

[Introduction to free article](#)

**This article is referred in several of the leadership commentaries such as John, Philippians, Philemon, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and the Titus Leadership Commentaries which are part of the Clinton Biblical Leadership Commentary CD copyrighted 1999. This commentary is available from the Clinton Resources at <http://www.bobbyclinton.com/>. It is dealing with some essential mentoring relationships a leader needs over a lifetime.**

## Constellation Model

### Introduction

One of the major lessons<sup>1</sup> identified from a comparative study of many effective leaders is,

**Effective Leaders See Relational Empowerment As Both A Means And A Goal Of Ministry.**

Both Jesus and Paul demonstrated this leadership principle in their ministries. In fact, both used mentoring as a means for applying this principle in their ministries. Jesus dominantly mentored in a small group context. Paul mentored both with individuals and in a small group context.

Definition      Mentoring is a relational experience in which one person, the mentor, empowers another person, the mentoree, by sharing God-given resources.<sup>2</sup>

Stanley researched leadership relationships for a number of years. From his observations on various kinds of mentoring relationships as well as his observations on leaders who finished well and who did not, he postulated a principle.<sup>3</sup>

### Stanley's Thesis

**Over A Lifetime A Christian Leader Needs A Balanced Relational Network With other Christian Leaders Who Will Help Him/Her And Vice Versa.**

What did he mean by a balanced relational network with Christian leaders? By it Stanley was saying that four kinds of relationships are needed over a lifetime:

Upward Help:

---

<sup>1</sup> Seven such lessons have been identified: (1) Effective Leaders View Present Ministry in Terms Of A Life Time Perspective. (2) Effective Leaders Maintain A Learning Posture Throughout Life. (3) Effective Leaders Value Spiritual Authority As A Primary Power Base. (4) Effective Leaders Who Are Productive Over A Lifetime Have A Dynamic Ministry Philosophy. (5) Effective Leaders View Leadership Selection And Development As A Priority Function In Their Ministry. (6) Effective Leaders See Relational Empowerment As Both A Means And A Goal Of Ministry. (7) Effective Leaders Evince A Growing Awareness Of Their Sense Of Destiny.

<sup>2</sup> See the nine mentor roles: mentor discipler, mentor spiritual guide, mentor coach, mentor counselor, mentor teacher, mentor sponsor, mentor contemporary model, mentor historical model, mentor divine contact, **Glossary**. The apostle Paul demonstrated many of these roles in his relationships with team members and others in his ministry. See **Articles**, *Paul—the Developer; Paul—The Mentor*. For further follow-up study, see Stanley and Clinton **Connecting** for a popular treatment of mentoring. See Clinton and Clinton **The Mentor Handbook** for a detailed treatment of mentoring.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Stanley, at this writing, is an International Vice President for the Navigators, a Christian organization heavily involved in developing laborers for the Kingdom. Mentoring is heavily used in Navigator ministries. Stanley would never call this theorem by his name, but I have taken the liberty to do so, since he was the discoverer of it and taught it to me.

A Christian Leader needs to relate to Christian Leaders more experienced in the Christian life who will help them in their growth and give needed perspective as well as help them be accountable for growth.

Lateral Help:

A Christian Leader needs to relate to Christian Leaders who are peers in the Christian life who will share, care, and relate so as to encourage them to persevere.

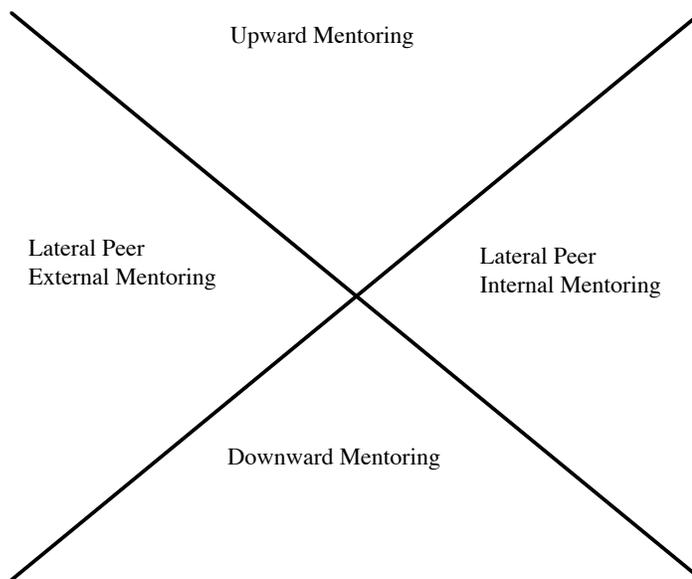
Downward Help:

A Christian Leader needs to relate to younger emerging leaders who he/she can help to grow.

Stanley was talking about mentoring relationships. Both he and I have observed that over a lifetime, effective leaders who finished well experienced from five to 30 or more mentoring relationships for limited periods of time in their lives. Mentoring is one of the five major enhancement factors that accompany leaders who finish well.<sup>4</sup>

**The Constellation Model**

The popular name for the graphic representation of Stanley’s thesis is *The Constellation Model*. Figure 1 shows this graphic representation.



**Figure 1. The Constellation Model**

Upward mentors dominantly bring strategic accountability and perspective to a relationship. When you have an *upward mentor*, you are being mentored by someone else. *Lateral peer mentoring*, internal, means a mentoring relationship with someone in the same organization or someone coming from basically the same background as you. Such a mentor knows you and your organization fairly well. Confidential things can be shared. Accountability for each other is expected. An internal lateral mentor is roughly at the same stage of maturity as you. Lateral peer mentoring, external, means a relationship with some one from a very different background than you and a very different ministry experience. Such a person can bring objectivity to you and you to that person, since you will frequently ask the question, “Why do you do it that way?” Accountability and perspective are expected in such a relationship. Downward mentoring means that you

---

<sup>4</sup> See **Articles**, *Finishing Well—Five Enhancement Factors; Finishing Well—Six Characteristics*.

are helping someone not as far along as you, at least in the area of the mentoring expertise. Such a relationship benefits both participants. The person being mentored of course receives the empowerment of the mentoring. The person doing the mentoring often experiences two things: (1) reality checks (mentorees frequently ask embarrassing questions about whether or not something is true for you); (2) a fresh injection of faith—often a by-product of being around a younger Christian is that they are not so cynical about things and trust God in ways that an older mentor used to do.

Each of the nine mentoring relationships can fit into any of the quadrants of *The Constellation Model*. Table 1 briefly lists the nine relationships.

**Table 1. Nine Mentoring Relationships That May Happen in the Four Quadrants**

Type	Definition
mentor discipler	A <u>mentor discipler</u> is one who spends much time, usually one-on-one, with an individual mentoree in order to build into that mentoree the basic habits of the Christian life. It is a relational experience in which a more experienced follower of Christ shares with a less experienced follower of Christ the commitment, understanding, and basic skills necessary to know and obey Jesus Christ as Lord.
mentor spiritual guide	A <u>spiritual guide</u> is a godly, mature follower of Christ who shares knowledge, skills, and basic philosophy on what it means to increasingly realize Christ-likeness in all areas of life. The primary contributions of a Spiritual guide include accountability, decisions, and insights concerning questions, commitments, and direction affecting spirituality (inner-life motivations) and maturity (integrating truth with life).
mentor coach	Coaching is a process of imparting encouragement and skills to succeed in a task via relational training.
mentor counselor	A <u>mentor counselor</u> is one who gives timely and wise advice as well as impartial perspective on the mentoree’s view of self, others, circumstances, and ministry.
mentor teacher	A <u>mentor teacher</u> is one who imparts knowledge and understanding of a particular subject at a time when a mentoree needs it.
mentor sponsor	A <u>mentor sponsor</u> is one who helps promote the ministry (career) of another by using his/her resources, credibility, position, etc. to further the development and acceptance of the mentoree.
mentor model (contemporary)	A <u>mentor contemporary model</u> is a person who models values, methodologies, and other leadership characteristics in such a way as to inspire others to emulate them.
mentor model (historical)	A <u>mentor historical model</u> is a person whose life (autobiographical or biographical input) modeled values, methodologies, and other leadership characteristics in such a way as to inspire others to emulate them.
mentor divine contact	A person whose timely intervention is perceived of as from God to give special guidance at an important time in a life. This person may or may not be aware of the intervention and may or may not have any further mentoring connection to the mentoree.

**Closing Observations**

1. Mentoring relationships that fill the four quadrants are usually limited in time and are not permanent. They happen and meet a need and then terminate after the empowerment. The relationship may endure and be rekindled later for mentoring effectiveness.
2. A given leader will not necessarily have mentoring relationships in all the quadrants at once. But over a lifetime mentoring in each of the quadrants brings balance.
3. Internal lateral peer mentoring usually stresses relationship, accountability and perspective rather than specific mentoring relationships.
4. Upward mentors are harder to find as a leader matures and ages in life. This is because fewer and fewer leaders are upward to a mature leader.
5. A leader with a strong learning posture will take proactive steps to find mentoring.

A closing exercise that is often used at mentoring workshops involves having leaders draw a constellation diagram and have them fill in names of mentors and types of mentoring that they have experienced in the past, even if the mentoring was not deliberate or formal. I have them try to think through each of the four quadrants. Then I ask them to re-do the diagram and put in current mentoring relationships they are experiencing. Finally I ask them to draw a final diagram with the kind of profile they would like to have over the next year or two. These diagrams are called Constellation Profiles.

What does your Constellation Profile look like now?