Are you mentor worthy?

There are a lot of people at every level of leadership that could never fit into that definition. So if we accept this as the meaning, you may agree it is a flagrant misuse of the word.

Have you ever been a mentor? Many people might say, “I don’t know,” or “No, I have never mentored anyone.” Since this is not necessarily, or even normally, a formal relationship or acknowledgement, we can’t always be certain.

I did a little experiment one time with my church group. We were discussing mentoring, and I asked everyone to tell me who had been a mentor in their life. I didn’t want names, just the relationship. The responses included boss, business associate, friend, neighbor, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, father (this is one of mine), pastor and mother. My next question to the group is the same one I’ll ask you—how many of these categories do you fit into?

My point is that everyone of us is either currently a mentor to someone, has been a mentor, or is being viewed as a potential mentor. Someone is watching everything we say and do. They watch how we react to decisions, what decisions we make, and how we respond in a crisis situation. Scary as it may seem, we are being judged on integrity, ethics and morality.

So, I’ll ask again. Are you mentor worthy? No one can answer that for you. When you look in the mirror, what is the face you see?

By Jay Bowen
M&PA Committee chairman

Are you mentor worthy? Do you know what that means? I personally don’t like how the word “mentor” gets thrown around. It has become very popular in the business world for leadership to issue a mandate to first-line supervisors to mentor all new employees.

Webster’s Dictionary defines mentor as a verb and a noun. As a verb, it is someone who mentors another or trains someone. I have no real issue when it is used in this context. But as a noun, it is a “wise and trusted counselor or teacher.” I take issue when the word is thrown around as a noun.

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About this newsletter

This periodic and Legionsire-driven newsletter, produced by the Internal Affairs & Membership Division, is designed to address best practices, ideas and training that every Legionsire needs to know to engage our membership through effective training now and into the future.

Highlighting new training ideas and resources becoming available in 2020 and beyond, it will also feature essays from successful leaders and training ideas of posts, districts, departments and individuals throughout The American Legion.

Are you a trainer? A writer? We need your submissions! Send your training ideas and articles to train@legion.org.
Are you mentor worthy? / Why take Basic Training?

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Are you someone that leads by example? Do you practice what you preach? Are you reluctant (or just refuse) to take an unpopular stand on an issue? Are you someone you want for a mentor? If not, why?

You are what you want to be. If you don’t like who you are, change! Your attitudes, beliefs and values should be living examples of who you are. You should not have to define them to anyone. They should be pretty evident. Those attributes may not be what you think they are, but they are out there and they define you everywhere you go and every time you walk and talk with others.

We are all looking for support. We are all looking for mentors. We may not know it, but when we observe others and take on some of their actions and mannerisms and quote their mantra as our own, we are becoming something of a protégé to a mentor. I can tell you from experience that most of the time a mentor/protégé relationship is rarely formally acknowledged. It is a relationship that develops over time and through mutual respect.

I know I have been a mentor to at least two people in my lifetime. I know this because years after we parted company, I had the pleasure of seeing them again and they told me. At the time we were together, I never thought about it. I don’t know what I did or said that created the relationship. I didn’t choose them to mentor. And I’m certain they didn’t choose me initially. But there must have been something I did right that made them want to learn more. I pray that whatever it may have been, I never lose sight of those things. Now I try to stay aware that anything I say and do in both my professional and personal life is being watched by someone and that person may be looking at me for mentoring.

We should all strive to be mentors, whether we are chosen or not. We can only do what we feel is the right thing to do, always. We cannot compromise our integrity or ethics, ever! Remember, someone is always watching, waiting and hoping to find a mentor.

Legion Family members around the world, and staff members at The American Legion National Headquarters, often encourage completion of the American Legion Basic Training online course. But is it really that important?

Yes.

The American Legion was born of veterans who served this great nation. At some point in our young lives, whether conscripted or volunteered, we were yanked from the comfort of civilian mediocrity and thrown to the wolves in an unforgettable boot camp experience. For most of us, that shock and awe moment of arrival to a dark place with larger-than-life professional military practitioners yelling and screaming at us shaped who we are today.

This life-defining moment began the process of military socialization. Socialization is that method of bringing humans from every walk of life and getting them to behave in a way that is acceptable for military service.

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MISSING AN EDITION?

Go to www.legion.org/training/newsletters and read or download any past edition you are missing!

You can also subscribe to receive future editions.
You were inundated with history, customs, courtesies and traditions. You were taught to work, think and act as one purposeful team. In the end, you formed new habits that would endure the test of time and, most importantly, were united in the strategic mission of the United States Armed Forces: to fight and win.

How does this apply once we are removed from our days in uniform? If you look at the onboarding processes of many Fortune 500 companies, you will find that there is a great focus on socialization. We aren’t just talking about rules, expectations and where to find the employee lounge. We are talking about learning the proud history of the organization and the vision of where the organization is going. This practice aligns everyone to work toward the same objective, and in return, reduces employee attrition.

The more Legion Family members who are aware of The American Legion’s history and hard work we have done for our veterans, communities, state and nation for 100 years, the better at retention, recruiting and the more mission-focused we will be.

The experiences of Legionnaires vary by post and department. Many have great experiences, while others do not. The same holds true in the military with the various units, commands and missions. The advantage that the military has, irrespective of the experience a young soldier or sailor has at their first unit, is that they believe in the larger organization and mission. Otherwise, they wouldn’t be there.

It is vital that we educate all American Legion Family members about the strategic importance of this great organization they belong to and the best starting point is to send them to boot camp!

Basic Training is not aimed at old or young members. It is for everyone. This training is designed to educate about the extraordinary accomplishments of The American Legion over the past 100 years and its strategic mission.

Encourage your fellow Legion Family members to take the Basic Training course, and purchase the “Century of Service: An Illustrated History of The American Legion” bookazine available through Emblem Sales. You will see a renewed sense of purpose and pride in The American Legion.

Take the free Basic Training class at www.legion.org/alei.

Have you ever thought about why your post was chartered? How is your post highlighting that reason and the ways it serves the community, veterans and their families? Does your post have a vision or mission statement? If yes, is it displayed for everyone to see? And is it time to be updated?

We must not lose vision of what it is we are doing and why. We must foster relationships with our communities, share ideas and contacts, and be proud of the activities the post is involved in.

Please share ideas on how you let your community know The American Legion exists and how to get involved. Share ideas, or send thoughts or comments to train@legion.org.
District Training in a Box is available on www.Legion.org. Below are screenshots on how to access the information. While the link moves to what is known as Dropbox, an account with Dropbox is not required to access the presentations.

Go to www.legion.org/training

How to sign up for the Training newsletter.

Arrow down to Tools and Resources and click on District Training In A Box.

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Once in Dropbox it will take you to a directory as shown below. Click on the boxes to take you to other directories and presentations.
With the signing of the LEGION Act – Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service Act – into law last July 30 by President Trump, the U.S. government now acknowledges that the military has been involved in at least 12 additional military conflicts not previously recognized. As a result of this, The American Legion National Executive Committee adopted to amend the organization’s Preamble to the Constitution to recognize the millions of U.S. military veterans from all of these wars and conflicts that have occurred since World Wars I and II.

Resolution 1 was adopted by the NEC during last year’s Fall Meetings in Indianapolis to amend “the Great Wars” in the Preamble to “all wars.”

The following information is taken from page 81 of the Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies.

**For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes** … The American Legion recognizes the influence of Almighty God in all worthwhile endeavors and declares the allegiance of Legionnaires to both God and nation.

**To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America** … The Constitution of the United States is the written bulwark of our free way of life and representative government. It is our guarantee of liberty, freedom, justice and democracy. Members of The American Legion bore arms and went to war to defend and uphold this document of freedom.

**To maintain law and order** … Without law and order, liberty would become license. Law and order protect our pursuit of happiness, one of our God-given rights. Members of The American Legion served in wars to uphold law and order among nations. It is just as important to maintain the due processes of law in our domestic affairs. It binds Legionnaires to obey the laws of the land and to support the constituted authorities in enforcing those laws.

**To foster and perpetuate a 100 percent Americanism** … Americanism is the American ideals of freedom, justice, individual rights and unlimited opportunities. It embraces all the freedoms we cherish and all the rights that are guaranteed to us. It is the very opposite of hatred, bigotry and intolerance. Americanism is the creed that has blazed the worldwide trail for justice, fair play, decency, belief in God, private enterprise, universal education, and progress in all human endeavors. It puts a premium on the virtues of loyalty, patriotism, hard work and thrift.

**To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars** … Service in defense of America is the greatest experience in the lifetimes of all veterans. Recalling the highlights of that service means more than flashbacks to tense moments of excitement and danger in battle: the grime of muddy trenches, the perils of sub-infested oceans and the combat in the wild blue yonder. It also means the inerasable recollection of the comradships, the bravery of pals, the teamwork, the sacrifices, and the miseries and hardships of military campaigns shared in common. It means the bond that binds all ex-servicemen and women together in mutual affection, respect and gratitude. It also means keeping green forever the memories of the supreme sacrifices of gallant American patriots, sacrifices necessary to the winnings of wars. It means faithful annual observance of Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

**To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation** … Always interested in building a better nation, the founders of The American Legion believed that such building must start first with the individual in their own community.

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So they made it one of the cardinal principles of The American Legion to inculcate that sense of personal obligation to the community, state and nation into the individual citizen. That means educating the citizen – young, old and future – in his and her responsibility to be active in making the hometown a better place in which to live, in discharging the duty of voting in elections, in paying taxes promptly, in contributing to community chest funds and to blood banks. The word “inculcate” means “to impress by frequent admonitions” and “to enforce by frequent repetitions.” Like the duties themselves, the reminders that they remain to be carried forward are never finished.

To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses ... This clause places the Legionnaire on the side of right in opposing autocracy by either class or mass when this threatens. In a democracy such as ours, composed as it is of all nationalities, races, creeds and economic groups, there are bound to be both classes and masses. Indeed, the masses are composed of classes – but all groups within the mass must feel assured that in this nation, reason and fairness will prevail in all human activities and relations.

To make right the master of might ... Many wars have been started by dictators who wanted their might to be the right. If human freedom is not to perish from the earth, right must always be master of might. The rights of small nations must be protected against the tyranny that powerful neighbors may seek to impose on them, just as the rights of minorities in our society must be protected and respected. Legionnaires are pledged by this clause always to stand with the right, protect the weak and preserve the liberties of the individual. This concept is the basis of The American Legion’s continued advocacy of a strong national preparedness so as to achieve the ideal situation that right will be backed by adequate might.

To promote peace and good will on earth ... Until the entire world becomes a good neighborhood, Legionnaires must continue the effort to promote peace and good will on earth. It is in pursuance of this founding ideal that The American Legion has supported from the beginning and seeks to strengthen the United Nations organization. Obliquely, The American Legion also contributes to this ideal by firmly supporting a strong national defense to discourage breaking of the peace by aggressors.

To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy ... On this ideal of safeguarding and transmitting the principles of justice, freedom and democracy, all of the youth programs of The American Legion are built. All Americans can be proud that in our international relations we have tried to live by the golden rule, the mark of justice. We have granted to others, as we prize it ourselves, the great boon of freedom. Through the Monroe Doctrine, we called a halt to foreign imperialism in the western hemisphere. We gave freedom to the Philippines. These principles are part of the American heritage. Legionnaires are pledged to protect and preserve that heritage.

To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness ... This is the most important ideal expressed in our preamble. We can hail The American Legion today as an unparalleled force in these United States for social betterment. American Legion concepts and its ideal of devotion to mutual helpfulness warmed the entire social climate of America. Today, America is extending its helpful hands all over the world through our assistance programs of foreign aid. This all came about because the veterans of World War I came home enriched with wonderful ties of friendship and gave those ties meaning by consecrating them to the ideal of mutual helpfulness.

What does the Preamble mean?
American Legion Preamble

No one person wrote the Preamble to the Constitution. It was a subcommittee of three that hammered out the first rough draft in Paris. Hamilton Fish of New York, John C Greenway of Arizona, and George N. Davis of Delaware, worked day and night polishing the Preamble during the St. Louis Caucus.

March 4, 1921

Congress, at the urging of The American Legion in support of U.S. Representative Hamilton Fish’s 1920 bill, approves the burial of an unidentified American soldier from World War I in the plaza of the new Memorial Amphitheater overlooking Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

March 26, 1926

Following vandalism at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and picnicking and other less-than-respectful activity there by random visitors, sunset-to-sunrise surveillance at the site by armed military personnel begins, at the urging of The American Legion.

July 2, 1937

The American Legion fights for, and gets approval for 24-hour guarding of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. The “sentinels” of the tomb are members of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment, known as “The Old Guard” which originated in the Revolutionary War. From midnight July 2, 1937, through today, the tomb is continuously guarded, regardless of conditions.

Training Events Calendar

is active! Check out

http://www.legion.org/training/events

for training events in your area.

Are you a department or district trainer and want your event on this calendar?

Application coming soon!