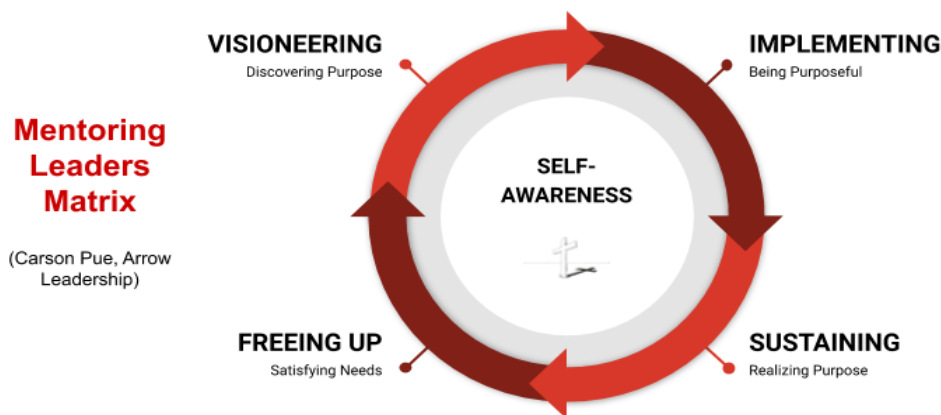


Implementation

In this final article of this year's Mentoring Mastery, I plan to briefly overview the final two stages of Carson Pue's Mentoring Matrix. While most of our work with the emerging leaders in Northview's Immerse program will necessarily focus on establishing and affirming the foundation of knowledge, character and skill that is being developed for future ministry leadership, it is also appropriate to observe and nurture the roots that are developing that will enable and sustain the individual's ministry success. The lens of our (mentors) ministry experience should prove helpful as we observe traits and actions that hint at character and competency, both positive and negative, that call for attention in the student's life.

The path we have followed in the *The Mentoring Matrix* thus far has focused our attention as mentors on a healthy "in-Christ" identity (Self-Awareness), recognizing potentially destructive personal, character or leadership habits or patterns (Freeing Up), and the personal journey of vision discovery (Vioneering).



Where the Visioneering phase sought to help us navigate with our student learners the discovery of purpose for our student's ministry life, these next phases are about being purposeful and ultimately realizing purpose. Depending on the maturity and experience of our mentees, the mentoring journey with our Immerse students will probably allow for a greater level of engagement in the first three phases of the Mentoring Matrix, with less opportunity for practical application and observation of the implementing and sustaining phases. Time and practicality will not allow me to thoroughly present the full outline of thoughts that Pue outlines for these phases, so my intention is to highlight specific aspects of these phases that are observable and practical facets of developing ministry leadership.

The Implementing Phase

The Implementing Phase of the Mentoring Matrix involves casting, sharing and communicating the vision. It assumes that the emerging leader has vision that is ready to be put into action. In this phase, Pue envisions the emerging leader learning to strategically step out in leadership towards the now-focused vision, and reminds us that it is often important to help young leaders see the incremental steps required to fulfill a vision.

Two definitions of vision highlight this aspect of the process. One definition of leadership that Pue presents says leadership “is the process of creating a vision for others and having the power to translate it into a reality and sustain it” [John Kotter, *The Leadership Factor* (New York: Free Press, 1988), 82.] It is the “power to translate it into a reality” that should inform our perspective and guide our application to mentoring our emerging leaders. The Immerse paradigm is intended to allow mentors the opportunity to observe the emerging leaders practice. The questions we should be asking are “how would you do this?” or “how would you do this differently?” or “what did you learn as you applied your learning in this setting?”

The second definition says “A vision is an aspiration or a description of a desirable future that exists within the leader’s soul that can inspire people, bring meaning to their work, mobilize them to action, and help them decide what to do and what not to do in the course of their work” (Mentoring Leaders, 132). In this sense, the emerging leader is being asked to demonstrate the ability to communicate the vision in such a way that it draws people, inspires them and gives meaning and direction to their shared activity. The mentor’s role is to observe both strengths and weaknesses in the mentees style and communication, allowing the student to construct and shape a captivating leadership presence.

In light of these definitions, Pue draws this insight for mentors.

“As a mentor, I also find it helpful in discerning vision with a leader to ask myself, “Does the leader demonstrate the core competencies necessary to give leadership towards this vision?” By core competencies I refer not only to skill but also to the necessity of character, righteousness, love, wisdom and grace.

“In that God is always about preparing his leaders for service, is there a history or a thread of preparation that would make the leader uniquely qualified to carry out the task?” (Mentoring Leaders, 128).

If it is not readily apparent, I see inherent in our role as Immerse mentors both the opportunity and the responsibility to probe beyond the assignments and learning displayed, for the purpose of discerning, assessing and encouraging the leader that is emerging.

Pue also offers this insight for mentors,

“Engage, don’t tell. Many mentors can get extremely excited about the strategic phase of their mentoring relationship. This is especially true, it seems, with men. So let me raise a caution to those of you mentoring leaders. Be very careful that your emphasis in this phase is on engaging the leader in the process of creating steps rather than telling them what to do. This is critical to their continued development as a leader. Our ultimate goal is not only to teach leaders how to step out visions they will receive in the future but also to equip

them so that as they work with their teams they will be able to transfer the concepts and skills to their colleagues” (Mentoring Leaders, 147 *sidebar*).

This leads to the next aspect of the Implementing Phase that I want to highlight - teamwork.

“Most ministries or missions, whether large or small, require teamwork. It is incumbent on today’s leaders to not only be able to inspire toward a vision but also to draw together the team to make it happen. A delicate balance is required: leaders must use all the skills they possess to inspire and lead a team, but they must never lose sight of the fact that they themselves are a member of the team, subject to its rules and dynamics, responsible for its shortfalls as well as its successes” (Mentoring Leaders, 149).

I like to think that Northview Immerse students have seen demonstrated, and been drawn into, a collaborative team environment, but that does not always mean that our students have developed the attitudes and attributes of team players. These goals and questions may facilitate challenging our students as team members.

- **Be a better listener.** Do our students give their full attention and openness to what is being said?
- **Be honest and open.** Is their authenticity easily seen?
- **Respond to other people’s needs and desires.** How do/could they respond to disagreement with others on the team?
- **Develop the practice of looking for the positive aspects in every suggestion.** Do they recognize the contributions others make in the process?
- **Address any areas of defensiveness.** Are there fears or insecurities behind their defensiveness that should be explored?
- **Encourage initiative in sharing ideas.** Do they seek the input of other quieter voices on the team?
- **Notice the unspoken communication.** Are they adept at noticing the communication of body language? Are they able to respond to it appropriately?
- **Create safe team settings.** Can all questions and ideas be asked and addressed? Can they protect the setting?
- **Champion the uniqueness of each team member.** Have they demonstrated the ability to identify the strengths and the unique contribution of those they work with?
- **Trust yourself, your team and the team process.** Is there confidence in themselves and the team process that can be seen in the action plan?

There is one final focal point that can be observed and shaped as we walk with our students in this phase of development. How do they manage their time and priorities? Pue observes, “When mentoring leaders, the issue of time and priorities comes up frequently... Mentors can help leaders find a system that works for them and will help bring about the renewed balance and increased productivity to their lives. The two must be tied together” (Mentoring Leaders, 160 *sidebar*). After sharing some ideas from Stephen Covey’s *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, he comments that “mentors can serve as a powerful encouragement to leaders by giving them permission to pursue these priorities towards a balanced life” (166). I am assuming that our mentor’s vast experience adds both weight and context to the importance of identifying right priorities and maintaining a healthy life balance. Let’s pass these life-lessons on to our mentees.

The Sustaining Phase

In the Sustaining Phase, the focus is on assisting the leader to know how to lead and continue to sustain the vision. Introducing this phase, Pue says, “it is at this stage that leaders once again have a difficult time. Once we are past the excitement of visioneering, and the strategic implementation of the vision, it seems as though sustaining is simply not as exciting. The entrepreneurial leader and even those who are less entrepreneurial have a desire to move on. Restlessness sets in” (22-23). He addresses that “restlessness” from two perspectives - first, by going back to the core of the Mentoring Matrix, self-awareness, to explore whether there is insight or insecurity that is evident that the leader must be freed from; and second, by addressing restlessness through the lens of opportunity to reframe and refresh the vision for the organization.

Pue opens this section of *Mentoring Leaders* with an assortment of insightful statements (201-202):

- Learning to sustain yourself in leadership and in your ministry is one of the most challenging phases of the mentoring matrix.
- It is the nature of leaders to always be moving forward, but as their organizations mature, an “unsettledness” begins to grow.
- The gifts and skills that brought you to this point may not be what are needed to maintain the good work that has been established.
- As leaders mature in their leadership, they also have different needs and pressures spiritually.

Each of these statements hold potential mentoring conversations with our mentees, but there are two specific aspects addressed in the sustaining phase that are relevant to the conversations we are having with our mentees as they establish healthy leadership practice.

The first aspect is this, “how do we keep up with change?” Pue observes that “Change is a foundational reality to organizational life, and no ministry or leader is immune from it” (210). “We as leaders can respond to change in one of two ways: 1) do nothing, muddle along, and risk being overwhelmed by the effects of change; or 2) undertake extensive planning and try to use change to our advantage” (211). Note this interesting observation, “When mentoring leaders in the phase of the mentoring matrix where they are learning to sustain themselves and their ministry, it is interesting to note that even younger leaders begin to display traits of being change resistant” (211). The mentoring question that emerges here is, “what reactions/responses am I observing in my mentee as change is forging their future?”

It would go beyond my purpose here to present models for managing change. However, one of Pue’s comments caught my attention, “...recognize that the past is history that you can build on and the future is there waiting to be engaged by the team taking on a new, optimal shape” (205). At Northview, there is a keen awareness of the reality of change as we move now to what are hopefully the final stages of the effects of a global pandemic, and into a new phase of transitioning senior leadership. Both provide opportunity: the first to reflect on the kind and quality of leadership given; the second to apply the lessons learned and insight gained to forge a new ‘optimal’ path forward.

There is a second aspect of sustaining ministry effectiveness that can be enhanced by the opportunity afforded to us in mentoring these emerging leaders - addressing the issue of threats to

ministry marriage. Arrow Leadership has documented and tracked various stresses to ministry leadership, which I have copied below:

Threats to Ministry Marriage

- Inability to balance family life and ministry
- Leaders more concerned about calling than marriage covenant
- Failing to facilitate partner's dreams - not helping one another grow
- Failing to have fun
- Alternative confidant found outside marriage
- Money problems
- Ministry makes spouse live like a single parent/widow/widower
- Unfulfilled expectations
- Admiration sought from someone other than partner
- Isolation

"Although the order of ministry marriage issues may differ somewhat from class to class, the first one is always clearly at the top of the list. Note how the second, "Leaders more concerned about calling than marriage covenant," links to the first (228).

My experience with students in the Immerse program and ministry in general affirms that emerging leaders are well acquainted with these ministry stresses. It is unlikely that pre-defined Immerse ODAs will adequately identify and/or address the stresses and fractures that present as symptoms in ministry marriages. Especially in these situations, it is the depth of relationship, and interest in our mentee's whole life, that will lead to opportunities to uncover and address these potentially destructive stresses. Of course, the balance, and the benefit of a mentoring paradigm in ministry development, is the experience and care of the mentor to draw on their life and ministry experience in an effort to address the issue and advance the development of healthy ministry life-style, a life-style that envisions biblical and wholesome balance and priorities so that marriages and families are strengthened, not corrupted, by a leadership and ministry calling.

My purpose over the course of this first year of the **Mentoring Mastery** newsletter has been to begin the construction of a framework that guides and assists us in our roles as mentors of emerging ministry leaders. Carson Pue's *Mentoring Leaders: Wisdom for Developing Character, Calling and Competency* has been a helpful resource to picture that structure and progression through the Mentoring Matrix.

Two questions have served to guide my thoughts in presenting and summarizing Mentoring Leaders as a resource for mentoring in the Northview Immerse program.

The first question focused on developing the best in ourselves - how do we master mentoring? If I were to highlight one key takeaway from the year in this aspect of mentoring it would be this - I hope that we see that mentoring is first and foremost an investment of ourselves in the relationship with our mentee. They are beginning a journey on roads that we have already travelled. Our commitment is to enter into the learning journey with our mentees. The key practice is consistently, and perhaps generously, sharing time and attention with our students. The skills utilized in mentoring can and will be learned along the way. Both quantity and quality time is lost if not invested in a timely fashion.

The second question seeks to draw out the best in our students - how do we mentor mastery? The key takeaway for this aspect of mentoring would be this - there is significant and unique value in your experience.

The key practice is identifying what might be called “application overlap” - inserting the wisdom of your insight and experience at the appropriate time to facilitate meaningful application of the learning components.

It is not exposure to content that is new to our mentees. It is the consistent implementation of a quality process for understanding and applying their knowledge and anticipating its leadership consequences that is new. Northview has invited mentors who can draw on experience and the knowledge that they have already mastered concepts and consequences that the student is seeking to master. A key thought for me here is learning to see beyond the assignment and asking the question, how is the assignment guiding and shaping them?

Undoubtedly, there is much more to learn as we seek to master mentoring and to mentor mastery. I trust and pray that some of the content that has been surveyed, or some insight that has been shared, or some application that has been made might have found its way into your mind, heart and practice. Thank you for your service and investment in our future leaders!