

Theory 2

CONDUCTING A MENTORING SESSION, PART I

Objectives: First, capture a Snapshot of the mentee’s spiritual life. Second, identify a particular issue on which to work.

Introduction: When mentoring another in the spiritual life, it is often tempting to begin the session without a clear understanding of what your goal is or of what your takeaway is for your mentee. However, before you as mentor can help your mentee strategize his or her process to grow in a particular virtue or root out a particular vice, you must first understand in a general sense your mentee’s current spiritual state. This requires good questions, good listening skills, and a way to confirm with your mentee that you understand what he or she said. From there, you can move towards a particular course of action.

Note: it’s fine to discuss your mentee’s physical, emotional or even psychological wellbeing, as long as it’s done in the context of their overall spiritual life, with the goal of bringing holy harmony to their interior life.

Part I: Gathering Information

Begin with a General Sketch of their life (5 Questions)

1. **Ask** – Paint me a picture of your life over the last month?
2. **Listen** –
 - a. *Pay attention* to what they are saying with an eye to the three major areas of life:
 - i. Love of God: Prayer and Sacraments
 - ii. Love of Neighbor: Marriage, family, work, friends
 - iii. Love of self: physical, emotional, knowledge, beauty, etc.
 - b. *Listen for Red Flags* – ways they may not be aligned with God – things that are disturbing their peace or ways they may be rationalizing or justifying sin and vice

3. **Identify** – Silently identify many of the possible particular subjects you may need to discuss.
4. **Paraphrase** - Summarize to the mentee the particular subjects they brought up.
5. **Ask** – “Which of these would be most helpful for us to focus on?”

Conclusion: The first part of your mentoring session is very important as it may be a temptation to either spend too much time talking about other things, other people, or too many issues. Therefore, it is essential that we help our mentee focus his thoughts by asking the right kind of questions that move from broad to more specific and that fall within the parameters of Jesus, Others, Self. Remember our objective, to capture a brief understanding of their current spiritual state so as to narrow the focus for their follow through.