

A MENTOR'S FINGERPRINT

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LEAVE A MARK. MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Ann Griffiths
Donna Inglis



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We dedicate this book to those who have patiently mentored us
and to those whom we have had the privilege to mentor.

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Preface

THE JOURNEY FROM concept to completion of this book is one we'd like to share with you, but more importantly we want to emphasize that what you're holding in your hands is not intended to show you how to create another program. Rather, it is meant to awaken the reality that we all mentor every day and to provide you with skills to do it better. We believe that as we all come alongside one another, we are encouraged in our walk with God, and friendships and families are strengthened.

Shortly after Ann and her husband began attending the same church as Donna and her husband, Ann was asked to head up the ministry to women and Donna agreed to be part of the women's leadership team. Though we had previously known each other, we became close friends as we worked together. We also learned that we had a lot in common—including our belief in the importance of mentoring.

As we talked about the value of mentoring we realized that, even though there wasn't a formal mentoring program in our church, mentoring was taking place. However, while women were mentoring women and men were mentoring men as part of their everyday lives, they did not necessarily see themselves as mentors, or realize that

they were mentoring. We believed that learning added skills would further enhance the lifestyle mentoring that we saw happening.

To test our belief, we created a rough outline of what we might teach in a weekly course and promoted it to the women of our church to determine their level of interest in the subject. To our delight enough women registered to fill not one, but two classes.

Armed with this confirmation, and a deadline to begin in two weeks, we began developing the course content—keeping one lesson ahead of the class. Each week, we challenged women to use the skills we taught. And each week, we heard enthusiastic reports about the positive effects they were seeing in their life, their work, their ministries, and the people with whom they were in contact.

As the course progressed, we received encouragement to put our material into book form and believed God was leading us to proceed down that road. When a friend recommended a Christian writers' conference that was being held in a nearby city, we decided to attend with two goals in mind: to learn more about publishing, and to confirm that God really was leading us in this direction. At the last moment, we threw our lesson material into the trunk of the car. When we walked into the conference, we knew we were supposed to be there and that God had already set everything in motion for the message of this book to reach many people. We simply had to trust Him and take each step as it came along—even though we didn't know where the path would lead.

Not long into the conference, we met Athena. The connection was immediate, as we discussed our vision and heart to see men and women understand the value of mentoring in their everyday relationships and recognize that they too are being mentored. Two days later, we were on our way home from the conference with a confirmed publisher for our book and a huge challenge ahead of us. The lessons now needed to be rewritten and expanded into a publishable manuscript.

This book would not have been possible without the amazing support and willingness of the women who participated in the two classes that launched our original material. It is with love and appreciation for each of you that we thank you for “going with the flow” and giving your insightful feedback. May you continue to influence others and leave a mark for eternity.

Thank you to Athena Dean for believing in us and the message of this book, and our editor/coach Barbara Kois for your brainstorming, editing knowledge, and giving us room to be ourselves so we could grow through the process. Our phone conversations and emails have morphed into evolving friendships with each of you.

A special thank you to our husbands, Jim and Max, for your faith in us and for being our special champions. You have always believed in us—for which we are forever grateful. Thank you too to our families and closest friends who cheered us on with, “You can do it.”

And a big thank you to you, our reader, for picking this book up, reading it, and encouraging others to do the same. May you be inspired and challenged to put the principles and skills of this book into practice. And may you leave an unforgettable mentor’s fingerprint on the world.

—Ann and Donna

P.S. from Donna

The book you hold in your hands is the work of Ann, whom I believe to be a gifted writer. I have been blessed to work alongside her as I shared thoughts and experiences and fulfilled research needs. But Ann is the one who has diligently labored over it and made it a reality. May you learn, as we have, that God put us into a body to impact each other for growth and for His glory.

Introduction

WHEN DONNA AND I were children, life principles were fed into our lives by people who took an interest in us. During our teen and young adult years, men and women encouraged us to discover and sharpen our gifts and talents. They guided us as we maneuvered our way toward adulthood. Even now, there are people we value as our mentors—friends who share their wisdom and experience when we need someone to walk with us through challenges or victories. And yes, we mentor each other.

Before Donna and I committed to co-create and teach our first mentoring course, our conversations were peppered with memories of people who had made an impact on our own lives—people who had mentored us—some intentionally and some unknowingly. Throughout this book, you'll meet some of those men and women.

In turn, we want to help you remember those who left a mark and made a difference in your life. We want you to understand that you are mentoring others as you come alongside them, sharing your experiences and insights. We want you to think about what

kind of fingerprint you're leaving on the people in your life. And we want to give you tools to help you be an even more effective formal or informal mentor.

In truth, we all mentor all the time, whether we realize it or not. Those who made a difference in your life may not have thought of it as mentoring. Maybe they were teachers or club leaders who took a special interest in you. Or perhaps it was someone who guided you through a difficult period in your life. Or maybe it was a friend or relative who shaped your attitudes as you watched him or her maneuver a difficult situation or respond to a significant success. Whether they realized it, or you understood it, they were mentoring you.

Mentoring crosses generational, cultural, and economic boundaries. It's where mentors and mentees enfold and engage one another in healthy relationships that encourage growth in all areas and stages of life. It empowers us to live a transformational lifestyle that strengthens us in our relationships and encourages us in our walk with God.

We have seen many come to a newfound freedom as they became more intentional in feeding into the lives of others, and as they implement the skills you will learn in *A Mentor's Fingerprint*. Our desire is that you too will gain that same enthusiasm, and experience what mentoring can do in and through your life as you allow yourself to be used by God to reach into the hearts of people and affect their lives for eternity.

We truly hope that *A Mentor's Fingerprint* will inspire you to leave a mark and make a difference.

SECTION I

The Evidence for Mentoring

CHAPTER I

Moments in Time

There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly.

—R. Buckminster Fuller

THE MORNING SUN warmed my face as I drove through the metal gate and onto the paved parking lot that surrounded a steel and glass office building. It wasn't until I entered my new client's corner office and glanced out the window that I realized I was looking at the land my paternal grandparents had homesteaded in the early 1900s. This was the company that had, years before, transformed my grandparents' hay and alfalfa fields into concrete and asphalt. This was the acreage where my uncle had died at the age of ten, my father was born, and I spent the first six years of my life.

My grandparents' journey to this part of the world began when my grandfather left my grandmother and their two boys in England to build a home in the land of opportunity. When they joined him a year later, they cleared, plowed, planted, and worked hard. They

laughed and cried. They won and lost. And they built a home that they dreamed would last for generations.

But the dream ended when this same corporation that now contracted with me to coach a couple of their executives, had expropriated my grandparents' land. When Grandma and Grandpa refused to leave, men with bulldozers and heavy machinery rolled up to the front of the farmhouse to take possession. And my eighty-something, defender-of-justice grandfather met them at the door with a shotgun, in a valiant, but futile, attempt to save his home from corporate progress.

As I drove away from the sprawling glass and steel buildings, I reminisced about early life on the farm and how hard my grandparents had worked. Not only had they been farmers; they had also been courageous pioneers who left indelible fingerprints of their lives on my life.

I let my mind replace the now paved road with the fields that I ran in as a child. I pictured my grandparents' English-style cottage and the home that my father and grandfather had built for my parents when they were married. I saw myself as a young girl walking over the railroad tracks that ran through the middle of the farm, dividing our home from the rest of my grandparents' acres of land. I recalled my white-haired grandma standing at the pole fence and waving as I hiked across the field to get the goat's milk that was the only thing my little sister could drink. And, in my memory, I heard Grandma call to me as my five-year-old legs ran toward her tall frame. I felt her calluses as we walked hand in hand toward the barn. I smelled the damp soil of the root cellar as we descended the stone stairs to pick out some vegetables. And I heard my grandma scold the chickens who disapproved when we entered the coop to gather their eggs.

Now, more than fifty years later, I drove past buildings and street lights. There was nothing to show that my grandparents had ever been there or that once upon a time, my sister and I ran in

the fields and picked buttercups. Even the road that once bore my grandparents' name was now a number and the gardens and fields had been replaced with pavement and steel. All that remained was the matter-of-fact recollection of a corporate executive who said, "Oh, yes, this used to be a farm."

Are memories all that remain? True, the farm that my grandparents had developed and the home where I spent the first years of my life are gone. My grandparents are gone, and the family they raised on the farm is gone. What remains are their fingerprints on my life—fingerprints that made a difference. Memories with pictures, words, and feelings all wrapped up in who I am today.

Intentionally and unintentionally, my grandparents mentored me. They taught me by what they said and how they lived. They influenced me by what they achieved and who they were. The life skills I learned, the tenacious spirit I inherited, and the memories I cherish are all part of who I am today. And the journey from generation to generation continues.

When I think about the speck of space I occupy in this world and the tiny role I play in the whole realm of history, I am in awe. On the one hand, I feel irrelevant and wonder what significance I could possibly have on anything. On the other hand, I feel privileged to be part of God's vast creation that stretches from the beginning of time to the end. I am overwhelmed with a sense that I was created to fulfill a special part of God's master plan—for such a time as this.

Maybe you've felt that way too.

Only the passage of time will reveal if something tangible remains to say, "Ann was here" or "Donna was here" or "John was here." However, what I do know is that we make a difference by what we pass on to others through our words and actions.

Our houses may disappear, our books may fade, and our possessions may crumble, but what we leave in the hearts and minds

of people will leave an impression on more lives than we will ever know; and we have no idea what beautiful butterfly may emerge.

When we mentor one person, we're not just leaving an imprint on the life of that person. We're also affecting the lives of every person he or she touches.

For Such a Time as This

The Bible tells us about a man named Mordecai who became the guardian of his young cousin, Esther. After her parents died, he nurtured and guided her into womanhood. As I reflect on that story, I wonder if Mordecai had any idea the impact his mentoring would have. When Esther accepted the challenge to go before the king to defend her people, I wonder if she even thought about the far-reaching implications her actions would have on future generations.

Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, 'Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?'

—Est. 4:12-14

God used Mordecai to mentor his cousin Esther and unknowingly prepare her for a special moment in time. Though Esther knew it could cost her her life, she went before the king to plead for the lives of her people.

Esther could have missed out on God's plan and blessing for her life, for her family, and for her people. Instead, she grew into a woman the king chose as his queen and she saved the Jewish nation. If she had turned her back on what she learned from Mentor Mordecai and dismissed the plot to exterminate her people, the

Bible says that God would have raised up someone else to deliver them. And we would be reading a much different story about Esther—if we'd be reading one at all.

Mordecai made a difference in the life of Esther and they both affected the lives of a whole nation, for generations.

What about you? What difference are you making in the lives of people around you? What are you conveying through your words? What are you showing in your actions and attitudes? What mark are you leaving on the lives of your children, grandchildren, and others? Is it an upright and godly example—one that demonstrates the power of God and what He has done in your life? Or do you sometimes find yourself hoping that your children and grandchildren won't duplicate what they see in you?

Think about the difference it could make to future generations if we took time to come alongside a family member. What if we set aside our busy schedule to walk with a friend during a difficult time in life? What if we encouraged a young person to reach beyond his or her comfort zone?

God uses our mistakes, our victories, and ordinary moments to fulfill a greater purpose. We don't know what event or word or action will impact someone. But we do know that we are leaving fingerprints on the lives of people every day. May the moments that make up our lives leave a positive and inspiring legacy.

Mentoring Moment

1. Think about the family members who have made a difference in your life. What was it about them that influenced you for good or bad?
2. What experiences have given you opportunity to come alongside members of your family?

3. Besides Mordecai and Esther, what biblical family relationships demonstrate a mentoring moment that affected generations?
4. Read at least the first eight chapters of Esther. Which character in this story is your life fingerprint most like: King Xerxes, Queen Vashti, Haman, his wife Zeresh, Mordecai, or Esther?
5. How would you describe the fingerprint you are leaving for your family?

CHAPTER 2

Friends for All Time

*Friends are angels who lift us to our feet when our wings
have trouble remembering how to fly.*

—Author Unknown

FRIENDS COME IN all shapes, sizes, colors, and temperaments. They have different interests, talents, and personalities. And they each leave a mark on our lives.

Years ago, it became clear to me that my number one personal core value is relationships. And it still holds true today. For some people, this may mean that having many friends around all the time is important, or that family is everything. For me, the value of relationships means that I enjoy developing lasting and meaningful memories in and through loving and close relationships with my husband, children, grandchildren, and close friends.

Knowing how important friends are to me, my husband, Jim, daughter, Sarah, and two close friends organized a unique milestone birthday party for me. To first throw my inquisitive but surprise-loving senses off, they arranged a dinner for twelve at our favorite

Italian restaurant. It was a relaxed event with lots of laughing, talking, and no one wanting to leave at the end of the evening.

At the dinner party, Sarah gave me a handmade invitation to join her the next weekend for a mother-daughter day. I later learned that it was a setup to get me out of the house while friends arrived and preparations were made for a surprise party.

Sarah and I had a great time visiting antique shops and talking over lunch. I was disappointed when she told me that we had to be home earlier than expected because her husband had a meeting he had to get to. It also turned out to be part of the scheme to “get Mom,” because when we arrived home promptly at three o’clock, the house was full of women—all friends of mine, ready to celebrate my birthday.

My dream of bringing girlfriends together from different parts of my life had come true. And here they were—old and new, young and not so young. Friends from diverse cultures and backgrounds with different interests and abilities. Some quiet mannered. Some party lovers. But all classy, strong women with passion and conviction.

It was fun to move from room to room at that party and watch groups of friends chat and exchange stories. These were women of all ages and stages of life, from twenty-something up through eighty-something. Many were meeting each other for the first time and discovering that they like each other. Some had known me for just a few months, others for all or most of my life. Some came from my business and corporate life. Some from my church and ministry life. Some had shared in my music and performance life, and some in my writing and school life. Yet here they were. Each one had made a mark on my life. All had left fingerprints to last forever. New friendships were born and old friends connected at a party that still prompts me to reflect on the diverse friends who have fed into my life—friends who have mentored me.

Each Friend Makes a Difference

When someone comes into our life, we don't know if the connection will be short-lived or if it will blossom into a lifelong friendship. Sometimes God gives us a special friend to walk with us through a certain phase of our life. Sometimes a friend comes in, goes out, and comes back into our life later on. And sometimes we are privileged to experience a meaningful friendship that lasts a lifetime. Either way, each friend mentors us in his or her own unique way.

As we walk alongside our friends, and they with us, we learn from each other. We encourage each other. We challenge and support each other. When difficult times come, we hold each other close. And when we experience high points, we celebrate each other's accomplishments. In short, our friends mentor us through the good, the bad, and the ugly. And we mentor them.

Friends Mentor Each Other

One of the most memorable friendships of the Bible is the story of David and Jonathan that begins in 1 Samuel 18. Their first meeting is right after David killed Goliath, who, with the Philistines, had threatened to take the Israelites captive. When David is brought before King Saul and his son, Jonathan, he enters their presence with the bloody head of Goliath in his hand. After David finishes speaking, Scripture says that Jonathan loved David.

As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

—1 Sam. 18:1

Later in the story of David and Jonathan, Saul and Jonathan are killed in battle and we read of David's lament over their deaths.

*How I weep for you, my brother Jonathan! Oh, how much I loved you!
And your love for me was deep, deeper than the love of women!*

—2 Sam. 1:26, NLT

The biblical example of David and Jonathan teaches us a lot about the everyday things we say and do that serve as mentoring moments between friends. Here are three lessons:

LOYALTY IS LONG TERM

On more than one occasion, David and Jonathan pledged their loyalty to each other. Beginning with their first meeting and until Jonathan's death, that commitment stayed true.

Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor; and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

—1 Sam. 18:3-4

Loyal friends don't run when the going gets tough. We stand by our friends through life's ups and downs, rights and wrongs.

ENCOURAGEMENT RENEWS STRENGTH

While King Saul's obsession drove him to pursue David because he wanted to end his life, Jonathan went to David "and strengthened his hand in God" (1 Sam. 23:16). As I read this, I pictured Jonathan taking David's hand and placing it in the hand of God as he encouraged him. During a very difficult time in his life, Jonathan led David to the Source of strength.

When we encourage and pray for each other, we are putting our friend's hands into the hands of God. We are reminding him or her of God's strength in any situation.

BEING A CHAMPION BRINGS NEW PERSPECTIVE

Jonathan did more than tell David not to be afraid and that everything would be okay. Jonathan pointed him to the bigger picture. He helped David focus. He told him that Saul would not kill him and that he would be the next king (see 1 Sam. 23:17). He dreamed big for David at a time when David could only see danger around him.

When we come alongside our friends and help them refocus, we help them put circumstances and events into perspective. We cheer them on and we challenge them to reach beyond what they see around them.

Friends Leave Fingerprints

Do you think of yourself as a mentor to your friends? Conversely, do you think of your friends as mentors to you? Like family members, friends teach and learn from each other. Friends mentor friends through their words and through their actions.

For example, when you pray with, and encourage a friend, you mentor her by guiding her to the Source of all comfort. And when your friend sits and listens while you talk about a concern in your life, she mentors you with affirming words or by asking questions that can lead you to dig deeper or gain a different perspective.

When people look at you and your relationships with your friends, do they see the biblical example of David and Jonathan? Do they see someone they can count on, someone who encourages rather than criticizes, and someone who dreams big when life seems impossible?

Imagine what life would be like if we were all more mindful of the fingerprints we are leaving on the lives of our friends. If we were more aware of how we mentor each other every day, would our actions change? Would our vocabulary change? Would our lives change?

Mentoring as a lifestyle means that we live our lives as if they matter. As if someone is watching, listening, and learning from us all the time. However, it's what's inside us that determines what kind of mentoring example we live and what kind of fingerprint we leave. Later, we will look at the heart and disciplines that set a godly mentor apart from others.

*What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—
practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*

—Phil. 4:9

Mentoring Moment

1. Read the story of David and Jonathan in 1 Samuel 18 to 2 Samuel 1. In addition to the three lessons listed in this chapter, what more can David and Jonathan teach us about how friends mentor friends?
2. Recall a time when you came alongside a friend to challenge, pray, or encourage him or her.
3. What difference would it make in your friendships if you knew that your words and actions were leaving a mark on your friends' lives?