

How many of you have had a mentor in your life???? It could be someone who mentored you in college or in your career....or it could have been someone in this room who mentored you when you joined Soroptimist...

I'd like to give you a little background about myself as it relates to the topic today. After teaching for about 30 years, I was given an opportunity to become a career mentor to novice teachers. I received extensive training at and through the New Teacher Center in Santa Cruz, CA.

There are many reasons why anyone beginning a new career needs a mentor. Some of the reasons a novice teacher needs a mentor is to increase teacher effectiveness and to move the teachers'

practice forward. *Two other very important reasons are to PROMOTE TEACHER RETENTION and to BUILD TEACHER LEADERSHIP SKILLS.*

Today, I'm going to talk about MENTORING AND BEING A MENTOR as it relates to Soroptimist and **RETAINING MEMBERS** who join Soroptimist and to help them develop as **CLUB LEADERS.**

How many of you here today at the GOLDEN WEST REGION SPRING CONFERENCE have experienced having new members join their club only to resign within months or even a year or two???? There may be many reasons for that. Today I'd like to talk about MENTORING as a way to RETAIN new members. The COLLECTIVE IMPACT is that MENTORING can have significant and positive

effects on member retention and, hopefully, promote participation in the Dream It, Be It and Live Your Dream programs.

After slide 2- Shortly after I joined SIP, I was asked to chair the Silent Auction for Theatre Night. A few months before the event, I broke my wrist. I was so worried about letting the club down, but being new, I was not quite sure what to do. After the Fundraising status report at a business meeting, Terry Parker asked me what night I was free the next week. I replied WEDNESDAY. She stood up and said "Marcia needs help with the silent auction. Be at her house at 7 PM next Wednesday." So I ordered some pizza and at the designated time, TWELVE ANGELS descended upon my house bearing baskets, auction items, certificates and supplies. Oh, and wine, lots of wine. Within 3 hours, dozens of baskets were prepared

for the silent auction and my fate was sealed as an actively participating member of Soroptimist. That's the impact of informal group mentoring.

A formal mentoring relationship is intentional and one that's based on shared values and clear expectations. Mentoring is building a relationship. Not much will happen until the mentee feels comfortable and looks forward to seeing you. The mentor has to be willing to be a mentor and to believe that she has something to offer a new member. The mentor must express genuine caring to the new member. Mentoring is important because it ensures that each new member has someone who is interested in her development as a new member and cares about her as an individual.

It is crucial that a *CONNECTION* is made

early on. As a career mentor, it was easy to have the shared connection of being educators. As a Soroptimist, you will have to find those connections. Start with the shared vision of advancing women's potential.

After Slide 5 One of the things I did to prepare to talk about MENTORING was to survey two groups of people. I asked them to tell me what were some positive examples of being mentored and what could their mentor have done to make them feel more welcome, knowledgeable and comfortable. One of the groups was members new to SIP within the last five years. The other group was teachers who were in the mentor program when I was a mentor. A member of SIP said "If someone is going to be a mentor, they really need to personally reach out to the new member." So there's that connection piece that is so

important.

After Slide 10 A comment from a teacher was the best thing was a smile and a listening ear. Don't ever underestimate the impact of listening.

After Slide 16 One of the teachers said that she had a different mentor in her second year and felt as though she couldn't trust her because the mentor had talked to her about other teachers.

After Slide 17 One of the club members said she was assigned a mentor who was not very active in the club and never reached out to her.

After Slide 20 An SIP member said her mentor was great about updating her and educating her on upcoming events and opportunities. While another said she would

have appreciated having someone explain how to RSVP for meetings on the club website, explain what the different acronyms are and another said it is important to have someone go over expectations.

After Slide 25 One of the teachers said she appreciated being allowed to vent and receiving encouragement, while another said her mentor encouraged her to verbalize questions she was afraid to ask.

Now that you know the skills involved in being a mentor, I'd like to share an experience I had as a mentor. It was my first year and the district had hired over a hundred novice teachers. The four mentors that year held a seminar for those new teachers to meet them and explain the program and our expectations. The new teachers all excitedly entered the

conference room dressed in their Sunday best, ties for the men and dresses for the women. We greeted them all and introduced ourselves. During this process, I noticed an exceptionally tall, very young looking man in shorts, a t-shirt and baseball cap. He found a place in the back of the room and slouched into a chair with his legs stretched out. I thought to myself that hopefully he was a high school teacher so maybe one of the other mentors would have him on her roster. At the end of the day, we read our lists and asked our mentees to follow us to another room. Sure enough, the young man followed along with my group. In this instance, I can tell you with 100% certainty that my first impression was absolutely INCORRECT. Zach turned out to be an engaging teacher who was always very happy to see me, his MENTOR, visit his classroom. His students were always engaged in their

learning and adored him because he truly cared about them and their learning. He picked my brain and eagerly attended any professional development opportunity I offered him. Fast forward 10 years, today Zach is half a dissertation away from earning his doctorate and has been chosen to be an assistant principal at an elementary school. We have kept in close contact over the years, with him coming to dinner every few months or so because he loves my husband's cooking. In March, I told him that I would be doing this **KEYNOTE** on mentoring and he was very interested, asking what my plans were. I told him I was thinking about a powerpoint using quotes and pictures. His reply was excellent, just don't use black and white and make sure you tell stories. So...I have come full circle with one of my mentees. He became my mentor a few weeks ago when he came over and asked to see my

powerpoint. He didn't tell me what to do, but instead asked guiding questions and I arrived at the answers.

Before Slide 29

Now, I'd like to conclude with a short exercise. I'd like everyone to **QUIETLY** stand if you are able and face someone nearby. Look at that person, observe without judgement, be present. Okay, now close your eyes. **QUIETLY** First, I'd like you to reflect back on a happy childhood memory. How did you feel? Was there a physical reaction to that memory? Now, think about your first job. It could be a part time job while you were in high school or it could be that first placement in your career. How did you feel? What is your memory of that? Finally, I'd like you to reflect on a sad time or time of loss in your life. How did that make you feel? Does that memory still bring

back the same physical reaction? Now, **QUIETLY** open your eyes and look at the person you are facing. My challenge to you is to *never forget* your story and to *never forget* that every single person you meet has a story. As you become a mentor, remember that your mentee has a story as well. Help them to write the next chapter to that story.

BE THE MENTOR YOU WISH YOU HAD