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WOMEN MENTORING WOMEN:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Jacqueline Jachym Fitzpatrick

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

University of San Diego
School of Education

1996

Dissertation Committee

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experience of ten business and professional women who have experienced a mentoring relationship as a mentor or protegee with another woman, to understand the essence of their mentoring experience, and to know more about their participation as mentors. This study began with the assumption that women who experienced mentoring whether from women or men would be active mentors themselves. However, the data reveal an important contradiction.

Since women are entering the business and professional ranks of the work force at an increasing pace, there are greater numbers of women who have reached positions of influence and are in situations to mentor other women. Likewise, there is also an increase in the number of women entering professions who may benefit from a mentoring relationship, especially as it concerns their workplace satisfaction and professional development. Thus, those who promote mentoring need to know more about its practice.

This qualitative study took a phenomenological approach to examine mentoring experiences; the data were collected during conversations that developed into narratives. This approach enabled these women participants to reflect deeply on their own mentoring experiences, and to consider how they in turn mentor others.

These women narrated their mentoring experiences as they examined the influences of family, education, and gender, as well as their work. Part of this examination considered the historical context which has otherwise been repressive to women's development in general and to their career development in particular for these women aged thirty-eight to fifty-seven.

There are two major implications of this study. First, while these women are interested in mentoring, participate in and enjoy mentoring, and recognize the benefits of mentoring, they lack a commitment to specifically mentor other women. Second, this phenomenological methodology promoted their understanding about the way they seem to distance themselves from mentoring even though they believe they benefited from their own mentoring experiences.

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Introduction

Women are entering the professional ranks of the work force at an increasing pace. Historically, conditions have limited women's work experiences, but today that repression has lessened. The number of women working outside the home has increased across an array of professions such as education, medicine, law, and in business though still limited in other fields such as engineering and scientific research. This demographic shift in the work place has presented opportunities as well as problems. Some women have succeeded to the highest levels of influence in various organizations. Other women cite their gender for their inability to advance.

Mentoring provides a supportive atmosphere for women at all levels. Today there seem to be more possibilities for women to mentor women as they are found in more numerous positions in the professional world where the environment requires advanced education and training. These opportunities challenge us to explore what the mentoring experience means to women and why fewer women have experienced opportunities to mentor and be mentored in the professional world given current demographics. Now that there are more

women in the professional ranks, a study of their mentoring experience can yield greater understanding about the phenomenon.

William Rosenbach (1993) addresses the importance of mentoring in organizations for empowering followers to become leaders. He proposes that "Mentoring allows followers to become intimately familiar with a well-developed style of leadership that should enable them to better develop their own style" (1993, p. 141). As more women continue to enter the professional ranks, society is likely to benefit as they develop a sense of their strengths and take on leadership opportunities. Mentoring has been examined in ways similar to leadership in that leadership authors have attempted to identify skills which are necessary for leaders to develop (Hosking and Morley 1988; Rost 1993). Since, mentoring, like leadership, is a relationship; the process of women's mentoring needs further examination, because of women's need for connective relationships.

Jean Baker Miller (1986) writes, "women stay with, build on, and develop in a context of connections with others" (p. 83). Women's need of others may make our mentoring experiences longer lasting. Exploring women's experiences of mentoring can provide important insights into what may be involved in promoting longer more connected relationships among those in mentoring contexts. In particular, a study that goes deeply into the phenomena of women's experience can illuminate both the relational and professional benefits for all women involved, as well as for the culture in general.

Importance of the Study

Mentoring appears to be a significant aspect of professional growth. Authors Belle Ragins (1989) and Beth Haslett, Florence Geis, and Mae Carter (1992) assert that through mentoring women may receive an understanding of the nature of the organization. A woman mentor is able to help her protegee "circumvent structural, social, and cultural barriers to advancement in the organization" (Ragins 1989, p. 3). Mentors also provide support and encouragement and may protect their proteges so that upward mobility will not be hampered. A mentor can provide details of practical advice, inside information, and personal experience. Women mentors are also able to share life experiences concerning family responsibilities and work, a major concern for most women.

It is appropriate that the working environment undergo an examination of mentoring in general and women's experience with it, in particular to better understand women's concerns. Further, some women are uncomfortable with a male mentor and fear that a relationship between the two might be construed as a personal relationship instead of a mentor-protegee relationship (Apter 1995). Therefore, mentoring relationships between women might be considered more appropriate for some.

There are different types of mentoring. There is the traditional or grooming mentoring relationship and there is a networking mentoring. Some authors refer to peer mentors (Ragins 1989) and others refer to networking mentoring (Haring 1994). Networking mentoring includes peer mentors but may

more aptly portray the complexity of mentoring using this format. For example, networking mentoring can take place in small groups. Some argue that peer mentors only involve dyadic relationships. Those who mentored or are mentoring in these formats are more inclusive since they sometimes act as a support system. These forms may be helpful because they show that there are different formats of mentoring and acting as a mentor. These forms also provide additional opportunities to mentor women. Perhaps the method that men have relied on so successfully for hundreds of years needs to be reevaluated by women who seek their proteges' success in order to strengthen the realm of women's influence. Knowledge about women mentoring women may inform a different work culture and, therefore, may directly influence the larger culture of society.

Although studies concerning mentoring have been conducted, most of them have centered around persons in business and education (Dreher and Ash 1990; Noe 1988; Ragins 1989; and Schwartz 1989) and the skills that are necessary to develop positive mentoring atmospheres (Kram 1985; Murray 1991). Women may not fit into these models however since these skills refer to what is seen in businesses dominated by male mentors. Gilligan (1982) and Miller (1986) agree that women are more relational. Our self-esteem develops through our friends, not only through our jobs. We identify with who we are, not only with what we do. If, in fact, women are different than men in these ways (Gilligan 1982; Miller 1986, Surrey 1991), these differences may influence the

relationship between two women in the mentoring process from those relationships consisting of both men and women.

Background of the Issue

Leadership and mentoring have commonalities. Both have been studied as important factors in society. The two may be considered to be intertwined. Authors are examining mentoring and mentors from different perspectives. Rosenbach proposes that "A culture of transformational leadership stimulates mentoring" (1993, p. 149). James Burns (1978) divides his leadership into two groups: transactional and transformational leadership. The former implies a simple exchange to achieve mutual goals. The latter requires end values such as liberty, equality, freedom, and justice. Joseph Rost's (1991) definition of leadership has given impetus to additional thoughts and definitions (Heifetz 1994). Leadership has been examined through traits, great man/woman, and contingency/situational theory, but an examination into the essence of leadership, the nature of leadership, the process of leadership is only beginning (Rost 1991). Helen Astin and Carole Leland (1991) used aspects of Burns' (1978) definition of transformational leadership by implying that feminist leadership embraces transformational leadership over transactional leadership. "Leadership is a process by which members of a group are empowered to work together synergistically toward a common goal or vision, that will create change and transform institutions, and thus improve the quality of life" (Astin 1989, p. 9).

Leadership encourages mentoring. When a woman understands the nature of a business or profession with the help of a mentor, she is more likely to participate in leadership relationships. These relationships may increase the number of mentoring experiences for her specifically, and other women in general.

I believe that there are three major limitations to promoting and exploring women's mentoring. The first is that there are relatively few women in positions to mentor other professional women. This problem continues as the fastest growth in business appears to be in small organizations. Particularly, women are starting their own business after being disenfranchised with their original place of work and the oppressive male hierarchical organization. As women leave these large organizations, there remain fewer women to mentor younger women coming into these work places. The second limitation concerns pressures on women who often contend that they feel as if they must work longer than men to be promoted. There is a perception among many women that they must spend all of their time working because they may be seen as uncommitted when they choose to divide their time among family, outside interests, and work even though in most households women still retain the major responsibility for raising children and running the households. The third limitation is referred to as the queen bee syndrome where women who succeed believe that they have achieved this highest level on their own. Therefore, they argue that the next generation of women should fight the same battle. An in-depth examination of

the mentoring experiences of women is necessary to understand their feelings concerning this experience.

The consequences of recognizing the mentoring phenomenon may help greater numbers of women achieve positions of influence and actively involve themselves in the process of leadership. A qualitative study may provide insights into women's mentoring experience, as well as offer ideas that can offset these typical limitations, and add to understanding of leadership itself. As the number of professional women in the work force increases, mentoring issues can be foregrounded with phenomenologically based research. Therefore, the advantages of studying mentoring are not only with the protegee. The women who mentor are also in a position to learn from their protegees, and those experiences improve their mentoring with others (Dreher and Ash 1990, p. 544). And researchers can learn more about the phenomenon from both. Moreover, businesses, educational institutions, medical facilities, governmental agencies, and other organizations and institutions can benefit. If workplace satisfaction increases because of mentoring, then this reason alone is significant enough to examine this experience. "If access to mentoring relationships is limited for women or if women do not receive the same level of return from such relationships as their male counterparts, then negative salary and promotional consequences are likely to be the result" (Dreher and Ash 1990, p. 539). Indeed, women need to improve their ability to mentor so that younger women do not continue to experience the historical limitations in their careers, and in their conceptions of self.

Statement of Purpose

The initial purpose of this study was to examine the lived experience of ten business and professional women, in mentoring relationships with another woman as a mentor or protegee, to understand the essence of the mentoring experience as a phenomenon, and to know more about the actual process of mentoring. As the study developed, however, the data reveal that the great preponderance of these participants' significant mentors were men, though the participants do mentor women. Further, since this study unfolded in such a way as to unexpectedly highlight the passive way in which they mentor, the purpose took on another dimension; to understand their passivity and to propose what might encourage women to be more active mentors.

Examining mentoring phenomena can help to understand these participants' leadership and mentoring views. "Mentoring occurs when a more-experienced professional gives significant career assistance to a less-experienced one during a period of transition" (Haring 1994, p.4). This study will add insight into the mentoring experiences of women who are considered leaders and are involved in leadership according to Helen Astin's definition of leadership: "Leadership is a process by which members of a group are empowered to work together synergistically toward a common goal or vision, that will create change and transform institutions, and thus improve the quality of life" (Astin 1989, p. 9).

Explanation and understanding can evolve from interpreting the phenomenologically based interviews. "Phenomenology is the systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures,

of lived experience" (van Manen 1990, p. 10). Description alone will not fully inform the researcher, the interviewees or the readers of the study; instead interpretation is also needed to understand the meaning created in a web of social relations. This process enabled me as well as these women to promote their interpretations of their experiences as well as my analysis of the data. A series of in-depth discussions allowed for analysis of the participant's language as the means to understanding and interpreting the essential experiences of this study.

I propose particular opening questions and encouraged the participants to include information of their choosing as they shared their mentoring experiences with me, the researcher. From these interviews I was able to elicit information concerning the following: What beliefs about self and others does a mentor hold? What compels and constrains the mentor? What are some of the benefits and contributions of mentoring?

This study adds insights into the lives of ten women and their experiences with mentoring, and insight into the development of mentoring as it relates to leadership. If "leadership is a process by which members of a group" (in this case the group is women) "are empowered to work together toward a common goal or vision" (giving career assistance) "that will be used to create change and transform institutions" (enabling increased activity for women in the professional ranks), "and thus improve the quality of life" (Astin 1989), then mentoring may be an essential ingredient of leadership.

Delimitations

Since this is a qualitative study there are no particular generalizations made to the overall population of professional women. "What is being observed are people's constructions of reality, how they understand the world" (Merriam 1988, p. 167). The purpose of this study is to understand the phenomenon of mentoring as lived experience and to participating reflectively in the qualitative process. Therefore, the participants' reflections are the means for explaining the phenomena. The data analysis can only consider their experience here, though readers will be able to rethink their own experiences as they reflect on this analysis. This process included analyzing the data from multiple participants, confirming my preliminary assumptions with the participants during the second interview, answering questions from the participants as to their interest in what other participants shared with me, and constantly checking my personal biases concerning mentoring in the professions as I formulated the analysis.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The focus of the women's movement, a movement for social change, is centered on women's empowerment and collective action. This significant movement is altering women's lives in a variety of ways. In the past, most women typically accepted traditional roles; only a few broke new ground or at least attempted to do so. The women's movement began in 1848 when Elizabeth Cady Stanton and others met in Seneca Falls, New York to discuss their beliefs in women's rights (Friedan 1991). Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, who is known for her civil disobedience, were at the forefront of the movement for equality of the sexes in this century. They both fought for women to enjoy the same rights as men in order to be fully capable of supporting themselves. The National Women's Suffrage Association was formed in 1869 by Stanton and Anthony. A purpose of this organization was to obtain a constitutional amendment for suffrage. That year also included the founding of the American Women's Suffrage Association by Lucy Stone. This second organization was considered more conservative and included some men as members. The two organizations merged in 1890.

In "mid-century, nearly all states had adopted legislation protecting married women's property" (Donovan 1993, p. 27). Divorce and child custody laws were liberalized and more graduate schools opened their doors to women in the last half of this century. Education is an especially significant factor in women's progression to equality because critical reasoning is gained in this endeavor. Without this equality prior to the late nineteenth century, women continued to be considered lesser citizens and were unable to attain positions of influence.

The twentieth century has seen progress in laws such as the Nineteenth Amendment (the right of women to vote), the Civil Rights Act, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act. The National Organization of Women was formed in 1966 and continued to fight to liberalize laws for women's rights. Greater numbers of colleges and graduate schools opened their doors to women. Today, there are increasing numbers of women entering the workplace and more women are running for political office than ever before. Emily's List (Early Money Is Like Yeast) and WISH (Women in the Senate and House) are two increasingly powerful organizations that are helping women achieve elected office. As the numbers of women in Congress increase, there is greater interest in family, health, and women's issues.

Women's activities in the professions and businesses are finding increased viability and credibility with the passage of civil rights laws. Today, Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem are often credited with broadening the number of significant opportunities of women since 1960, when the women's movement

gained additional popularity. However, many women are still faced with a world dominated by outdated and outmoded views about what should be appropriate roles for women (Astin and Leland 1991; Conway 1994; Gilligan 1982; Miller 1986).

Historical Perspectives

Women's reflections of their past circumstances allow insight and possibility for change in our society. Increased numbers of working women will benefit because of the broader perspectives to be observed. Women were relegated only to specific work before this century according to Arthur Schopenhauer (1928), a well known philosopher and author, who was born in 1788 and died in 1860. He stated in *Studies in Pessimism*, that women's existence is "solely for the propagation of the species" (p. 144). He also expressed his opinion that women are childish, shortsighted, and sympathetic to those less fortunate. He continued to write that not one woman contributed any achievement to the arts and therefore, women are also lacking in this area.

Schopenhauer wrote that women believe they view themselves as the ones who spend money and men as the ones who make money (1928, p. 139). This assessment led him to the conclusion that women are incapable of managing money and should not be allowed to inherit funds, nor should they be given any independence to make decisions of importance. Schopenhauer's view is disturbing for its influences then as well as now.

Continued research on women's past influences has offered additional perspectives. "Recovery of the history of women's lives and accomplishments reminds us of the progress women have made and the means they have employed" (Jamieson 1995, p. 191). Even though women have made progress in the professional world, some view the improvement as insufficient. Some argue that family and health needs are not adequately addressed by businesses where others see these needs addressed in some workplaces. Some women also feel that the way men relate to men, commonly known as the old boy's network, continues to exclude their advancement but others note an increase in the number of women in the management levels of large organizations. We need to be aware of the past and to examine the present so that women's roles can be seen as a progression of fairness, being reminded of positive change, even if it is still viewed as inadequate.

Schopenhauer's work reflects the society of his lifetime when women had limited female mentors typically their own or others' mothers. The focus of this study is to relate women's progress in mentoring relationships and to understand its historical conditions. Mentoring has classical roots in relationships between men which were enjoyed much more liberally than today (Apter 1995).

The word *mentor* originates in Greek mythology. Odysseus was away fighting in the Trojan War and he entrusted his loyal friend, Mentor, to advise, teach, and befriend Telemachus, Odysseus's son. This pairing of an older and wiser man (Mentor) with a younger and less experienced man (Odysseus's son)

was used to "emulate the values of his mentor" (Murray 1991, p. 7), of which some would argue is an important aspect of mentoring.

Contemporary Perspectives on Mentoring

Mentoring was observed frequently between men because of their dominate numbers in the work force and likely existed because of a presumed comfort level between them. Therefore historically women lacked the opportunity for mentoring which men continue to enjoy today. Stage theories developed regarding men and mentoring as being an essential aspect of maturation in such works as Levinson's book, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (1978). Levinson further developed the necessity of mentoring and wrote of the importance of a mentor's protection of his protegee during the protegee's struggle to climb the corporate ladder and become successful.

The mentor's function is "to support and facilitate the realization of the Dream" (Levinson 1978, p. 98). Typically a mentor is a "transitional figure" (p. 99). More than one mentor can be observed in men's lives since men have several transitions in their working world. Some men feel that their own identities are determined by the success of the protegee and consequently they carefully choose those they mentor. This aspect of mentoring has been more difficult for women because of the limited number of women in executive positions.

Gilson and Kane (1989) reported that one third of the executive women participating in their study said "a mentor who believed in (their) talents gave them their start" (p. 108). The same study found that among the youngest

women, most had mentors, but not necessarily women mentors. Levinson (1996) writes that "A life involves significant interpersonal relationships -- with friends and lovers, parents and siblings, spouses and children, bosses, colleagues, and mentors" (p. 3). Women often have a difficult time finding a mentor. If a woman is perceived of as a token, a man may not want to be her mentor (Swoboda and Millar 1986). A man might consider the possibility that his female protegee may be limited in her abilities and success. When a woman protegee fails to climb the corporate ladder, the male mentor may be perceived by others as a failure (Morrison et al. 1992). And of course there is always a risk of sexual innuendoes in cross gender relationships.

Paula Short, Darla Twale, and John Walden (1989) write about their study concerning women graduate students and women professors. They contend that women need greater research opportunities in graduate school and more opportunities to develop networking. Women lack women mentors who are in administrative positions to serve even as role models, let alone as mentors, for women graduate students. "Mentors are important to all persons and may be even more critical for those who are moving into fields that in the past have been closed to them" (Short, P. Twale, D. and Walden, J. 1989, p. 7). As an example, university campuses remain male dominated even though the number of women receiving doctoral degrees continues to climb.

Rosenbach (1993) writes that mentoring is an important aspect of leadership because the activity allows the protegee to examine leadership as seen in the mentor, and this perspective may increase the protegee's

understanding of a key concept in a particular professional world. The protegee's advancement may depend upon her ability to understand the political nature of an organization. Ragins (1989) argues that mentoring has an impact in the personal and professional development of the protegee. Colleagues' support in an organization is necessary for advancement. If this support is not available, women suffer. Kathleen Reardon writes, "one certain factor is that most companies don't reward or encourage women or men to mentor junior women. Since women often are left out of organizational networks, the absence of mentors and the seeming unwillingness of senior women to reach out to them can create hard feelings" (1995, p. 167). As women continue to suffer, many choose to leave organizations and begin their own business. However, many women are dependent upon their pay checks and/or do not have the necessary capital to start a business and therefore are forced to stay within an organization. Some women make efforts to change their work environments by educating employees about sexual harassment and gender communication and use their influence to develop organizational policies for child care, maternity, and family leave.

Both the mentor and the protegee are able to benefit from the mentoring relationship. "Being a mentor can be as important to one's career as having a mentor" (Gilson and Kane 1989, p. 112). When professional women share experiences with others, they have the benefit of examining the situation from different perspectives. With this introspection and reflection, one is better able to make decisions that include other views of the same circumstances. These new

conceptualizations and insights may lead to advancement in the organization.

"Besides being good mothers to our daughters, we must be mentors to the women in our companies" (Gilson and Kane 1989, p. 213).

Studies of mentoring have included many *how to* books such as Kathy Kram's (1985) *Mentoring at Work*. This book is a step-by-step approach to the development of formal mentoring programs in the workplace. She details mentoring functions, stages, and discusses cross gender relationships. Kram hardly mentions women who mentor other women. My concern with this kind of book is that authors attempt to simplify the difficult subject of mentoring using formulas for formal mentoring programs. Formal mentoring programs may be helpful for some women, but they are not the only method. Ann Morrison found that "some people are against any assigned mentors on the grounds that effective mentor relationships must occur naturally" (1992, p. 130). Many mentoring relationships exist because an individual sought a mentor or protegee on her own initiative.

A female mentor may be understanding and helpful. However, the queen bee syndrome inhibits some women from becoming mentors or other women to believe in the idea of mentoring. These types of women may not want to take the chance of being surpassed or even of admitting they need advice from another individual in their own organization. Once they do accept a mentor or protegee, some women are reluctant to intertwine their own reputation with another woman. "There was little evidence that women mentors in business or academe protect their proteges, take responsibility for mistakes outside the proteges'

control, or act as buffers" (Luna and Cullen 1990, p. 9). Perhaps some women lack the necessary security to mentor or even to seek mentoring relationships.

The process of mentoring is not understood when writers ignore the significance of relationships. Kram (1985) admits that this aspect of mentoring is not thoroughly developed. George Dreher and Ronald Ash (1990) write "Although Kram describes the various activities associated with mentoring, there is no current theory to guide understanding of the interrelationships that exist among these activities. Mentoring may be a constellation of highly interrelated activities" (p. 545). Perhaps mentoring needs to take place on a daily basis in informal settings not only in structured programs in order to fully understand its complexity.

Several authors examined many business and education mentoring programs (Dreher and Ash 1990; Noe 1988; Ragins 1989; Schwartz 1989). Formal programs with structure are easier to assess than the informal mentoring that occurs every day, in every aspect of life. Forcing someone to mentor another might miss the important aspect of mentoring -- a sincere interest in assisting a person during a period of transition. This means that a mentoring relationship happens because of a match, a circumstance, a need and/or an interest.

Peer mentoring (Haring 1994) or networking mentoring (Swoboda and Millar 1986) is another form of mentoring. However, this type of mentoring, in which women are peers as they assist each other, differs from that which we usually consider traditional or grooming mentoring. In peer mentoring, women

are involved in a dyad or are in groups, and often considered equals. This type of mentoring has not been described as successful in career advancement because as peers there is no power of a position or perhaps even a strong enough manager to give significant career assistance to the protegee. However, women using this form of mentoring advance in their careers simply by the knowledge they gain and the experiences they share with each other. Personal contact brings added insight and future job openings may be discussed.

Peer mentoring typically happens informally. Women seek out other women for support, knowledge, personality traits, or position and sometimes by intuition. Some might argue that peer mentoring is simply a support system found in an organization. However, the research indicates that these types of relationships are more complicated because they involve more than just support. This format can be used in various professions. Heinrich and Scherr (1994) write about their peer mentoring model to improve better teaching. Their system involves two peers who assist each other in planning, implementing, and evaluating a lesson or presentation.

"Networking mentoring consists of an ever-changing series of dyadic contacts in which each person plays the role of mentor or protegee to differing degrees in each dyad" (Swoboda and Millar 1986, p. 11). This is a form of mentoring in which each individual develops many dyadic relationships for professional and personal growth. "Effective networking is built on trust and reciprocity of support" (Haslett, Geis, and Carter 1992, p. 99). The number of these relationships is significant for advancement and these relationships offer

greater ability for the mentor and the protegee to change positions. Given the view that women are relational (Gilligan, 1982), this type of mentoring is likely but may not allow for the depth needed for self reflection and critical examination.

Marian Swoboda and Susan Millar (1986) state: "Networking-mentoring relationships are less intense and entail less commitment, they are less subject to the principle of homogeneity" (p. 11). This is especially important for women because of their sparse numbers among the higher levels of the hierarchical organization.

These peer relationships can be more fluid, change often, and include people from diverse cultural and social backgrounds at different levels of the management hierarchy having differing levels of power. A mentor may become a protegee in the same relationship with differing issues or circumstances. In other words, the mentor and protegee change roles as the needs change.

These types of mentoring relations allow the protegee an assortment of role models as well as leadership styles. Swoboda and Millar (1986) propose that this type of mentoring encourages self reliance because the protegee has many mentors and is never dependent on any single woman. There is some literature discussing this topic but further research needs to be done concerning the relationship using this format.

Women's Development

Carol Gilligan (1982), Janet Surrey (1991), and Ruthellen Josselson (1992) find differences between men and women which profoundly influence their

relationships and cultural conditioning. Boys are raised to separate from their mothers, while girls are raised to connect with others; these differences shape our lives. Jean Baker Miller's (1986) *Toward a New Psychology of Women* proposes that women, as subordinates are often identified as being caring, nurturing, empowering, and relational. She describes the domination that many women endure, and contends that men, or dominators, prefer power and authority, do not like conflict, define what is normal, do not want to hear about inequality, will not listen, and often do not understand themselves. Women are often subordinates who associate with dominant men. As subordinates, they tend to be submissive, understand the dominators better than the dominators understand themselves, and feel inferior and dependent. They concentrate on survival, are psychologically absorbed with untruths about themselves, and ignore the conflicts in their lives.

Miller (1986) and Elsa Walsh (1995) both argue that there is a need to address the issue of conflict, for without understanding such conflict, there is no growth. Miller explains growth: "Growth requires engagement with difference and with people embodying that difference" (p. 13). When differences are noted, there is increased knowledge and understanding of ourselves and others' experience. This development brings satisfaction and growth. Conflict can never be eliminated, but it can be productive rather than destructive when there is growth. When women and men allow inequality, growth is stymied and women's oppression continues.

Women are threatened by isolation and grow in relationships. Miller (1986) contends that women tend to give more than men and feel guilty if they do not give enough to those they love. Women's need for connection is strong (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule 1986; Gilligan 1982; Miller 1986; Tracy 1991). Women spend more of their time with their family responsibilities than do men.

Women tend to be relational, collaborative, and intuitive; their actions lead women to empower, while men often prefer to maintain their power (Aburdene and Naisbitt 1992; Astin and Leland 1991; Josselson 1992; Miller 1986). Therefore, as more women are in positions of leadership, making more decisions, businesses and professions may change to reflect the differences between the two genders. The hierarchial systems that are prevalent in the government and business world may become more like webs in organizations. Women's need for connections may also change the patterns for decision making, allowing for shared decision making. This change is already seen in some organizations with the flattening of traditional hierarchies and therefore an increase in women's power results.

The women's movement is a force that has enabled more women to enter the professions. Carolyn Heilbrun (1990) expresses concern that younger women today do not understand the battle for equal rights for which women fought throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. If today's young women do not consider themselves to be a member of a group called *women*, but instead consider themselves as isolates, then the women's movement may

die before there is greater parity with men. This loss would be devastating not only for the female gender, but also for society. The significance of women in the workplace cannot be ignored.

Women and Work

“Throughout history, women have been identified as bodies not minds, wombs not brains. The distinction is captured in the cliches of our culture. Where men think, women feel” (Jamieson 1995, p. 53). This perception needs to be changed. Until equality in the work place is achieved between men and women, organizations will also suffer (Rosener 1995; Wolf 1993). Society is deprived of half the eligible working population by perpetuating the baseless gender stereotype that women are not qualified to obtain positions of influence. Given the international economy that continues to become even more important to our economic stability, organizations and government must become concerned with utilizing all of the country’s potential. Even today, there are limited number’s of women in the management levels of large organizations and only one third of Fortune 500 boards include two or more women directors (Lublin 1995).

Some authors argue that women have not been able to make the profound changes that others would like to see in various organizations. Judy Rosener (1995), Edith Gilson and Susan Kane (1989), and Laura Tracy (1991) all address the subject that women in large organizations often relinquish their femininity as they advance in a male dominated hierarchy. These authors argue that to achieve in these business atmospheres, women need to acquire more

masculine traits; however, these authors suggest that with continued numbers of women entering the workplace, there will be more support for women's interactive and collaborative natures. This will be a fundamental shift in the business atmosphere. A serious problem remains however. There are many women leaving large organizations and becoming entrepreneurs because they are unwilling to function in male dominated businesses (Rosener 1995). If this trend is not curtailed, additional years will be spent trying to make the necessary changes so that women are able to advance in established organizations. One of the predominant barriers for women to advance is referred to as the glass ceiling.

The glass ceiling prevents women from attaining positions of influence simply because of their gender. The glass ceiling is used as a metaphor because it represents a transparent barrier for professional women. In organizations, women often feel that there are obstacles placed in their career paths which prevent them from advancement for the simple reason that they are women. Women are sometimes placed in jobs where there is little upward mobility likely, while men are placed in areas where there is quick movement upward. Hal Lancaster (1995) feels that women hit the glass ceiling because corporations have "difficulty coming up with mentors for talented women" (p. B1). He further suggests that women may have to reach outside of their business or profession to receive the necessary help. However, he strongly suggests that all women make every attempt to also find a mentor within their organization. Ann Morrison, Randall White, Ellen Van Velsor, and the Center for Creative

Leadership (1992) agree that women need to find support inside the organization and state "women probably won't break the glass ceiling without the unusually strong advocacy of a senior manager" (p. 132).

Patricia Aburdene and John Naisbitt's (1992) *Megatrends for Women* is a book that addresses the future possibilities for women in the workplace. They write that there are no easy solutions to the continuous problems that women face, that more women are working, and that they are working in a greater diversity of positions. Ann Morrison (1992) argues passionately that women have been stymied by past practices of the male hierarchial structures that control our society. However, since demographics are changing in the United States with women becoming better educated and more focused on careers, there is greater pressure on the glass ceiling as more women advance in their careers. Morrison continues to write that organizations seeking diversity need to challenge their workers, and offer recognition of achievement and support. These three necessary keys to changing organizations will allow an organization to diversity their work force and retain greater numbers of women. Support of mentoring by women has been limited in the past because of the relatively few number of women in positions to mentor. Also, there are women in positions of influence who do not mentor because of the lack of time and/or their priorities (Gordon 1991).

In order to counter the lack of women mentors, many organizations promote formal mentoring programs. There are also nationally focused programs such as "take your daughter to work" (Kipnis and Herron 1994) which

forefronts some issues of mentoring for the youngest generation. This type of program generates interest in young women so that they may begin to consider their future work roles at an earlier age. This opportunity also opens the possibility for meeting a mentor who will help them through some difficult stages in their career planning.

Mentoring and Leadership

Mentoring and leadership have commonalities that suggest paired exploration. Both may be identified when they are happening, and both can be difficult to explain and define. Definitions of leadership shape the way we view the process and the relationship between leaders and followers. Burns (1978) writes about transactional leadership as a model in which something is exchanged for something else (usually gaining followers in the process). His interest in transformational leadership is probably more acceptable to women, who are often described as more able to work collaboratively and for social justice (Astin and Leland 1991). Rost (1991) defines leadership as, "an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (p. 102). Although he argues against dyads as leadership, I believe that a relationship that consists of a single leader and a single follower can also be considered leadership. Leadership as an influence relationship differentiates between a relationship that uses power to persuade and a coercive power often associated with positional roles. However, those holding positional roles need not necessarily be excluded from leadership.

Rather, those holding positional roles ought not use their position to force leadership but instead must meet the requirements of the definition.

Activity must be present in a relationship in which leadership exists. There must be a deliberate or purposeful intent for change. However, the key word is intend. One might not recognize immediate results. Years may pass before the intended change is recognized. Mutual purposes refer to the fact that leaders and followers must both want these changes; they must both share an interest.

Mentoring is based on mutual purposes. Astin's (1989) definition should be remembered for its end values, "improving the quality of life" (p. 9). Astin and Leland (1991) discuss women who they consider leaders and fought for social change such as Margaret Mead, Susan B. Anthony, Lillian Hellman, Betty Friedan, and Gloria Steinem. They are more closely aligned with the transformational leadership definition of Burns (1978) and further removed from Rost's (1991) definition because Rost feels that there is good leadership that improves society and bad leadership that detracts from society's benefits. He argues that a definition can not dictate what one society considers positive and another negative.

Betty Friedan (1991) writes in *The Second Stage*: "Our mothers and grandmothers experienced leadership, in the Beta mode, in those voluntary organizations, but their own and society's denigration of women kept them, and even feminists themselves, in the first state, from valuing it as real leadership (p. 324). Family guidance appears to be important in the development of leadership in women. Astin and Leland (1991) and Betty Walker and Marilyn Mehr (1992)

both cite examples of the importance that parents play in nurturing women who lead. Parental support appears to be necessary in developing a daughter's confidence to accept risks, to fight for beliefs, and to reach for one's highest potential. Dorothy Cantor and Toni Bernay (1992) establish the importance of mothers' and fathers' views in influencing daughters to become leaders. Previously, with fewer career minded women to use as models, fathers who treated their daughters as they would their sons were also considered the source of strength for successful daughters.

Leadership occurred over the years in ways still unrecognized by leadership experts. Bernard Bass (1990) cites many contradicting studies that have attempted to explain the reasons for women's failures to reach leadership positions in greater numbers. He explains studies of discrimination against women as females who were thought to be undependable, without political awareness, too emotional, too family oriented, and many other apparent characteristics that would not allow them to be responsible in organizations and act as leaders. This view of leadership appears to be more management oriented as Bass examines positional roles of leadership and ignores the possibility of leadership as a process and its appearance in all walks of life. Bass also fails to recognize that women experience leadership and intend real change differently than expected, since most expectations have been through men's models. Women tend to lead in collective action; relationships are key (Belenky et al., 1986).

Astin (1989) states that "leadership is a process by which members of a group are empowered to work together synergistically toward a common goal or vision, that will create change and transform institutions, and thus improve the quality of life" (p. 9). The strengths of women authors such as Astin and Leland (1991) addressing this topic include their acknowledgment of collective action and empowerment and the need for change, their emphasis on communication, and their future orientation. As women increase their numbers in the professional world, an increase in the number of women recognized as leaders will result.

"Nearly all leaders are highly proficient in learning from experience. Most were able to identify a small number of mentors and key experiences that powerfully shaped their philosophies, personalities, aspirations and operating styles" (Bennis and Nanus 1985, p. 188). As women increase their visibility in business and the professions and are recognized as participating in a leadership relationship in which they are leaders, we need to increase the amount of mentoring in which additional women are able to participate.

Summary

The women's movement has been a significant force in changing the roles of women in our society. Gone are the days when women's existence was solely to propagate our species. Today, women are reaching for equality using laws and influence to achieve our goals. As the number of women increase in the professions and in business, mentors become more important in our lives. There

remains a paucity of women in the upper levels of organizations and therefore the traditional grooming mentoring relationship between two women is not as commonly found as a mentoring relationship between the two genders.

Leadership and mentoring both need further examination because they are necessary for women to understand in order to establish ourselves as a significant and contributing force in the professions. There have been extensive studies concerning mentoring but few are focused on the mentoring relationship between two women. There are many books concerning formal mentoring programs. However, if there is a feeling among some that mentoring is best achieved through informal channels and allowed to take a natural course, then *how to* books do not solve the problem of understanding successful mentoring relationships.

There are different types of mentoring. Besides the traditional form of mentoring where an older and more experienced professional assists a younger and less experienced professional, there is also networking mentoring or peer mentoring which women have found particularly effective. Women are more likely to find women peers as mentors than women mentors in positions above them in a management hierarchy. Until the number of women reaching levels of influence increase, there will continue to be a paucity in the number of women who can perform the mentoring role as a traditional grooming mentor.

Women grow in connection which differs from a male's growth by separation. If women are considered to be more nurturing, empowering and relational, then the relationship between two women in a mentoring relationship is

likely to differ from a mentoring relationship between a man and a woman. There is literature that supports the notion that women change their behavior when they achieve positions of influence in large organizations. This may be true, but the reasons are as yet undetermined. Until the number of women in these positions are equal to the number of men, one can argue that a woman must suppress their femininity to achieve levels of influence. The glass ceiling continues to be present in large organizations and career minded women will continue to fight these barriers. An effective mentoring relationship is one avenue for advancement.

There are studies concerning women, mentors, and leaders, but the combination needs further study. Since women are found today in greater numbers in the workplace, a further understanding of their lived experiences with mentoring as a group can benefit women in general.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of ten professional women leaders who have participated in women's mentoring either as a mentor or as a protegee of another woman. Understanding a lived experience is facilitated by a phenomenological approach, a type of qualitative methodology (van Manen 1990). Phenomenology is an approach to examining persons' conceptions of a particular experience. That experience is then the phenomenon under study. The study process enables them to highlight that experience, dwell on it, and relate it's meaning. This study used an inductive qualitative strategy which enabled both the participant and the researcher to explore reflections on the mentoring experience in depth.

Methodological Framework

A phenomenological approach examines the meanings of individual experiences as the phenomena are discussed and reflected upon in meaning oriented conversations about mentoring relationships. A discussant format is more likely to uncover the nuances in relationships that serve as points of

understanding more about these particular relationships. Nuances are located deep in the structure of a relationship and language. Hence, they cannot be observed easily; they can only be examined indirectly by way of the reflections that phenomenology can provoke in a research context. This method is especially appropriate for studying the experience of mentoring because this type of research relies on a naturalistic approach which emphasizes each participant's discovery and emerging themes (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Therefore, there is no one reality in this type of research, but instead multiple realities (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Miles and Huberman 1994).

Participants view the experience of mentoring differently and as these women articulated their stories, they reflected on past mentoring experiences and developed additional insights. Their short answers turned into long descriptions that became stories of their mentoring experiences with several common themes. Van Manen (1990) writes, "Phenomenology attempts to systematically develop a certain narrative that explicates themes while remaining true to the universal quality or essence of a certain type of experience" (p. 97).

Their narratives yielded information about their lives that could not be limited to their mentoring experiences. "The act of constructing a life narrative forces the author to move from accounts of discrete experiences to an account of why and how the life took the shape it did" (Personal Narratives Group 1989, p. 4). Therefore, as I examined their mentoring experiences, I also needed to develop their context of that reality. Their reality is historically significant because these women did not lead the life which society tried to impose on them.

Description is part of the process of interpretation because it sets the stage, but it is always itself an interpretation (Heidegger 1962; Ray 1994; Tesch 1988). Denzin contends that "Interpretation is the process of setting forth the meaning of an event or experience. Meaning is defined in terms of the intentions and actions of a person" (1989 p. 32). As the interviews progressed, the participants described and interpreted their experiences of mentoring and discovered new meanings. Meaning involves interpretation and understanding. First in the description of the experience. Second is the interpretation of that event and third is the understanding. "Interpretation makes sense out of expressions of experience (Denzin 1989, p. 108). A phenomenological approach also offers the participants and the researcher opportunities to reflect together on the experiences.

The ten women participants were forthright as they shared their stories of mentoring. By examining their thick descriptions of the phenomenon, using their own words together with Tesch's (1987) design analysis, this study examined their mentoring experiences and provided meaning for the researcher's analysis as well as for the participants' understanding of themselves.

Research Design

"At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman 1991, p. 3). To more fully understand the meaning of mentoring phenomenologically, the researcher engaged the participants in examining their

own context historically through a life history (pp. 11-12). "Studying individual relationships abstracted from their larger relational contexts ... gives us very narrow information" (Josselson 1992, p. 27) and therefore, each participant shared her historical context for a greater understanding of her mentoring relationships. The guiding questions were limited so that there were more opportunities for deeper reflection. Each woman was asked few questions and allowed ample time for dialogue and introspection as they related their stories (Moustakas 1990; Tesch 1988; van Manen 1990). Some of the participants were more reflective than others. Some wanted to share their stories and their historical context in depth. Some participants acknowledged deeper insights than others felt comfortable in doing. Most of the participants had not considered the significance of their mentoring experiences until their stories were discussed. These participants were not chosen for their introspection, but for their leadership and involvement in mentoring experiences with other women.

Participant and Site Selection

A letter describing the study was mailed to the participants in September 1995 and scheduled interviews began in September 1995 and ended in October 1995. Women were selected for their interest, their acknowledgment that they had participated in a mentoring relationship with another woman during their professional career, and their occupation to provide some variety concerning work contexts. Women in each of the following professions were chosen:

business, education, law, and medicine. This diversity allowed me valuable insights across the spectrum of professional women.

These participants were not selected for the excellence of their mentoring experience, but for their willingness to explore their understanding of what is actually involved in women's mentoring relationships. This realistic examination of mentoring reflects the women and their professional world. These women were known to me or introduced to me by colleagues and acquaintances who were aware of this study. I sought successful professional and business women from positions of influence and in differing workplaces. I called these women to explain the purpose of the study, the type of methodology and the consent form. Each of the women personally contacted accepted the invitation to be a participant. Interviews were easily arranged suggesting an eagerness to share their mentoring stories. Ten women with significant professional experience and who work in the western United States were interviewed. Interviews always took place at the convenience of the participants.

An initial phone contact was made with each participant. After they indicated an interest to participate, a letter of explanation concerning the nature of the interest, and a description of the advantages and disadvantages was sent (Appendix A), along with a consent form (Appendix B) which met all of the requirements of the University of San Diego's Protection of Human Subjects Committee.

Protection of Human Subjects

I maintained the confidentiality of the participants was maintained by using pseudonyms in the reported results of this study. The names of the participants were not used on any part of the tape recordings and any information which could have revealed their identities were deleted from the transcripts, thereby guaranteeing anonymity. All the precautions that were taken in the study were explained, as were the participants' rights according to established procedures of the University of San Diego's Protection of Human Subjects Committee. Most of the participants appeared not to be concerned with identifying remarks. However, one participant carefully avoided using any names when she described her mentoring experiences. Each participant signed consent forms. When sensitive topics arose, the participants were reminded about the guarantee of anonymity and that they were not obligated to reveal any information which made them feel uncomfortable.

Participant Profiles

The researcher met with each of ten women for two approximately one hour interviews. These participants enthusiastically agreed to participate even though their schedules were full. Their appointments were often arranged through their administrative assistants. These women were highly organized and all were prepared for the interviews with stories to share. Their eagerness to explain their mentoring experiences made the study enjoyable as well as informative.

The women's perspectives on mentoring evolved during the two interviews and they all acknowledged that further examination of mentoring would continue to be considered and evaluated. They also expressed their opinions that this experience was meaningful to them and that they now more readily recognize the mentoring experience for what it was, what it did for them, and perhaps what the experience did for their mentors and their protegeses. All of the women recognize that they will more likely participate as mentors to other women in the future differently because they have recognized the importance of their experiences regardless of their different environments and professions.

Chief of Staff and Medical School Professor

As a chief of staff at a large hospital in the western United States and an adjunct professor of medicine at a medical school, Marilyn maintains a hectic schedule. She has contact with other medical doctors, administrators in the hospital, and medical students. She is witnessing a rise in the number of women in medicine and feels a responsibility to help women develop their skills and reach their potential. She did not have the benefit of women mentors as she went through medical school and training. Marilyn wore a business suit at both interviews which took place in her spacious and warm office. Her office includes one wall of all windows, and she enjoys the view overlooking other office buildings, homes, and mountains. She explained that the office was just redecorated and expressed satisfaction that the office reflects the fact that the chief of staff is a woman.

Due to this woman's hectic schedule, her availability to mentor women would appear to be quite limited. However, she did not give the impression during the two, one hour interviews that she makes any attempt to limit her time to help others. Marilyn discussed the women administrators she mentors, as well as several students with whom she has shared a mentoring relationship. She stated that she enjoys spending additional time outside the classroom with her students because class time does not allow one to really understand or know the students. She encourages them to contact her and meet for lunch because she enjoys time away from her office which she finds more relaxing when one mentors. Marilyn is in her mid-fifties, married, and the mother of two children in their twenties. She graduated from a women's college and received her medical training in the eastern United States.

University Associate Vice Chancellor

Patricia is an associate vice chancellor and adjunct professor at a large state university in the western United States. She is the author of two books and numerous articles, and is concerned with women in the work place. She wore casual pant suits at both interviews. Patricia is warm, friendly, outgoing and enjoys being around people. Her staff raved about her while the researcher was waiting for the interviews to begin.

Patricia was reluctant to acknowledge her involvement in mentoring perhaps because she did not have a traditional grooming mentor, one in which a more experienced professional assists a younger less experienced professional

in a period of transition over a long period of time. She attempts to mentor in the traditional sense but questions her success. However, she readily acknowledged her networking mentoring roles in which there is reciprocity. She stated her frustration with women who do not have a strong sense of themselves and wallow in their indecision. "You can't mentor a person who has no focus. You have to have some passion, some interest."

Patricia makes herself available to other women who are contemplating career changes and are seeking information to help with the change. She is in charge of the department of the university that typically reaches out to older students who are returning to school for certificate programs or sharpening their skills for their present occupations. Therefore, she has contact with many people in the community and relies on her knowledge and relationships which are necessary for her to perform her job so remarkably well. She is quick to acknowledge her success and believes that she was mentorless for twenty years. Consequently, she feels that one can be successful without mentors. Patricia is in her early fifties, married, and has one college age son. She graduated from a private college and received her Ph.D. from a large public midwestern university.

Health Care Executive

Melissa is senior vice president of human resources, marketing, public relations, and strategic planning for a large medical group in the western United States. Previously she held positions in the restaurant industry, federal

government, and universities. Her ability to cross professions in the business world is in keeping with her belief that women are flexible and that skills are transferable among different occupations.

Melissa wore colorful suits to both interviews. She is outgoing. She likes to look feminine and encourages other women to express themselves with their clothes and jewelry and not limit their clothes to dark and dreary suits. She is confident and direct. If I asked for clarification, she elaborated. Melissa is single and has lived on both coasts of the United States. She graduated from a private university and received her MBA from another private university on the west coast of the United States.

Manufacturing Entrepreneur

Vera is a woman who started a multimillion dollar manufacturing business fifteen years ago. She is president and chief executive officer. She started her business because her husband told her the family needed an additional ten thousand dollars a year. She had previously led a traditional life, raising four children and doing limited freelance art work at home. She is particularly vocal about the responsibilities of a mother, freely admitting that she is delighted she stayed home raising her children until they reached the teenage years.

She never had a professional woman mentor, but she is, by her own description, a loner. She appears shy but has such a twinkle in her eye that one knows she is full of fun. She was dressed in tights and tee shirt at the first interview and a casual pants outfit during the second interview. At both meetings

she wore shoes that had high heels which caused her to clunk around as she walked.

Vera was thoughtful during our interviews, and was sometimes slow to answer questions. She does not acknowledge her mentoring roles easily, but recognizes that others in the community look to her for advice. She gives her time to help others through organizations and presentations which she is slowly learning to enjoy as she recognizes her impact on and knowledge of the business world. She has little patience for people who want her time but have not carefully considered their business plans. She wants her advice to be considered, not necessarily taken, but considered. She reaches out to people in need because she feels that she has been fortunate to have her success. This woman is divorced with four grown children. She dropped out of college after three years and married at that time.

University President

Deborah is the president of a mid-sized university in the western United States. She previously held positions of vice president, provost, and dean at two other universities. She speaks with ease and is a wonderful storyteller. Her face lights up when she relates past experiences and she uses colorful descriptions that allow the listener to clearly picture her adventures.

Deborah did not envision a career when she was in her twenties, “but that’s how it turned out.” Her college advisor was her most significant woman mentor and her advice is still considered although this mentor is now deceased.

Thoughts expressed and remembered, and written work are reminders to be considered today as decisions are made. This participant has a large and lovely office with many sitting areas. She wore business suits at both interviews. She was thoughtful while talking and was eager to share her experiences. She exhibited a variety of facial expressions as she shared her positive and negative mentoring stories. She recognizes a mentor's rewards, difficulties, and responsibilities. Deborah is in her late fifties, has never had children, and is a widow. She received her bachelor's degree from a women's college and her master's and doctorate from private universities in the midwest.

Accounting Partner

Paula is a partner with a national accounting firm. She was the first woman partner in her office, and since that time two more women have become partners, one of whom she mentored. She was dressed in business suits at both meetings. Her spacious corner office overlooks a large city. She was a refugee in the United States but shows no bitterness for having to leave her homeland. Instead, she voiced the opinion that one has to make one's own way in life and this country offers the opportunity to be successful. She does not view herself as one who asks for help. Although she never had a mentor, she actively involves herself in mentoring others and feels strongly that she must continue to be involved in this role.

Paula was more reserved at the first meeting than the second interview. She was polite and appeared to consider the questions carefully before

answering. She is in her late forties, married, and the mother of one young daughter. She received her bachelor's degree from a large public university in the midwestern United States.

Sports Entrepreneur

Until recently, Marsha was the associate director of athletics of a large state university. She left that field in 1994 to start her own sports related business but has not totally ruled out the possibility of returning to work on a college campus. This participant at age thirty-eight, is the youngest woman participating in this study, and is single with no children. She is an outgoing, high energy person, and delved into the interview process sharing countless stories of her mentoring experiences. At this time, Marsha mentors but does not feel that she is performing the traditional grooming mentoring role to anyone as she experienced the phenomenon. However, she hopes to one day be a significant mentor to a younger, less experienced woman.

Marsha wore pant suits both days of our interviews. Her large, comfortable office is filled with sports memorabilia. She participated on college teams and enjoyed a national championship. She laughs when she speaks about her own sports involvement wishing she had planned ahead and participated in a sport that could earn her income today, such as golf. She thinks about her mentor frequently. Marsha continues to enjoy her mentor of thirty years which began when she was eight years old. In fact, she contacted her mentor between our interviews and offered me her mentor's phone number so I

could contact her. Marsha was open, caring, and willing to share her thirty year mentoring experience. She also recognizes that this relationship is unusual and wonderful. Marsha received her bachelor's degree from a large public university and her master's degree from a large private university, both in the western United States.

Retired Superior Court Judge

Doreen is a retired superior court judge in a large state in the United States. She received her undergraduate degree from a large state university and her law degree from a small university, both on the west coast of the United States. She became a lawyer when few women went to law school. In fact, she was one of four women in her law class. She is married and never had children. "If I had children I don't know how I could have done these things. I don't have that much stamina." She wore business suits on both occasions. Her office is in a suburb of a large city.

Doreen was quiet, thoughtful, and guarded. She was careful to answer the questions carefully and did not mention any names throughout the interviewing process. She joined other women judges to start a group which met with women lawyers who were interested in becoming judges. She is proud of this accomplishment as the group continues to inform aspiring judges today. Doreen had women mentors but her strongest mentor was a man. She does not believe that the mentoring relationship necessarily differs along gender lines;

instead she believes that it depends upon the personalities of the mentor and the protegee.

Bank President and Chief Executive Officer

Zoe is the president and chief executive officer of a bank in a large city in the United States. She is warm, friendly and wore knit dresses for each interview. I met with her at one of the bank's branch offices. She enjoys sharing her experiences. She graduated from a women's college on the west coast and received her MBA from a university in a large city in the United States. During her years in business school, she was one of only a few women. She had no career plans in college but found, that with every promotion, she wanted to reach the next level. Even though she and her husband had originally wanted six children, they had two instead. She never stopped working except for a few weeks after the birth of each child.

Zoe never had women in positions above her. When she became pregnant, she did not tell anyone at the bank because no officer of her bank had ever returned to work after having a child. She was determined to be different. Zoe is forceful, but friendly. She has definite opinions and was eager to share them. She, like so many of my other participants, does not easily recognize her mentoring roles. It is only after considering my questions and further reflection that she acknowledges her impact on many women.

Appellate Court Judge

Karen is an associate justice on a state court of appeal. She is warm, thoughtful, and sensitive. She was wearing pant suits both days. The first interview was tearful. The memories of respective mentors was sometimes difficult to express. Karen went to law school when few women chose such a path and found few opportunities when she graduated. She is particularly grateful to a group of women lawyers in her city that made it easier for her to work at a law firm and later to become a judge. She does not place herself in an activist role and is glad others are willing to take bold steps so that other women can have the opportunities that she has enjoyed.

Karen fondly remembers her woman mentor for setting the stage for Karen's career by encouraging further education. She did her undergraduate work at a large public university and obtained her law degree from a small university, both on the west coast of the United States. She does not feel that she mentors enough today but accepts every opportunity to speak to organizations, especially at her alma mater, and encourages other women to become judges. She also continues to communicate with women lawyers at the law firm where she was a partner and tries to help them with any concerns that women in particular feel as part of an organization still dominated by men. Karen is married with two grown children.

Data Collection

Each interview lasted approximately one hour. Roughly two weeks after the first interview, a follow-up interview was conducted for further information and clarification. All of the participants had considered the first interview and at the second interview they were eager to share additional stories that they had previously forgotten. A few follow up phone calls were made for clarification. However, the researcher, seldom asked for demographic information because the participants were eager to share their family context with me and offered the necessary information without any questions.

Through this interpretative study, the participants and the researcher engaged in reflection and introspection. This type of methodology intends to inform not only the researcher but also the participants and this study accomplished both goals. The opening questions were the only ones structured, followed by only few questions for clarification. This format allowed for a full description of their experiences of mentoring. Guba and Lincoln's (1981) description of an unstructured interview fit this research well. "The purposes of naturalistic inquiry are best served by nonstandardized interviews. The focus on multiple perspectives and multiple realities precludes heavy reliance on survey interviewing as a means of grounding an inquiry" (p. 157). The research focus was discovery of the mentoring process, not verification and therefore, the unstructured interview means "the exchange is likely to be spontaneous, to

sound more like a real conversation than a question-and-answer interchange” (p.166). This reality led to different follow-up questions in each of the twenty interviews.

The approximately one hour interviews required thought and consideration by these women and the researcher. Patience was required because these women were recalling experiences that happened up to forty-five years ago. “Feminist phenomenological interviewing requires interviewer skills of restraint and listening as well as interviewees who are verbal and reflective” (Reinharz 1992, p. 21). The interviewees were sometimes slow in completing their thoughts. Some admitted that they did not think about these experiences over recent years, suggesting some of their thoughts were deeply buried.

The opening question was, "Tell me about your educational experiences." This question enabled the researcher to learn a great deal about the participants. It also helped the participants to become comfortable because we all identified with educational experiences. Second questions depended upon the responses to the initial question and typically included, "How would you describe your experience as a professional woman? Did you have a mentor? What was it like to be mentored? What was it like to mentor?". A third question concerning her meaning of the experience followed. Since researchers using unstructured interviewing methods cannot anticipate the direction an interview make take, it is seldom useful to have a long list of questions. These few questions were useful for beginning the interview process. Further questions depended upon the original answers and to my interests and reflections that were absorbed through

the interviewing process. Generally, the second interviews were even more like conversations as the participants related their narratives, and questions depended upon the answers shared during the first interview.

The participants of this study provided the necessary data through the interviewing process. These data were collected following the three steps outlined by Moustakas (1994). The first step I used was the epoche process for "creating an atmosphere and rapport for conducting the interview" (p. 181). This step unmasked preconceived assumptions by setting "aside our prejudgements, biases, and preconceived ideas about things" (p. 85). This step was essential for successful interviews. The second step is bracketing "in which the focus of the research is placed in brackets, everything else is set aside so that the entire research process is rooted solely on the topic and question" (p. 97). The third step was to continue the interviews "to obtain descriptions of the experience" (p. 181).

All interviews were tape recorded. Tape recording was necessary so that I could observe body language and prepare for additional questions. Limited field notes made during the interviews and immediately thereafter, described the physical setting, social interactions, activities, and other information which helped in recalling the setting (Patton 1987, pp. 92-93). These notes were an essential part of the interviewing process and were carefully recorded and considered during the analysis stage of the study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is critical to qualitative research. Tesch's (1987) design was followed which includes: (1) immersion; (2) dividing data into smaller units called units of meaning, themes, or patterns; and (3) confirmation of relevance. Step one included many reviews of the transcripts by the researcher, taking note of the tone of voice as well as the speed of the words spoken. I contemplated the information over several months. After deep reflection, consideration of an overview of the interviews took place before continuing the analysis. Using Tesch's design allowed for the breakdown of data into smaller pieces. It was at this point that themes or patterns of the participant's mentoring experiences became clear. The transcripts were carefully coded so that information could be retrieved quickly. This formality aided Tesch's third step of confirmation of relevance. At this point, all the themes were considered and matched with other participants' views. If the same themes were repeated, then relevance was determined.

I transcribed the twenty hours of tape recordings and analyzed them together with the field notes. The researcher in this methodology is the instrument. Therefore, every precaution for continuity, clarity, and reliability is necessary. Only by listening to the interviewees' tapes numerous times and validating data in subsequent interviews, was the researcher able to understand more and more about the meaning of the interviewees' mentoring experiences.

At the initial interviews, the participants and the researcher planned for the subsequent meetings. Upon completion of these initial interviews, we reflected

on the experiences so that the second interviews yielded as much rich data as possible within the confines of this study. Some of the participants read initial transcriptions. However, these women expressed their views that due to time restraints they had no interest in reviewing later transcripts. So preliminary assumptions from the first interview were discussed at the beginning of the second interview and all necessary clarification was done at that time. This process was the beginning of analysis; the data and the assumptions merge which is the nature of qualitative research. Van Manen (1990) stated, "The insight into the essence of a phenomenon involves a process of reflectively appropriating, of clarifying, and of making explicit the structure of meaning of the lived experience" (p. 77). Effective reflection (Gadamer 1976) also allowed the researcher to consider emerging themes or issues for further exploration. Second interviews were completed by November 1995 and data analysis continued through January.

The rich descriptions that the participants detailed of their professional lives and their intense reflection from open-ended questions are filled with meanings, themes, or units of meaning. The relationship between consciousness or awareness and their personal construction of their world was examined as a theme (Tesch 1988). Themes help the researcher to see or understand the meaning of the lived experience or "the structures of experience" (van Manen 1990, p. 79). The researcher examined the elements which contribute to the mentoring experience. These explanations aided my discovery of meaning of the mentoring phenomenon as all of the rich details were explored.

Background of Researcher

A researcher using a phenomenological approach is also a participant in the research process and thereby brings her or his perspectives into the data collection and analysis. These perspectives are what influenced my choice of a research topic. It is important that researcher's perspectives are viewed as part of the research (van Manen 1990). Researchers' life experiences bring biases as to how one might view the same phenomenon. For example, as a feminist I am interested in feminist research methodology. This perspective includes interest in "a multiplicity of research methods" and among other goals, "aims to create social change" (Reinharz 1992, p. 240). This work can enable other women to learn from these ten participants who have changed their work places by the fact that they are women and have achieved positions of influence. My own mentor was a well known developmental psychologist whose scholarship changed the perception of nature versus nurture in the development of children.

I will always remember my first significant mentor. She had unlimited faith in my ability. Years have passed since her death, but I shall never forget her support and interest. My return to graduate school is directly related to her personal involvement in my life. Therefore, I have a deep and powerful reason for researching women's lived experiences with mentoring, to become a better mentor myself. I am a mother of two children (one daughter), adjunct professor, counselor, and student teacher supervisor for college students, and I try to mentor when appropriate. I too will benefit from this qualitative study as I hope

others will; I look forward to sharing these insights and using my lived experience with mentoring in this research.

Summary

A phenomenological study is particularly relevant for examining the topic of women's mentoring. I was able to probe and analyze the essence of mentoring in the lived experiences of these ten women using two one hour interviews. A discussant format enabled me to understand the meaning of their relationships. The conversations enabled both the participants and the researcher to gain greater insight into the mentoring phenomenon. Reflection between the two interviews, as well as during the interviews themselves allowed for this greater insight. The context of their mentoring was discussed at length. Guiding questions began the conversations, but data developed as their stories were elaborated.

The participants were selected for their interest, their acknowledgment that they had participated in a mentoring relationship with another woman during their professional career, and their occupation. The quality of their mentoring experience was not a factor for selection. This realistic examination of mentoring reflects the women and their professional world. After the collection of data, analysis began.

Data collection included Tesch's (1987) design: (1) immersion; (2) dividing data into smaller units called units of meaning, themes or patterns; and (3) confirmation of relevance. This method relied on the researcher for continuity,

clarity, and reliability. The tapes and transcripts were reviewed a minimum of five times. This time frame allowed for additional reflection and introspection by the researcher.

The discussant format was particularly effective for uncovering their meanings of mentoring. This format also allowed an understanding of the context of their working environments and society in general. Only through this type of investigation can the researcher begin to uncover the importance of their mentoring relationships.

Description and interpretation of the mentoring experience were essential to understanding the experiences and to writing this study. Through these interpretive interviews, the women recognized the changing nature of their mentoring experiences. This method of phenomenological interviewing and data analysis allowed for any possibility of the mentoring experience between two women to be introduced and discussed.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The mentoring phenomenon appears to be complex, expanding, and changing significantly. The traditional form of mentoring, sometimes referred to as grooming mentoring, is still recognized, but is not as commonly experienced by these women as is peer mentoring or networking mentoring. The twenty interviews with ten highly successful professional women yielded valuable information by clarifying the women's and the researcher's insights into mentoring.

Half of the women had women mentors in the grooming sense early in their careers. Nine women had male and/or female mentors although one woman stated that no one expressed an interest in mentoring her and she never had any mentor at all. However, as these women progressed in their careers, they did not typically have women in positions above them to fulfill the traditional mentor role. Therefore, they relied on male mentors, peer mentors, or no mentors at all. All of these women have achieved positions of influence in their professions or business which few women have experienced. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that they all have broken through the glass ceiling.

All ten of these women currently reside in the western United States, and were chosen for their differing professional responsibilities. While one of the women is in her late thirties, the other women range in age from forty-eight to fifty-seven. They share similarities in their career paths and their success. One of the women is a chief of staff of a large hospital. Two women are judges; one is an appellate court judge and the other is a retired superior court judge who continues to sit on the bench occasionally. Two women work in university settings and one woman is a vice president working in the health care industry. Two women, including the youngest participant in this study, started their own companies. One woman is president and chief executive officer of a bank in a large city and another is a partner in a national accounting firm.

Almost all of the women attended public high schools. All but one attended a private college or university during her undergraduate or graduate years. One woman stated, "I got married in my junior year so I didn't finish college." Another woman ended her education when she graduated from a state university with a BS degree. Deborah attended a small women's college in the midwest and stated, "I think that women in women's colleges in the fifties had a good experience because we saw women faculty, we saw women deans, we saw women presidents." Eight of the women received advanced degrees and only one of these eight received an advanced degree from a public university. These women were in a small minority of women attending graduate school. One participant told me she was "one of seventy." Another stated that there were four women in her class and another said that there were three women in a class of

more than ninety. Two women estimated that the percentage of women in their graduate schools was approximately ten percent.

These women discussed their mentoring experiences in narrative form. They felt that expressing their life history was important to understanding their mentoring experiences. Their family, education, and working environments have all contributed to the person they are today and the way they view mentoring. Their relationships with others are also dependent upon these same factors. They felt that the researcher needed to understand these concepts in order to understand their professional lives and those who mentored them and those they mentor. This interaction of their professional and personal lives is so deep that one influenced the other. Their perspectives on mentoring shared several common themes and their narratives reflected this fact.

Narrative Frame: Sharing Stories

Marilyn stated, "I think that women like to talk through things, try out various things and hear them spoken, see what they should like, get some feedback to make some modifications in what they want to do and then eventually pick a pathway that suits them and fits their needs." The interviews were actually conversations. The women enjoyed telling stories of their mentoring experiences. Yet they could not limit their stories to mentoring. They all expressed the opinion that to understand them the researcher needed to acknowledge the historical time in which the events happened. Otherwise, they felt their actions and feelings could not be comprehended. And so the interviews

became long stories of their experiences, filled with details about their families, their education, their work, and historical context. They clearly wanted to provide all the necessary details of their lives so that a true understanding of their mentoring relationships and the significance of this phenomenon could be appreciated. This study became a narrative of ten women's lives. One woman stated, "What women do is share their stories." The narrative as communication enables the women to examine their past, present, and future relationships and also consider the way they view themselves today.

Narrative is used as a means to link themes. It mediates the self as we imagine ourselves to be today and what we hope to become in the future. By examining their own lives, as they speak about their changing nature within their historical sense, they reveal for themselves more of a sense of self. Using this new awareness, they were then able to discuss and reflect upon their mentoring experiences.

This phenomenologically approached study is in many ways a narrative study because of the way these women told their stories of their life experiences. They developed further insights as they reflected upon their mentoring experiences. The second interview was typically different from the first because it was even more like a conversation between two women. They carefully considered their responses to questions and decided that some of their mentoring opinions changed. This was particularly evident as peer mentors were discussed. They shared their stories but questioned whether these experiences actually involved mentoring. After further reflection, using the time in between

interviews, they were more definite about their experiences as indeed being a mentoring relationship and shared further stories about their mentoring phenomenon.

Mentoring appears to have different meanings among the women. If they had a definition before the first interview, that definition changed during the interviewing process. Most of the women started the first interview with a clear and formal definition of mentoring similar to grooming mentoring. This definition would include an older and more experienced professional guiding a younger and less experienced professional during a period of transition and over a long period of time. In other words, they did not view their mentors as someone who briefly entered their professional lives.

However, as they began to articulate their mentoring experiences, they recognized that mentoring is not a single process, is not limited to a traditional hierarchical relationship, and there are no time requirements. Mentoring is changing to include additional formats. One woman stated, "mentoring is just something that is very difficult to explain." All of the women argued that mentoring encourages the protegee to make decisions of their choosing and proceed with what is ultimately best for the protegee, even if this action is in contradiction with her mentor. "A willingness to be concerned about somebody's future" is how Marilyn explained mentoring.

Karen described mentors as "somebody who sets an example and who notices and takes you under their wing." All of these women have experienced more than one mentoring relationship. Perhaps they might label their mentors as

being either major or minor mentors in their lives. The dialogue shared between the mentor and the protegee involved a variety of topics, professional as well as personal.

Mentoring as Dialogue

"One of the things that most of us lack in our education is negotiation skills" stated Marilyn. Mentoring relationships are filled with advice from the mentor to the protegee and, also from the protegee to the mentor. The advice centers not only on the present, but also on the future. Marilyn is in academic medicine and is adamant about expressing her opinion concerning academic and private practice medicine to her protegees. She feels that moving into private practice is more easily accomplished from academic medicine than the other way around.

Writing and positioning oneself for presentations is necessary. She tells her chief resident, "since you have to do some of these lectures, pick some that you would like to carry into your professional life in the future. It means that you walk on, able to volunteer to speak about things for various groups." She also strongly advises that her residents carefully examine all job offers, the expectations, salary range, hours, what one hopes to accomplish, and attain as much of this information as possible in writing. There is a certain amount of aggressiveness that is necessary in a medical career and she feels that women sometimes lag behind men in this area. A mentor can be particularly helpful to a protegee using her own past experiences.

What are the responsibilities of the mentor and the protegee? Marilyn feels that a mentor must be supportive and explicit in her advice, yet allow enough leeway for the protegee to make decisions. She feels a mentor should care about her protegee. "It is important to find people who you can go to and discuss a variety of things related to your careers and even other aspects of one's life." Karen also recognizes that women's professional lives are connected to their personal lives. Therefore, she does not find that her protegee's questions concerning personal issues are unusual. These women have more than one mentor and multiple mentors can be helpful for discussing a variety of aspects in one's complicated life.

Patricia feels that businesses are changing so rapidly in this "highly volatile and changeable world" that a mentor cannot and should not prepare a person for one position. Instead, a mentor can give specific advice but must recognize that typically, people change professions during their working careers and, therefore, mentors in occupations different from their own may also be useful. Many people approach Patricia for advice when they lose their jobs or are looking for a change in profession. She attempts to be helpful by offering suggestions for future employment requirements even if it is outside of her specific expertise. And in this endeavor, she says, "it's not just encouragement and sponsorship, but it's giving people honest feedback." She said in the future, "mentoring is going to be different." Patricia feels that grooming mentoring may continue, but because of economics today, mentoring will take different formats from the traditional grooming mentor relationship and necessitate an increase in

networking mentors. She recognizes that people need others who can help them personally, not just identify talent and bring them along in a particular organization.

Deborah enjoys her protegees because they offer her different insights into the same situation. She has found that her protegees view situations differently than others when attending meetings and they share these thoughts with her. And after meetings, Deborah can “explain things to her (the protegee) and have her see why I did what I did, and whether it was right or wrong, why I did it. And how it worked. She would be able to see things through to completion and see how it turned out.” These meetings and the following dialogue help both the mentor and the protegee in this example.

Vera, Marilyn, and Patricia voiced strong opinions about honest feedback. These women did not shy away from bluntness. Vera asserted that women seek her out for advice. Her responsibility is to be realistic. Sometimes one can only point the protegee in the right direction and allow her to select the appropriate path. Vera stated, “now sometimes I’ve talked people out of things too.” Patricia agrees that there is a need to be honest. “The mentoring was not about sponsoring women in a positive way, but feeling comfortable giving women negative feedback.” This woman stated that she feels women have a difficult time receiving negative feedback and men have stated to her that women cry and get upset with negative feedback. Therefore, these men feel uncomfortable with women protegees and use that reason for not mentoring women.

Marilyn was concerned with her protegee (a woman in hospital administration), whose arrogant language in a meeting offended other attendees. She felt duty bound to correct this situation and later that day expressed her opinion to her protegee and ended this way:

you know it's really hard for me to tell you this, but I like you a lot and you may not realize it but this is how the people in the room were perceiving your behavior. You're just too good and too special to have that sort of thing happen.

"And she was very grateful. And it hasn't happened again!" Therefore, women need honest feedback, the ability to accept the criticism, and benefit by changing their behavior. Patricia talks about the need for women to have resilience for success in the business world today. "There is no question in my mind that she can't be successful in this environment, unless she takes my advice. Not that my advice is so smart, just informed by experience." Patricia gave advice about the importance of the workplace environment. If one does not understand that connection, then she feels her protegees are better off leaving and finding a suitable match.

A mentor sometimes feels fear and responsibility of giving advice. These feelings can determine the level of direction a mentor is willing to give to a protegee. Marilyn expressed her view that she does not have to live with the protegee's decisions and therefore does not want to take the responsibility for major decisions. She acts more as a sounding board and allows her protegees to make the final decisions, even when she feels they are heading in the wrong direction. She feels she can only do so much guiding. "I think their choices

should be freely made. I wouldn't want someone coming back to me and saying you told me to do such and such and I really feel differently." She finds that she is a sounding board for not only professional matters but also personal decisions, such as whether to accept a marriage proposal. Patricia also agrees with Marilyn: "My role is not to guide them in a specific direction, but to give them general counsel about the qualities of mine and experiences and the competencies that they need so that they can take advantage of opportunities, so that they can create their own future."

Many times these mentors feel they offered no advice at all. "They would just come in and I would just listen." However, listening to women express their concerns can be most helpful. As we articulate our concerns and ponder the various options, decisions are more easily made. "They'd go away and they'd come back and they'd say, 'I did just what you told me and it turned out wonderfully.'" The participant had not told them anything, but by listening to them and perhaps exhibiting some body language, the protegees felt that they were benefiting from a more experienced professional.

Marsha's words of "passing something down to the next generation" sticks with her as she ponders the mentoring in her own life and who she is coaching, teaching, sponsoring and advising. She thinks that as a mentor it is essential to pass on advice to young women: "understand there are no obstacles" and "you can do anything you want." She further elaborated, "a whole other side of my personality is not taking no for an answer. That actually probably came from Susan (her mentor), somewhere along the way."

Patricia and Vera are frustrated by women who profess that they want mentors to help them but at the same time do not even consider suggestions that are given. Patricia met many times with a woman who wanted a fulfilling job but would never consider the necessary elements of a business plan. This encounter was wasted time as far as Patricia is concerned. She finally said to her protegee,

All you talk about is what you're looking for in a job and a kind of experience that you want to have, what makes you happy, what fulfills you and frankly as a potential employer, I could care less. What I need to hear from you is how you can help me solve my problems. And maybe what you need to do is spend more time listening to what people you talk with about, where their organizations are going, what their needs are, and then try and connect as to how you can help them.

This protegee did not contact Patricia after this advice, but Patricia stated she did everything possible for this woman. She further asserted that she needs and wants to spend her time helping people who will listen and benefit from her advice.

When Marilyn's students graduate from medical school and move to their next professional position, typically in a different city, she enjoys reflecting on her relationship, feels satisfaction and tells her protegees. "Stay in touch, I'll be glad to help." And I can tell by the enthusiasm in her voice that she intends to remain active and helpful in her protegees' lives no matter where they go or when they come back to her. Feedback continues by way of letters and phone calls, after personal contact is no longer possible. Marilyn wrote one of her former students a letter explaining the necessity of her joining a support group in her new job.

Even though Marilyn is no longer in personal contact with her former protegee, she maintains an interest.

Melissa shared many positive mentoring experiences. She feels that women tend to limit themselves because they fail to see that their abilities are “transferable baggage.” She stated, “Judgment is judgment and common sense is common sense, analytical skills are analytical skills. It’s just the jargon that’s different.” She observes that men are good at moving from different businesses with ease whereas women tend to limit themselves. Therefore, she has encouraged women to look at their skills and feel confident that they can easily move to companies in differing businesses. She is a good example of this ability to change professions and recognizes that she probably stands as a role model to many.

Karen is also available to discuss the special needs of women lawyers who have trouble dealing with certain men in the legal profession and even advises lawyers to use their instinct when picking jurors. They need to be aware of jurors who have prejudices against women lawyers and judges.

Maternity pay and leave are issues which concerned her, especially when she was a partner in a mid-sized law firm. Many times she had women lawyers ask for advice on how to raise a family and work full time. She finds that making herself available is the best way she can mentor other women. Zoe feels that women need to be aware of their gender, wear appropriate clothing, and work within the system to lessen discriminatory practices. “You need to get the lay of

the land.” Once that is established, one can gain the respect of others in the organization and necessary changes can be implemented.

A statement of several women reflected their concern with protegees. An explanation by Vera is representative: “I weed through and save time or make time for the people that really are on the right track and I think that whatever advice or opinion that I have, will be listened to, not necessarily taken, but that it’s going to be someone, someone will do something with it, either reject it or whatever.” None of these women participants want their advice to be ignored. The time they give to their protegees is sometimes seen as time away from their other work. One woman explained: “I used to have an open door policy. I can’t do that anymore.”

Vera also sees the necessity of giving practical advice. She is presently meeting with a woman who is going through difficult circumstances and needs to change jobs. She offered to go through mock interviews and suggested resume and networking tips. Deborah also remembers practical advice which her mentors previously gave her. When she was a dean and advanced to a vice-presidential position, fund raising became important. She did not know how to deal with large groups of people. She encountered women who had never worked outside of the home but were large contributors to university causes. Deborah’s mentor gave her specific questions to ask these women such as, “How was your trip?” or “How are your grandchildren?” These remarks expressed interest and concern. Deborah recently sorted through papers and uncovered her mentor’s funeral mass card where the following words were

written. "I want you to be happy always and do everything that I have taught you." These words ring close to Deborah's heart as she recalls her mentor's words. Even after her mentor's death, she explained, "she was speaking to me, incredible."

Doreen directly credits her mentor from changing her career path from an attorney to becoming a judge. Her mentor was a superior court judge who called her into her office and gave her the practical advice necessary to obtain a judicial appointment. At this time there were very few women judges. This encouragement, the notice of an upcoming opening, the practical instruction of how to be a judge, the explanation of the process and the information necessary were specific. Today, she reads over the questionnaires for other judicial candidates and offers suggestions on possible changes so that the process will go as smoothly as possible. She obviously enjoys mentoring others.

You try and pass it (the political process) on in your mentoring experiences that says "I have the faith that you can do these things." That makes people think "yes, maybe I can." Maybe they know what they are talking about. Later you think, "Oh, I'm not so sure they did." But it's enough to make you take the risk, it's really worthwhile.

Interaction as Dialogue

Zoe asserted that a successful mentoring relationship more often appears when one appreciates the chemistry of the interaction. She does not "necessarily feel an obligation to these people. I want to see them be exposed because it also helps me. I want to grow them. And I love to watch them attack

something and be really good at it.” These are the relationships she prizes, helping others realize their potential. She often notices characteristics of herself in those people she chooses to mentor. She speaks of spirit and energy that she recognizes in her own career. Zoe and these participants, do not feel that mentoring is an obligation, rather an activity in which they wish to participate.

Doreen and Paula both asserted that a person who is in a more secure job has an easier time recruiting a protegee than a protegee recruiting a mentor. “If you recognize that you have the clout or the position to be able to reach out to someone and help them, then it’s much more likely, I think, for the person in that position to do it, than the person who needs help. Because none of us are very good about that. But I think that it actually works both ways.” This is an important finding because younger women need to recognize that they have some responsibility in this relationship to reach out even if it is more difficult.

Melissa recalls seeking out one protegee because she recognized that this woman “sought her advice on a whole host of issues that had nothing to do with her particular functional area of responsibility, because I thought she had good judgment and common sense, and a good perspective on a whole array of things.” When she left the company, she asked her chief executive officer to hire her protegee whom she felt was the most qualified. She had moved into what she has identified as her stated third stage of mentoring when she sponsored this woman. Melissa elaborated on her three stages of mentoring. The first stage consists of acting as a role model, the second stage is a mentoring one in which a woman offers advice and support of her protegee. The third stage consists of a

sponsoring role in which the mentor uses her influence to advance her protegee to higher positions of influence.

Marsha stated that her mentor is a teacher, enabling her to make decisions. She knows that she has the foundation and the ability to make a decision because a mentor gives the protegee "everything before." In other words, her mentor has prepared her for the next step in her career development. Her mentor's "actions told me that I could survive." She acknowledges that the mentor takes on a great deal of responsibility, but the protegee also has the responsibility of taking the next step by representing her mentor well. Patricia notes that women today are more aggressive in their careers as they seek out others who can help them advance in their organizations. In the fifties and the sixties, she notes that women were more shy and submissive.

Melissa stated that other women sought her out to mentor. She views these people as recognizing her potential, and willing to use her ability even though she is in a lower position. These senior women "don't see it as acknowledging a deficiency in and of themselves. It's how do they improve themselves and be able to take on other opportunities." In other words, using the protegee's strengths also helped the mentor to grow in others areas themselves.

Marsha prized her mentor's opinion to such a degree that she spoke of consulting her mentor at each turn in her own career. When she was contemplating a job offer, she was reassured when her mentor agreed that the job was one she should accept. That confirmation was strong enough for the

participant to make the change from a private business to an assistant director of athletics at a large university in the western United States.

Experience as Frame

All of the women mentioned the glass ceiling and the effects it has had on their personal and professional lives. All of them feel that their gender influenced their professional lives. However, they are quick to acknowledge that these experiences have not always been to their disadvantage. Some of these participants felt that they had benefited from affirmative action policies. They expressed no regrets that they were given opportunities because of their gender.

Karen views her experiences in the legal profession as definitely having been influenced by her gender. Even though she did not immediately attend law school after she finished her undergraduate work, she was still in the minority attending law school in the seventies. She is sensitive to women working in a male dominated organization and appreciates those women ahead of her who broke the glass ceiling. She asserted that men cannot understand a woman's hurdles and obstacles that are ever present.

All of the participants' narratives centered around an historical perspective. They felt that the researcher could not possibly understand their accomplishments and their feelings concerning their being mentored, their mentoring actions and relationships until a basic understanding of the times of their career advancement was shared. This was such a powerful theme that it could not possibly be ignored. In many respects, they were at the forefront of

professional women and enjoy the changes they now see reflected in the increased number of women working in their organizations. The majority of these women have advanced degrees. Nine of these women expressed their opinion that their education is important to their achievements because they would not have been offered the opportunities without the degrees.

Women and Education

Eight of the ten women in this study went to graduate school and, as women, were in a small minority. Four women were part of particularly small groups of women; for example, such as one of seventy or three of ninety. Three women estimated their graduate women classmates were merely ten to fifteen percent of their class. Their minority positions influenced their educational experience and their ability to find jobs after graduation. Some felt that being in the minority was advantageous. Karen stated, "I went to the public agencies knowing they were under pressure to hire women." However, Patricia felt just the opposite when she received her Ph.D. "No one helped me get a job. It was terrible. They (her professors) didn't set me up for one job interview."

When Doreen attended law school, young men were being drafted to serve in the Vietnam war. She felt there was some resentment against her. At this time, men could sometimes put off their military service if they remained in school. Therefore, some people held resentment against women for taking a place in graduate school. "Somebody's life might actually be at stake here who didn't get into graduate school because you took their place. And that viewpoint

was certainly expressed by a few people, on the theory that you really aren't going to use this. You're going to be just a housewife anyway." When the women attending graduate school in the sixties finished their graduate education they moved into jobs where there were few women in positions of influence.

The vast majority of women in this study stated that they did not plan to have careers when they were growing up. This opinion did not necessarily change in graduate school even though they felt they had an opportunity to continue their education. They felt that they would work temporarily, eventually marry, have children, and then stay home. However, as their careers progressed they were unwilling to stop work and stay at home. Nine of these participants continued to work after college, taking time off to have children, and staying home no longer than a few weeks.

Their careers progressed when relatively few women attended graduate school and had careers. Therefore, it is not surprising that there was a lack of strong women mentors who were in positions of influence above them. However, four were mentored by women in their early years when they were still executive secretaries, and later they surpassed their mentors. Half of these women began their work experience in traditional positions such as a secretary. It was not unusual for them to change professions from their original work as they progressed and continued with their education. If they had women mentors, they stated that these women gave them encouragement when they left to pursue other interests such as returning to school for advanced degrees. But many of the women never had a grooming woman mentor and their experiences with

women was limited to women peer mentors. One participant stated that she “was mentorless for twenty years.” The years that she is talking about are between her college years and mid-forties. After this time period, she developed numerous relationships with peer mentors.

Today, the female gender is viewed differently from what it was when these women were growing up and attending graduate school, even though some would argue that the changes have not been significant enough. Their sense of self developed under enormous pressure for women to remain submissive. They are, therefore, remarkably strong and focused. Today, they exhibit little patience with protegees who are not as focused in their professional lives. Patricia stated, “they need to tell me what they can do for me, not what they want to fulfill their life.” They view today’s women as having greater opportunity as well as greater support. There are numerous women in most work contexts today who are able to guide, support, encourage, facilitate, motivate, and listen to other women in their chosen profession.

Women and Work

Melissa stated:

To understand me you have to know that I didn’t intend to have a career. I’m that generation of woman. I’m fifty-two, almost. I’m that generation of women that sort of said, I’ll have a house in the country full of kids and a big shaggy dog.

Melissa’s life is very different from what she expected. Similar statements were expressed by several women. “You were a nurse, a teacher, or a mother. Or

you taught until you got married." They went to graduate school because without a graduate degree they could not get the type of job that gave them satisfaction.

Karen, an appellate court judge, described her life this way:

I was so young. ... I was just doing things because I needed a job and such. I had no career plans in mind. I never imagined when David and I got married, having a career. I will say that I got married to David instead of my real love or desire would have been to go to law school. But quote, girls didn't do that at that time.

Although they saw themselves as working women, they did not envision careers and thought their work was a temporary situation. However, one participant did know early on that she had the ability to go beyond the executive secretary position. She noted that her mentor, a woman, quickly recognized her ability and gave her added responsibility because she knew, "I was wasting my time to be a secretary." This encouragement was not universal.

Patricia stated:

No one helped me get a job. It was just terrible. They didn't set me up for one job interview. ... So I literally followed my husband who hadn't even started his dissertation, but passed his exams as I was finishing my dissertation. So I had my Ph.D. and he had qualified and he had two or three job offers.

This was the attitude of the time. These highly educated women were not expected to get jobs and when they wanted ones with futures, they faced a difficult task.

Vera, an entrepreneur, does not feel that her gender was a hindrance in her work. She started her business as a business, not a hobby like so many other women. Her husband told her they needed an additional ten thousand dollars a year and she needed to get a job that would pay that amount. When

she decided to start her own business, he backed her. She also remembers that there were other men who encouraged her, but no women mentors to encourage her.

Before Vera established her business, she participated in volunteer activities for different organizations which she thinks was an enormous help to her success in the business world. Vera is specific when she speaks of mentors and friends, clearly differentiating between them. Her friends "loved to serve on my committees." Today, her organization is a multi-million dollar manufacturing business which employs over two hundred people.

A university president, Deborah had a strong woman mentor whom she met during her undergraduate years and with whom she continued a relationship throughout her career until her mentor's death. They stayed in close personal contact. But her working world did not include a grooming type of woman mentor.

In my professional life, I was nearly always the first woman of this, that, or the other. And so, I did not have somebody immediately who had held the position before me or who, to whom I reported who could give me that kind of guidance. I was, in fact, the only woman in the science division when I became Dean. So, there was nobody there who would serve that role.

When a woman is the first to achieve a position of influence, such as the case for Paula, the first woman partner in her accounting firm, there is the concern that the need for a mentor might be seen as weakness. Therefore, Paula never wanted a mentor and pronounced that she never had anybody even try to mentor her. On the other hand, people have sought her out and she

willingly and enthusiastically mentors men and women. She stated that she mentored another woman to become a partner in her firm. This woman specifically asked for Paula's help to become a partner and "she wouldn't have made it without me."

Graduating from law school in the early sixties was an unusual experience for a woman. When Doreen and her women classmates applied for jobs after graduation, they received letters that stated that even though their credentials were strong, "our clients won't work with a woman." Women were not typically able to become partners in law firms in the early sixties and women judges were few and far between. But because there were so few women judges, Doreen and others joined forces and started a program to change that trend. They used this group to influence the state bar, the governor and others in positions to make the changes necessary to bring more women to the bench. This experience has influenced Doreen's life and numerous other people. "We wanted to flush all these people out of the woodwork who maybe had this idea in their mind but weren't brave enough to step forward."

Zoe, a bank chief executive officer, was typical of these women in that she never planned on a career but continued her education so that she could get a better job. Once she became a part of the work force, she recognized that she wanted to reach the next level and the next. When she became pregnant, she knew that she wanted to continue working after the birth of her child. However, no officer of her bank had left to have a baby and return to work. There was no maternity leave. Therefore, she did not tell her superiors until she was six

months pregnant and submitted a detailed plan on how she could continue with her work at home and then return after a six week absence. She felt that the resistance that she met was more kindly concern than prejudice. She did return after six weeks and has never left work again except to have her second child. She acknowledged that she was an inspiration to other working women as she explained information she had gained from this experience. Today, she notes, what she did is common. She does not consider herself an extraordinary person, simply a woman who needed and wanted to continue working after having children. She stated, "you have to ask, you have to tell people what you want and you have to ask for the jobs you want. You have to go for things. But I think it's hard for women in my generation to ask for anything."

Marsha, who became an assistant athletic director at a large public university, was the youngest of the women participants by ten years. She did not spend as much time discussing problems of gender as did the other women in this study. However, she noted that "in 1990 they (universities) were more forced to have women in senior positions in athletic departments. I didn't want to come back and be the token, because they had to have one." When she was convinced that the job was what she wanted and that she was not offered the position solely because of her gender, she accepted the position.

On the other hand, Karen was ready to take advantage of her gender. She graduated from law school and did not feel that her chances of getting a job with a law firm were promising so she "went to the public agencies knowing they were under pressure to hire women." Later on, law firms also were under

pressure to hire women and that is when she joined a firm. Today she is an appellate court judge and recognizes that she serves as a role model to other women, not just in a professional sense, but in society at large.

Women and Society

Society has influenced the way women have lived their lives in the past as well as influencing the way we live our lives today. There have been significant changes in these women's lives and as they examined their past and present circumstances, they found that their past is essential to understanding the way they lead their lives today. These women participants also understand that the younger women they mentor are living in a different historical perspective than the one they experienced. They take that knowledge under consideration as they attempt to meet their own expectations as well as those they mentor.

"The forties and the fifties, those were women who really, really were without choice. They were going to make their lives as homemakers." Deborah continued, "it would not have been possible, for example, for women in my class to easily get into law school or medical school. The more prestigious universities were not admitting women in the fifties." Another woman, Marilyn, did make it into a prestigious medical school and was one of only three women students in her class. Today she is a Chief of Staff of a large hospital. Early in her medical career, she found that nobody "was being explicit about how to be successful. You sort of learned it from having your own antenna up." Because of this past experience, she wants to be very explicit with those she mentors. "You should

be putting together the sorts of some opportunities to be able to deliver lectures so that you're the expert on certain topics." This exposure will help gain acceptance in the medical profession. Marilyn also suggests "get it in writing." This type of clarity can reduce problems later because the expectations are more clearly identified between the doctor and potential employers.

The majority of these women are now in their fifties. Therefore, their higher education took place in the fifties and sixties. Patricia stated, "I think it's important (to realize) that I was a product of the late fifties and the early sixties. At least when I was at college, girls had serious discussions about well, if you go to law school and medical school, nobody will ever marry you." This was a traditional time when women were expected to marry, raise children, and stay home. Doreen stated

I was the first in my family to go to college and so it was an interesting thing ... and I sent away to all these schools that I had heard of and it was funny because I got schools back, of course, that were only for men. I had never made the connection that this school does not even admit women.

During the fifties, success for women was difficult and many met with discriminatory practices. Melissa spoke about taking a shorthand course. "I knew how to type. We all learned how to type, my generation, in high school. So I took a shorthand class, and at the end of that class my instructor said to me, 'you know, you've really done well, if you could just get a college education'." Melissa laughed when she shared these comments with me and they obviously had an impact on her life. The encouragement led this woman to receive a

bachelors degree from one of the most competitive universities in the United States and then on for a MBA degree fifteen years later.

One woman felt slightly differently about women and work in the fifties. Deborah attended a women's college and said she was always told that women could do anything they wanted to do. And more importantly, she believed that. "There was very little consciousness of women as women. I probably had more than my contemporaries because I was at a college for women. But there was very little sensitivity to women's roles." This same woman felt that, "assumptions were made about the way we would live our lives that turned out not to be true." She did not expect to have the career she did, "but that's how it turned out." Even though she did not plan a career, she was given the confidence to try to reach her potential, which she has. The added incentive was the support her mentor and others gave her during her college years.

I thought I would teach for awhile and then that I would settle down and raise six children. So that was my expectation. That's not how my life turned out. But that was certainly what I'd expected. And we were very docile and we expected support from (a man), a different life than it is now.

Paula, a partner in an accounting firm, is hardworking and wants no special treatment because of her gender. She had no women professors when she was in college. She stated that she made partner on stamina, by working hard and requesting nothing special. She sees some circumstances changing in her firm such as maternity leave and a concern for family activities which require time away from the office, but the changes have been slow to develop and she does not feel that they are yet adequate. She expressed her opinion that she

does not want to see other women discriminated against, wants to mentor and help other women, but is interested in mentoring men also. She is not as concerned with gender as some of the other participants.

Doreen remembers the district attorney who only wanted to hire lawyers who had previously been eagle scouts or played college football. This requirement obviously eliminated women from consideration. Doreen remarked that this man has long ago been replaced with a more enlightened lawyer.

When Zoe was working in a large Western city, she could not rise above a teller job because of her gender. She has never forgotten being told that "you can't do that because you're a woman." They probably said 'you're a girl.'" She felt such comments were an incentive to encourage change in the work force for women. Karen stated that her mentor was treated unfairly by other women in the university setting because she was not seen as championing women's causes on campus. The irony was that she often spent her weekends doing just that and the students on campus did not realize the activities because they were done in a quieter way off campus.

Society impacted women in the past just as it does today. "And I think that everything about female socialization, for my generation, focused on pleasing people." Patricia also stated, "A lot of our socialization reinforced the lifestyle, go with your interests. Not the development of passion, ideas, or projects or skills." This lack of development in women's careers has caused women to lag behind their male counterparts. She views younger women differently in that there is an acceptance that most will work full time outside of their homes.

Today, women's opportunities have expanded. The women who participated in this study voiced their thoughts concerning younger women who are now attending graduate school. Higher education is filled with women, and careers have become common as more women enter the professional ranks. Many women graduate from college with the expressed interest in having a career and many go on to graduate schools that are now almost fifty percent women. What a change!

Women today lead different lives and their relationships are also different. Marilyn expressed her belief concerning women medical students: "The young man is often more supportive of her, from the standpoint of emotional support and the like. It's a different kind of a relationship than those I grew up with. ... Maybe the working mothers have changed their attitudes." Marilyn married in her twenties, has two grown children, and maintains a hectic work schedule at the hospital. She thinks women can do everything, but with help. She is an example of a woman who has broken the glass ceiling and appears to be happy and satisfied with the balance in her life.

Today, there remains the feeling among some of these women that they continue to be held back by their gender. Patricia, a university administrator, stated that affirmative action may have helped her get her job but "I feel like I'm seven years behind where a man my age would be. I do feel that gender is an issue." She feels that the time will come to head an institution of higher learning but not until she is in her late fifties. Whereas her male contemporaries who have pursued the same professional path are filling those positions now. "I just

have this sense that it just takes longer for institutions and the individuals to get comfortable with the leadership skills of women.” She also feels that men who try to mentor women seem unwilling to give them negative feedback. “Men have told me that women will start crying, they’ll get upset. In other words, men don’t know how to mentor women and therefore after ten years women are less competent.” She feels that learning takes place by interacting with people of influence and peers and if this avenue is closed to them, they fall behind.

One woman has enjoyed her grooming mentoring relationship as a protegee for thirty years. Today, her mentor is an athletic director at a major university who had to struggle to attain a position which had always been held by a man. She believes her mentor should have been offered an athletic director position much earlier. Marsha feels this setback is strictly gender related. When her mentor was passed over, Marsha left that university and went for a private sector job because she feared she too would not be able to reach the top position. A few years later she returned to college athletics with renewed interest. Recently, she left the assistant athletic director position in order to start her own business in a sports related area. Now, however, she knows that it is possible for a woman to be an athletic director at a division I university.

Patricia mentors many women. Because she has been such a positive example of what women can accomplish and is open to meeting with individuals to give advice, she is sought out by other women. On the other hand, she encounters many women her age whom she views as being “so many compassless women and no amount of mentoring can help that. You can’t

mentor a person who has no focus. You have to have some passion, some interest." She is selective of those she mentors recognizing her limited time and her interest in helping those who have the potential to achieve. She threw up her hands as she described many meetings with one woman who wanted no advice, just a sounding board. Patricia felt she could not help this particular woman, told her to make up her mind concerning her abilities to help an organization and "has not heard from this woman again." In other words, Patricia felt that she was not mentoring, just offering sympathy to someone who would not take the necessary steps to be successful.

Even though Melissa works in the health care industry, she remains one of the few women executives in her organization. "I'm very often the only woman at a meeting, the only woman at a conference ... at least (in) my executive peer group." She smiles as she relates the story of going to an executive meeting for a long weekend at Pebble Beach and explaining that she does not play golf, the expected activity in Carmel. She decided to rent a car and drive around the area while the other executives were on the golf course. One has to wonder if she missed out on business discussions by separating herself, yet she is confident that she is able to "do my own thing" and survive very well in the business world. She has worked for many different companies, in private business, government, and educational environments. She does not express concerns that her gender holds her back. She stated that other women do not recognize the ability to change businesses as easily as men accept different business opportunities.

Paula, who was never mentored, but spends time mentoring others stated that "I think the problem with the women's issues is not that women are not being mentored by women. I think it's an issue that women are not being mentored by men." Because she is one of three women partners in her office and recognizes that there are some offices across the country with no women partners, she feels a need to help when she can. However, mentoring across the country is not possible for her. Therefore, she feels strongly that men must also mentor women.

Marsha has established a business working with universities and their sports programs. She states, "there's some sort of inherent obligation (to women) that we all feel and maybe even stronger in athletics because it is so male dominated." Although she is just as comfortable working with men, she does note that other women have been discriminated against and she wants to make sure that she does what she can to improve their situation.

On the other side, Doreen has seen a dramatic change in the legal profession. She feels that the process of becoming a judge is no longer closed to women because they have the opportunity to learn the requirements for judicial appointments and will be considered without gender discrimination. She felt differently when she became a judge. Therefore, the profession is much improved and she now feels that one must sponsor the best person, male or female.

However, she does note that the agendas for the National Association of Women Judges and the California Judges Association differ dramatically. The

top priority of the Women Judges typically deals with children and women while this is not the case with the California Judges Association or other large legal organizations such as the American Bar. Using these organizations to encourage change is still needed. Doreen recognizes that women's issues are still unrecognized by a male dominated judiciary and until there are equal considerations given to issues advanced by each gender, there will remain serious problems for women.

Another woman who has had many firsts is Zoe. She was the first woman to join her chapter of the Young President's Organization. Today, there are approximately ten percent women in the national organization and she knows that she has benefited from this group immensely. She sees continued growth in the number of women joining this organization and enjoys a peer mentoring relationship with some of the women in the group.

One's life and the historical moment intersect to frame mentoring relationships. These women, in particular, are at the forefront of professional working women. This context of relationship is critical to understanding and appreciating their accomplishments and the significance they hold for women today and tomorrow.

Relationship as Frame

Paula stated: "I don't think you can be part of society and not have mentoring relationships." Mentoring is a relationship between a mentor and a protegee. This connection may be limited to professional issues or more likely, it

will encompass personal as well as professional concerns. Typically, these women shared professional concerns as well as family considerations with their mentors and protegees. They noted that sometimes their personalities matched, other times they differed. A few of the participants shared stories of an assigned protegee while most spoke about protegees and mentors they chose themselves. There was agreement that a friendship between the two participants in the relationship makes a mentoring situation more likely to be successful.

All of these women have a strong sense of self which may be important in a professional mentoring relationship. They recognize their strengths and feel that their mentoring relationship is a meaningful one which helps them personally and professionally. Their relationships required an understanding of who they are today, who they have been in the past, and where are they going in the future. Their sense of self develops through family, their professional and personal experiences, and gender. Their accomplishments are even more remarkable because they are women. They understand their accomplishments and how they are able to help other women by being effective mentors. These women were open with me, as they discussed their mentoring relationships, sometimes speaking passionately, and were typically introspective during the interviews.

Relationships work in both directions. In a successful mentoring relationship, the mentor also learns from the protegee. If respect and concern for the other is not present, the relationship becomes more difficult and consequently less satisfying. As the participants shared their stories about their relationships,

the researcher noticed important nonverbal clues. When these relationships were not successful, sadness could easily be discerned by watching the pained facial expressions and tenseness in the body. More often, the relationships that the women elected to share were positive experiences and they were quick to smile and laugh. Their expressive bodies displayed the joys of the experience.

The mentoring relationship is typically between two people, but some women feel that one person and a community of mentors or group of people can be a mentoring relationship. The women used such words as "supportive," "caring," "developing," and "nurturing" when referring to the relationship. They also used the words, "formal," "long term," and "influencing."

Those women who look at mentoring as a formal relationship feel that there has to be a specific format and a long term commitment. The women agreed that the relationship is an evolutionary process and typically not recognized until the relationship is long term. Some feel that they did not recognize the mentoring relationship until years later when they were no longer involved with the mentor, but using the mentor's words to guide their careers. By the end of the second interview, all of the women acknowledged that the relationship may be episodic. This fact is a significant change for some of these women.

The relationship must involve two people who are available to share information and advice, "but also feeling invested in the other individual's success." Both women in the relationship benefit. This is not a one way relationship. Marilyn stated that mentoring is like a friendship and "I suspect it's

the sort of thing that communities used to do and the way extended families and the like supported one another.”

These women’s professional lives have commonalities. They have broken through the glass ceiling, they have the opportunity to meet with other professional women today with the expansion of opportunities for women; they recognize what other women have done for their careers, and they expressed concern with family issues and how they relate to their working environments. All of these women recognize that their professions have influenced their sense of self and how they relate to their families.

Self and Family

We know ourselves by first examining our immediate families. Most of the women spoke about their parents, siblings, husbands, and children and those influences on their lives. Six of these ten women are now married. One woman is divorced and another is widowed. The other two women never married. Six women have between one and four children. The other four have no children. As a group, they are concerned about their professional responsibilities, their families, women’s historical influences, and their influences as women. All of them discussed their families. Husbands were mentioned but more discussion centered on children, nieces, and nephews. They talked about the advice they gave to youngsters concerning college choices and their development into adults. One woman who has no children takes particular pride in her

relationships with her nieces and nephews. She considers herself a mentor to these young adults.

No one mentioned her mother working outside of the home. All of the women were raised with at least two other siblings. Six participants came from families with four or more children. All have fewer children than their parents. Patricia recognizes the sacrifices she has made from a personal point of view. "I paid a price. I wish I had three kids. I have one." Four of these women have no children; two women have one child; three women have two children; and one woman has four children. Their children influenced them personally and professionally. Several women made statements similar to Marilyn, who talked about mentoring having similar qualities to raising her children. "It's sort of a little like your children. Not quite as intense." Even though these women were in different professions, they all were keenly aware of family needs, their needs, work requirements, and the balance that is required to make themselves productive and satisfied with their own life.

All of the women who have children addressed their concerns about balance between work and family with their proteges. This is an overriding concern among women. "Sometimes I can help women see how they can balance it all. But there weren't women like that when we were young." Patricia noted that times have changed and this balance is important for women today. If they can help in this area, these women are eager to give advice on the pitfalls and successes that they have experienced. The reality that most women are

working full time outside of the home and many have families will continue to forefront the need for balance in our lives.

These women often equated mentoring to raising children. Paula has a young daughter and stated, "I don't see mentoring in a career situation to be much different as (than) raising children." She had her one and only child at age forty and, therefore, she had opportunities to mentor before the birth of her daughter. Marsha also feels that mentors have some similarities to her parents. There is a certain amount of passiveness and submissiveness in this kind of relationship. "You don't always agree with them, especially as you get older, you can have your own opinions. It's sort of the same evolution." She stated that early in her career she would never disagree with her mentor. "But later, I think it's the respect that you both gain and the mutuality that the individual being mentored gains through experience and to be able to say, I think maybe we should do it this way." As these mentoring relationships develop, they change. The participants spoke of their grooming mentoring relationships becoming a peer format after a certain amount of time and the sense of self as a professional which was gained from the relationship.

The impact of working and raising children expressed most thoroughly by Zoe who was the first woman officer of her bank to have a child and return to work a few weeks later. "This was in 1977. This was a kind of mentoring. I would get calls from women all over the bank. 'I want to know what you did. How did you find your sitter? How long did you stay at home?'" She met with women over lunch, had drinks after work and offered her practical advice on how

to balance the responsibilities of raising children and continue to work. Again, the practical advice was necessary for other women and today she notes that what she did has become commonplace at her work site. She even refers to her activities as this “network started up” and the “little consulting service on the side.”

Karen finds that family issues take center stage when she mentors other women. She knows what it is like to miss a child’s recital and takes every opportunity to allow her proteges time off when she feels they need it. Karen feels that women are more productive at work when they can also include important family responsibilities in their schedules.

Vera employs her daughter. This allows for a professional mentoring relationship to take place. She sees many of her traits in her daughter; neither accepts compliments easily. Thinking of her daughter, Vera stated, “she doesn’t ask me for advice very often at all. I know that she has this great deal of respect for me. She wants to do it. She wants to prove herself to me that she can do it. So it’s kind of a funky kind of mentoring. It’s an unspoken one.”

Deborah grew up in a traditional family and never had children. However, growing up she thought she too would have six children after teaching for a few years. Once she started teaching and moving into administrative positions, she found herself leading a very different type of life than she had imagined. Zoe also planned on having six children, just like the family she was raised in. However, once she started working, she never stopped. “I’m from a family of six

kids and (in) the middle. I have four brothers and one sister. And I mention the four boys because I think they had a lot to do with my outlook on things later on.”

Karen’s mentor was instrumental in her perception that she could work full time and also raise children. Her mentor had a “lovely relationship” with a daughter and as Karen observed this relationship, she developed the sense that she too could be a wife, mother, and professional. This experience was critically important to Karen’s mentoring. “Women were assigned to work for me and I wanted them to do a good job, but I knew that I had to be careful about their family needs.” She was instrumental in gaining maternity leave for her women lawyers in the law firm where she worked before becoming a judge.

Patricia was made aware of her future potential by a father who said, “Well, I hope you don’t use your college education just to be an English teacher. Think about law school, think about business school.” Her father did not want Patricia to limit her options, but to consider all possibilities. She credits her parents for instilling ideals of hard work and a life of accomplishment. Patricia admires these attributes but also remembers her difficult encounters with her parents. She is a daughter of immigrant parents and feels that her family is different from the typical American family. This factor has helped her with her professional life as she relates to students who are first generation Americans.

When she lectures she can use her gender perspective and examples of being a first generation American. Patricia derived strength by being different from other girls. “I was not as uncomfortable at being different as I think a lot of girls of my generation were.” Patricia held strong opinions of her father’s

influence on her professional life and did not share stories of her mother's influence. However, other participants were more vocal about their own mothers and their influence.

"Somewhere along the way, we hope that we are all mentored by a woman, who is our mother." This statement was made by Marsha, but similar statements were also given by Vera and Zoe. A mother-daughter relationship did not extend to their professions, except for Vera, but to their personal lives and the way they act in their professional lives. None of the women stated that their mothers were in a profession. If motherhood was mentioned, it was in a statement of how these mothers functioned as women who stayed home and raised children, but nevertheless some are considered as mentors to the women participants.

Vera talked at length about her mother's abilities. Her mother was an immigrant from Italy and did not pursue any work outside of the home. "If she had been born today, I think she would have been really hot stuff." Instead, her mother watches and admires her daughter from the sideline. The fact that Vera is so successful has changed her role as daughter and protegee to caretaker and mentor. "It's actually ruined our relationship because she does think I can do no wrong. So I don't have normal conversations with her. She is in complete and total awe." The roles have been reversed in their caretaking. Vera expressed her feelings about her mother as mentor more than any of the other participants. She recognizes that she probably has a similar influence on her daughters. One of her daughters works for her and she struggles to give her advice in a way that

the daughter can accept. Vera states that she cannot give any advice to her daughter that she would not also give to another employee. They are both very independent and need to make their own way.

Marsha looks to her mother as a mentor, but not in her professional life. She participated in sports at an early age and received recognition for her ability. She was offered college scholarships for softball and played on a nationally recognized team. "Even though I had very supportive parents who would have done anything and continue to do anything for you, they still didn't quite get it, if you will. In terms of what does this mean in the future? What could you be doing?" When her parents and brother needed her near home, she changed jobs so that she was able to provide the necessary support. She feels strongly that her mother was always there for her and she wanted to return the favor when she was needed. She often compares her mentor to her mother. Each has a significant voice in her life and both relationships have changed in similar ways as she has aged. Therefore, she views her mentor and her mother in some similar patterns but recognizes her mentor as someone with professional experience from which she benefits.

Self as Woman

"Women are much more likely to talk about their feelings about almost anything; career type situations, their feelings about relationships to family and children, peers, supervisors, the job in relation to the family. They are more likely to be explicit about their doubts." These women's sense of self has developed

as their careers have progressed. All of the participants talked about who they are. I heard such comments as "I'm much more comfortable with myself today."

Marilyn expressed her opinion that women in medicine are still confined by some cultural expectations that men's work takes precedence over women's. She sees a change in this generation, but she feels couples still do not fully discuss their future expectations as much before marriage as they might. This lack of discussion can cause future problems. As a mentor, she has discussed these types of personal issues that women face in the medical field. Among her women protegees, Marilyn senses that they choose their jobs because they love to work. Pay becomes secondary to them. This concept is not the same for her male protegees. She further feels that women are good at sharing their feelings. She does not find that activity in male proteges.

Marsha is eager to mentor other women and to give someone the same experience she has had. She recognizes that a thirty year relationship, and still continuing, will be difficult to duplicate. She is mentoring younger women now in sports related businesses and hopes that some of these relationships may offer some of the advantages she attained in her own relationship with her mentor. "Hopefully somewhere along the way, I will be able to be a mentor in a longer term relationship and be a stronger influence in a young woman's career life and have her understand or pass on the knowledge, motivation, understanding that she can do whatever she wants as well as anybody else." Marsha also articulated the feeling that "I just can't imagine people getting along without having those kinds of influences." She further stated that mentoring extends to

our personal lives, not just our professional lives. "To be mentored as in bringing up the ladder is only a little part of what our lives are all about. I mean it's our personal lives, everything is so interacted (*sic*) that makes you who you are."

Karen expressed the most concern about her women protegees' needs. "Sometimes I agreed or disagreed with perhaps the problem, but had this sense of, I need to support this person because it was a young woman and I knew that the young guys were being supported." She further stated that, "I find myself wanting to help the women more, or key in on some things they may be doing, or talking to them about things they ought to be alert to."

Marilyn reports that she has had the opportunity to participate in some fun experiences that are not possible with her male protegees. For instance, when she travels to conferences, she makes an effort to share a room with one of her female students. Because the hospital pays for her room, she is able to take a student for free. This opportunity allows her to develop the relationship outside of the hospital setting and gives her a better understanding of her protegees. Once a year, Marilyn attends a conference and notes that the younger women attendees often end up mentoring each other, a form of networking mentoring.

Frequently the young women in the group end up mentoring each other or tell each other ways they might solve a problem that is being presented and so I'm also being taught by the rest of the group that there are ways that a problem could be addressed or has been addressed by other people. And, just a lot of sharing because I think that women are good at sharing. They are much more likely to share the bad as well as the good, what didn't work, how they felt about the fact that it didn't work, and then how they solved the problem or approaches they used to solve the problem.

Deborah graduated from a women's college; she contended that it had an enormous influence on her professional outlook. She had witnessed women administrators and professors so that she never considered herself unusual as she rose from position to position in coeducational universities. Her sense of self developed as she was encouraged throughout her undergraduate years. She credits that institution as being instrumental in her success. When she was told during the fifties that women could do anything and be anything, she believed it.

Today Deborah feels that the same encouragement can be received at any institution so that women's colleges may not be as necessary today. She appreciates her women mentors and wishes to be helpful to other women. However, Deborah stated that she does not like to push women for certain jobs just because they are women. Instead, she prefers to encourage the best candidate, be it a woman or man. At the same time, she also sees differences in the genders. "I do think that women deans handle their administrative responsibilities in a way that is, you don't want to generalize here, but many of them do have a different style of administration." She continued to cite a story of a woman dean who always helped in the development of a proposal, not waiting to the last minute to accept or reject a proposal on its merits. In other words, many women see their roles as "developmental as opposed to directive. Even though the directions were given, the responsibility is there." In other words, directions are given, but there is a responsibility taken throughout the process to understand what is needed for success. Directions are not given at the end just to accept or reject. There is greater involvement in the process so that success

is more likely. She sees a marked difference in women today generally.

Deborah believes that women were once “very docile and we expected support from men, a different life than it is now.”

Paula stated that “docile” may still apply to women today because we do not have the same support system in most organizations that men have. “They (men) have no fear of repercussion or am I going to fit in. And I do feel that women are more guarded. I am more guarded than I see some of the men being. Because they have a support system and I feel like I don’t. So you keep more to yourself.”

Once Karen worked in a law firm, she felt a definite attachment to other women who arrived after her. She had two children at this time and younger women lawyers asked for advice on how to handle career and families. “Sometimes you just needed to be around women to complain or make sure that your sensibilities were not off because certain things were bothering you either in practice or how other attorneys were relating to you.” She considers herself to be an example for other women lawyers, proving they can achieve the appellate level of judgeship and have a family too. Her mentoring has more frequently been done with women but she also mentors men. However, she feels that there are issues that she discusses only with other women. Karen finds that some of these issues bring about concerns such as: “When do I have children? How do I do this? This is a level of intimacy and responsibility that’s different. And I have just found that the women I have mentored have chosen to talk about that topic.”

Women enjoy intimacy, and a strong mentoring relationship often includes this characteristic.

Self as Professional

Melissa's experiences with women mentors was especially important to her early on in her career. She felt that "a lot of women have had trouble balancing in some way or another and she (her mentor) really was a model to me that the first thing is to be a business executive and it doesn't matter whether you are a male or female and you don't have to sacrifice the feminine aspects of your personality because you happen to be a woman." She loves to wear colorful clothes and appreciates hearing from business associates that they too feel more comfortable dressing as a woman in a male dominated business. She thinks of herself as a role model in this situation but recognizes that some of these women are also her proteges and she is willing to work with them to help them develop their own sense of self. This sense of self may be very different from what some people in the business may think is necessary. Melissa is an independent woman and willing to take chances. She encourages the same type of behavior in her proteges.

Zoe's role models were all mothers. Like so many of the other women, she "never had any sort of idea even that I would have a career. It was never raised as an option." However, she found that without further education she was limited to teller jobs in banks and the income from that job was insufficient for living. She was finally accepted into a bank training program (most training

programs for executives did not allow women) and her career developed one step at a time. Looking back on her career, she stated, "It was frustrating for me. Not so much because of the advancement, where it would get me, but because I hadn't thought that far ahead yet. It was today. I could make more money have a more interesting job. I was doing something very boring and it wasn't fun to come to work."

"Successful women don't see obstacles, they see challenges." Zoe asserted that if one cannot go through the normal channels, then one goes around those paths to achieve the stated goal. There are numerous ways to achieve the ends. Always looking for opportunities is one way to describe Zoe. She thinks that women need to search out mentors as one searches out opportunities.

You have to be the kind of person who sparks somebody's attention. I think you have to be out there on your own, determined to do well, to do better, to grow, to find opportunity in order for somebody to spot you and say, I'll help you.

Zoe feels that women often appear to have the notion that if they work hard and do a good job, they will be appreciated. She does not agree with this attitude. Women need to take action. "It's not by luck that somebody decides to adopt you. You make it happen." She also finds that many women are too defensive and fail to take responsibility for their problems. "And I hate to say it but I've seen it much more with women in our company. I have such a problem with women who will not take constructive criticism. They just won't listen to it

and they get so emotional.” Patricia and Zoe both stated that women need to take responsibility in their organizations and be more assertive.

Doreen spoke about her mentoring roles and stated, “I’m just pleased and thrilled to be part of it, finding pearls.” She feels a strong sense of accomplishment when she speaks about the women she has mentored who have become judges and whose careers have surpassed her own. This woman is a retired superior court judge and helped others who are now on the appellate and state supreme court.

Marilyn stated, “I feel as though I get a lot more than I give in terms of the relationship. There are usually things that come back in an intangible way.” She further stated that the time is never poorly spent because mentoring offers an opportunity to clarify one’s own thoughts. Melissa seems keenly aware of being the lone woman executive in her last few businesses. She recognizes that other women are looking to her for guidance yet, “I think that I’m surprised by it and what those responsibilities are.” She recognizes and accepts her position and hopes that other women will benefit from her experiences. She attends conferences and sits on many panels every year which deal with topics for women executives. She freely expresses her opinion. She was open and direct during our discussions. Patricia also feels that her sense of self has improved with age.

I would say over the last decade, I have found myself better able to mentor. In part because I now have experiences that are not just based on my personality and gutting it out but how to use political influence, how to build coalitions, how to build corporate structures.

I've started getting experience in doing that and having success, feeling confident that I can coach and mentor people in doing that.

She notes: "I had a twenty year period where I was my own navigator and sort of focusing on my own goals and evaluating opportunities." She believes that people have really been reaching to her only in that last few years. Previously, she was reaching toward others.

Patricia is critical of women for their unwillingness to accept criticism. "I think it's hard for women to receive negative feedback, and therefore in some ways it's harder to mentor women than to mentor men." She told me a story of giving such feedback to a woman dean at her university and this dean responded with tears and said she had never before received such feedback. "I don't know if she will quit tomorrow" was Patricia's worry. But at the same time, she gave her protegee the critical advice necessary to perform her job at the university. The following day she received a message from this dean who thanked her for the straightforward criticisms.

Deborah has acted as a traditional grooming mentor more than the other women participants. Her working life is in university settings and she has enjoyed contact with many university fellows who contracted to work with her for one year. When she had these opportunities, she scheduled regular meetings with them and is always interested in their feedback. She finds that they sometimes have very different insights to the same meeting she attended. She calls them "independent observers" and hopes to have more fellows in the future.

Deborah has grown from her peer mentors. Because she does not have

women in positions above her, she does not have nor has she experienced a woman grooming mentor. However, there have been other deans, vice presidents and the like, who have helped support and guide her during challenging and difficult times. She has performed in the same capacity for them. Interestingly, she is reluctant to acknowledge her significant mentoring role with others. She did not easily call herself a mentor, only when pushed did she acknowledge her university fellows, yet she quickly acknowledged those who mentored her.

The youngest woman in this study and the one with the longest mentor-protégée relationship, Marsha, spoke about the sponsoring stage of grooming mentoring. She noticed that her mentor opened doors for her professionally, but she herself was responsible once she accepted the position. "The door gets open and you're on your own. You probably have to come through even more because someone put their name on it (giving the protégée the opportunity) and you'd better not let them down."

Paula talked about mentoring as "guiding individuals in their chosen profession," "supporting their decisions," and helping them to develop their own ideas and thought processes. These considerations require "a lot of human emotions" and are not always easy for the mentor or the protégée. The mentor is "providing a lot of different influences" such as developing one's own philosophy of the business, personal style, and work ethic. Protégées change and Marilyn acknowledged, "people get busy, they meet other people who can be mentors and they don't need or choose to maintain a relationship."

Paula's protegee of several years had just announced her resignation to her accounting firm. "She's chosen a different career path and I was not surprised nor shocked at her decision." Paula further elaborated that she had spoken of a possible career change with her protegee many times even though she would miss her as a valuable assistant professionally and personally. Paula believes that part of mentoring is allowing the protegee to learn her strengths and limitations, spread her wings, and perhaps the protegee will fly away.

As these women examined their mentoring relationships, they acknowledged that the experience has affected them as family members, as women and as professionals. The way we view ourselves affects the way we understand others in which we have contact. These relationships help determine our differing perspectives on the complicated issue of the mentoring phenomenon.

Perspectives on Mentoring

Mentoring is typically viewed in the traditional grooming sense in which an older professional guides and helps develop a protegee along the career path by acting as a role model, encouraging, motivating, counseling, listening, giving advice, and sponsoring the younger less experienced professional for positions which advance his or her career. This relationship revolves around favoritism (Swoboda and Millar 1986) because of the limited amount of time a person chooses to spend with one other person. Grooming mentoring typically includes a hierarchy with the mentor having greater power. This traditional view of

mentoring challenged these women while they attempted to share their mentoring experiences as protegees, because half of them did not experience this type of relationship as they progressed through their careers.

Networking mentoring, on the other hand, was repeatedly described to the researcher. These women typically questioned themselves whether this was actually mentoring, since they were in a relationship with peers, not within a hierarchical structure with an older, more experienced mentor and younger, less experienced protegee. They cautiously chose to describe the experiences. When some of the current literature on mentoring was explained, they expressed relief that their experiences have been duplicated among other professional women. Several women also consider that mentoring can be done by groups, a form of networking mentoring (Haring 1994).

Often these women spoke about the need for a formal format in the relationship to be considered mentoring. This more confined thought process was at first a stumbling block to their discussion of mentoring because some had not experienced this type of relationship. On further reflection they decided that they did not need to meet with their mentor on a regular basis, but only when there was something important to discuss. As these women further contemplated their experiences with their mentors, they all agreed that there was no regular schedule of meetings but still acknowledged their relationships as mentoring ones.

Although some of them experienced a traditional grooming mentoring experience with women, most spoke about these phenomenon with other women

in a peer mentoring format. In this relationship, the mentor and the protegee positions are fluid, moving back and forth depending upon who needs the guidance and what particular expertise can be utilized. This type of mentoring typically includes two women who are in similar positions of influence yet have different capabilities and assist each other during periods of change. They may have specific problems in their departments and under their supervision, yet they need an outside point of view to develop solutions. Sometimes these women work for the same organization, sometimes not. If these women are in the same business they may have resources available to them to make significant contributions to their peer. Other times these women have peer mentors in the same profession but in other organizations and they use each other to exchange ideas and arrive at solutions. These types of relationships are significant. These women spoke glowingly of these relationships which are so important to them.

Networking mentoring may not be easily acknowledged as a tool for moving to higher positions in the same organization. However, it can be used for professional growth and advancement out of a woman's particular organization such as moving to another business to work. This style of mentoring brings new perspectives to the mentor and the protegee. Networking mentoring is particularly effective in changing the status quo. This study found that groups of networks are often used in this capacity. This is a collaborative process involving peers and was commonly found among these women. There is reciprocity in this type of relationship. As hierarchies in business continue to flatten, an increase in peer mentoring may occur.

Several women spoke about groups who they feel have mentored them as they broke through the glass ceiling. This dynamic is not a dyadic relationship. These types of relationships might appear to be impersonal. Nonetheless, they are significant to the participant's career development. Because these women encountered restrictions in their careers paths, they found that banding together with others contributed to a stronger influence for change.

Forms of Mentoring

Mentoring is broadening to include not only the traditional grooming form but also networking mentoring. Some women stated that grooming mentoring is not commonly found in their experiences. Although they may or may not have had a significant grooming mentor themselves, they expressed their opinions that other women had significant influence in their professional growth in a variety of ways and decided that they would indeed consider them mentors, but not traditional mentors. By and large they were not previously familiar with the concept of peer or networking mentors but expressed the circumstances so clearly that when asked if this might be considered another form of mentoring, they quickly tried to label it. One cannot dismiss the conclusion that these interviews caused the women to examine their own views on mentoring relationships, who mentors are, who they want to mentor, and what mentors do.

Networking mentoring consists of peers who mentor as well as groups who mentor. Each of these relationships involves women who fulfill both the roles of mentor and protegee. Depending upon the need and the circumstances,

the roles can be reversed. These relationships appear to be extremely important to these participants. Their need for connections and their desire to advance in their chosen professions -- both contribute to significant mentoring relationships among peers and within organizations.

Peers as Mentors

“And sometimes, even your peers are your mentors” explained Marsha. Peer mentoring relationships are commonly found among these women. Some of them were not familiar with the term but described this kind of relationship. Therefore, in their minds, they decided that this relationship was indeed a mentoring one and once they understood that there is indeed a term for it, they continued to tell me even more stories of this phenomenon.

Marilyn shared a formal peer mentoring experience. She attends the yearly conference of the Association of American Medical Colleges and they have a program for professional development which meets over a three day period to discuss mentoring among each other and younger women faculty. She has enjoyed this group and mentioned that the

AAMC also puts on a program for more senior women who would like to move to higher levels. And I think that points out that all the stages of our work lives, it is helpful to have people who can make the hurdles a little bit easier by telling you things to avoid, things you can do, and being available, just there, to get in touch with a group, a problem, or an issue.

Patricia spoke at length about a woman she at first referred to as a friend and later recognized as a mentor. They are in totally different professional

entities yet their support, guidance, and sponsorship all indicate a relationship as peer mentors. These two women became friends when they served on a couple of community boards together twenty years ago. Their friendship developed into a professional relationship. They have used each other's strengths to help them in their own professions. She also refers to the relationship as "companionate." When her mentor wanted to start a foundation, Patricia "spent hours writing position papers and thinking about it, and I think what I'm trying to give you a sense of is a lot of opening and closing of doors for one another." She later explained that this person who is twenty years older is not a girlfriend, not her mother, and she's not her daughter. They are more than friends and therefore, Patricia decided for herself that indeed she is a peer mentor.

Zoe encourages a peer to increase her speaking appearances and she has received satisfaction in return, recognizing and nurturing this strength. The same relationship includes guidance handling management techniques. She is weak in management yet strong in the technical area. "She and I now share speeches and will do tradeoffs. She will work with me on the technical side and have one of her staff write something that keeps me learning." She spoke about many meetings with peers where she would share an experience and "these cohorts would say, 'What about this? Have you tried this? What do you think about that? I did this and it worked for me.'"

Another peer mentor to Zoe helped her separate business attacks from personal ones. Zoe remembers recounting her concerns to this mentor one day when she was forced to examine the circumstances more carefully. Her mentor

said, "What are they doing to you? Explain what they are doing to you. Zoe, that's not personal, that's business." Zoe clarified the experience and recognized the insights that her peer mentor had suggested. She is most appreciative of the fact that her mentor could look at the situation unemotionally and help her separate the business and personal attacks. "She got me through some very tough times."

Deborah shared numerous stories of peer mentors with me. Because she was the first woman to hold each of her positions, she did not have the opportunity to be mentored by women unless they were peers. When she was a dean, there were women deans in other departments. The same can be said about the vice presidential position. "I talked to several women who were not my immediate superior; they did not report to me, but they were women whose opinion I respected." When she was considering a new position, it was a peer on whom she depended upon for advice. "We could talk. She helped me come to that decision." Another statement was, "it was helpful to me the way she laid it out." These peer mentors are meaningful to her because they discussed difficult issues concerning her career.

Marsha has a long standing relationship with her mentor but recognizes that other women have also played pivotal roles in her professional life. "They will give you a piece of advice or just one little thing that you take with you. And I think that's part of mentorship. That's why I'm not sure what this definition is. It's very broad and it has a lot of different meanings." This statement reflects a common thread throughout these interviews.

Zoe maintains a particularly close relationship with a woman who is a former employee with her bank. "We don't get into personal lives." They speak every week and see each other several times a year even though they live in different parts of the country. When she moved west to begin a new operation, she found herself with no peers to discuss issues with, to complain, or to congratulate her on new successes. And so this friend agreed to commute between the two cities when she was needed and helped her through a difficult time. This participant also travels to help this friend. They use each other as sounding boards. She said this relationship has evolved over a fifteen year period with no specific turning points. She appreciates this relationship for the enormous support this peer mentor has provided.

Zoe is also involved with two other women who meet whenever the three of them are in the same city. "One is younger with fantastic sales ability." The other is older and her strengths are in financial and administration. Her own strengths are in management. "The three of us have a collective experience level that has been very interesting ... and we're who we call when we're really upset about something. An important pressure release when we've really needed it." She depends upon these people to tell her the truth, "and sometimes it could sting." She feels that this relationship has been evolutionary and could not identify any turning points.

Organizations and Groups as Mentors

Doreen was probably the most articulate participant concerning group mentoring. She feels "mentoring on the legal side has been significantly accomplished through groups." She continues to cite the group of women lawyers who have helped many other women become judges. She also believes that groups are like a critical mass and are able to operate in ways that individuals cannot. For example, one person may feel at risk of losing her job if she expresses her opinions, but a group can be more vocal. "Groups can be effective in a way that individuals cannot. Because you can reach more people and because you have more perceived power." Groups also offer a place where individual contacts may be made and mentor-protégé relationships may begin.

Marilyn spoke about the group of women who meet at the American Medical Association twice a year. They actively mentor each other during these meetings and over the phone in between meetings. "Certainly we share a lot of experiences and discuss ways we can do it (mentoring younger women) better. And it is very clear that each of us has a different style of doing things."

Vera also enjoys talking to large groups of people and recognizes that she is probably a role model to many. This activity has forced her to learn to speak to groups and express her feelings. "It is exciting for me and it renews why I do what I do." Afterwards, she typically has women come up and ask questions. Many have phoned her for advice later on and some see her a couple of times a year for continued advice. She stated that she is willing to spend time with other women who desire to start their own business, but has little interest when they

lack the organizational considerations necessary to thoroughly investigate the business requirements. Vera is highly motivated and stated, "I want like people around me." She doesn't care if they are as successful as she has been, just that they carry their own weight and are willing to work as hard as she works.

Vera also talked at length about the international group called the Committee of 200 of which she is a member. To join this organization you must have your own company with a minimum of ten million dollars in business or be with a large company as president or chief executive officer. Therefore, these women are generally considered successful. She finds that they are supportive and "genuinely loving with each other." She said that it includes a lot of networking, but mentoring also goes on.

Vera finds enormous support from other women in this group and appears comfortable with asking for help from them if needed. She describes herself as a loner and not one to seek out assistance, but this group is the exception because she feels comfortable in it. Their meetings include a session called "conversations with." These sessions she finds particularly meaningful because the women discuss their companies, and their personal and professional concerns. This insightful sharing experience is important because the group exudes trust and support which helps other members to consider their business, problems as well as solutions, and their personal goals. She contacts members of this group when a need or wish arises. This group also publishes a newsletter in which one may request help from other members when a problem arises. She does not observe jealousy. "When you are happy with yourself, it's easier to be

giving and you tend not to be resentful or jealous because you are happy with your lot in life.”

Deborah spoke briefly about an organization in which she is a member and their group efforts to mentor others. She has used this organization to speak and encourage other women in the sciences. Zoe is a member of the Young Presidents Organization. She feels that mentoring goes on during those meetings and the contacts that are made often continue into peer mentoring roles.

Karen and Doreen are both judges and they both shared stories about groups that are instrumental in helping women in a profession that just twenty years ago was totally dominated by men. Karen feels that her group of women lawyers are now looking for younger women to carry on because the older group is “getting tired.”

Doreen also talked about the importance of an organized group that greatly influenced her professional life. She started a woman's law group with other women to enable women lawyers to understand the process of becoming a judge. “And so the reason we started this was to flush all these people out of the woodwork who maybe had this idea in their mind but weren't brave enough to step forward. You know, like me, waiting for someone to come along and tap them on the head and say, ‘Hey, wake up, why don't you do this?’” This group became so popular and helped so many women to become judges that today the group is open to both men and women.

Zoe does not meet on a formal basis with any one mentor but does set up monthly meetings with groups of women. She particularly enjoys women in different occupations who have been successful like herself. Most of the women expressed interest in networking with other successful women. They feel that they share certain experiences that family and friends may not understand.

Karen spoke frequently about a group of women who made her entry into the judiciary realm much easier because they were a vocal group and caused significant change for women lawyers in a major city in the west. "These women are not my colleagues, but that five years (longer in the legal profession) made a huge difference. And we have talked about it." She is most appreciative of this group of women because they "pick you up when you are down or you need a boost or you need to at least know that your frustrations are not unique to you, that other people are sharing your frustrations." This group of politically active and astute women has been significant to her and, she suspects, to many others.

Melissa, Paula, and Marsha did not discuss groups or communities of mentors. This is not to say that they do not exist, only that these women did not share any of these types of experiences during the two hours of interviews. The other women shared stories concerning various groups or organizations in which they were members and the effects of the mentoring that they enjoyed. I believe that specific people in these groups are likely to become individually important to each participant. Groups are more likely to be used as a starting place for identifying a mentor for the future. However, to reflect what they had to say, one must acknowledge that most of the ten women feel that groups have had an

enormous impact on their lives when they needed to make changes and were in transitions and at times in their professional lives when they were not aware of a need to find a mentor.

Mentor and Protegee

“It started out without my realizing.” This comment was repeated throughout the interviews. Most were not initially aware of what mentors are or what they do. As their mentoring relationships developed and sometimes ended, the protegee recognized the meaning of the relationship. Mentoring is first a relationship. Karen said, “she was a very strong mentor figure before I even knew what that was or realized that was what it was.”

Few of these women planned on having professional careers when they began working. Nor did they anticipate having a mentor early in their careers. None of the women spoke about seeking out women to mentor them. Several had the benefit of mentors before they realized they were protegees. Perhaps it takes time for the relationship to build before the two people involved in the relationship can identify its meaning and purpose.

There are several advantages of women mentoring women versus cross gender mentoring. Women share some commonalities such as an interest in connection, family concerns, and typically a knowledge of being a minority in the organization. A possible romantic link in a same gender relationship is also less likely assumed.

Most of these women discussed the advantages of having protegees. They commented on their protegees' ability to notice aspects of the work that the mentors themselves might miss. Protegees also offer some insights into the business that someone in another position might not have the opportunity to notice. Some women feel that the mentors take on an added responsibility when they agree to mentor someone. However, they acknowledge that the protegee also takes on responsibility to the mentor. Therefore, this relationship works both ways. Both carry extra responsibilities and both learn from the relationship. These women have limited time and definitely prefer to be around people who are equally committed to their work. They enjoy guiding younger women but they must see a desire to take advantage of the situation. One participant talked about a "spark" or characteristic that the two shared. Obviously, traditionally mentored women come together for undefined reasons, but interest, trust, and friendship are three characteristics typically seen.

If there is one word I heard more often than any other concerning mentoring, it is the word "listen." If the mentor or the protegee fails to listen, the mentoring will be more difficult, probably impossible. The mentor may help the protegee to define her goals by listening, giving constructive feedback, and recognizing the protegee's interests and concerns.

These women questioned if their involvement in mentoring was adequate. One of the women stated, "I have not been as supportive of women as I should be" and other women agreed. All of the women articulated their belief that

gender is not the only factor in selecting mentors and protegees and consequently, they do not limit their mentoring activities to women.

Contact between Mentor and Protegee

I found that every participant expressed an interest in meeting with their mentors and protegees in informal surroundings. They enjoy leaving the work environment to meet over food, typically lunch. Breakfast was rarely mentioned, but coffee was. Dinner and cocktails were also discussed. The women typically did not elaborate on meeting with their protegees or mentors at other social events. In fact, most of them clearly stated that because they were not the same age group, they did not socialize. However, that changed when they were talking about peer mentors. Peer mentors are sometimes limited to professional encounters and other times include social activities. Several women spoke about their limited availability and some of them regret that they are in a situation that allows little time for protegee development.

Vera feels “a kind of obligation to try to be available if people wish you to. I don’t think that I go out and solicit folks, but I send out signals ‘if you want me to help you in some way, I’d be glad to’ and then allow people to choose whether or not they wish to accept that.” This comment was not unusual. Most of the women did not feel an obligation to solicit protegees, but they did typically feel an obligation to make themselves available to women because of the relatively limited number of women in positions of influence.

The timing of the contacts varies widely. Marilyn talked about meeting at least annually with one of her proteges to discuss her promotions and interests. Openness by both the mentor and the protegee is something that all the women feel is necessary in a mentoring relationship. "I think it's a sense of openness on the part of whoever the more senior person is ... and the protegee has to be open to being mentored and has to indicate a desire to have a relationship." The contact cannot always be scheduled, and is many times sporadic. Marilyn spoke about conferences and sharing a room with a student. Since the hospital pays for her room, she can take along a student at no cost. She feels that this opportunity not only gives her protegee additional time for counsel and advice, but also gives her added insights into her protegee. She does not feel that mentoring is a crisis situation but instead an ongoing event. This phenomenon is more like a continuing relationship where there are periods of greater intensity than others. She does not consider herself a distant administrative type person but rather an accessible chief of staff. This accounts for the spontaneity of many of her meetings.

Zoe feels her protegee is too protective of her employees and does not hold them directly responsible for their duties. "Do you want to spend your time babysitting?" She encourages her protegee to be more assertive. "I see her struggling with the things that are hard for any new manager, firing people, disciplining people, holding people accountable." Zoe considers her responsibility as a mentor to help her protegee sort out these problems and learn to deal with them on her own. She wants this protegee to move up the corporate

hierarchy and considers the victories of her protegee to be almost like a victory for herself.

Patricia did not easily acknowledge her mentoring roles. She appears to be concerned, as many of the other women are, with the traditional definition of mentoring. She is now recognizing networking mentoring in which she is heavily involved. She speaks with some people frequently and recognizes that she has some impact. But she stated, "I'm not guiding her in the decisions, I don't think. Maybe I am and I don't realize it because we talk a lot." On the other hand, she expects reciprocity, an ingredient of networking mentoring.

These women acknowledged that women enjoy talking things out and that listening is critical. Sometimes the mentor does not need to say anything. The protegee voices her concerns, discusses the options and makes the decisions. In this situation, the protegee considers the mentor invaluable, even if the mentor views the situation differently.

During the first interview, Vera struggled with her perceived lack of mentoring. She had a very firm definition of mentoring, the grooming relationship, with regularly scheduled meetings, sponsoring and advising. To her, if one does not accomplish all these requirements, then one is not mentoring. During the second interview, Vera began changing her mind. She had several meetings with people and recognized that she does mentor, if in a more informal and sporadic way. She also began to recognize that her mentoring had indeed a great impact on her protegees. And so she stated, "I'm not real anxious to sit down and mentor somebody on a formal basis over a long

period of time. But I'll do it. Whatever's happening seems to be okay with me." In other words, she is willing to mentor formally but prefers to network mentor sporadically.

Deborah has had the experience of many mentors and many protegees. She has had women assigned to work with her as interns for one year periods. These opportunities have been more structured in that she sees them everyday and meets with them at least once a week to discuss different issues involving the institution. Deborah spoke about more social interactions than the other women. She also acknowledged that they would meet over meals, lunch, dinner, or drinks, but they also celebrated birthdays and even weddings together. "We were a family crowd."

Deborah is convinced that people will seek you out if you can help them. She does not feel that she always recognizes her ability to help others herself but there are always opportunities. Paula feels mentors and protegees must both seek each other out to talk. She also likes meeting over meals, away from the office setting and likes to make the arrangements informal and loose. She particularly enjoys group settings because she feels they open doors to future opportunities to mentor.

Doreen was more reserved in her discussions about her mentoring relationships. She did discuss meeting mentors and protegees for coffee or lunch and many phone conversations plus meetings at her home to clarify some issues when she was helping women apply for judicial appointments. She also

acknowledged that group meetings can lead to meeting a mentor or a protegee. A clear example is the experience she enjoyed with her judicial group.

Karen met with her mentor on a daily basis because their offices opened up to one another's. As a mentor herself, she is more distant. "But primarily, I never socialize with her." This how she describes her relationship with her protegee. She also feels that at this point in her career, she does not call or reach out to people as much as she did when she was with a law firm. Her protegee continues to contact her and ask for support and information. "But I almost never initiate it."

Mentoring Relationships with Men

Melissa forcefully stated, "Of all the people I might classify as mentors, forget whether they're men or women, who really has been there, was there challenging and moving through the organization ... they were all men. They weren't women. Now maybe that could be a generational thing." This study is concerned with women mentoring women. As much as I tried to limit the discussion to women, these women did not want to limit their stories to exclude men. I also did not want to make comparisons between the genders. However, they sometimes forced distinctions. Their opinions were too strong to be ignored.

These women have achieved positions of influence ahead of their time. Most had expected to marry, raise children, and remain at home. As their careers developed, they found themselves in circumstances that included few women. Their contact with other women who might be considered as mentors

lessened with every promotion they achieved. It fell to the male mentor to give advice, suggest opportunities, sponsor, listen, and counsel on situations that arose in their professional lives. Nine of these women expressed their feelings concerning their male mentors and suggested that they figured strongly in their careers, encouraging them professionally and moving them along in the organization.

A male physician was very helpful to Marilyn early in her successful career in academic medicine. There were other men who were very supportive of her and gave her specific advice. On the other hand, she stated that "many men, I think, find it very difficult to mentor women because men of my generation really didn't grow up learning to be friends with women." She feels that is changing today with men involved with women in friendship and not just amorous interests. She feels that mentoring involves a friendship and that peers look upon mentoring relationships as possibly being more than just business relationships. To further complicate matters, she feels that "with a man, they tell you how to fix the problem and my effort (as a mentor) is more to talk about what the options are. Have they thought about this, that, or the other thing? Is it really what you want?" This woman recognizes and accepts some of the most obvious and common differences between men and women. She uses these differences to her advantage in her working world. She understands that there are different ways of relating to others. Some people do not want answers, but want suggestions on how one might go about a task.

Patricia was also influenced by men. She talked about her father and a male professor from her undergraduate education who both encouraged her to become something other than a teacher, nurse, or wife. She credits these experiences as making her a stronger woman. She also feels that “men I interact with much more easily absorb critical feedback and not going around internalizing about not being competent.” She also shared stories of mentoring men which she appears to enjoy.

Melissa spoke about her concerns of being mentored by one man, in particular, who was most helpful to her. Others in her working environment viewed it as a situation that was personal as well as professional. “I ultimately gave up trying to deal with it. If the world wants to assume that there’s a personal relationship, there’s nothing I can do to dissuade them of it.” She also stated that she has had at least three men talk to her about not wanting to mentor women since the Anita Hill testimony. “And my response was that you can’t stop doing that (mentoring women). You just have to be very sensitive to the words you use, the gestures you use, so that it cannot and will not be misinterpreted.”

Vera feels that a man was the most responsible person for starting her business. “Phil was one of my friends and he said, ‘just do it.’ So I think the mentoring was more male than female.” She also talked about a former employee she would like to mentor if he can organize his plans for a future business.

Deborah spoke of several male mentors in her life. There were two during her graduate years and at least two more in her professional life. Interestingly, one of these men did not make any attempt to mentor her until she became a president of a university, like himself. In other words, she had to become a peer before he was willing to mentor her. When he was president of the university she worked for, he would assign her to committees and he promoted her, "but there was none of that sense that he was personally guiding my development or anything like that." He now sends her copies of his speeches to read. She has decided that he has the "king maker complex" and he feels that he is directly responsible for her achieving this presidency. She briefly mentioned a man "who was truly my mentor for thirty years," but Deborah did not elaborate.

Paula stated that she is comfortable with men and women proteges. However, she feels that her male proteges' needs are "more geared toward career and development. I think that women need more all around personal and professional, not guidance, but listening." Like Melissa, she also stated that she has heard many men express the view that they are uncomfortable mentoring women.

Marsha briefly talked about a significant male mentor. This is a supportive relationship and continues today even though she has left the university where he works. Doreen has been active recruiting men and women for the bench. "There have been more women than men" but she spoke warmly of several men she has mentored. "I don't think that mentoring men and women are necessarily different in what they discuss. It's more a function of the man rather than the

gender.” She also had a significant male mentor but did not mention this fact until the end of the second interview.

Zoe's most influential mentor as she climbed the corporate hierarchy was a man. She did not think of him as a mentor until she had been working with the bank and had known him for several years. “It was never a spoken thing. He didn't adopt me and I didn't adopt him or try to get his attention for mentoring. ... We had this easy relationship.” She talked about the relationship; sometimes feeling like a daughter and at other times feeling like a business associate. His fatherly advice was apparent when she had her first child and again at the time she moved to another location to expand the bank's operations.

Karen stated that “there were mentoring issues that I felt comfortable sharing with Jane that the guys could have cared less about, that is, the children, the husband, how to balance it all. And likewise, she felt comfortable sharing with me.” All of the women in this study who have children raised their concerns with balance in their lives between their work and their family responsibilities. They discussed these issues with their proteges. Karen did not elaborate on particular male proteges but reflected on both men and women as mentors.

Summary

These women participants enthusiastically related their mentoring stories. These interviews quickly turned into conversations between the researcher and the interviewee. Through their own descriptions of their lives, professionally and personally, they shared the way they see themselves in their relationships. All of

the participants acknowledged the importance of her family and the development of herself through her parents, siblings, spouses, children as well as the impact of their education on their careers.

These women's historical context is critical to their understanding of mentoring. They all broke through the glass ceiling and therefore their traditional grooming women mentors were limited. Given the increase in the number of women in educational programs today, that number is changing. Therefore, the opportunity to be a mentor to another woman is more easily attained. They all acknowledged that they need different kinds of mentors. Some had the advantage of strong mentors who helped them attain higher levels of influence in various organizations, while others struggled and never asked for help because they felt that seeking assistance might be viewed as a weakness.

As our examination of mentoring began, the women expressed their views, and with that vocalization they took the next step to examine more closely not only their relationships and how they feel about them, but also what mentoring actually consisted of and what it could do for them. Some women originally said that although they were mentored, they were not mentors themselves. This expression was particularly evident when women were more independent in their careers and organizations not hold tight inhibitors on their work patterns. Such examples are found in the legal profession and in businesses where they hold positions of such influence that they were free to make many of their own rules. They originally expressed the view that mentors need close contact with their protegees and they must meet on a regular basis.

And yet, as the conversations progressed and their opinions were clarified, they decided that a mentoring relationship can be sporadic.

These women examined their relationships with other women whom they considered peers and acknowledged that they had indeed benefited from the relationship professionally. Many women find that connections matter deeply to them and that through dialogue this relationship develops. They instinctively know that they must meet with other women, to communicate their problems and work out solutions. These peers are not always in positions of power to assist them in reaching new positions of influence. However, these peers assisted them in such a way that in fact opened up further career advances because they now have additional knowledge and skills.

The women decided that a mentor does not have to open doors for advancement, but can give them information to utilize to advance themselves. This format is evident with women working in the same organization but outside their particular area of expertise. This type of relationship also extends to women in organizations that were quite different. However, this cross mentoring was not reported with women in law for example. The two judges only spoke of women lawyers. On the other hand, in the business world, it did not matter that one might be working in the banking area and another in a health related enterprise.

It was interesting that some of the women were very strongly motivated to seek other women for networking purposes while others indicated that they sought out other women to meet socially because they needed that connection, but did not want to use what they considered a friendship to make a networking

mentoring relationship out of it. These women wanted to clarify the difference between mentors and friends which is significant. One can be a friend and mentor or one can be a mentor or a friend. Mentors require expertise in certain necessary areas that friends may or may not have.

Clearly, every woman expressed to me the need of women to have women friendships. They all feel that as important as men might be in their professional and personal lives, they need women. They did differentiate in their friendships between the two genders. The majority also feel that mentoring is a form of friendship and if it's lacking, the mentoring relationship typically suffers.

Consequently, these women recognized that mentoring is something that is needed. Different types of mentoring offer different types of advantages. None of these women will think of mentoring in the same way after these interviews. They also stated that they felt a need to contact their mentors and in fact, some did just that. They were very open about these contacts, proud when a protegee contacted them between the two interviews, and eager to share the news.

As the interviews progressed they decided that traditional mentoring is useful but probably more difficult to find today. As women change organizations, traditional mentoring relationships break down. At the same time, with modern communication the way it is today, they often spoke of picking up the phone and reestablishing the connection. Then, the mentoring relationship becomes sporadic and necessarily changes as it progresses into different stages. All of these women acknowledged that mentoring in the late stages is usually

considered to be a relationship of equals, much as networking mentoring. These women also spoke about their hope to increase all types of mentoring in the future.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experience of ten business and professional women who have experienced a mentoring relationship with another woman as a mentor or a protegee, in order to understand the essence of the mentoring experience, and to know more about the actual process of mentoring.

As the study developed, however, the data reveal that the great preponderance of these participants' significant mentors were men, though the participants do mentor women. Further, since this study unfolded in such a way as to unexpectedly highlight the passive way in which they mentor, the purpose took on another dimension; to understand their passivity and to propose what might encourage women to be more active mentors.

This study adds insights into the mentoring experiences of women who are considered leaders and who are involved in leadership according to Helen Astin's definition of leadership: "Leadership is a process by which members of a group are empowered to work together synergistically toward a common goal or

vision, that will create change and transform institutions, and thus improve the quality of life" (Astin 1989, p. 9).

Some of the participants were more reflective than others. Some wanted to share their stories and their historical context in depth. Some participants acknowledged deeper insights than others felt comfortable doing. Most of the participants had not considered the significance of their mentoring experiences until their stories were discussed.

The participants included: two university administrators, two entrepreneurs, one physician, one certified public accountant, one bank officer, two judges and one health care executive. All of these women attended college. Nine graduated with bachelor's degrees and eight have advanced degrees. One woman is in her late thirties, the other women range in age from forty-eight to fifty-seven.

Women are entering the professional and business ranks of the work force at an increasing pace. There are greater numbers of women who have broken through the glass ceiling and are in positions to mentor other women. There is also increased numbers of women entering professions who may benefit from a mentoring relationship. Literature suggests that workplace satisfaction may improve when women are mentors and protegees (Gilson and Kane 1989; Josselson 1992).

Gilson and Kane (1989) reported that one third of the executive women participating in their study said "a mentor who believed in (their) talents gave them their start" (p. 108). The same study found that among the youngest

women, most had mentors, but not necessarily women mentors. Levinson (1996) writes that "A life involves significant interpersonal relationships -- with friends and lovers, parents and siblings, spouses and children, bosses, colleagues, and mentors" (p. 3). Women who mentor are also in a position to learn from their protegees and those experiences may help them improve their mentoring with others (Dreher and Ash 1990, p. 544). Therefore, there is an increasing opportunity for a reciprocal process. Businesses, educational institutions, medical facilities, governmental agencies, and other organizations and institutions may advance with the increased numbers of women in positions of influence. Therefore, society at large may benefit if women are participating in mentoring relationships.

This qualitative study used a phenomenologically based approach which was particularly effective for studying the experiences of mentoring. The unstructured interviews allowed for differing questions and answers. As these women articulated their thoughts concerning mentoring they developed additional insights. Short answers turned into long descriptions and then narratives of their lives developed.

As noted earlier, the findings suggest that these women do not specifically seek out other women to mentor even though they recognize the advantages that mentoring relationships between women can offer. Additionally, they participate in networking mentoring relationships more commonly than the traditional grooming mentoring relationships. Phenomenologically based interviews allowed for their recognition of the importance of mentoring and for their further

understanding of the phenomenon, especially their hesitation to be active mentors.

There are several implications and recommendations of this study. If women do not seek out other women to mentor, then women will continue to rely on male mentors or continue without mentors. Furthermore, their reticence may send confusing messages to women who work with them, and that seems contrary to relational attributes and their need to develop their self identity and sense of competence. Even though mentoring is a term commonly used, these women were not clear in their understanding of the concept. However, as the phenomenological interviews progressed, these women clarified their thoughts on the mentoring phenomenon. Therefore, these phenomenological interviews led to their greater understanding of mentoring.

Methodology

This qualitative study used a phenomenological approach which examined the meanings of individual mentoring experiences as the phenomena were discussed and reflected upon in meaning oriented conversations. A discussant format is more likely to uncover the nuances in mentoring relationships that serve as points of understanding about such relationships. This qualitative method is especially appropriate for studying the experience of mentoring because this type of research relies on a naturalistic approach which emphasizes discovery of emerging themes for all the participants including me as the researcher (Lincoln

and Guba 1985). Therefore, there is no one reality in this type of research, but instead multiple realities (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Miles and Huberman 1994).

As such, we all viewed the experience of mentoring differently yet some common themes emerged. As we reflected on their experiences, they shared their insights and I began forming my analysis. After articulating their thoughts, they considered their words and we developed further insights together. Description and interpretation led to additional meanings. Meaning involves interpretation and understanding. These women described their mentoring, and narratives of their lives developed, as did the narratives of this dissertation.

Their narratives yielded information about their lives that could not be limited to their mentoring experiences. "The act of constructing a life narrative forces the author to move from accounts of discrete experiences to an account of why and how the life took the shape it did" (Personal Narratives Group 1989, p. 4). Therefore, as their mentoring experiences were examined, their context of that reality was developed. Their reality is historically significant because these women did not lead the life which society tried to impose on them, which was to be wives and mothers with no careers.

To more fully understand the meaning of mentoring phenomenologically, I engaged the participants in examining their own context historically through a life history (Seidman 1991, p. 11-12). The guiding questions were limited so that there were more opportunities for deeper reflection. The opening question was: "Tell me about your educational experience." This allowed the women to become comfortable with the researcher as we both identified with our education. The

questions that followed included: "How would you describe your experience as a professional woman? Did you have a women mentor? What was it like to be mentored? What was it like to mentor?" These ten women participated in two, one hour interviews. Guba and Lincoln's (1981) description of my part in each unstructured interview fits this research well. I sought to understand the mentoring process and therefore "the exchange is likely to be spontaneous, to sound more like a real conversation than a question-and-answer interchange" (p. 166). This approach led to different follow-up questions in each of the twenty interviews.

Thus, these women provided the relevant data through the interviewing process. These data were collected following the three steps outlined by Moustakas (1994). The first step, which was the epoche process, unmasked preconceived assumptions by setting "aside our prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things" (p. 85). The second step, bracketing, means "the focus of the research is placed in brackets, everything else is set aside so that the entire research process is rooted solely on the topic and question" (p. 97). The third step was "to obtain descriptions of the experience" (p. 181).

I tape recorded, transcribed, and compared data with my field notes. I used Ranata Tesch's (1987) phenomenological design for data analysis. She suggests three steps: (1) immersion; (2) dividing data into smaller units of meaning, themes or patterns; and (3) confirmation of relevance. These steps enabled me to frame the data so it could yield valuable insights for me as to the meaning of mentoring.

Summary of Analysis

This study examined the mentoring relationships of ten business and professional women who have experienced this phenomena with other women. These women offered their mentoring experiences in narrative form. They shared their life stories by examining the influences of the following: family, education, gender, and work in an historical context which has been repressive to these women's careers. Nevertheless, they all achieved positions of influence and appeared to be satisfied with the life they have chosen as they constantly attempt to balance their personal and professional lives. In the course of their careers, mentoring has played a pivotal role. Ruthellen Josselson (1992) states that mentors are anchors to women's work. Mentors are persons who care about the professional development of a person's life, a caring which may transcend the work environment.

However, these women seem to be passive mentors themselves. As one woman stated, "a kind of obligation to try to be available if people wish you to. I don't think that I go out and solicit folks, but I send out signals 'if you want me to help you in some way I'd be glad to' and then allow people to choose whether or not they wish to accept that." If this caring is not available to women, they may struggle. These women did not limit themselves to stories concerning their mentoring relationships with women; they also included stories about their male mentors and proteges.

Mentoring as Narrative

These women's narratives were informative for the details of their lives as well as their broad descriptions of the mentoring phenomenon. The interviews became conversations between the participants and me. As time progressed, we became more and more comfortable with each other. As one participant stated, "What women do is share their stories." This statement was a telling remark for all ten of these participants, as they freely exchanged their thoughts. Their narratives enabled the participants as well as me to examine their past, present, and future mentoring relationships through the interview process.

Different meanings of mentoring emerged as they considered their experiences. Their early definitions of mentoring constantly changed and evolved into additional and expanded formats. As they discussed mentoring and considered their thoughts, they developed different ideas about their original definitions of mentoring and decided that peer mentors (Ragins 1989) or networking mentors (Swoboda and Millar 1986) is another form of mentoring. "And sometimes even your peers are your mentors," stated one woman. After reflection and communication, they considered their expanding ideas. The phenomenological based interviews allowed the participants the time and direction that their ideas dictated for exploration.

These women recognized the importance of dialogue in their mentoring relationships and questioned the thoroughness if they offered advice. Sometimes they relied on their ability to listen and express empathy, offering no advice. A participant stated, "They would come in and I would just listen." The

appearance of considering the words of the protegee were simply enough to help her work out her problems. Tannen (1994) states that women are interactive listeners which the participants acknowledged as particularly important to a mentoring relationship. Honesty became an issue as they struggled to help their protegees, yet at the same time allowed their protegees to be true to themselves. The mentors also recognized the efforts of their own mentors and considered their actions when they were protegees.

Interaction between the mentor and the protegee depended upon the closeness of the women in the mentoring relationship. These relationships developed through shared interests. Most of their stories revolved around mentoring relationships which were developed naturally and this supports Morrison's (1992) findings that assigned mentoring relationships can be difficult. Occasionally, protegees and mentors were assigned to these women, but these relationships were seldom mentioned. "I wouldn't do it again" stated one woman when referring to one of her assigned protegees. "You have to care and have respect to be in a mentoring relationship and I had neither."

These women typically mentioned mentoring relationships of their own choosing. They shared common characteristics, concerns, and interests. As Gilson and Kane (1989) state, "a mentor who believed in (their) talents gave them their start" (p. 108). Who is responsible for reaching out? These women did not typically feel any obligation to mentor. One participant stated, "I'm not real anxious to sit down and mentor somebody on a formal basis over a long period of time, but I'll do it." This would support Reardon's (1995) statement that

senior women often do not reach out to mentor. However, as they shared their stories, several of them commented that they perhaps should make more of an effort to mentor in the future. "I will spend more time mentoring" was a typical remark.

These women were not shy about expressing their opinions. They appeared to enjoy the experience of being interviewed and admitted that by telling their stories and examining the meaning of their mentoring experiences, they developed further insight. They also expressed interest in reading the results of this study.

As these women talked through their experiences, some of their opinions changed about the concept of mentoring. Specifically, what is mentoring and how will they be involved in mentoring relationships in the future. As the interviews progressed, they seemed to put their thoughts into words, listened to their own answers and then questioned themselves as well as me about what they were actually saying.

Their stories explained their self identity. "There's more giving and taking, but I think that in doing that, in some respects, you're also clarifying some of your own thoughts about things," said a woman. Another participant elaborated:

Over the last decade I have found myself better able to be a mentor. In part because I now have experiences that are not just based on my personality and gutting it out. They are more based on how to work in institutions; how to use political influence, how to build coalitions, how to build corporate ... I've started getting experience in doing that and having success in doing that and therefore, feeling confident that I can coach and mentor people in doing that.

“Women’s personal narratives can also provide a vital entry point for examining the interaction between the individual and society in the construction of gender” (The Personal Narratives Group 1989, p. 5). By examining their identities, their mentoring relationships are more easily understood. These women spoke about their educational experiences at length with many references to their gender. They were aware of possible limitations in their lives and made choices different from many of their contemporaries. They stated many times that their historical context must be understood to understand them, their choices, and those they mentor in order to understand why and how they mentor.

Women typically enjoy sharing their stories (Belenky et al. 1986; Miller 1986). As they developed additional insights of the meaning of their experiences, their sense of self and purpose expanded. The first interviews were filled with the participants’ stories and had only limited remarks from me. The second interviews were used for clarification. They responded with enthusiasm. There was also renewed interest in the second interview because their mentoring experiences were being remembered and presented in a different light after having had time to reflect upon the phenomena.

Mentoring as Experience

These women attended graduate school at a time when there were few women continuing their education beyond college. Most women did not have professional careers. These women participants continued their education to

achieve better jobs. Central to all of these women was the fact that they would likely marry, have children, and stay home (Hancock 1989, Sheehy 1995).

As these women worked in their early jobs, the majority had mentors. If these mentors were women, they quickly surpassed them. These early mentors typically encouraged the participants to continue their education. Today, as they reflect upon these same gender mentoring relationships, they recognize their importance. These women stated that they did not recognize the significance of their mentoring relationships until much later in their careers. At the same time, they considered their mentors' opinions and returned or continued with their education.

When women with advanced degrees sought work in the nineteen sixties, they were limited in finding jobs in their chosen professions because of their gender. All of them experienced gender discrimination hearing such things as "you can't do that because you are a girl." Some joined organizations which sought social change. Using these groups to advance their working environments brought them into contact with like-minded women. Without even realizing the changes in their lives, they developed careers. Most worked with no maternity leave. There was little support for child care and they were forced to make their own accommodations. They were further handicapped because women of this generation found themselves reluctant to ask for things. They overcame this obstacle, continued the best they could, and made what they thought were possible.

These women have seen enormous change in societal roles during their working careers. It is important to remember that these women grew up in an environment where pleasing others was a primary function of women (Belenky et al. 1986; Josselson 1990; Miller 1986). As one woman stated, and others concurred, "And I think that everything about female socialization for my generation focused on pleasing people." Even though all of these women attended college, they were also encouraged to take courses such as typing classes because they might want or need to be a secretary some day. Teaching was a common occupation for women and some of these women felt that they might want to teach until they had children.

These women recognize that today many professional schools include approximately half of their class as women. The two judges in this study both see significant gains in the number of women judges and both note that one can attain this status if there is interest and ability. However, all of the women recognize that gender can still limit or restrain one's career. One participant, in particular, views her male contemporaries' careers as significantly more advanced than her own and she cites gender as the reason.

All of these women participants have been, or are currently involved in mentoring relationships with men. Considering that few women were in positions to mentor them, they expressed appreciation for their mentoring men. Of those women who had men as mentors, they did not view their ability to find male mentors as unusual. If they were not mentored by men in their professional careers, they nevertheless feel comfortable mentoring men today. Only one

participant stated that she did not want a man to mentor her because she feared that the situation might make her appear weak to her colleagues.

Mentoring as Relationship

Relationships provide the foundations of mentoring. The women in this study described their mentoring relationships with interest and emotion. These relationships were complex, meaningful, and sometimes difficult when goals expectations were not realized. The women in this study stated that a mentoring relationship is not easily acknowledged during the beginning stages. When these women reflected on the meaning of the encounters, they recognized the significance of the relationship.

Mentors and protegees allow for different insights and make each feel useful to another in their profession (Dreher and Ash 1990). "They'll have seen things I never saw. And the things that I thought were as obvious as could be, they would have missed." These women admitted that their perspectives may differ from their protegees or mentors and the different viewpoints can benefit both sides of the relationship.

The women in this study stated they are interested in mentoring women because they share common issues and hope that women will more easily reach acknowledged leadership positions. One woman stated that she sometimes felt she needed to be supportive of women in her workplace because they did not have the same network that was available to men. Paula Short, Darla Twale,

and John Walden (1989) found that women mentors are even more important for women who are in careers that were previously limited to men.

None of the women acknowledged that they actively sought out women to mentor them or that they actively seek out women to mentor. Most stated that they want to mentor women but they are not actively seeking the role. This is in direct opposition to Daniel Levinson's (1996) work. He states, "Now, many of them (women over forty) had an interest in being helpful (mentoring) to their younger female colleagues; the possibility of mentoring younger men was rarely mentioned" (p. 342). These women admitted participating in mentoring relationships because of an interest. Some of these women clearly stated that they do not feel that mentoring women is one of their responsibilities. "I never went out of my way to mentor a female. In other words, I didn't feel that I owed something to the gender."

Kathleen Reardon argues that "most companies don't reward or encourage women or men to mentor junior women. Since women often are left out of organizational networks, the absence of mentors and the seeming unwillingness of senior women to reach out to them can create hard feelings" (1995, p. 167). On the other hand, Pamela Kruger's (1993) found that women are indeed seeking out other women to mentor.

Yet, these women understand their need for connections (Gilligan 1982; Miller 1986) and they shared countless stories of communication with their protegees and mentors. This relationship is not necessarily long term, but instead may be short term or sporadic. Mentors also necessarily change as they

develop their careers. There are different needs of the protegee as well as the mentor. Most of the participants acknowledged that grooming mentoring has similarities to a mother-daughter relationship. This relationship consists of one person having greater power than the other. There is an evolution in the mentoring process as the protegee develops her skills and the relationship becomes one between peers or at least one between women who are in more equal positions. One woman read a letter from her protegee which said, "it's really exciting for me to think of us as peers now."

However, these women appear to be uneasy about acknowledging their mentoring roles. They readily admit being mentored but were reluctant to acknowledge that they may have played a significant role in someone else's life. When pressed, they admitted that their role could be a primary one in the protegee's professional life.

The amount of time that they mentor varies widely as does the success which they feel. They also admitted that they were never sure how significant their role is in a protegee's career unless they are directly told. One woman was pleased to receive a letter from a protegee. "She feels free to give me advice now. And hers was that I needed to take more time for myself, kind of mentoring done by a younger woman."

All of the women spoke about discussing personal issues with their mentors and/or protegees. They were involved in all aspects of each other's lives. These factors made the relationship more complete and is considered one of the advantages of mentoring relationships within the same gender. "There

were mentoring issues that I felt comfortable sharing with Patty that the guys could have cared less about, ie. the children, the husband, how to balance it all. And likewise, she felt comfortable sharing with me." They recognized the influence that family life has upon the professional life of women and therefore shared common concerns about family, work, and balance. The majority of the participants felt that cross gender mentoring relationships did not include personal issues. One woman clearly wanted to differentiate between the two genders' mentors issues and felt that women should not try to make men into something they are not. Instead, she wanted to appreciate the differences between the two genders.

One participant stated that the sharing between the protegee and the mentor is not gender specific. The personal characteristics determine whether the relationship will include personal issues or not. Two of these women felt that they had to "earn" a mentor, meaning that no mentor was available just because they wanted one. They stated they had to become successful before someone was interested in mentoring them.

One woman spoke convincingly of her femininity and its relationship to her work. She refused to adjust her dress code by wearing dark suits as men do typically just because she is at work. She prefers instead to wear colorful clothes and a lot of jewelry. This is different from much of the literature which suggests that women relinquish their femininity (Rosener 1995) as they advance their careers. However, this participant is adamant about encouraging her protegees to dress like women. This characteristic she directly attributed to her own

mentor. She said that early in her career, the woman who mentored her and encouraged her to go beyond the executive secretarial position always wore the latest fashions. This woman remembered her mentor's clothes and feels the same way about her own appearance today.

None of these women stated that they particularly searched for talented women to mentor or that they attempted to identify talent. They chose those they mentored because of a feeling they had or they saw something that reminded them of themselves. "You see yourself in these people or parts of yourself. You remember when you were that age or in that kind of situation and you kind of like seeing that. You like that spirit, that energy that I can do anything." This lack of identifying talent indicates that the relationship develops for unclear reasons, not like in traditional grooming mentoring that men have used so successfully to seek outstanding talent. These women feel that they do not need to initiate a mentoring relationship. "I usually make an effort once someone expressed an interest" was a typical remark. If a relationship develops, it happens. But there is no inherent obligation to find women to mentor.

None of these participants stated that they preferred regular scheduled meetings with those they mentor. All of the women feel that effective mentoring is done outside of the office setting, in informal settings. Lunch is a particularly attractive time in which to mentor. Most of these women stated that because of time, they had to limit the number of people they mentor. Although some of these women feel they are available to mentor, none talked about spending time aggressively seeking proteges.

Time is viewed as a variable in mentoring. Sometimes there is little contact, other times there is a large commitment of time. This fact does not directly relate to the effectiveness of the mentoring experience. All of the participants felt that one must be open to mentor and that meetings should be held when mutually convenient.

These women specifically stated that they have no interest in arranging their protegee's lives. They do not want that type of responsibility. They freely exchange experiences and make suggestions, but ultimately, these women stated that decisions are left to the protegee. They also noted that mentoring allows the mentor to clarify her own thoughts about her personal and professional life.

Meaning of Mentoring

These women originally viewed mentoring in the traditional grooming sense in which an older professional guides and helps develop a protegee along the career path by acting as a role model, encouraging, motivating, counseling, listening, giving advice, and sponsoring the younger, less experienced professional for positions which advance his or her career. This relationship revolves around favoritism (Swoboda and Millar 1986) because of the limited amount of time a person chooses to spend with one other person. Grooming mentoring typically includes a hierarchy with the mentor having greater power. This traditional view of mentoring challenged these women while they attempted

to share their mentoring experiences as protegees, because half of them did not experience this type of relationship as they progressed through their careers.

As these women struggled with the concept of mentoring, they repeatedly articulated a networking or peer mentoring concept. The phenomenological approach allowed these women and me the opportunity to reflect together on their mentoring experiences and establish new meanings of the phenomenon. "Interpretation is the process of setting forth the meaning of an event or experience" (Denzin 1989, p. 32). They eventually decided that mentoring among peers does exist and that the relationship does not have to be hierarchical. "And sometimes even your friends are peers" stated one woman, with the others agreeing. They cautiously chose to describe the experiences. Several women also considered that mentoring can be done by groups, a form of networking mentoring (Haring 1994). "Mentoring on the legal side has been significantly accomplished through groups."

Although half of them experienced a traditional grooming mentoring experience with women, they spoke most enthusiastically about their experiences with other women in a networking mentoring format. In this relationship, the mentor and the protegee positions are fluid, moving back and forth depending upon who needs the guidance and what particular expertise can be utilized. This type of mentoring typically includes two women who are in similar positions of influence yet have different capabilities and assist each other during periods of change. They may have specific problems in their departments and under their supervision, yet they need an outside point of view to develop solutions.

Sometimes these women work for the same organization, sometimes not. If these women are in the same business, they may have resources available to them to make significant contributions to their peers. "We're all good at different things. The three of us have a collective experience level over fifteen years and we're who we call when we're really upset about something." Other times these women have peer mentors in the same profession but in other organizations and they use each other to exchange ideas and arrive at solutions. "We still talk business even though she left the company" was how one woman described her mentoring relationship with another woman.

Networking mentoring may not be easily acknowledged as a tool for moving to higher positions in the same organization. However, it can be used for professional growth and advancement out of a woman's particular organization and into another business. This style of mentoring brings new perspectives to the mentor and the protegee. Networking mentoring is particularly effective in changing the status quo concerning women's opportunities in the work place. This study found that groups of networks are often used in this capacity. This is a collaborative process involving peers and was commonly found among these women. There is reciprocity in this type of relationship. "I'm involved in a lot of reciprocal relationships where people who can open doors and fill resources do so for me, but it is always an exchange for doors that I open and resources that I share with them." As hierarchies in business continue to flatten, an increase in peer mentoring may occur.

Several women spoke about groups who they feel have mentored them as they broke through the glass ceiling. This dynamic is not a dyadic relationship, and these types of relationships might appear to be impersonal. Nonetheless, they are significant to the participant's career development. Because these women encountered restrictions in their careers paths, they found that banding together with others contributed to a stronger influence for change.

Their traditional grooming and peer mentoring relationships with men could not be ignored. Seven stated that the mentors who advised them, gave them opportunities, sponsored them by moving them through organizations, were men, not women. One participant said, "That could be a generational thing." Nine of the participants viewed this cross gender relationship as different than one between two women. They found that the conversations involved more personal issues when two women are in the relationship.

The fact that some might view a cross gender mentoring relationship as a sexual one did not appear to bother any of the participants. One woman described it bluntly: "I ultimately gave up trying to deal with it. If the world wants to assume that there's a personal relationship, there's nothing I can do to dissuade them of it."

These women expressed gender differences. "Women like to talk things through, try out various things and hear them spoken, see what they sound like, get some feedback to make modifications in what they want to do and then eventually pick a pathway that suits them and fits their needs." Some argued that women are strong about talking things through while "men want to fix it."

This comment would be supported by Tannen's (1990) research. They argued that women like to get involved in projects, not wait until the end when a decision is imminent. On the other hand, they sometimes dismissed the differences and instead stated that training was what influenced the way they performed their work. All of the participants acknowledged that men had been influential in their professional lives and, therefore, they had the advantage of both genders as they developed their careers.

Implications and Recommendations

There are two major implications from this study. First, these women stated that they are interested in mentoring, participate in and enjoy mentoring, and recognize the benefits of mentoring, but lack a commitment to specifically mentor other women. Second, the phenomenological methodology promoted their understanding of mentoring as these women reflected upon their mentoring experiences and they recognized the way they distance themselves from mentoring even though they acknowledge benefitting from the experience. These implications require consideration of recommendations so that further understanding of the mentoring phenomenon are understood and additional research is conducted.

These women expressed interest in mentoring. They made comments such as, "Mentoring is something you want to do." Or "I don't think you can be part of society and not be involved in mentoring." And, "I just can't imagine people getting along without having those kinds of influences." If these

statements are true, then I have to ask why these women do not actively seek out protegees to mentor.

All of these women were involved in some form of mentoring at the time of the interviews although they did not easily admit to being successful mentors. They stated that age and position is a factor in their ability to mentor. As their professional life has advanced and they feel more self confident, they stated that they are better mentors. "I would say over the last decade, I have found myself better able to mentor. In part, because I now have experiences that are not just based on my personality and gutting it out." This also relates to their positions in that "only in the last few years are people reaching out to me." Three participants noted that until they became more successful, others did not appear to want to mentor them and protegees did not approach them.

Even though all of these women have participated in a mentoring relationship with another woman, they clearly did not aggressively pursue women mentors or protegees. "I never went out of my way to mentor a female. In other words, I didn't feel that I owed something to the gender" was a common statement. However, these women all acknowledged that they particularly enjoy their women mentors and/or protegees. Nine of the women strongly stated that they are able to communicate differently with their women mentors and protegees, as well as participate in different activities in a same gender relationship.

Of these women who experienced a woman mentor, they had been chosen by that mentor. They did not seek her out. As far as their protegees are

concerned, "I make myself available. If they want assistance, I'm there." In other words, they are interested in mentoring women, but there is no action to seek out women because they feel any obligation. Again, I question the reasons they do not seek out women to mentor if they claim there are many benefits to the relationship. Levinson (1996) writes that there are men who will not mentor women and these women also acknowledged this fact. If more women do not mentor other women, then the likelihood of some professional women not having mentors will continue. The consequences are that they may be left behind in various organizations and never reach levels of influence.

I believe that women should have the opportunity of a mentoring relationship. There are several recommendations for addressing the need for specifically mentoring women. The recommendations that emerged from this study involve the five major topics: families, education, identity as women, business and professional organizations, and future research. All of these segments of society need to consider the factors that mentoring includes. Most of the women participants were passive about their mentoring other women. If, in fact, mentoring is a significant aspect of professional growth (Ragins 1989), then increased use of mentoring will enable upward mobility. There will be an increase in the productivity of women's working lives as well as their personal lives if mentoring is used to advance and improve them.

The first recommendation is that families encourage mentoring of your girls. All of these women spoke about their immediate families and their influences. Some of these women shared their stories of their mothers and

explained that they were mentors -- not in the traditional sense, but as to how they lived their lives, and the values they held that carried over from their personal lives to their professional lives. Several women compared their mentors to their mothers and stated that the relationship had similarities. Parents need to be made aware of the concept of mentoring early in their daughters' lives. Early connections with adults may enable a daughter to identify a specific career early and help her develop a passion about her future work.

The second recommendation that educational institutions encourage mentoring. Schools are an essential aspect of our development and mentoring can begin during the elementary school years. There are enormous opportunities for mentoring during these developmental years. Role models may become mentors by inspiring young girls to achieve advanced degrees and thereby allowing greater opportunities for mentorship and career advancement. Increased use of counselors in school may inspire career paths by educating girls about different possible options of classes they need to consider given their career interests.

School personnel could encourage mentoring programs by encouraging the business community to become more active in the schools which would expose girls to various occupations. Peer mentoring programs are also an ideal solution for many children's problems all through their early and adolescent development. By exposing girls to peer mentors early, there may be an increase likelihood of adults using peer mentors as their professional careers develop.

Higher education needs to continue to encourage mentoring in the same manner as elementary education through high school. The use of mentors is useful all through our educational years. During college and in graduate school years, there needs to be a connection with the business and professional world. Mentoring from the outside world can meet this requirement. Again, the importance of peer mentors can be useful all through these years. Women remain a minority in some professions such as engineering and may find a same gender mentoring relationship helpful to understanding the demands of the profession.

The third recommendation is that mentoring be promoted as a way to enhance self identity. A woman's sense of self can be enhanced when she is involved in a mentoring relationship. This format allows her to contemplate her professional growth as she examines her mentor and/or protegee. Women not only need to become more aggressive in seeking mentors, but must also begin seeking mentors in the early stages of their careers. These women stated that they did not recognize their early mentors at the time and, in fact, were not even acquainted with the idea of mentoring until they were further established in their professions. Young women need to recognize early on what a mentor can do for them and what they can do for a mentor. Not only do protegees learn from their mentors, mentors also learn from their protegees. The protegee can offer information about what is happening at a different level of the organization. Women need to recognize and take advantage of their mentoring relationships.

Women also need to recognize and accept their peers as mentors. They should also be encouraged to join organizations with similar goals to their own interests. These networks can be invaluable. Women often look to friendships and are afraid of breaking the connection (Gilligan 1982; Miller 1986). They need to realize that mixing personal friendships and business can be effective tool for developing their careers.

The fourth recommendation is that professional and business organizations consider women's mentoring needs. Some businesses have established mentoring programs in efforts to increase the advancement of women. However, there are some authors who state that mentoring should include women who find mentors themselves because of a need or an interest. Educating business and professional organizations about the advantages of mentoring and providing an environment where mentoring is encouraged would be helpful for mentoring and consequently for productivity.

Women need multiple mentors. Different people offer different information and support. Women should not limit themselves to traditional grooming mentors because their needs change as their careers develop. The same can be said of their networking mentoring relationships. There are always different people changing positions in organizations and one should be prepared to take advantage of these encounters. Specific professional organizations are also available for meeting potential mentors and protegees.

The fifth recommendation is that more research needs to be conducted on women's mentoring. This study is only a beginning. The concept of women

mentoring women needs to be examined in an expansion of women's lives. These ten narratives are not representative of our society. They are indeed a small segment of women. These women had similarities in their educational backgrounds because nine of them graduated from college and eight hold advanced degrees. Nine of these women are Caucasian. This representation is not a sample of women living in the United States. There needs to be further evaluation of women mentoring women at different age levels, in different businesses and professions, and at different economic levels. These women were passive about their responsibility to mentor other women. Perhaps in another study the results may differ. Therefore, additional groups of women and their mentoring experiences need to be examined.

The second major implication of this study addresses the methodology. This study used a phenomenological approach which enabled these women and me to examine and then reexamine the meanings of their mentoring experiences. Description of the experience was followed by interpretation and then the understanding. And the second session enabled further interpretation and understanding. "Interpretation makes sense out of expressions of experience" (Denzin 1989, p. 108). The women described the phenomena, and through that description their context of realities was established. Van Manen (1990) writes, "Phenomenology attempts to systematically develop a certain narrative that explicates themes while remaining true to the universal quality or essence of a certain type of experience" (p. 97). Their narratives helped these women interpret their mentoring experiences and established new meanings. Using

this approach enabled me to uncover their meanings. I did not expect to find that women are not actively seeking women to mentor. Because “women stay with, build on, and develop in a context of connections with others (Miller 1986, p. 83), I expected to uncover deeper mentoring relationships between women.

The participants shared countless stories concerning their parents, husbands, and children. This amount of information was appropriate for the phenomenological method. “Studying individual relationships abstracted from their larger relational contexts ... gives us very narrow information” (Josselson 1992, p. 27). Their narratives were filled with the historical context in which their professional lives have taken shape. Their education was different from men because women were in the minority in graduate school and even regarded as “passing time, not really interested in a career.”

They acknowledged that gender had impacted them in some way. Many of their comments concerned the problems they faced. “Your credentials are wonderful. You would be a terrific addition but our clients won’t work with a woman.” But they also noted that gender has been used at some point in their careers to their advantage. “I went to the public agencies knowing they were under pressure to hire women.”

Rosener (1990) finds that women leaders tend to share power and encourage participation. I could not discern from my interviews if these women shared power, but they stated that they encourage participation between their protegees and themselves. Since they believe that mentoring involves learning

on the part of the protegee as well as the mentor, they expressed interest in hearing the perspectives from their protegees.

All of these women agree that mentoring is an important aspect of their professional lives. Most acknowledged that without mentors their lives might not have been successful. This study sorted through their mentoring experiences and determined that mentoring is expanding to include additional formats. The traditional grooming mentor is commonly giving way to a networking mentoring format.

The traditional grooming mentor is important to women, if and when they are able to find one. To have an older and wiser woman to listen, guide, coach, encourage, and sponsor a younger and less experienced professional is a helpful resource in the business and professional environments today. They need to consider all the mentor's advice, take criticism, and accept responsibility.

A traditional grooming mentor may be able to offer an opportunity that would not be experienced otherwise. These types of mentors will continue to be important, but more likely limited. With the growing number of occupations and the changing organizations, women will likely change careers and jobs many times in their lives (Sheehy 1995). Therefore, a traditional mentor may be more difficult to find. As long as there are men who will not mentor them, they need to be aware of their own gender and use these resources. This statement by no means implies that women should not be involved with men in mentoring relationships; only that by having mentors of both genders will all resources be effectively used.

These women repeatedly discussed networking mentoring relationships. These types of relationships involved peers as well as organizations. Even though some of the literature on this topic has been available for the last ten years (Swoboda and Millar 1986), these participants were not aware of the concept until they examined their experiences and shared their thoughts with me. Again, the phenomenological approach allowed these women to describe their experiences, interpret their thoughts and develop additional meanings.

Networking mentoring (Swoboda and Millar 1986) with other professionals appears to be essential to most of these women. Many spoke of peers who have been most helpful in their careers and others elaborated on the effects that organizations have had on their development and advancement. If these relationships are central to their success, then more women need to be made aware of their possibilities and encouraged to use their peers as mentors and to join and actively participate in organizations which could help them advance their careers. And most of all, women must use their knowledge and encourage each other in their networks.

Conclusion

Mentoring is a concept that is important for us all to understand. This study does not dismiss the advantages of cross gender mentoring. Rather, this study supports the idea that women's mentoring relationships can be significantly important even when viewed passively by them. However, this passivity implies that additional work needs to be done to promote mentoring. Women in this

study supported the concept that their mentoring relationships, especially those with other women were broader because they included women's professional and personal concerns. A woman's identity develops from experiences within family, environment, and work. Therefore, a relationship which also includes family contributes to a fuller mentoring relationship.

Women will continue to increase their numbers in the professional world and they need to have the same advantages in the workplace which many men enjoy. There may always be some men and women who are not interested in mentoring women, but these data suggest that more women must take a more active role in mentoring other women so that more women experience greater workplace satisfaction, and relatedly, the numbers of women in positions of influence will continue to increase. Otherwise, the relational expectation of women will be thwarted at the very time that they are also trying to develop identity and competence as women.

This study attempted to honor the voices of these ten women as they narrated their mentoring lives. Their narratives were filled with personal insights into their families, education, self identity, and professions in their historical contexts. They freely shared their feelings, acknowledged their successes and failures, and their concerns. They admitted gaining new insights and perspectives of their own lives by participating in this study. They hope that their mentoring experiences are helpful to other business and professional women. With the increasing numbers of women entering these positions, their stories can inspire women to seek mentors and to be mentors themselves.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Date

Dear _____,

Thank you for your interest in my dissertation research on the experience of women mentoring women. I value the unique contribution that you can make to my study and am excited about the possibility of your participation. The purpose of this letter is to reiterate some of the things we have previously discussed and to secure your signature on the participant release form which you will find attached.

I am using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, a type of qualitative methodology. Hermeneutics is not only a theory of understanding, but also a theory of self-understanding for me, the researcher, and you, the participant. I am seeking comprehensive descriptions of your mentoring experiences and therefore a discussant format will be used to uncover the nuances in relationships that serve as understanding of the relationship and the structure of mentoring. My questions will emphasize discovery and emerging themes, knowing that there are multiple realities to the experience of mentoring.

Through your participation as a co-researcher, I hope to understand the essence of the phenomenon as it reveals itself in your experience. You will be asked to recall specific episodes or events in your life in which you experienced the phenomenon we are investigating. I am seeking vivid, accurate, and comprehensive portrayals of what these experiences were like for you; your thoughts, feelings and behaviors, as well as situations, events, places and people (anonymous, of course) connected with your experience.

I value your participation and thank you for your commitment of time, effort and energy. If you have further questions before signing the release form or if there is a problem with the date and time of our meeting, I can be reached at (619) 756-2046. I look forward to our first one hour interview on _____ at _____.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Fitzpatrick

APPENDIX B
CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO ACT AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT

Jacqueline Fitzpatrick, a doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of San Diego, is conducting a study of women leaders who have been mentored or are mentoring women. The intent of the study is to understand the process of mentoring between women. This understanding may help me to provide insights about mentoring experiences for women so that others may see the value of women mentors for both workplace and societal benefit.

As a research subject in this study, I agree to participate in two one-hour interviews, one day to one month between each one. A telephone conversation, used only for clarification, may be necessary. The interviews will be audio tape recorded. I have the right to edit the transcripts. Participation in this study should not involve any added risks or discomforts to me except for possible minor fatigue.

I understand all research records will be kept completely confidential. My identity will not be disclosed without my consent as required by law. I further understand that to preserve my anonymity only pseudonyms will be used in any publication of the results of this study.

My participation in this study is entirely voluntary. I understand I may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without jeopardy to me.

Jacqueline Fitzpatrick has explained this study to me and answered my questions. If I have other questions or research-related problems, I can reach Jacqueline Fitzpatrick at (619) 756-2046.

There are no other agreements, written or verbal, related to this study beyond that expressed on this consent form.

I, the undersigned, understand the above explanations and, on that basis, I give consent to my voluntary participation in this research.

Signature of Subject

Date

Location
