

WOMEN'S VU

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In Search of Mentoring

Joan Anderson
The Women's Center

In 1976 Gail Sheehy wrote "The Mentor Connection: The Secret Link in the Successful Woman's Life" in *New York* magazine. Since that time numerous books and articles—scholarly and popular—have been written on the subject. The relationship between mentor and protege is full of possibilities, so that "when it is good it is very, very good, and when it is bad it is horrid."

The word mentor comes from a character in *The Odyssey*—Mentor, the wise old nobleman to whom Ulysses entrusted his house and the education of his son, Telemachus. Occasionally Athena, goddess of wisdom and the arts, assumed Mentor's form in order to advise either Ulysses or his son during Ulysses' 20-year absence from home. Mentor served as teacher, advisor, and friend.

Today the mentor relationship suggests an older person who helps a younger person with career development. Not all mentors are beneficial. A poor mentor can give bad advice, take academic (or other) credit for the work of the protege, become sexually involved, or hang on to the relationship too long. But an effective mentor can take a young person with promise and help mold her into something fine—the lump-of-coal-into-a-diamond process.

A good mentor understands the professional system and has the personal power to be effective within it. He or she trains the protege in the rigors of the discipline, encourages her, challenges her to her maximum potential, introduces her to the right people at the right places, and otherwise provides timely opportunities for her to progress per-

sonally and professionally.

The mentor serves as a role model. And this presents a problem to women students at Vanderbilt where as of spring 1985 only 10.5% of the tenured faculty were female. It is possible to earn a VU degree without ever taking a course taught by a woman. Female students with no other view of higher education may see professors as primarily male and white. All research indicates that potential mentors select proteges who are "like them," in whom the mentor sees a quality that reminds the mentor of his/her own youth. Thus, at Vanderbilt, chances are overwhelming that proteges chosen in any given year will be "one of the boys."

Junior women faculty face similar obstacles which can limit the rate of and ultimate achievement of tenure. At many institutions, including Vanderbilt, women are concentrated in non-tenure-track and pre-tenure positions—often resulting in a "revolving door" that propels women out of the university. Hiring and tenuring more women would provide students a balance of role models and would develop women faculty from a powerless minority group to fully integrated members in the real faculty club—the one that hires, tenures, and professionally promotes its own.

The same operational mechanism that makes potential male mentors tend to select male proteges operates within the mostly male faculty and administration to select men for job openings: someone who will fit in; someone "like us." And the system reinvents itself.

Certainly there are male professors and administrators who do encourage women students and junior and senior faculty. These men make an invaluable contribution to the career development of individual women. But institutionally, there is a long way to go.

The good news for women is that while change comes slowly, it does come. There probably will be a brighter future for our daughters—and our sons—who will benefit from greater possibilities and the freedom to explore that a diverse environment creates. If the numbers of female faculty and administrators increase, then more women will extend hands in a personal and professional way to ambitious young women.

Meanwhile, Vanderbilt women can engineer their self-promotion in several ways. They can seek advice, guidance, support, and intervention from a variety of sources on and off campus. A publication by the Pro-

ject on the Status and Education of Women, *Academic Mentoring for Women Students and Faculty: A New Look at an Old Way to Get Ahead*, suggests that while "mentors engage the protege in the most intense and 'paternalistic' relationship, help shape and promote the novice's career, and are in a position to intervene on the novice's behalf, sponsors perform many of the same functions as mentors, but exert a less powerfully personal shaping and promoting influence; guides help explain the system, point out pitfalls and shortcuts, and provide general information, but are not in a position to be benefactors, protectors or promoters; 'peer pals' share information and strategies, act as sounding boards, offer advice, etc., and so help each other as they help themselves."

Networks for women offer help in understanding and succeeding in the system. Examples at Vanderbilt include the Women's Faculty Organization, the Women Law
(continued on next page)

A Thank-You Note

The following note was written by a female Vanderbilt professor to a colleague, a guest speaker in her class last spring:

"Thanks again for the visit to my class. I think of it as an important phase of the continuing struggle to show the students that 'their world' is not the only world.

"Speaking of their world, yesterday as part of a discussion of social policies in this century, we mentioned affirmative action quotas, which they overwhelmingly condemned. I whipped out my statistics on how little quotas had done to change this venerable institution with its 8.5/1 ratio of men/women tenured faculty. They thought that was OK, and when I suggested that women students lacked role models, one naive child said that she had had enough of those in grade and high school. When I begged to differ, she then proclaimed that she had always felt she 'got as much out of this class' as she would have gotten from 'a professor.' Upon learning that I was indeed a professor with a real Ph.D. and all, her response was then a fervent hope that her grade would not be sullied."

(Plus çu change, tout c'est le même chose!—Ed.) ■

Students Association, sororities, and the Women's Week Group.

Resources such as Career Planning and Placement Service and a myriad of paper resources can contribute to the technical and political knowledge necessary to succeed in any field. Martha Toplin's *A Woman's Guide to Academe: Moving In, Moving Up, Moving Over*, is one such paper help. *How to Get a Job* and *How to Keep a Job* by Susan Goldhor are others. The list goes on. Self discipline and a sense of "go for it" help the seeker to find.

Finding a mentor is essentially finding good help. Whether it comes in one person or it's your own constructed model, having a person who believes in you and who encourages you is invaluable. At some point we all can turn that around and become the encourager of others. Donna E. Shalala, in the *American Association of University Women* newsletter, spring 1986, writes "I believe that whatever her institution and whatever her discipline, a woman in a position of power should not be counted a victory unless she identifies and implements ways to help other women."

It is our challenge to find help for ourselves in others, and our responsibility to help those who come after. ■

News Briefs

Have you ever wondered what your credit record contains? If you're curious—and there's good reason to be— simply telephone the Credit Bureau of Nashville at 248-5850 and leave your name and address and request on their answering machine. The Bureau will send you a form to complete and will, upon return of the completed form, send you a copy of your credit record. The cost is \$8 for an individual disclosure and \$10 for both you and your spouse. If you find unfavorable information on the record, you may be able to persuade the creditor to change it; for instance, a department store may be willing to remove a record of late payment one or two years ago if you have consistently paid the account on time since then. Getting credit is worth checking.

—*Cablegram*
August 1986

A three-year study by Johns Hopkins University found that sex education programs dramatically reduced the pregnancies of inner city black teenage girls. About one-fifth of a large group of sexually-active Baltimore high school girls who participated in a sex-education program became pregnant during the 28-week long program, while about half of those who were not given instruction became pregnant. The study also indicated that sex education programs somewhat delayed the beginning of sexual activity among the teenagers. The findings of

Gender Communications Quiz

From the Project on the Status and Education of Women, originally excerpted from The Communications Gender Gap published by the Mid-Atlantic Center for Sex Equity.

How much do you know about how men and women communicate with one another? The 20 items in this questionnaire are based on research conducted in classrooms, private homes, businesses, offices, hospitals—the places where people commonly work and socialize. If you think a statement is generally an accurate description of female and male communication patterns, mark it true. If not, mark it false. Answers below.

- | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Men talk more than women. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Men are more likely to interrupt women than they are to interrupt other men. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. There are approximately ten times as many sexual terms for males as for females in the English language. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. During conversations, women spend more time gazing at their partner than men do. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Nonverbal messages carry more weight than verbal messages. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Female managers communicate with more emotional openness and drama than male managers. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Men not only control the content of conversations, they also work harder in keeping conversations going. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. When people hear generic words such as "mankind" and "he," they respond inclusively, indicating that the terms apply to both sexes. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Women are more likely to touch others than men are. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. In classroom communications, male students receive more reprimands and criticism than female students. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Women are more likely than men to disclose information on intimate personal concerns. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Female speakers are more animated in their conversational style than are male speakers. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Women use less personal space than men. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. When a male speaks, he is listened to more carefully than a female speaker, even when she makes the identical presentation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. In general, women speak in a more tentative style than do men. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Women are more likely to answer questions that are not addressed to them. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. There is widespread sex segregation in schools, and it hinders effective classroom communication. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. Female managers are seen by both male and female subordinates as better communicators than male managers. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. In classroom communications, teachers are more likely to give verbal praise to females than to male students. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. In general, men smile more often than women. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

True are 1, 2, 4, 5, 10-15, 17, 18. Others are false. The higher your score, the more perceptive you are about human communication. If you scored low, stop, look, and listen when you're with a group of people. Analyze the flow of communication. Remember you may miss your personal and professional goal if you also miss key verbal and nonverbal cues about conversational power, politics, and the gender gap. ■

the study contradict the main objection to sex education, the belief that it promotes sexual activity that would not otherwise take place.

—*Eleanor Smeal Report*
July 1986

A nationwide *Washington Post*, ABC public opinion poll conducted in February 1986 found that women, 3-1, thought pornography harmful to adults and that there should be stronger laws against por-

nography. Men, by more than 2-1, did not think pornography is harmful to adults.

—*Media Report to Women*
July-August 1986

According to a recent survey reported in the *Wall Street Journal*, the average salaried worker can expect a pay increase of about 5.5% in 1987—down from 6% in 1985 and 1986.

—*The Moneypaper*
August 1986 ■

It's Your Health

Lois J. Wagner, R.N., C., M.S.N.
Occupational Health Service

Increasingly, women are becoming aware of the painful and potentially disabling disease of the reproductive years called endometriosis. Whether due to greater incidence or improved diagnostic techniques, endometriosis appears to be on the rise with up to an estimated five million women affected.

In endometriosis, fragments of the endometrium (lining of the uterus) become implanted elsewhere in the body. These fragments build up, break down, and bleed as does the endometrial lining of the uterus during the menstrual cycle. The blood from these fragments cannot exit the body, leading to internal bleeding, inflammation, and scar tissue. This may result in severe pain which can threaten a woman's career, social activities, and sexual life. Scar tissue formation can result in infertility.

The exact cause of endometriosis remains a mystery. Symptoms, however, are quite real. They vary among women: most experience progressively worsening pain usually, but not always, before and during menses. Other symptoms may include pain during or after intercourse, increasing menstrual flow over time, and premenstrual spotting. If the bladder and intestines are involved, urination and defecation may be painful and bloody.

The disease is often hidden and may go undetected until picked up on examination for other conditions. One reason for this is that menstrual pain may not be recognized as unusual by the woman or her health care provider. Believing this, the woman may just live with her pain until it becomes unbearable, prompting her health care provider to look for endometriosis as the cause of her pain.

Once diagnosed, treatment depends on severity of symptoms, the woman's age, and her future fertility plans. Several hormone drugs, such as oral contraceptives and Danazol, have been approved for treatment. In extreme cases, major surgery to remove the reproductive organs may be recommended.

Whatever is recommended, the woman should be well informed about short and long term effects of all therapies. Second opinions are highly recommended. If a woman suspects she may have endometriosis, she should consult a gynecologist knowledgeable in this area.

For support, educational literature, and local help regarding endometriosis, write to the Endometriosis Association, P.O. Box 92187, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202. ■

Women's Center Programs

For more information on the programs below, call the office at 322-4843. The Women's Center staff also encourages your comments and suggestions on any subject so that we can be responsive to the concerns of Vanderbilt women.

"New Tax Laws," a class taught by Sandra Lewis, C.P.A., will be Thursday, October 30, 6:00-8:30 p.m. at the Women's Center. Get ahead, learn up-to-the-minute tax facts. Receive a thorough explanation of the tax reform provisions and learn all the planning techniques you need to apply now: changes in tax rates, exemptions, deductions, exclusions; capital gains, insurance products, IRA's; taxation of trusts, estates, gifts and minor children; business provisions, such as travel, entertainment and seminars, and an office in the home; etc. Ask questions and get answers. Fee: \$10. Pre-register.



Sebastokratorissa Dessislava, fresco, 1259, Church at Bojana, Bulgaria. Byzantine noblewoman.

"Ktitors and Creative Artists: Deeds and Images of Noblewomen in Late Byzantine Society," the second in our series of Lunchtime Seminars, will be presented by Ljubica D. Popovich, Assoc. Professor, Department of Fine Arts. In this lecture, Dr. Popovich will examine architectural monuments erected specifically at the request of queens or noblewomen. Further, the portraits of these ladies will be studied, and the dual creative work of one specific noblewoman, both artist and writer, will be explored. A two-projector slide presentation accompanies the lecture. Q & A to follow the presentation. Thursday, October 23, 12:15-1:15 p.m., Sarratt 118. Bring a bag lunch.

The Graduate Students Group will meet on Friday, October 24, 4:30-6:00 p.m., at the

Women's Center. Happy hour and program selected by the group, dealing with graduate studies issues. This group is open to all women graduate students. For program topic and to get on the mailing list for each month's meeting, call 322-4843.

Dissertation Writers Group, second month. For A.B.D. women, a task-oriented group dedicated to helping members successfully complete the dissertation process. Monthly meetings serve as check points, encouragements, and problem-solving sessions. Friday, October 10, 4:30-6:00 p.m. The group will meet at the Women's Center. Light refreshments.

In cooperation with the Vanderbilt University Child Care Center (VUCCC), the Women's Center will sponsor this year a **Single Mothers Group** for single mothers on and off campus. Though the group will develop its own agenda, some possibilities include dealing with developing self esteem and community, identifying and sharing resources, giving and receiving support through discussion with other single parents. Tuesday, October 14 at 7:00 p.m., at the VUCCC. Meeting will begin promptly and will end at 8:30 p.m. Child care will be provided for \$1.50 per child.

Glen Clanton, Deputy Provost and Dean for Academic Services, will be the guest speaker for the **Dutch Treat Breakfast Club**. His topic will be the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) ten-year accreditation report which was completed last spring, and which will have an impact on Vanderbilt in the next ten years of growth. Thursday, October 16, Divinity School Private Dining Room at 7:30 a.m. for those who go through the cafeteria line for breakfast, 8:00 a.m. speech with question and answer opportunity at 8:20 a.m. Open to faculty and staff women. Club members may bring guests, and prospective members are welcome at each gathering. Coffee available free.

This year the Women's Center will sponsor a **Book Group** for women faculty and staff who would like to explore life themes and ideas in the context of a group. Two books have been suggested as possibilities: Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, and Maria de la Jesus' *Journal of a Central American Woman*. Bring your own suggestions to the first meeting Tuesday, October 28, 5:00-6:00 p.m., at the Women's Center. Off-campus women are welcome at this and all other programs. ■

ANNOUNCEMENTS ET CETERA

YWCA Opportunities for October include the following:

- "Hypnosis for Smoking," 5 Thursdays beginning October 23, 6:00-8:00 p.m. \$60.
- "Property Rights and Women Seminar": Learn the facts regarding ownership rights of women whether single or married, rights in a divorce to division of property, and various estate planning considerations. October 29, 6:45-8:30 p.m. \$5.
- "Writing Your Will Seminar": find out if you need a will, how to prepare it, the costs, how to designate wanted and unwanted beneficiaries, and what to do about sentimental items. October 15, 6:45-8:30 p.m. \$5.
- Legal Clinic: Up to 30 minutes of legal counsel with a volunteer attorney. Thursday, 6:00 p.m. Must call for an appointment. \$1.

For more information about these and other courses, call 269-9922.

Each year Planned Parenthood Federation of America leads a coalition of national organizations in recognizing October as National Family Sexuality Education Month. Planned Parenthood Association of Nashville (PPAN) will sponsor two "Parent-Child Film Festivals" on October 25, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at Planned Parenthood Center, University Plaza Building, 112 21st Avenue, South. One program will be for 9 to 12 year olds and their parents and the other program for 13 to 16 year olds and their parents. Both programs will discuss adolescent development and parent-child communication. The programs are free.

PPAN also will sponsor a two-day training program, "Sexuality Education in the Religious Community," on October 9 and

10, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. at the PPAN Center. Clergy and lay persons interested in providing sexuality education in their church or synagogue will benefit from this training. Participants will become familiar with program ideas, activities, and community resources for providing a sexuality education program in a religious setting. \$25 per person.

For more information or to register, call the Education Department at 327-1097.

Family and Children's Services is sponsoring the following groups:

- "Dimensions of Divorce," 6 Tuesdays beginning October 7, 7:00-8:30 p.m. at Westminster Presbyterian Church.
- "Divorce Adjustment Group," 10 Tuesdays beginning October 14, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Southeast Office (Harding Mall area).
- "Children Facing Divorce," 6 sessions for divorcing parents and their school age children, 5:30-7:30 p.m. starting October 15.
- Stepmothers' Coffee, a support group which meets monthly, October 18, 9:30 a.m., Southeast Office. (This group is growing and may splinter into other groups in other locations.)

For fees and information: 832-9220.

"**Theology of Women Toward Spiritual Liberation**" is a course offered by Womanflight, a center for feminist spirituality in Nashville. The course will meet on 8 Thursday nights, excluding Thanksgiving, beginning October 16, 7:00-9:00 p.m., at the Women's Center, E-2 West Side Row. Class fees are on a sliding scale from \$35 to \$60. Scholarships available. Facilitator is Margaret L. Meggs, M. A. For information, call 255-1225.

Tennessee State University Student Government Assn. and Central America Solidarity Assn. (LaCASA) present Underground Railway Theater of Cambridge, Mass. in *Sanctuary: The Spirit of Harriet Truman*, celebrating the Underground Railroad of the 1850s and today. Tubman was a fugitive slave and a rescuer of slaves. This play deals with her life and the lives of Central American people in the U.S. today who are legally "illegal aliens" but who see themselves as political refugees. The play looks at the dual historical events as one theme. Billed as "An epic play combining giant puppets, actors, masks, shadow puppets, and live music."

One showing only, Tuesday, October 14 at 7:30 p.m., TSU Administration Building auditorium. Tickets: \$4 general, \$2 students. Wheelchair accessible, child care provided. For information, call 385-0485. ■

Coffee, Tea, or ETA?

*Captain Linda M. Durham
Airline Pilot, Woodland, California*

After a flight on a regional airline, a gentleman of the old school wrote a letter to the airlines president complaining that the stewardess spent the entire flight in the cockpit conversing with the pilot, virtually ignoring the passengers.

The airline, upon investigating the complaint, discovered that the 19-passenger Jet-prop the gentleman had ridden on had no stewardess on board. The woman in question was the copilot.

—Savvy
August 1986 ■

Edited by Joan Anderson

TO RECEIVE YOUR OWN LABELED COPY OF WOMEN'S VU return the form below or call the Women's Center, 322-4843, to place your name on the mailing list.

Monthly newsletters, excluding July and August, are sent to all students free. Newsletters to faculty and staff at campus addresses are free. For non-student, off-campus addresses there is a \$3.00 fee for one year. Please make checks payable to Vanderbilt University Women's Center.

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