



## *A Good* **MENTOR**

*“A good mentor hopes you will move on. A great mentor knows you will.”*

—Leslie Higgins in *Ted Lasso*

Two sentences and 14 words that say it all. What a great lesson in leadership!

We all know that mentorship offers mentors the opportunity to give back to this profession by sharing knowledge, expertise, and experiences. What people do not always realize is how much the mentor also benefits from this relationship. It allows the mentor to enhance their own skills and knowledge by staying updated with current legal trends, research, and technology.

For the mentee, the relationship provides a safe place to be vulnerable in asking questions. It allows the mentee to make more informed decisions, avoid common pitfalls, and develop the skills necessary for a successful legal career. It is a win-win situation!

I am blessed that I had great mentors early in my career and still have mentors 30 years into my career. You are never too seasoned to have a mentor. You learn from each other, you bounce ideas off each other, and you open your mind to new ways of practice.

There are too many lawyers to name that mentored me as a young lawyer. I had no problem asking someone a question if I did not know the answer. I count everyone who answered me as a mentor. They took time out of their day to help me. That is the definition of mentoring.

A few still stand out in my mind, though, including the late Judge Bill Logue, who presided over the 19th District Court in McLennan County. My first job was as an assistant district attorney, and I handled all of the civil cases, including all of the CPS cases, which were in the 19th District Court. Judge Logue took me under his wing. We would have regular meetings in his office, not to discuss cases, but to discuss *me*. He was interested in me not just as a lawyer who appeared in his courtroom, but also in me as a person. I will never forget that.

Other mentors later in my career include Tom Vick, Gary Nickelson, Wendy Burgower, Kristal Thomson, Kathryn Murphy, and the list goes on and on. I consider every one of them a leader in their field. If I called any one of them, they would instantly pick up the phone and spend time answering my question or working through a problem with me.

Unfortunately, not all leaders are good mentors. To me, mentoring is an integral part of leadership. A leader needs to make those 14 words uttered by Higgins his or her mantra. This is the difference between a good leader and a bad one. Some leaders mentor their team hoping they will succeed one day. A good leader mentors his or her team knowing they will succeed.

I read an article once that stated mentoring people isn't about bringing people to your level. It is about preparing them to succeed at a level higher than you. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of my mentors who helped me along my path, took time for me, and poured into me so I, like them, could succeed at a higher level. Thank you.

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