"The Power of Mentoring"

Have you ever reflected upon the successes in your life and wondered who was there to help you along the way? The overwhelming response for most of us would be, that there was someone there encouraging, motivating and inspiring us to find our path of excellence.

Mentoring is important because of the enormous and positive impact it can have on a mentees life and the personal growth it provides a mentor in return. Academics alone don’t provided us with the skills necessary for successful job placement, nor do they adequately prepared us for professional work life. Given the current economic landscape and highly competitive nature of today’s job search, it’s obvious that many cannot achieve success without some assistance. The rigors involved in job-search, networking, promoting our personal brand and influencing future employers requires guidance and timely counsel. This much desired guidance can be facilitated by an experienced HR professional mentor.

It’s no surprise that some of the most successful and influential people in the world attribute their success to a strong mentoring relationship. Two such examples are Martin Luther King Jr. and Oprah Winfrey. Martin Luther King Jr. was mentored by Dr. Benjamin Elijah Mays. He showed Dr. King how to achieve social change in a meaningful and positive way. While Oprah Winfrey attributes her success to her fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Duncan.

As a young man and athlete, my physical education teacher Mr. Nair (St. Paul’s School) made an indelible impression me. He boosted my self-confidence and impressed upon me the importance of finding value in every opportunity that came my way. He taught me discipline and what was required to execute personal goals in the face of adversity. When I was searching for my first job in Toronto, my mentor Eric Draycott (HR Director at City of Mississauga) taught me how to leverage my strengths and not to worry about the non-essentials. He provided comfort by assuring me that I was not required to be an expert in every facet of Human Resources.

I spoke with Peel chapter members who have participated in the Mentoring Program to gather their perspectives, insights and experiences in serving as mentors and mentees.

Some of the reasons they chose to become a Mentor included; an opportunity to help those aspiring to be future HR Leaders, an opportunity to inspire others and impart valuable insights, personal and professional growth and development, an opportunity to meet other HR professionals and finally that they themselves had benefitted from a strong mentoring relationship and wanted to give back.
Some of the take-aways from their mentorship experiences included; improved listening skills, feeling motivated and inspired, (mentors) learned from mentees experiences, improved confidence and leadership skills, impacted others, became a better person and finally many made long-lasting friendships.

In closing, I’d like to share a powerful quote from Winston Churchill “We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give”. It is my hope that each of us can be intentional about our mentoring goals and strive to make a positive difference in our mentee’s life. Remember, One day of mentoring can change a life forever.

Denny George