

XV. The Enactment of Generativity Two: Mentoring Individuals and Organizations

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This essay is devoted to insights offered by our Sage leaders about Generativity Two, as represented in the processes of mentoring both individuals and organizations. We begin with our leaders' reflections on their role as mentors. We then expand this perspective by talking about four related roles played by generative leaders: mediator, monitor, motivator, and mobilizer. Along with mentoring, these become the "Five M's" of Generative Two leadership. (Quehl and Bergquist, 2012).

We start this review by emphasizing the complex nature of Generative Two mentoring. Our Sage leaders describe a variety of ways in which they provide mentoring as organizational leaders. At this starting point, one of our Sage leaders said:

I have a management role that I play. I supervise a number of programs, and my style is a mentoring role. I support staff in their leadership and help to move our department into new areas, like chronic disease prevention. I also create partnerships for the department by providing community service in ways that further the mission of public health.

In her brief description, this leader defines mentoring as not only support for other members of her organization, but also mentoring ideas and partnerships with other organizations. We will see additional ways that mentoring takes place as we tune into other Sage leaders in the following paragraphs-and as we then turn to the related roles of mediator, monitor, motivator, and mobilizer.

Mentoring and New Sources of Gratification

One ingredient of the role that mentoring plays in Generativity Two concerns the nature of rewards one receives from seeing other people be successful and acknowledged for their work. It is about expanding our perspective beyond self-based achievement. As one of our generative leaders noted, she is "motivated by the fun of seeing things happen as the result of the efforts of others and myself."

It is also, for her, about finding new sources of gratification:

I see myself primarily as a mentor and enjoy promoting the professional growth of others. I encouraged someone to apply for a countywide coordinator position, and she brought me a bottle of champagne when she got the job. When I asked why, she told me she never thought to apply before I mentioned it. I got a huge charge out of that. That's why teaching, in all of its forms, has been so satisfying for me. I enjoy seeing people succeed and grow.

Learning about Mentorship

Why and how do Sage leaders become mentors? In many cases, they themselves were mentored and found powerful role models among the men and women they worked with when young:

I admire the qualities of calmness and a willingness to listen in a leader. One leader stands out to me. There was an old business partner who was very successful, and he always took the time to listen and be involved. He knew so much more than I did about everything, but he always encouraged my decisions and supported them. And he did this in such a calm manner that it was empowering for me. The biggest thing of value I took from my relationship from him is that I have now developed similar abilities. I discuss a direction with people rather than dictate to them.

Another Sage leader offered a similar, heart-felt reflection on how she learned about mentoring and how she, in turn, "passes forward" this mentoring role:

I have been fortunate to have been mentored by some great individuals throughout my life. They have helped me to grow over the years and have allowed me to become an effective mentor myself. I mentor junior analysts at work, providing them with advice and help with personal training. I also provide role modeling in leading by example. I have extended my mentoring role in my involvement with the Business and Professional Women group of Nevada County, where I am on the mentoring committee. We target young women in their late teens, especially those from underserved populations, and provide mentorships. This includes meeting with the girls, having lunch with them, and

helping them learn about opportunities. It also involves helping them determine what they want to do with their lives and identifying steps they need to achieve their goals.

The Transition to Mentoring

Many of our Sage leaders, whether emerging or senior, reflect on the transition between being "take charge" and "doing it myself" leaders to a more collaborative and mentor-based role. One of our Emerging Sage leaders offers the following reflection:

When I was younger, I was very driven and results oriented. I had to lead by example, and perfection was the goal. Now I view my leadership role more as mentor and coach, giving others the skills to move-up and move on and better themselves and not so much focus on myself. Helping others grow into those roles, not having it be only myself.

Another of our Sage leaders identified the transition primarily in terms of not taking ownership for everything herself (keeping the "monkey" off her back):

I've gotten better at not over-committing by learning when to say "no." I also balance my time better than I did in the past and have more self-acceptance about wherever I'm at in my learning process. And, I'm finding more ways to let go of responsibilities and create the opportunity for other people to step forward. When just I take the lead, it doesn't create much space for other people to step-up. I also now recognize the ego trip I get from being the one person who does it all. I'm trying to give more from my heart, rather than from a place of wanting recognition.

Mentoring with All Levels and at All Levels in the Organization

We found in reviewing the interviews conducted with our Sage leaders that mentorship occurs at many levels in an organization and can be engaged with the young, the middle-aged, and even those men and women who are older than ourselves. Here is someone who enjoys mentoring the young:

My principal civic role here is in mentoring young people. There is one young woman in particular whose mother had been killed in an automobile crash. I helped to mentor her through her grieving process and our relationship continues to this day. I have also been

involved in two other civic roles: as a mobilizer to bring about social change and as a motivator to urge people toward public good and away from self-interest.

Another Sage leader identifies his role as a mentor to those in his organization who are new in the job and need to gain a perspective about how the whole organization works:

Within the probation department, I've had the opportunity to be in all of the units and become fluent in all the aspects of the organization. That's helped me become a leader in the department, and it has served me well. I tell younger department members that they should go after assignments in different areas of the organization, because it gives them such valuable perspective to know that each unit has its own style and culture. Each can benefit from the other.

The mentoring of younger or less experienced employees seems to be most effective if the person doing the mentoring is neither judgmental nor intimidating:

My strongest role is mentor. In my school district position, I often have site administrators who are new or transitioning into a new position. I am the person they contact because I'm not intimidating, and they feel safe in calling me. One of my gifts is being able to put people into the right positions. This is one of the reasons I enjoy the district personnel position. Being able to get the right teacher in the right place is important, because then I know I am impacting many kids. I am a good mentor and really enjoy it.

Generativity Two often involves not just having gained considerable experience in one's working life in an organization, but also having achieved some well-deserved status and position-power in the organization.

In mentoring from the top of the organization, one can often provide protection for the younger or less experienced person being mentored:

I admire leaders who protect their staff and take hits for them. The guy I worked for in Santa Cruz always looked so beat-up, and what he took on was just amazing. Whatever got filtered down to us, he would fight the battle. And when he couldn't fight the whole

battle, he would somehow find a way. That's hard to do sometimes, because the easiest thing to do is avoid fighting the battle.

Generativity Two and the Four Other M's

Through our interviewing of both Emerging and Senior Sage leaders we encouraged a reflection on not only their generative role as mentors, but also the ways in which Generativity Two shows up as mediating, monitoring, motivating, and mobilizing. How do these other M's compliment the generative role of mentoring? We turn first to the role of mediator.

Mediator

This second of the five M's has much to do with conflict. In a complex civic environment, there is room for diverse and passionately held opinions about many issues. We begin with a story provided by one of our Sage leaders about a direct role he played as mediator in a conflict-filled situation:

We had a board member who was abusing the office staff. I met with him and asked that he stop. He thought about it and decided to resign from the board, although he is still supporting the organization. That was a success. He was a major contributor, and I was very much afraid he would stop, but he hasn't. There are also financial issues and the selection of a new Artistic Director. Another role I have played is driving home the fact that we are in a serious recession, that donations and ticket sales are going to be down, and that we must stop spending more each year than the year before. And now we are facing the need to search for a new Executive Director, and it is probable that I will serve on the search committee.

Through our study of Sage leaders, we concluded that the Generativity Two Sage leader who can mediate conflict and help mentor other people to become more effective and collaborative problem-solvers provides an invaluable service to her community (Quehl and Bergquist, 2012).

One of our Sage leaders frames the role of mediator in a broad, historical context:

I always felt this country was founded on people becoming involved in their community. Back then we didn't have professional politicians because business and other leaders would come together to run their community, then leave and someone else would come and do the job. Well, we've screwed that up. I've always felt an obligation to pay back the community, because the people before me established an excellent school system and form of government. I've always felt the need to be involved, and I've always enjoyed it, working with right-thinking people who appreciate the community.

Ultimately, it seems that effective mediation involves many of the analytic and relational skills we identified earlier with regard to alternative definitions of generativity. Mediation (and perhaps all forms of generativity) also seems to require a strong dose of patience:

I have a lot more patience for stupidity than I used to have. In many cases, it's naiveté. Early on, that would irritate me no end. I'd have a hard time being patient with people who didn't get it, or didn't want to get it. I came to accept that sometimes it's just like that.

Monitor

This third of the five M's often complements mentoring by providing an oversight function that is observant rather than judgmental. This is a tricky balance for any Generativity Two leader who wishes to be supportive, but also provide insights and expertise regarding the organization where she is serving as mentor. This monitoring leader is particularly concerned about uninformed and unreflective decision-making:

The biggest problem with some leaders? In brief terms: *Ready, Fire, Aim*. There's a lot wrapped up in that old saw, including anger, impulsiveness, and over-confidence. It is so easy when you have been in charge to see some idiotic thing happen that you don't know the background of but let fire any way. And that is more often than not the wrong thing to do.

Another Sage leader was faced with an even greater challenge--the continuing existence of his organization. How does one serve as mentor and observant monitor while facing a stressful crisis that is likely to precipitate the kind of *Ready, Fire, Aim* decision making described above?

Two years ago, when I would wake up some mornings, I was not sure we were going to keep our doors open. We were short on providers and our bills had mounted due to some mismanagement by one employee. So, we had to make some changes in personnel. We really bit the bullet and tightened our finances. We had to hope for about six months that our one medical provider could survive the increased patient caseload until we were able to successfully recruit, hire and train new people. We weathered those problems and made a successful turnaround, which has been very satisfying.

It seems that successful monitoring requires a balanced ego when helping to engage and resolve a conflict-filled issue. The Generativity Two monitor is doing hard work that often is not acknowledged or even appreciated by many people in an organization or community. Unlike the mediator who is often recognized for the role she is playing, the monitor is likely to be less visible--and usually doesn't get a plaque in the city park.

Mobilizer

Like the activist/monitor, the mobilizer is involved in providing active generativity in a collaborative, mentoring manner. This exemplifies yet again the delicate balancing act in which effective Generativity Two leaders must engage:

I think my strength is as a mobilizer. In all of the day-to-day things that I go through, it's really not me who's *doing* anything. It's more me knowing the people and having the knowledge to mobilize them in the direction we want to go. It's asking, "Why can't we do that?" or "How can we make that happen?" "Who do we need at the table?" The most important function is getting the train going down the tracks.

At the heart of the matter, mobilizers who are generative in their role are finding and activating the energy of people with whom they work; in this way they are acting like the mechanical "generators" we identified in a previous essay. They are translating desire and vision into action.

Motivator

This fifth of the 5 "M's" often seems to involve leading by example, as well as providing a compelling vision that excites other people and leads them to collaboration:

I'm good at motivating and helping others to have passion in what they are doing. If you lose motivation and passion, everything gets lost in details and turns into one big frustrating mess. So, I never lose sight of what I am doing. Everything is tied together in my personality.

This motivationally oriented Sage leader speaks about being a "cheerleader," especially when the "going gets tough":

My strongest role is as a motivator—whether getting volunteers working with the girls, understanding why this work is so important, or empathizing when the work gets tough. I play this role with the board as well, walking a fine line between leader and cheerleader. Board members need to have a good grasp of the issues, but also not panic when those issues seem overwhelming.

A final insight we offer from our Sage interviews brings us back to the fundamental role played by appreciation in all aspects of generativity, including Generativity Two motivation. We motivate by helping our colleagues to focus on their own strengths and appreciate them:

Motivator is an important piece, and probably the strongest tool I use in my advocacy work. There's a reason that people choose to work touching the lives of children. In engaging them, I help them to examine their core beliefs and mental models as a way to increase their effectiveness. The important part is doing this without destroying their sense of self-worth. It is all a work in progress, everything from education to child welfare to how we feed our kids. It's unfolding, and we're learning all of the time. Being positive is one of my strengths. I'm always reframing and don't even know that I'm doing it, and I think that helps people to look at possibilities.

Blending the Five M's

We have treated the five M's as distinct roles that are all related to the broader process of Generativity Two and have suggested that all interweave in some manner with the foundational process of mentoring. The actual enactment of Generativity Two, however, often involves interplay among the five Ms. At the very least, our Sage leaders often acknowledge that they play all five generative roles:

As a mentor, I have helped my staff and other community members learn how to engage people and deal with different situations. I also try to set a good example and help people to engage in advocacy, empowerment, and self-directing their lives. As a mediator I work to resolve community conflict, especially in situations where people have strong feelings or may not understand the whole picture. As a monitor, I am also very engaged in working with people who contact us because they feel they have been discriminated against. We know their rights, and we work with businesses and organizations to help ensure that these people are heard. Being a mobilizer is my favorite role, and where I have been most involved. My work has focused on systems change and making social change in our community, our politics, and our policies to support fairness and equality for people with disabilities. This has been the most challenging and the most rewarding role. We advocate on each individual's own behalf but do not tell the community what it needs to do. Instead, we mobilize the community to see what is best for each individual, and what each wants to do to make that change on his or her own behalf. This approach has had excellent success.

Conclusions

What does all of this mean? What have we learned from our 100 interviews with Emerging and Senior Sage leaders about the complex processes of Generativity Two? We conclude, first, that Generativity Two doesn't occur overnight. It is a gradual, transforming process that is a central ingredient, as Erik Erikson noted, in the developmental process of any maturing adult. We must be patient, in particular, about the emergence of Generativity Two as a leadership style or perspective. We don't learn about Generativity Two from a textbook on leadership. Rather, we learn about it by observing and personally experiencing the generative role played by other leaders. And we learn how to be generative through our own accumulated positive and negative experiences in our work within organizations and communities:

My leadership style has greatly changed over the years. When you're working for a living and have people working for you, it's a whole different approach to getting things done. If you were getting paid to do a job, I expected you to do it. That's the way we were brought up, and that's the way we learned to manage things. There's more control involved, and more downside. What I've taken away—what's been good for me—is that

I don't need to be a controlling person anymore. I don't need to say, "Why didn't you get that done?" I'm a lot more appreciative of people. We're all volunteers, and I'm very appreciative of what these people do. And I've found it much easier to be personable with people that I don't even know, like a walk-on volunteer. I feel very comfortable with that person because I know they want to get involved in doing something for Habitat. I don't need to be controlling or measuring. I like to just lay it out there and say, "How are we going to get from here to here by this time?" It works.

Furthermore, it is more than being patient about our own emerging generative style of leadership. It is also about patience in observing and supporting the growth and maturation of other people with whom we interact as mentor, mediator, monitor, motivator, and mobilizer. It means thoughtfully awaiting the achievements we hope to gain in collaboration with other people and in our five generative M roles:

We have concluded from the wisdom offered by our Sage leaders that effective Generative Two engagement is aligned with a particularly challenging stance: being quiet:

I have tended to do things quietly. I live quietly and when I act, I act quietly. I like being in the background, working behind the scenes, rather than being up front. I am not a joiner and don't belong to a lot of organizations. So I do things without other people knowing. People don't have to know the good things one does. The Good Lord knows, and that's all that is important.

To be quiet is not to be mute, nor to stand by idly as bad decisions are being made. Our Sage leaders repeatedly talk about stepping in and providing both direction and energy when a problem emerges in their organization. To be quiet is to step away from taking credit for everything. It is about letting other people speak. It concerns the acknowledgement that you might not be the custodian of all truth. It is not always about being in the formal leadership role. Perhaps in the end, we should turn to the wisdom offered by one of the Sage leaders we quoted earlier. Generativity Two is about *gentle fierceness*.