

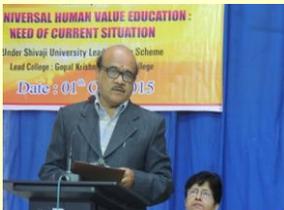
Mentor's Energizer

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Workshops at G K Gokhale College, Kisanveer College, KTHM College and SMBST College

Habits of a Lifetime

Why do we do the things we do, eat the foods we eat, think the thoughts we think? It is the force of habit. The habits we learn in childhood and early adulthood become part of our daily actions for a lifetime. Parents and teachers want their children and students to study hard, to be diligent and to persevere. Perhaps they want them to exercise or play an instrument. As mentors of the Universal Human Values courses, we know that habits of mind and spirit are just as important, if not more so, than habits of the body. What a person does when he/she gets up in the morning, whether he turns on the TV or reads the newspaper or opens his mobile phone to check on the latest messages, whether he/she eats eggs or toast or idli-sambar, whether he/she is always plugged into sound or prefers the quiet of nature—these, and thousands of other habits are usually acquired at an early age and are difficult to change later. We are asking students not only to be learners, but to regularly reflect on learning, not just to do, but to do with a moral purpose, not just to tolerate differences, but to see the world as one human family, not just to serve, but to cultivate the habit of service. As we move into winter, the beginning of a new season signals a new start and an opportune time to actively foster new habits. Every habit-forming activity follows the same behavioral and neurological pattern—a loop that includes a cue or trigger that tells your brain to go into automatic mode, the routine itself and finally a reward that helps you remember the habit. What if our habits included waking up and taking time to connect with our higher selves before starting the day, perhaps reading something inspirational or writing in a journal, looking at something beautiful smelling a sweet-scented flower, taking a walk in nature, meditating and having good thoughts for ourselves, our family, our community and our world. And then what if we reviewed our goals, accomplishments and plans and decided which things needed to be done to further our vision? What if, as mentors, we encouraged our students to form valuable habits? It's never too late to form new habits of mind, body and spirit, especially with support.

Meet the Mentors

What is the difference between mentoring and instructing?

Mentoring is doing something yourself whereas instructing is asking somebody to do something. It is easy to say but tough to act. It is easy to tell others to be patient, loving, just and be truthful. When it comes to oneself there is escapism.

What are the Dos and Don'ts of mentoring?

Dos: -1. Come down to the level of students so that you can take them off (Ravindranath Tagore) 2. Treat the students as mine of gems and yourself as the jeweler who is supposed to polish the crude stones into shining gems. Develop all the skills required for the same. 3. Prepare the mind maps giving a brief overview of the lesson. 4. Prepare the lesson plans. Mention the cooperative learning structures to be used for every paragraph. Mention the games and the energizers to be taken. Accordingly make all the preparations required for the games. Remember the games are educational games and need to be processed. 5. Explain the practical activity to be done after lesson 2, 5 and 8. 6. Have patience, be cheerful and enjoy mentoring
Don'ts: - 1. Don't give lectures. 2. Don't misunderstand or underestimate the students. 3. Don't forget to give the home activities at the end of every session and ask/collect them in the subsequent session.

What were the challenges you faced when you were mentoring and how did you overcome them?

1. The most challenging is to change fixed mindsets of students and teachers, the strong convictions developed from early childhood and their lifestyle; the external force of "Fastness and easy going life", restricting them to even think of moral values. 2. Making students think and even speak in front of the class. 3. Remaining attached to the old style of lecturing, lecturing and lecturing!

How did overcoming the challenges improve your mentorship skills?

Mentoring, specially using the cooperative learning structures helped me develop the habit to listen to others. Using examples from the real life made things easy for students. The higher modules helped me to broaden my thinking which in turn enhanced my understanding of the first module in a real and deeper sense. Now I am very comfortable using the cooperative learning structures, my enable students to become Change Makers is developed and enhanced with every session I conduct.

Which skills and attitudes did you deploy to be a better mentor?

The skills deployed include critical thinking, active listening, identifying the examples and illustrations from real life situation, being cooperative, motivating and encouraging, being happy and cheerful, using humor and being down to earth, treating all equally.

Attitudes: Being upright, understanding, caring, not being prejudiced, loving, and hardworking and the attitude that I am simply a facilitator.



The Bahá'í Academy wishes to thank our mentor of the month, Dr. Shashi Gaikwad, Asst. Director for Research, Bahá'í Academy, Panchgani, for sharing her insights.

Self-Motivation Strategies



Back issues of the Mentor Energizer and the full Energizer Compilation are available on the website. If you've missed an issue, please feel free to download it at www.bahaiacademy.org

The job of "mentor" is often described as someone who motivates others. However, successful motivation from others usually involves a reward or the alleviation of pain. People will form a new habit out of desire for the reward or self-preservation (avoiding the pain). They will work hard so long as they get a bonus or more muscles or the degree. They will work hard to avoid losing money, friends or health. If the reward or punishment is removed, however, often the behavior stops. As mentors, we want to move beyond external rewards/punishments to internal motivation based on values, vision and personal victory. Here are some suggestions for helping students learn to motivate themselves to form habits.

Ask yourself "Why?"

Why is forming/changing/breaking a certain habit important to you? Will it bring you joy? Will it unite your family? Will it help you be healthier? Will it serve your purpose? Ask yourself the potential benefits of forming this new habit. How will it improve your life/the life of those you love? And when the 'why' is clear, we are more willing to be motivated. The 'why' is our deep, internal satisfaction that comes from accomplishing a task or growing a virtue!

Create a cue

A cue helps remind you to take action on the new behavior. The easiest cues are those that are already a part of your life—like the alarm clock rings in the morning and it reminds you to meditate before getting out of bed, or you take a shower and you take that time to reflect on the day before it begins. Or, you keep something unusual by the door to remind you to take a walk after dinner.

Change your environment—make it easy to change

It's easier to form a new habit in a new place, on vacation or when you make a physical change in your environment. Think of ways you can alter your living environment so you will find it easier to perform your new habit. The less time between the cue and the new behavior the better! For instance, put your daily reflection journal and a pen next to your bed, so before going to bed, it's easy to pick up the journal and write your day's reflections.

Focus on the long-term vision/consequences

Become more mindful. Often people forget their goals, because they're running on autopilot and not thinking about the things they are doing. If the vision is clear, you move in its direction a little every day, and the internal good feelings are apparent, it's easier to stay positive and stay on track.

How can we help students learn to make cohesive plans?

What does cohesive really mean? Cohesion means unity. All of the parts work together, are well integrated and act as one. The opposite of cohesion is disintegration and chaos. With cohesion, the whole is greater than the parts, but all the parts are important contributors to the whole. United, cohesive, cooperation is the source of irresistible strength.

What is the goal?—Last month we talked about different kinds of goals, including chores, internal, external, behavioral and skills—and each of these has a purpose in a person's vision. To make a plan, the goal must be clear, specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant and have a time frame. If the goal is too far away, it's easy to get discouraged. Encourage students to envision the future, but set short-term goals at intervals along the path to the ultimate goal. In fact, the goal is not the vision. The vision can be lived in the present and happiness can prevail though the goal is in process and not yet achieved.

A plan is a step-by-step path—Nothing is achieved without action. Each action, no matter how small, done with purpose and consistently over time, will lead to the successful outcome of a goal. A cohesive plan includes all of the parts: what needs to be done, who will do it, when, why and where. It will also take into consideration all aspects of a person's life that either contribute to or are affected by the goal.

Imagine that you've had a Happy Hippo Show in a small village and all have decided the following vision and goal:

Example Vision: How can we work together to improve the quality of life in a village?

Example Goal: Improve the moral education of all children ages 5-10.

Possible Plan:

1. Work with a team to make the plan. Meditate on the vision and outcome desired. Decide who will do each part.
2. Do a survey: Find all the children in this age group, and the contact information for parents/guardians.
3. Invite all of the adults to a meeting to explain the class (Ask for input, their vision of their children's future, etc.)
4. Offer teacher and parenting education to all the adults first.
5. Choose several trained parents, help them organize small neighborhood classes and prepare to begin (Who will get the supplies, find the place, inform the children, plan the activities?)
6. Hold classes and accompany the new teachers as they gain experience.
7. Conduct follow up meetings for further training and to address challenges. (Equality of the genders, etc.)

Next month: How can we decide between acquiring certain knowledge or protecting ourselves from it?