect of this study that became important during my reflection on the narratives was language. We discussed language in the first chapter and reflected on it through some of the chapters.

I make a few concluding remarks on the importance of language here.

People (including scholars, myself and the authors of literature) use language to describe and explain. As discussed, this language constructs our experiences and the way in which we understand anything in life.

Language originates from certain contexts, especially subject language, like in the case of mentorship. Mentorship language does not come from one discipline but from various disciplines and contexts. People access this language and use it to describe their experiences. In this study language came at least from the following contexts:

The world of relationships

The world of coaching

The world of other modalities and disciplines

The world of spirituality and religion

The world of mentorship

Throughout the study language was used with certain meanings attached to the words. Even when the same words are used in language, it doesn't mean the same meanings are attached to these words. The scholars in the interdisciplinary conversation would use the word ''mentorship'' in a different way than Coenraad and Carina or Hanlie. Any of the co-researchers might learn the word ''mentorship'' from one context and describe their relational experiences with this word. From another perspective, different words might be used to describe the same relationship – words like "spiritual guide", "spiritual friendship", "brother" and "sister", et cetera.

The question remains: Who owns language? Who is allowed to use it to describe an experience? How can language be validated? Should it be checked or validated as being true to the original context and meaning? Is there an original meaning or can the interpretation of language be a dynamic process; free and open?

This reminds me of Wittgenstein's metaphor of a game as referred to by Gergen (1999:34). If language is not a picture, but a game, each word or ''piece'' of language acquires its meaning from the game as a whole. Language is thus contextual and therefore language is ''owned'' by the game in which it is used. The rules of that game ''validate'' the language.

Within a social constructionist view the language of mentorship is defined and used within a particular context (the relationship of the co-researchers, the programme) and the bigger context of mentorship as informed by various traditions of interpretation.

As with defining mentorship, it is vital to discuss and listen to the meaning of language within a particular field or context. There should be a balance in one's use of language. On the one hand one should respect the use of words of other contexts and field and the way they attribute certain meanings to concepts, and on the other hand one should see the use of language as open and dynamic.

2.3 Spirituality, experiences of God's presence and the contribution of practical theology

The question can be asked what the contribution of practical theology is to the field of mentorship. In other words: What is practical theology's unique contribution in the interdisciplinary discussion about mentorship?

This is an important question. As a practical theologian I am concerned with what these narratives tell us about God's presence in this context. Practical theology is concerned with the transformative practice and continual work of God in creation. It is a hermeneutical process of continuously coming to a new understanding of the narratives of faith in our world.

Within the positioning of postfoundational practical theology, there is a focus on theology being public. Theology needs to be part of the discussion in various fields and contribute on an equal level to the conversation.

In the reflection on spirituality and the experiences of God in this particular context I discussed the following themes:

- Honesty and authenticity
- Morality and ethics
- Connection and relationship
- Holism and openness
- Lack of dogma and institutionalized language

- Spiritual expressions and acts
- Imago Dei

After revisiting these themes the contribution of practical theology to this discussion can be formulated as follows:

- People integrate their spirituality and experiences of God into their everyday lives. It is not segmented or compartmentalised. The language people use to describe these experiences is not only religious language or language used in the institutional church. Words like ''connection'' and ''relationship'' is used. Practical theology helps in the process of developing these narratives and reflecting on them to bring them into conversation with other narratives of the greater tradition of theology but also with the public realm.
- People find meaning in their spiritual experiences and express them in acts of worship and disciplines. Practical theology helps with these expressions by developing new transformative practises and meaningful activities. Mentorship can be such a spiritual practice.
- It is clear from the narratives of the co-researchers that in this particular context people do not live confined to the walls of the local church but also experience God outside the walls of the institutional church. Some of the critical questions asked in the interdisciplinary conversation are also based on a particular understanding of church. Practical theology can help to bring new understanding into the conversation as ways that local faith communities continue to play a part in the public theological realm.
- The fact that practical theology is concerned with spirituality and experiences of God in a particular situation contributes on its own. In some of the material discussed in chapter 5, mention is made of spirituality in mentorship as being part of a holistic view of humanity. Practical theology can help to thicken this view and explore ways to help people and programmes to formulate this better.

- The fact that morality and ethics are always linked to faith and religion shows the need for people to have some sort of normative guidance. Primarily theology contributes by interpreting the Bible and helping with a responsible understanding of the primary text of Christian faith. Practical theology brings this text in conversation with other texts. This is an important contribution. In mentorship this is an aspect that will always be needed.

2.4   A tribute to the unheard narratives

This study did not hear all of the narratives in this context directly. Some weren't even heard indirectly. These include narratives about mentorship we do not know about, others that we didn't get the time to listen to and others who might feel marginalised in the programme.

It is suggested on the basis of this study that this programme and future programmes in this kind of context take time to further explore, describe, find and tell the narratives of:

- The group of leaders
- The mentees in general
- Those who did not get the chance to contribute their narrative in this particular study

I do however pay tribute to all the narratives; heard and unheard, marginalised and included, present and past that could also have formed part of this study.

The other day I listened to a story of one of the leaders in the youth ministry that was asked by a final year school graduate to be his mentor. This was not formal or structured. It just had the potential to add meaning to his life through someone he looked up to.

3.   A SUGGESTED APPROACH TO MENTORSHIP

Postfoundational practical theology aims to contribute to the field of mentorship not necessarily by formulating new definitions, giving easy answers or developing programmes that work with linear steps to complete, in order to reach a certain kind of success.

I will carefully venture into suggesting an approach to mentorship and mentorship programmes. This approach is formulated from this study's specific context. It hopes to point beyond this context and contribute to the field of mentorship.

This approach suggests that when planning and working within the mentorship field there are certain **values** that need to be present in order to have a meaningful mentorship experience. The content and the way mentorship is formulated will be dependant on the content, the community that is involved in the process and the responsible listening to the wider voices within this field that form part of the tradition of interpretation.

A value-based approach to mentorship and mentorship programmes

In this approach the following values need to be present in mentorship and mentorship programmes. They are discussed briefly.

The value of clarity

> It is important to value clarity. Clarity refers to a clear understanding of mentorship. In Homer's terms: be clear about the path as well as the goal. Mentorship should value clarity about ideas, understanding and the meaning of language. What is meant by certain terms? Expectations

should be clear and where content and structure can assist in this, this should be utilised.

The value of context

The context in which mentorship is practised should be valued. Each context is unique and will have an effect on the way mentorship is practised. The local community in which mentorship is constructed should be nurtured and kept part of the dynamic process of mentorship.

The value of the ordinary

There is great value in focussing on the ordinary. In mentorship it might mean doing simple things together like eating or laughing. Value the telling of authentic narratives and describing the simple ways in which God and life is experienced. Understand that people and mentorship are holistic and inclusive. It is not a relationship that is compartmentalised or segmented. This should be valued.

The value of relationship

Relationship is the foundation of a meaningful mentorship process. Valuing relationship implies spending enough time in the relationship and being seriously committed to your mutual understanding of this particular kind of relationship. This relationship is different from other relationships and needs to be named differently. Creativity plays a vital role in the way that this relationship grows. Roles can overlap in this relationship but should not steal meaning from the mentorship relationship. In the process of matching a mentor and mentee, relationship should play an integral part.

The value of listening

In any mentorship relationship or programme the value of listening should be respected. This means to be open to other voices and traditions of interpretation. It also means to be open to listen to the context, other texts and marginalised voices. The value of listening helps us to be conscious of God and help us to listen to God in various ways during a mentorship relationship.

The value of adding value

Although there are no specific stipulations made here with regard to the qualifications for being a good mentor or mentee, the value of adding value is proposed as part of these decisions. A mentor must be someone who can add value to a mentee from the perspective of the mentee and the community in which the relationship is practised. The mentor is not the only one who adds value to the relationship. The relationship is reciprocal. Knowledge, skills and value are some of the ways in which value is added within a mentorship relationship.

The value of reflection

It is of value in a mentorship programme and a mentorship relationship to reflect together. This reflection can be on the process, the relationship, spiritual or other experiences, the presence of God, growth or anything else that is important to the relationship or the programme. This can facilitate growth in the programme or relationship, and suggest that mentorship processes need to be dynamic in nature.

The value of ethics

It is important that the mentorship process and relationship value an ethical awareness. This applies to roles, the presence of anxiety or other fears as well as the possibility for a relationship that has become destructive to be ended. Ethics and morals are informed especially in this context by the normative narratives of the Christian community. It also refers to the way language and mentorship is used within the greater traditions of interpretation that exist in the interdisciplinary conversation about mentorship.

4.   IN CLOSING

In this chapter I concluded by bringing the many voices in this study together. From these voices I made a few final remarks and suggested a value-based mentorship approach that points beyond the confines of this particular context.

This research narrative that has been written would not have been possible without the co-researchers who gave time and commitment to this process. I thank them and everyone else who contributed to this study along this journey.

May this study contribute to the public realm of mentorship.

Chapter 7: REFLECTION ON MY RESEARCH

In this short chapter (or epilogue) I reflect on my own experience of the research process in this study. Within the approach to research followed in this study, it is important for me as a researcher to reflect on my own growth and narrative during this time. I will do so under the next few headings.

The approach

During the course of all my studies, working within the narrative approach, this has for me been the most meaningful positioning in research and practical theology up to now. I felt that the postfoundational epistemology provided a sound basis to work from, both in terms of epistemology and theology. The way in which Müller developed this approach into a research design has immensely contributed to the thoughts and theory of practical theological research. The biggest contribution and one of the most positive experiences during my research was the interdisciplinary conversation that the approach leads you to. The idea that our work needs to be public and the encouragement from this approach to contribute beyond the local is an inspiration.

I do however think that the way in which this takes place and the way the conversation is facilitated is far from perfect. The method used in this study is a wonderful starting point, but it was difficult to be part of such a conversation. There are differences in the basic epistemology of our fields at certain points, and the instruments to handle it and ways to discuss this with the other fields need to be developed further. I do think that after this experience it will be difficult not to have interdisciplinary investigation as part of any future practical theological study.

My own position as researcher and programme designer

The fact that I was involved in the design of the programme and the training of the mentors could have been difficult as I was also the researcher. I was sensitive to this from the start. During the course of the study I think I overcame the fear that this might cause a problem by starting to see myself as a participatory researcher. Some researchers go and live for years in the contexts that they study. This was exactly the way that I saw myself as a researcher in the study. The fact that Hanlie played a crucial role as co-researcher by focusing on the narrative of the programme also helped to establish my role as researcher in this study. I was part of the context. And within this research approach this could actually be beneficial and possible. As far as possible I strived for subjective integrity in the process of telling and describing the stories of the co-researchers.

Practicalities

I realised over the five years that I was involved in this study that narrative research is not always easy. I felt that I could have spent more intensive time with my co-researchers. But they just didn't always have the time to do that. I also wanted to hear more of the narratives of the programme, but this was also not possible due to practical constraints. The fact that the research was partly related to my work, helped a lot in terms of spending time in the context and having contact with the co-researchers, but I would have liked to spend more time with the narratives and the co-researchers.

Narrative research is very focused and takes time to develop. It differs from working with data acquired through sampling and questionnaires that can just be analysed with a computer. In narrative research people are directly involved and this makes it difficult and sometimes has the effect that the process takes more time.

The fact that I was acutely aware of the fact that the co-researchers need to be part of the interpretations also sometimes caused delays.

At the end I regretted not starting sooner with writing down the research. I heard this a lot in the PhD group, but it is so true. I would have liked to have started writing earlier in the process.

My own growth

Academically this process helped me to grow regarding my own critical and independent thoughts. I felt that I had learned a lot more from this process academically and in terms of positioning, theory and understanding the approach than in any of my previous studies.

I also acquired knowledge about the programme that I was not aware of and did not expect. Many new insights emerged from this process and totally new interpretations and suggestions emerged that I never thought about in the beginning. I was concerned that because of the fact that I was so involved in this context there wouldn't be that many new insights, but I was wrong. This serves to prove that one must trust the narrative process of development.

The help and insight from the co-researchers also came as a surprise. In a previous research study language and context was a huge barrier between the co-researchers and me. In this study the opposite was true. This made it a meaningful experience and a privilege to share in the lives of the co-researchers. Again I thank them.

Future study

In narrative research the journey is never finished. In this study there are a few areas in which future study can be considered:

- The understanding of how and why young people choose mentors
- The connection between mentorship and confirmation
- The understanding of language and how language is used to construct certain realities within local contexts
- The opportunities for local congregations to utilise mentorship in different contexts in the congregation
- The connection between mentorship and intergenerational theory

In looking back, the overall experience of this study has been rewarding and will hopefully contribute to the understanding of mentorship, not only in the church but also in other contexts.