



*Mentoring Institute*



# MENTORING & COACHING MONTHLY

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## THIS MONTH IN MENTORING & COACHING

In 2014, President Barack Obama proclaimed January to be National Mentoring Month. This proclamation garnered great excitement from those already involved in the field of mentoring.

In celebration of National Mentoring Month, this edition is filled with information about the power and science of mentoring and the power of happiness.

We have included a few of our favorite TED talks, and as always, this edition contains news links about mentoring around the world.

Of special note is an article from Dr. Jerry Willbur. Within the article Dr. Willbur explores the use of positive mentoring, and the re-wiring of the mind can bring positive results.

### Holiday Office Hours

The University will be closed December 24th through January 2nd. With the exclusion of those days we will hold regular office hours.

### 2015 Mentoring Conference

We are eagerly anticipating the 2015 Mentoring Conference. We are preparing to open the Call for Proposals on March 27th, and are beginning the hunt for sponsorships.

### Membership Site

We can't wait for the launch of the membership site in the Spring of 2015. Keep an eye on our website for more details.

# Happy New Year!

We at the Mentoring Institute would like to wish you and yours a happy and joyous new year! May this upcoming year bring many opportunities for learning, growth, and prosperity.



## IMPORTANT DATES

- Spring 2015: Membership Site Launch Date

## QUOTES

“Great things are done by a series of small things brought together.”

- VINCENT VAN GOGH

“Put your heart, mind, and soul into even your smallest acts. This is the secret of success.”

- SWAMI SIVANANDA

“Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.”

- ARTHUR ASHE

“You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.”

- C.S. LEWIS





## THE POWER OF POSITIVE MENTORING

Dr. Jerry Willbur, CEO of the Leadership Mentoring Institute

Only recently have scientists finally had the technology to peek inside our brains and see what is going on when we engage in the one-on-one experience called mentoring. Using Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRIs) and other transcranial magnetic scanning technology, researchers now know that our brains can continue to grow and develop at any age as we engage in positive cognitive activities. Some of the most rigorous and cutting edge research in neuroscience has now concluded that our brains have built in 'plasticity' and our potential for growth is quite malleable at any age.

In other words, by engaging in the right mental strategies we can rewire our brains to be more positive, creative, resilient, and productive. For example, from this research we can now identify and observe in real-time 'mirror' neurons in our brains firing as we smile or are smiled at. This provides an observable, scientifically based explanation for why smiles become contagious, how bonding takes place, and why infants automatically mimic the faces loved ones make. This neurological mechanism behind the concept of mentoring was initially uncovered in the 1990's. Subsequent research has found a complicated set of these mirror neurons in people and has

changed the way we think the brain works. In other words, humans don't just passively observe other people and things in action, but in their minds they actively do what they see, actually rewiring their brains.<sup>1</sup>

This entire process of brain rewiring is referred to as 'neural plasticity' and has exciting repercussions for those of us engaged in mentoring.<sup>2</sup> If we can develop in ourselves and those we mentor a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset we can continuously improve our thinking as well as that of the people we mentor. By our positive actions we can shape an experience -an extraordinary connection- that will be beneficial for all involved.

Another lesson we can draw from the research is that mentors and protégés must both learn to monitor and manage their one-on-one experiences to make sure they are positive in nature. An extensive array of studies done at Oxford, Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania and Mayo Clinic using both fMRIs and blood testing have shown that experiencing positive interactions, such as those involved in effective mentoring, increases a person's dopamine, serotonin and endorphin levels, thus enhancing learning and memory as well as the sense of well-being. Positive experiences also have a significant impact on raising oxytocin levels (the hormone

involved in bonding) while decreasing stress hormones such as cortisol.<sup>3,4</sup> Research indicates these chemicals not only make us feel better but "dial up the learning centers of our brains to higher levels. They help us organize new information, keep that information in the brain longer, and retrieve it faster later on. And they enable us to make and sustain more neural connections, which then enable us to think more quickly and creatively, become more skilled at complex analysis and problem solving, and see and invent new ways of doing things."<sup>5</sup> It is a win/win as both those expressing positive exchanges as well as those receiving them benefit from the experience. The key for us as mentors is to be aware of how we are affecting others as we engage them in mentoring relationships. If we want people to quickly assimilate best practices there is no better way to influence a willing protégés brain than a watching a good role model in action. This of course also means the mentor has a critical ethical role to play. Both consciously and unconsciously the mentoring relationship rewires the brain of both the mentor and the protégé.

1. Dobbs, D. (2006) A revealing reflection. Scientific American Mind 17(2), 22-27.
2. Shawn Achor, The Happiness Advantage (New York, Crown Business, 2010) p.29.
3. Jessica Pryce-Jones, Happiness at Work: Maximizing your Psychological Capital for Success (Chichester, UK, Wiley and Sons, 2010) pp. 2-3
4. Achor, op.cit. P.177.
5. Ibid. P.44.

*"By engaging in the right mental strategies we can rewire our brains to be more positive, creative, resilient, and productive."*



## IN THE NEWS

*This month's selection of news articles relating to mentoring*

### The Country Today:

[World-class musher mentors protege](#)

### San Jose Mercury News:

[Wish book: Mentoring program helps mentally ill restore social connections](#)

### Inman News:

[4 things to look for in a mentor](#)

### The World Link:

[Down to business: How to find a mentor](#)

### DNA India

[Mentoring India's future](#)

### The Denver Post

[I Have a Dream mentoring helps students build bright futures](#)



## The Hidden Power of Smiling

**R**on Gutman shares some interesting facts about smiling and how it could help you live longer.

## The Habits of Happiness

**M**atthieu Ricard, a biochemist turned Buddhist monk, talks about how a mind can be trained to feel happy.



# OUR FAVORITE TED TALKS

*Discover what the experts think about the power of positive thinking, the advantage of and science behind happiness, and the power of the smile.*



## The Happy Secret to Better Work

**P**sychoanalyst Shawn Achor discusses the correlation between happy people and productive people.

## The Surprising Science of Happiness

**A**uthor Dan Gilbert explains that getting what you want won't make you happy.



# EVENTS

Our list of mentoring and coaching related events occurring soon.

- **2015 National Mentoring Summit**

📅 January 28-30, 2015  
📍 Washington, D.C.  
👤 TBA

*This event is the only national forum that brings together practitioners, researchers, corporate partners, government and civic leaders, national youth-serving organizations and the network of affiliate Mentoring Partnerships to explore and advance mentoring's positive impact on individuals and communities.*

- **2015 International Mentoring Association Conference**

📅 April 22-24, 2015  
📍 Phoenix-Gilbert, Arizona  
👤 Laura Capello, Laura Gail Lunsford, Robin Milne

*Mark your calendars to join us for the International Mentoring Association Conference. Our theme "Best Practices in Mentoring: Tools & Strategies for Success" offers opportunities for you to share tips, tools, and ideas that have worked best for you and your organization, to learn effective tools and strategies from others, and to build your mentoring network.*

- **SIAST Inter-Professional Mentorship Conference**

📅 May 24-26, 2015  
📍 Regina, Saskatchewan  
👤 Ann Rolfe, Keith Walker

*Join professionals from business, industry, and education in this three-day event focused on exploring mentorship opportunity and developing effective mentorship programs within your organization. Conference highlights include: an international keynote speaker, local mentorship champions, and opportunity to network and share mentoring experiences.*

# ABOUT US

## MENTORING INSTITUTE:

The Mentoring Institute develops, coordinates and integrates research and training activities in mentoring best practices at the University of New Mexico (UNM). Through the application of instructional design standards, the Mentoring Institute provides training and certification services for a diverse array of staff, faculty and students, in a centralized effort to recruit, train and develop qualified mentors for the University, the City of Albuquerque and the greater New Mexico community.

The Mentoring Institute does not replace or direct existing mentoring programs. Rather, it provides a variety of services to these programs. The Mentoring Institute aims to build up current mentoring program and enhance the culture of mentoring within the University, and the state it serves.

The Mentoring Institute will assist in stimulating and promoting a mentoring culture within the community. By encouraging the matriculation and graduation of students as well as the retention of faculty and staff at the University of New Mexico, the Institute will also contribute to the development and economic growth of New Mexico

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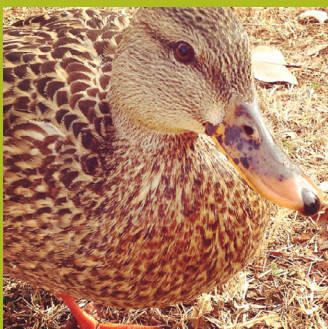
## WEBSITE:

[mentor.unm.edu](http://mentor.unm.edu)



## LAST MONTH IN PHOTOS

Photos taken around UNM, from our Instagram feed (@unmentoring)



Friendly duck at the duck pond.



An atypical cold, rainy day.



Ice formed on bushes after a hard freeze.



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