

# CORE VIRTUES FOR THE PRACTICE OF MENTORING

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Mentoring relationships in psychology and other fields are often long-term, complex, and multifaceted. Although mentoring is associated with a host of benefits and positive outcomes for protégés, excellent mentoring requires careful attention to potential ethical concerns. In this article, we review mentoring literature from the education and management fields, as well as spiritual-direction literature, with attention to the traits and virtues of mentors. We argue for the relevance of mentor character virtues and propose that three central virtues (integrity, courage, and care) offer a solid starting point for theory and research relevant to the significance of mentor character. We conclude with a discussion of implications for training and research in psychology.

During the past twenty-five years, scholars and practitioners in a range of fields have contributed to an extensive body of literature on the subject of mentoring. A centuries old practice, mentoring is most simply described as a relationship in which a younger or less experienced individual is trained and developed by a more experienced—often older—individual. In recent decades, research findings and practice models for mentoring have emerged primarily from business and academic settings (Kram, 1985; Lorraine, 1984; Zey, 1991).

In spite of a burgeoning cross-disciplinary literature that largely supports the benefits of mentoring for both mentors and those who are mentored (protégés), relatively little attention has been given to the requisite qualities and characteristics of effective mentors. As long-term, multifaceted, and emotionally intense relationships, mentorships may pose unique ethical risks. Johnson and Nelson (1999) dis-

cussed the uniquely “multiple” nature of many long-term mentorships and recommended several principles for the professional practice of mentoring. In this article, we attempt to compliment Johnson and Nelson’s (1999) principle ethics approach to mentoring by focusing on the person of the mentor—including foundational mentor character virtues. Integrating these principle and virtue perspectives may provide a coherent structure for enhancing the ethical competence of psychologists who mentor. Such integration may ultimately enhance the character of our profession (Meara, Schmidt, & Day, 1996).

In this article, we briefly summarize literature bearing on the practice of mentoring. We then highlight the unique nature of mentorships, including their strong potential for both benefit and ethical conflict. We argue for the addition of a virtue-based perspective on the requisite characteristics of ideal mentors, then briefly summarize the sparse literature relative to mentor qualities and virtues. Because character virtues are an inherent product of cultural and situational factors, we intentionally consider writings from the Christian tradition of spiritual direction, with an emphasis on discerning salient similarities to the secular construct of mentoring as well as perspectives regarding the importance of the character virtues and values of the spiritual director. Finally, we propose that three character virtues—integrity, courage and care—offer a useful starting point for developing a model of ethical mentoring for Christian professionals. We conclude by discussing implications of this model for the practice of mentoring in the field of psychology and future research on the topic.

## MENTORING THEORY AND RESEARCH

### *Definitions*

When Odysseus departed for the Trojan War, he charged his trusted friend, Mentor, with the educa-

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tion and development of his son, Telemachus (Fairchild, 1982; O'Neil, 1981). This education was comprehensive and included aspects of physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and occupational development (Clawson, 1980). Master-apprentice relationships were institutionalized in the middle ages as trainees were occupationally mentored into life-long vocations (Little, 1990). Mentors have been characterized as models or exemplars of behavior (Anderson & Shannon, 1988), seasoned craftsmen (Little, 1990), facilitators (Shea, 1994) and quasi-parents (Levinson, Carrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978). Historically, mentors have been expected to model admirable personal traits and professional skills.

Although conceptions of mentoring vary widely (Jacobi, 1991), most agree that a mentor is usually older than the protégé and has greater experience in the world and skill in a profession (Levinson, et al., 1978). Thomas and Kram (1988) suggested, "A mentor is defined as any higher level employee who can be depended upon to share personal insights and to provide guidance and support that can enhance performance and career development" (p. 50). Following a review of the literature, Clark, Harden, & Johnson (2000) defined mentoring as a personal relationship in which an individual who is usually more experienced and older acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and sponsor of a protégé who is less experienced and younger (p. 263). In essence, mentors are teachers, advisors, models, guides, and even protect those they mentor.

### *Mentor Roles and Functions*

The range of role descriptions used in discussions of mentoring is extensive and includes trusted guide (Clawson, 1980), teacher, sponsor, advisor, host, counselor and supporter (Levinson et al., 1978), patron, godparent (Phillips-Jones, 1982), protector, promoter (Zey, 1991), trainer, role-model, talent developer, confidant (Gehrke, 1988), trusted colleague, supervisor (Bey & Holmes, 1990), encourager, befriender (Anderson & Shannon, 1988), champion (Parsloe, 1992), and leader-coach (Shea, 1994). Kram (1985; Thomas & Kram, 1988) broke new ground in conceptions of mentor functions when she divided these into career functions and psychosocial functions. Career functions include sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection, and provision of challenging assignments. Career functions enhance the protégé's

career and smooth his or her journey through the professional world. In contrast, psychosocial functions serve to enhance one's sense of personal and professional competence and identity formation. Psychosocial functions include role-modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling and friendship.

### *Benefits of Mentoring*

Research suggests that mentor relationships often prove beneficial to all parties involved. Protégés are particularly likely to accumulate benefits when mentoring occurs. Those who are mentored often report more rapid promotion, higher salaries, greater awareness of their organization's structure and politics, and higher ratings of both career and life satisfaction than those who are not mentored (Bolton, 1980; Jacobi, 1991; Kanter, 1979; Kram, 1985; Roche, 1979; Zey, 1991). Mentoring appears to create a fundamental transformation in the way protégés perceive themselves, their careers, and their relationship to and value within the organization (Zey, 1991). Mentoring is also markedly important for women and minority group members who typically have had less access to mentoring (Johnston, 1987; Shea, 1994). Underrepresented group members may effectively utilize mentoring as a means of gaining advantages equivalent to those traditionally afforded to junior members of the majority group.

### **ETHICAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE PRACTICE OF MENTORING**

Most authors on the topic of mentor relationships agree that mentorships are often long-term, complex, and multifaceted. In graduate school and other settings, they are personal relationships characterized by depth, caring, trust, mutuality (sharing of reciprocal feelings and values), comprehensiveness (broad coverage of many interpersonal and role characteristics), and sometimes emotional intensity (Hardy, 1994; Kram, 1985; O'Neil, 1981; Torrance, 1984). Levinson et al. (1978) had this to say about mentor relationships:

The mentor relationship is one of the most complex and developmentally important a [person] can have in early adulthood. No word currently in use is adequate to convey the nature of the relationship we have in mind here. . . . Mentoring is defined not in terms of formal roles but in terms of the character of the relationship and functions it serves (p. 97-98)

Although graduate faculty may have concern about the appropriateness of mutuality or multiple

types of interaction with students, graduate students themselves rate mutual support and comprehensive relationships that extend beyond the graduate school environment as two of the most important factors in successful mentoring (Wilde & Schau, 1991). Mentorship effectiveness often hinges on mutual trust, and mutual trust is facilitated by self-disclosure on the part of the mentor (O'Neil & Wrightsman, 1981).

Johnson and Nelson (1999) showed that mentor relationships in graduate education often pose unique ethical challenges to psychologists. In addition to their emotional intensity and mutuality, these relationships are less formal than psychologist-client relationships. For this reason, they are less often scrutinized, leaving the mentor with greater responsibility for independently safeguarding the relationship without peer review or consultation. At the same time, very little in the American Psychological Association's (APA) Ethical Code (APA, 1992) appears to have direct bearing on mentoring. At times, mentorships may contain elements of academic advising, teaching, counseling, and even bonded emotional friendship. Johnson and Nelson (1999) suggested that clinical models for avoiding dual-relationships (Gottlieb, 1993) are less useful when applied to mentorships. In contrast to clinical relationships, mentorships naturally involve an inherent power imbalance between student and faculty member, are long-term in nature, and seldom have any clear termination or ending point.

Although there are currently no guidelines for the ethical practice of mentor relationships, several core ethical principles have bearing on this enterprise (Brown & Krager, 1985; Kitchener, 1992). Johnson and Nelson (1999) applied Kitchener's (1992) principles to the practice of mentoring. These included the principles of (a) *Autonomy* (How can I strengthen my protégé's knowledge, maturity, and independence?), (b) *Nonmaleficence* (How can I avoid intentional or unintended harm to those I mentor?), (c) *Beneficence* (How can I contribute to the welfare of my protégé and facilitate his or her growth?), (d) *Justice* (How will I ensure equitable treatment of protégés regardless of variables such as race, age, and gender?), and (e) *Fidelity* (How can I keep promises and remain loyal to those students I mentor?). Although such ethical principles provide useful normative standards of professional behavior, they say little about the person of the mentor.

Johnson and Nelson (1999) also offered several recommendations for graduate programs relevant to promoting ethical and excellent faculty-student mentoring. These included (a) careful evaluation of the competence of faculty to mentor, (b) explicit training of faculty in the art and science of mentoring, and (c) development and articulation of guidelines for mentors to use in forming, structuring, and conducting mentor relationships. Most relevant to our discussion is the issue of assessing mentor competence. Mentor competence in psychology may be defined on the basis of a number of salient criteria such as personal maturity, history of ethical behavior, familiarity with the developmental stages and milestones common of graduate students, and focused knowledge and sensitivity in areas such as cross-gender and cross-cultural mentoring (Johnson, Koch, Fallow, & Huwe, 2000; Johnson & Nelson, 1999). We suggest, however, that knowledge and skill with respect to mentoring must be complemented by undergirding character virtues that inevitably shape one's knowledge and skill. In the section that follows, we attempt to make the case that virtue must be included in discussions of ethical mentoring.

## VIRTUES FOR THE PRACTICE OF MENTORING

Character is typically defined as the unique or distinctive mark made by some engraving instrument (Flexner, 1987; Simpson & Weiner, 1989). Character is "the sum of the moral and mental qualities that distinguish an individual (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). Walton (1988) describes character as more complex than a collection of traits and values; he states, "emphasis on character shifts attention from the act performed to the performer of the act, from an emphasis on thinking to an emphasis on being ... Character becomes the conduit through which an individual's past and present flow and the future is designed" (p. 177).

At the heart of definitions of character is the concept of *virtue*. Virtues are historically defined as distinctly good or admirable human qualities that denote moral excellence, righteousness, or uprightness in the way one lives (Flexner, 1987; Simpson & Weiner, 1989). Virtues reflect the internal composition of one's character (May, 1984) which are nurtured habits that mature in the context of a formative community that includes family and church.

Most concepts of human virtue refer to the moral or natural virtues of which humankind is capable, rather than innate theological or supernatural virtues which are qualities or graces infused into the human intellect and will by special grace of God. For the purposes of our discussion, the source of virtue is less significant than its expression in a mentor relationship.

How might virtues inform and influence the practice of mentoring? If character development hinges on the formation and strengthening of persistent manifestations of moral selfhood (Campbell, 1982), then these moral manifestations or virtues become salient indicators of the course and outcome of human relationships, including mentor relationships. In an important article, Jordan and Meara (1990) argued for virtue ethics as the foundation for professional ethics in psychology. Virtue ethics focus on the historically formed character of identifiable persons; such character development provides the basis for professional judgment. In contrast, ethical codes are often based primarily on principle ethics (i.e., approaches that emphasize the use of rational, objective, universal, and impartial principles in the ethical analysis of dilemmas) (Jordan & Meara, 1990). Principle ethics often focus on the question, "What shall I do?" In contrast, virtues emphasize the agents or actors themselves. "Through the formation of internal qualities, traits, or mature habits, virtue ethics attempt to answer the question 'Who shall I be?'" (Jordan & Meara, 1990, p. 108).

Meara et al. (1996) noted that virtue ethics serve as another relevant criteria for the development of an ethical professional life. Virtue ethics calls upon individual professionals to aspire toward ideals and to develop virtues or traits of character that enable them to achieve these ideals. The practice of mentoring, like other professional relationships, is seldom either totally absolute or completely relative. Therefore, virtuous, competent psychologists must exercise careful professional judgment (Meara et al., 1996). Principles and virtues must function in a complimentary manner for maximal ethical accuracy, and virtues are especially important in those circumstances in which there are equally justifiable alternatives to a mentoring practice dilemma.

### *Character in the Psychology and Management Literature*

Authors in the area of mentoring have described excellent mentors as possessing various characteris-

tics. Good mentors are described as available and invested (Roche, 1979), respected by others and altruistic in motivation for mentoring (Aryce, Chew, & Chay, 1996), ethical (Kitchener, 1992), and intentional role-models (Gilbert, 1985). Women have been encouraged to seek mentors who effectively balance professional and personal role demands and who embody feminist values of equity, reciprocity, and cooperation (Gilbert, 1985; Richey, Gabrill, & Blythe, 1988). Although there is no empirical evidence that specific personality characteristics effectively discriminate between effective and ineffective mentors (Alleman, Cochran, Doverspike, & Newman, 1984), survey research indicates that certain personality traits are consistently noted as important to protégés. Cronan-Hillix, Gensheimer, Cronan-Hillix, and Davidson (1986) found that personality characteristics were rated as extremely important to prospective protégés. Good mentors were described as humorous, honest, dedicated, empathetic, compassionate, genuine, patient, nonsexist, flexible, and loyal. Of course, several of these factors might be considered character virtues, versus mere personality traits. Similarly, Clark et al. (2000), found that mentored clinical psychologists most frequently mentioned the following important characteristics of their mentors: supportive, intelligent, knowledgeable, ethical, caring, humorous, encouraging, and honest. In sum, protégés tend to endorse both positive personality features and desirable character virtues in valued mentors.

Within integrative doctoral programs (that intentionally blend faith with training in psychology) recent research has shown that specific characteristics of faculty have substantial bearing on how graduate students learn to integrate faith with the science and practice of psychology (Sorenson, 1997; Staton, Sorenson, & Vande Kemp, 1998). Specifically, a faculty member's ongoing relationship with God, emotional transparency, and sense of humor were rated by students as most important in helping them learn to integrate clinical psychology and faith. Other important faculty characteristics included openness to new thinking and tolerance for different points of view.

Attention to values has also been emphasized in recent literature from the management field bearing on mentoring and leadership (Covey, 1992; Peters & Waterman, 1984; Rosen, 1996). Rosen (1996) noted that "healthy" organizations have leaders who prize organizational integrity and who hold core values

such as trust, integrity, honesty, and an emphasis on balancing corporate needs with those of employees and stakeholders. Little (1990) emphasized that the finest management mentor programs are those that select mentors with demonstrated professional competence *and* personal character virtues. Mentors who intentionally commit to proteges and voluntarily subordinate themselves to higher purposes and principles (Covey, 1992) are most likely to produce good mentor outcomes for organizations. Leaders in business environs who ignore foundational ethical concerns and principles such as fairness and honesty can cause economic disaster for organizations (Rosen, 1996); we hypothesize that relational disaster will result for those they lead and mentor.

### *Character in the Spiritual Direction Literature*

Spiritual direction is a long-practiced form of Christian ministry in which a newer Christian is aided in his or her development as a Christian by a more experienced believer. Spiritual direction has roots in the monastic tradition of the Christian church. Following the declaration by Constantine that Christianity was the state religion of the empire, many devout Christians withdrew to the wilderness to avoid the inevitable compromises that would accompany a state religion (Fairchild, 1982). Spiritual directors who were appointed to minister to these hermits were precursors to formal monastic communities (McNeill, 1951; Merton, 1960).

The practice of spiritual direction became associated with terms such as the "cure of souls" or the "care of souls" and it was most actively practiced in the Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions. Although spiritual direction is an ancient practice, much of the literature regarding spiritual direction is modern (Fairchild, 1982; Leech, 1992; Merton, 1960; Nouwen, 1981; Peterson, 1990).

The concept of spirituality was greatly enhanced by several monastic communities that developed specific schools of spiritual direction during the first five centuries. Mystical forms of spiritual direction are evident in the writings of Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Avila, and John of the Cross, Benedictine, Carmelite, and Franciscan traditions of spiritual direction evolved, and several Protestants such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, Augustine Baker, and George Fox also advocated the necessity of spiritual direction (Fairchild, 1982; McNeill, 1951; Nelson, 1972).

Merton defined spiritual direction as "a continu-

ous process of formation and guidance, in which a Christian is led and encouraged in his special vocation, so that by faithful correspondence to the graces of the Holy Spirit, he may attain to the particular end of his vocation and to union with God" (Merton, 1960, p. 13). Merton was clear about the distinction between spiritual direction and psychotherapy: "Spiritual direction is not merely the cumulative effect of encouragements and admonitions which we all need in order to live up to our state in life. It is not mere ethical, social, or psychological guidance. It is spiritual" (Merton, 1960, p. 14). More recently, Stanley and Clinton (1992) wrote, "a spiritual guide 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" (p. 65).

Spiritual direction is clearly distinct from mentoring, in that the primary objective of the relationship is to develop the directee's spiritual resources with an intent to prepare him or her for Christian ministry. Although both spiritual direction and contemporary mentoring are typically rooted in a relationship with a more experienced person for the purpose of growth and development, the focus is primarily spiritual.

A striking feature of the literature bearing on spiritual direction is the relative dearth of attention to the person of the director. We were unable to locate any research on the traits or values of spiritual directors. Still, a few authors have postulated important values underlying the process. For example, Merton (1960) stressed honesty, sincerity, humility, godliness, and the gift of prayer. He emphasized that the relationship should be based on love, simplicity, and trust. Hendricks and Hendricks (1995) emphasized the spiritual mentor virtues of faithfulness, honesty, humility, godliness, service, patience, and wisdom (p. 245). Edwards (1980) similarly identified several qualities thought to be necessary for effective spiritual direction. These included: personal spiritual commitment, experience, knowledge, humility, and an active prayer/meditation life.

Attempts to describe essential virtues for the practice of mentoring or spiritual direction are well intended but are generally without clear rationale. In the remainder of this article, we offer a preliminary discussion of the ideal character virtues of professionals who mentor. In our view, character virtues undergird the entire mentoring enterprise, and we hypothesize that good mentor outcomes are posi-

tively correlated with the presence of certain core mentor virtues. Because conceptualizations of character virtues are naturally shaped by culture and context, we intentionally offer a Christian perspective on ideal moral virtues.

### CHARACTER VIRTUES FOR THE PRACTICE OF MENTORING

We propose a preliminary model of mentoring which addresses the character virtues of exemplary mentors. We offer it as an initial attempt to shape subsequent theory development and research on mentoring. Although we provide a biblical/theological rationale for our focus on virtues, we believe the model is also useful for secular mentors interested in explicitly considering character as the basis for sound mentor relationships.

#### *Core Mentor Virtues*

Authors from the field of management have identified some character virtues relevant to the practice of mentoring in organizations (Covey, 1992; McCollum, 1998). For example, Bell (1998) identified several qualities of a mentoring partnership that we view as mentor virtues. These include balance, trust, generosity, passion, and courage. Although these authors often describe the importance of modeling and the mentor's behavioral demonstration of various moral and ethical principles, there has been little attempt to define the core character virtues relevant to managing or mentoring.

Many virtues have been proposed as important for professional practice. For example, May (1984) described the importance of the following virtues: fidelity, prudence, discretion, perseverance, courage, integrity, public spiritedness, benevolence, humility, and hope. Meara et al. (1996) proposed that a virtuous agent is one who is motivated to do good, discerning, self-aware, and cognizant of the role of both emotion and culture in ethical decision-making. With respect to the professional practice of psychologists, Jordan and Meara (1990) noted that virtues such as discretion, integrity, and benevolence were especially relevant to the client-psychologist contract (i.e., informed consent) and various constructs in psychology such as genuineness.

Although many character virtues may be relevant to the mentoring enterprise, we propose that the virtues of integrity, courage, and care form a reasonable foundation for the practice of mentoring from a

Christian perspective. These virtues are somewhat synonymous with the apostle Paul's list of the three greatest virtues, faith, hope, and love (1 Cor. 13:13). Faithful men and women are often trustworthy and act with integrity. Courage is a manifestation of optimism held by those who have hope. Finally, care is a facet of the most important of the virtues, love.

*Integrity.* All relationships, including those between mentors and protégés, hinge upon the establishment of an undergirding sense of trust. Trust is seldom feasible when integrity is absent from the character of the participants. Several authors have affirmed the salience of trust in professional relationships. Krasner and Joyce (1995) asserted, "trust is to committed relationships what food is to the sustenance of life" (p. xxii). Similarly, Sonnenberg (1994) said, "trust is the fabric that binds us together, creating an orderly, civilized society from chaos and anarchy" (p. 187). From a business perspective, both Covey (1994) and Bell (1998) hold that trust is the foundational principle in all relationships, particularly mentoring partnerships.

Trust originated in the German word *trost*, which means comfort. This suggests that trust is a state of confidence and comfort in relation to another. Trust is distinct from care or affection, however, in that one can trust deeply without liking. As in any interpersonal relationship, trust is essential in mentoring. Ideal mentoring relationships are characterized by honesty and some degree of self-disclosure and mutuality (O'Neil, 1981). When a mentor demonstrates integrity to the protégé, trust can be established and maintained. Integrity is characterized by both honesty and behavioral consistency over time and contexts (Bell, 1998; Sellner, 1990; Shaw, 1997). For example, a mentor who respects privacy and simultaneously holds protégé disclosures in strict confidence, is demonstrating integrity and enhancing trust. Merton (1960) described one facet of integrity as honest expression in relationships: "we must learn to say what we really mean in the depths of our souls, not what we think we are expected to say, not what somebody else just said" (p. 37).

*Courage.* We propose that courage constitutes a second foundational virtue for the practice of mentoring. The word courage comes from the French *Coeur*, or heart (Cory, 1998). To take courage is to take heart versus giving in to fear. In our view, mentoring often requires courageous thought and action. In addition, protégés often borrow from the courage of their mentors as they face the anxiety that accompanies new challenges and unfamiliar demands.

Courageous mentors must understand, address, and accept themselves as persons and professionals. This requires integration of painful life experiences such as failures at work. Excellent mentors are courageous in accepting their shortcomings—including their tendencies toward irrational self-disturbance (Johnson, Huwe, & Lucas, 2000)—and working diligently to avoid making mistakes repeatedly. Mentors must be courageous enough to know and manage themselves if they are to successfully assist proteges with weaving an integrated professional identity that includes their salient flaws and errors.

Strong mentors demonstrate courage in their optimistic view of the future (Lee, 1997; Shaw, 1977; Stanley & Clinton, 1992). More than Pollyannaish wishful thinking, we are referring to a courageous optimism that is a measured choice of perspective. Cynical, pessimistic, or self-deprecating mentors are unlikely to produce confident, self-assured proteges (Bell, 1998). Principled mentors appreciate the impact of their perspective on protégés. In addition, courageous mentors take time to mentor. In academia, business, and other environments, patient courage is often required to look beyond immediate demands and devote precious time and energy to the nurture of juniors.

A salient goal of mentor relationships is empowerment of proteges (Bell, 1998; Covey, 1992; Lee, 1997). The mentor has empowered the protégé to the extent that he or she provides the protégé with the resources, opportunities, and motivation to success. Empowerment includes encouragement to literally replace lost courage due to the stressors of living. As proteges grow and develop, they often lean on mentors during times of developmental crisis (Erickson, 1994). For example, the developmental identity crises, which often accompany the graduate school experience, are made manageable through a courage-by-proxy process. That is, the mentor's encouragement, support, and protection allow the protégé to grapple with the stress of development, borrowing from the mentor's courage. The goal of this encouragement and support is the ultimate independence and self-sufficiency of the protégé. The mentor's courage allows the protégé to face adversity, ultimately boosting self-confidence and solidifying a new identity. In this atmosphere of courageous empowerment, mistakes are not viewed as critical, but are welcomed and processed (Bell, 1998; Wolterstorff, 1994). If the mentor refuses to lose courage or catastrophize, the protégé creativity can be nurtured,

thus, we hypothesize that performance will be enhanced, and significant errors are likely to decrease in frequency.

*Care.* We propose that a third core virtue for the practice of mentoring is care. In our view, care is a facet of love and, like the Apostle Paul, we suggest that it is the "greatest" of the virtues. At the heart of any successful mentor relationship is genuine care and concern for the protégé. This virtue is clearly promoted in both secular literature on mentoring (Kram, 1985) and in writing from the spiritual direction literature (Covey, 1993). Bell (1998) noted that the original Mentor (from the *Odyssey* by Homer) knew that his young protégé, Telemachus, "needed both the wisdom of experience and the sensitivity of a twin, if he was to be a king" (p. 7).

As is true in marriage or parenting relationships, the mentor may express care in many ways. Caring mentors value the distinct personhood of their protégés (Wolterstorff, 1994), devote considerable time to hearing and understanding them (Shaw, 1997), work to discern their specific talents and vulnerabilities, provide an affirmation-rich environment for them to experiment with new identities, and weather their tribulations that accompany crisis and growth. Caring mentors clearly communicate valuing of the protégé and consistently work to further the protégé's best interests and ultimate goals.

#### IMPLICATIONS OF CORE VIRTUES FOR THE PRACTICE OF MENTORING

Character virtues unavoidably undergird all that transpires in mentor relationships in psychology and other disciplines. In our view, it is possible for a mentor to have technical expertise and experience without having the requisite character for the mentoring enterprise. Character virtues such as integrity, courage, and care serve as the core from which the mentor's relational and field-specific technical skills are expressed. We hypothesize that specific mentor functions (Kram, 1985) will be most impactful when delivered by a mentor whose character virtues are positive and clearly evident to protégés. Jacobi (1991) wisely noted that role-modeling, rather than a mere psychosocial function, is important enough to the mentoring process that it constitutes an entirely distinct category of mentor function. Protégés are likely to benefit maximally from mentors who model integrity, courage, and care in their relationship with the protégé, their relationships with others, and in their professional practice.

A virtue-focused model of mentoring also has important implications for ethical concerns unique to mentor-protégé relationships (Johnson & Nelson, 1999). Whereas ethical code-based models cause the mentor to ask, "What should I do in relation to my protégé," this model causes the mentor to ask, "Who shall I be in relation to my protégé?" Further, the core virtues of integrity, courage, and care would lead the mentor to avoid harming the protégé at all costs while simultaneously and diligently seeking to maximize the protégé's development and ultimate benefit from the relationship. We emphasize again that both virtues and principles have intrinsic value. They are necessary equals and counterparts in the practice of ethical professional behavior (Meara et al., 1996). Mentors are not only called upon to perform certain functions, but to be certain kinds of persons as well.

#### SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH

The primary implication of the foregoing discussion is the identification of a need for accelerated model-building relative to mentoring and the character of exemplary mentors. We hypothesize that mentor character virtues will shape the delivery and amplify the effect of both the career and psychosocial mentor functions (Kram, 1985). Our review of mentoring literature from education and management, as well as literature from the Christian discipline of spiritual-direction, suggest a current deficit in theory and research relative to both the personality traits and character virtues of effective mentors. Although several authors refer vaguely to character features, no well-developed model of mentoring exists that accounts for the mentor's character.

An important implication of this discussion for training in graduate settings is the need for careful attention to the character and traits of potential faculty mentors. Mentor relationships in graduate school are often uniquely complex, intense, and mutual; and current clinical models for minimizing dual relationships (Gottlieb, 1993) may be only moderately relevant to mentoring (Johnson & Nelson, 1999); therefore, we suggest that attention to character virtues among graduate faculty is particularly important. Although we agree with Jordan and Meara (1990) in hypothesizing that positive character virtues will predict more ethical mentor behavior in psychologists, it is not at all clear how these virtues might be assessed. It appears that contemporary

methods for evaluating the presence of important virtues among prospective faculty members are vague at best. Attention might be given to methods of operationally defining and assigning behavior anchors to the virtues of interest in a particular graduate program.

The issue of mentor character may be even more prominent in religious graduate programs. A recent survey of professional psychologists from both religious and secular Psy.D. programs indicated that religious program graduates were more likely to socialize with their mentor outside of the academic setting, and were more likely to view their mentor as a "friend" (Fallow & Johnson, 2000). Graduates of religious programs also rated the spiritual maturity of their mentors as significantly more important than graduates of secular programs, and they rated the mentor functions of "providing spiritual direction" and "integrating spiritual/religious faith with professional training" as significantly more important than secular program graduates. Thus training in religious doctoral programs may pose unique dilemmas to faculty members who may feel pressure to blend several roles, particularly the roles of faculty advisor and spiritual director, within a single mentor relationship. At the same time, these concerns must be balanced by evidence that graduate students in integrative training programs are most likely to learn integration via intentional modeling and personal faith transparency on the part of faculty (Sorenson, 1997; Staton et al., 1998).

A final implication for training is the need for prospective student protégés to become more proactive in initiating and assertively managing mentor relationships (Clark et al., 2000; Johnson et al., 2000). In the recent survey by Fallow and Johnson (2000), only 51% of Psy.D. graduates from religious programs were mentored, compared to 56% for the secular sample. It seems that mentoring is not the norm in graduate education, and most students who are mentored report initiating the relationship themselves (Clark et al., 2000). We recommend that graduate students actively seek mentorships and that they carefully consider indices of important faculty character traits during the mentor selection process. Students might seek multiple methods such as personal interaction and discussions with the faculty member's previous protégés for considering whether virtues such as integrity, courage, and care are evident.

Finally, we offer several recommendations for exploratory research in this area. In general, we rec-



commend that research on mentor traits and characteristics include an attempt to evaluate character virtues. Initially, this might best occur in the form of ratings by protégés or students and professional colleagues. It will be essential for researchers to clearly operationalize potentially nebulous terms such as "integrity" and "courage."

It will also be important to differentiate personality traits from virtues. It is often difficult to distinguish core virtues from fundamental personality features. For example, several researchers have asked protégés to describe the primary personality features of their mentor (Clark et al., 2000; Cronan-Hillix et al., 1986); however, protégés often list what might arguably be character virtues and not personality traits (e.g., honesty, dedication, caring, compassion, and loyalty). We believe more work is needed to ferret out these distinctions.

Once the assessment issue is addressed, it will be important to evaluate the relationship between mentor virtues and the various benefits usually associated with being mentored (Bolton, 1980; Jacobi, 1991; Kanter, 1979; Kram, 1985; Roche, 1979; Zey, 1991). Of course it would also stand to reason that important mentor virtues should be negatively correlated with negative mentoring outcomes (Clark et al., 2000; Johnson & Nelson, 1999; Kram, 1985). On the whole, research is needed to determine which if any virtues appear vitally relevant to good mentoring and how such virtues contribute to mentoring outcomes.

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