

Linked



Mentoring Shout!

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“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.”
Benjamin Franklin

Mentorship means far more than helping someone make the “right “ decision; in fact it is more like a journey where two vessels learn from another and are engaging at the highest level along the way. I can say that in my personal and professional career, I have had many of teachers and few mentors. However, those who I look to as my mentors have some of the same qualities. First and foremost their ability to listen without judgement, their knack for consistency, the skill to give feedback that feels more like direction as opposed to providing the answer, the ability to speak life and positivity in most situations without fail, and the willingness to experience things along with me rather than the side-lines.

In my teen years is when I could say I met my first mentor besides my mother. At first I thought her to be odd and out of place, hanging out in the recreation center day-after-day, getting to know me and my friends. She was patient, kind and not overwhelming which some adults can come off as. She did not force the friendship and

often allowed me and my friends to set the pace. As I began to trust that she wasn't hired to go the extra mile, have talks about my future and challenge me to see and do things in different ways, it was then I was fully engaged to allow the process of relationship building to take place. Her consistency was most incredible because at 13 years old who really is accountable and on time? But there never was doubt in my mind that she wasn't going to show up. She often prayed on my behalf when I didn't have the words, and helped me to express my thoughts and feelings when I thought no one could relate, and through her own perseverance and model behavior regarding success and committing to her goal, I too felt confident in becoming a successful woman myself. Her tenacity and will to finish Law school, and commit to her goal that she pursued after taking some time off from school to work, taught me to never lose sight of the end goal and that everyone has a different path and timeline. Not only was she there to mentor me and my friends, our friendship has taken on a peer form and has grown over the years; From attending her wedding, going over the best colleges to choose, to doing brunch, chatting about professional goals and transitions, and now visiting her and her growing family out of state. Although we are not in contact as much with our hectic lives I'm sure that I can pick up the phone and it would feel as if time has not passed us by.

Some things I was told I may have forgotten, some things I was taught I have retained, every bit of engagement I have put to use. Amy Tyson-Pettway you were one of my true mentors, and I hope you've gotten just as much out of the friendship that I have.

Kiana Walbrook is a current staff member of Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City. To become a volunteer mentor or to learn more about Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC, log onto www.bigsnyc.org or call 212-686-2042.