READY TO USE MENTORING

# Base-zero relationships

I know we all like to think we’re completely honest with people around us, but in reality I’d guess that for most, if not all of us, in our various relationships there’s always something we hold back. There are always times when we’re careful how we communicate what we’re going through, or ways in which we twist and manipulate the complexities of who we are, our shadows and darker characteristics – our sin – and our feelings. In many contexts this is normal and perhaps wise. However, the power of sin is in shame and hiding it away, the danger of poor mental health is in not talking about it; and the risk of trying to project things about ourselves to gloss over or mask our weaknesses is in pretending they don’t exist.

I’m lucky enough to have one friendship in particular – a peer-mentoring relationship – which has zero hidden corners, pretences, secrets or holding back. We have a rule: ‘No filters’. That means if you think something, you have to say it. No overthinking, no toning thoughts down, no filtering through diplomacy or self-protecting by polishing things away from the gritty truth underneath. I’m coining this as ‘Base-zero relationships’. It’s been a revelation for me personally.

You can’t face up to things until you can see them.

You can’t be truly free until you are no longer hiding anything. Including from yourself.

This is a hard thing to achieve – you have to be vulnerable, you have to trust the other person implicitly. And it takes time. But as we reveal ourselves, warts and all, bit by bit there is a powerful healing, a freeing process like no other. This is why God encourages us in the Bible to “confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayers of a righteous person…[are] powerful” (James 5:16). In my mind being ‘righteous’ means being ‘right with God’, that is, having no secrets. It doesn’t mean being perfect, it just means being honest and having pure intentions and motivations.

Is this something you need as a mentor?

Is this something you could discuss with your mentee? Is this something that this year would be appropriate to aspire to attain for or with your mentee? A place where they don’t have to hold back but can talk about literally anything without any fear of judgement or disapproval? Could you manage to be that for your mentee? It may mean you too have to be vulnerable with your mentee. But this will itself be massively powerful and influential in them. Are you brave enough to go to that length? To go beyond being a nice person who asks good questions? To risk vulnerability for the sake of deep and profound growth and revelation for your mentee – *and* for you?

Start off the year with strong, aspirational intentions. Don’t set resolutions (that can be easily broken and motivation lost…) set *resolve* to aspire towards specific, tangible, ambitious but achievable goals.

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