



Olumuyiwa Akinrole Oludayo

INDISPENSABLE INFLUENCERS

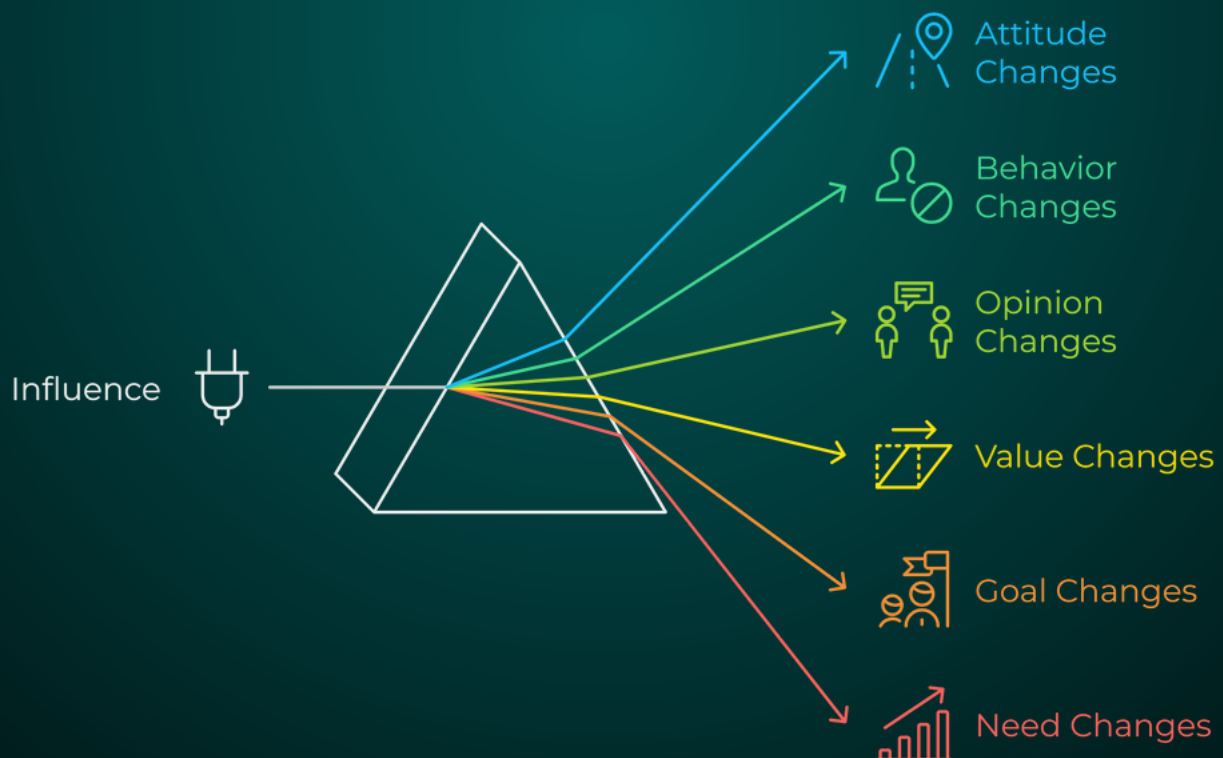
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Understanding Influence

The word **Influence** means different things to many people. It is a description of human relationships and the outcome of accepting the suggestions and opinions that ensues within that relationship.

Quite a number of academic research efforts have attempted to explain the concept of Influence. French and Raven as far back as 1959 classifies influence into the relationship between an agent and a target. In their description, they opined that the agent exerts force on the target to induce changes in attitude, behaviours, opinions, values, goals and needs. These changes were also listed as the outcome of influence in the work of Rhoads (2008).

Rhoads Outcomes of Influence



The military also gave an insight into the concept of Influence. The US Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Strategic Studies Group (SSG) XXIV opined that Influence is the power of producing effects without obvious exertion of force or direct exercise of command.



Keywords in Understanding the Concept of Influence

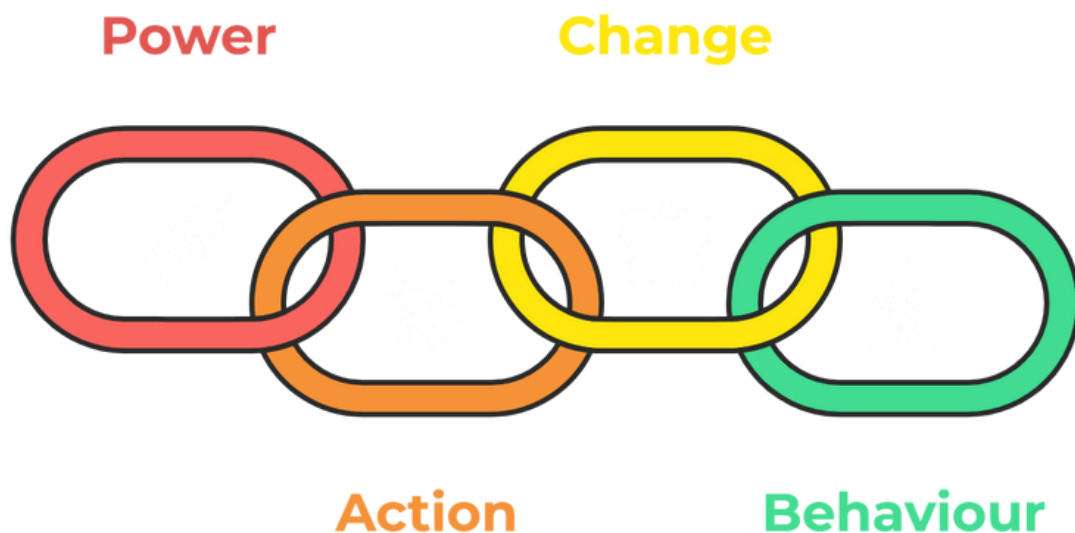
The following words seem to underline definitions, descriptions and conceptualisation of the word Influence.

- Power
- Action
- Change
- Behaviour



A one-line explanation of these words will help explain how relevant they are in understanding the concept of Influence.

- **Power:** is the engagement of one's **ability** to perform an act. I refer to this Power as emanating from the Influencer.
- **Action:** is the actual **performance** of an individual to attain a goal. Here, I refer to the actions of the Influencer.
- **Change:** connotes making a **difference**. This connotes the alterations in the life of another Individual other than the Influencer.
- **Behaviour:** is the **consistent conduct** of an individual. Here I refer to the behaviour of the person being influenced.



Other authors such as Brown and Hayes (2007), Wang, Holloway, Beatty and Hill (2007) also used these keywords in their explanation of the concept of Influence.

These Influencers are people that possess considerable power to act in a way that will alter the behavioural patterns of those within their sphere of Influence. I have described these Influencers as Indispensable because for every phase of human life, they play a role that alters perceptions, value orientation and actions. In my classification, i have identified them as:

- Parents
- Role Models
- Mentors
- Coaches
- Sponsors.



I will dive deeper into the responsibility of each class of Influencer, pattern of relationship and responsibility of the Influenced. It is my desire to see how these Influencers affect people in the workplace and in life generally.

1. THE PARENT

Zhang, X., Martinez-Donate, A., & Rhoads, N. in their June 2015 article, Parental Practices and Attitudes Related to Smoke-Free Rules in Homes, Cars, and Outdoor Playgrounds in US Households With Underage Children and Smokers, 2010-2011 defined a parent as "a household's reference person (head of the household) or his or her spouse, which means this person may not be the child's biological parent." Morrison (1991) sees a Parent as **"anyone who provides children with basic care, direction, support, protection and guidance"**

In explaining the responsibilities of a Parent, I wish to state here that I am not referring solely to biological parents. The spheres of individual life goes beyond just existing, it continues unto careers, religion, business, family, amongst others. **For the purpose of this piece, the scope of Parenting will go beyond biological affinity to include career relationships.**



PARENTING RESPONSIBILITIES

Individuals who have chosen to have children (biological, career or social) must seek to know what expectations lie on their shoulders. Morrison defined parenting as "**the process of developing and utilising the knowledge and skills appropriate to planning for, creating, giving birth to, rearing and/or providing care for offspring**".

In my quest to be a better biological parent and career parent, I find the following responsibilities as germane to quality parenting:

- **Communication:** Engaging several means of expression is key to conveying parental intentions to the child. In family settings, communication is key to cultural integration. In career, a parent is responsible for ideological integration.
- **Teaching:** The first set of lessons gleaned by a child is expected to come from the parents. In a family setting, teaching involves imparting cultural skills. In careers, the parent is expected to expose the child to the ethics of the chosen profession and career path.
- **Modelling.** Examples are one of the best ways to train children. Many great children saw the ways their parents behaved and followed suit. In family settings, the parents influence the behaviour of the child by their own conduct. In career, the parents show how to get work done professionally.
- **Development.** Parents are care givers. They guide the mental, physical and social development of their children. In family settings, mothers provide good nutrition to avoid stunted growth of the child. In careers, the career parent guides by exposure to resources that ensure mental stimulation and growth.
- **Decision-Making.** Maturity is often tested by the depth and quality of decisions made by individuals. Parents help a child make a decision by guiding him through the considerations for quality decision making. In family settings, family values are strong considerations that guide the decisions of a child. In careers, shifts are predicated on trends, opportunities for advancement in the profession. Career parents help their children to see trends in their field and opportunities for advancing discoveries.





PATTERN OF PARENTING RELATIONSHIP

In the traditional family setting, parenting relationship goes beyond the primary family of father and mother. In Africa, parenting a child gives responsibility to the members of the families of the parents as well as trusted friends and relatives. In career settings however, the parenting relationship is between the proponent of a **school of thought** and the "child" or "follower" that has bought into it.

In a career framework, parenting relationship exists between the founder of a school of thought and the leading proponents of that school on one hand and the student who has bought into that school and has begun to propagate her assumptions and findings. The relationship that exists between a career parent and a career child is a direct one. It is one that imposes the responsibility of care on the career parent as he seeks to impart his ethos on his child. In a few fields of academic and career engagement, there are individuals dubbed as "fathers" because of their pioneering role in their respective fields.



George Palade is referred to as the founding father of modern Cell Biology; Gregor Mendel is the Father of Human Genetics; and Peter Drucker is the Father of Management Theory amongst others. These men are referred to as Fathers because of their pioneering contribution to knowledge and the values they have added to their field of engagement. They also have been able to raise other people who are extensions of their hearts and hands in their chosen field of expertise.

The work of Vandegrift and Greene (1992) espoused that Parental involvement in children can be classified as supportive and active. This extends the thoughts of Morrison that parents must provide care, custody, control over and concern for the child. In family settings, it is expected that as the child grows he will lean on the support and active engagement his parents have offered him. In career, the pathway to creating and improving knowledge is the key expression of support and active engagement.

DUTY OF A CHILD IN A PARENTING RELATIONSHIP

As with the Parents in this Influence relationship, the "child" has a role to play in order to draw maximally on the resources available within this relationship whether on the family front or in the workplace environment.

With every parenting relationship in the family, the child is a dependent. In the case of a career, the "follower" is a student, learner and an ambassador committed to improving the acceptance rate of the school of thought he has subscribed to.



INDISPENSIBLE INFLUENCERS



The specific roles of a career child in this parenting relationship include but not limited to the following:

- **Executes the professional expectations of his career parent:** You must not set your wit against theirs if truly they are leaders of the school of thought you have subscribed to.
- **Extends the professional counsel of his career parent:** A child must be a representative of the thoughts and practices of his professional domain in every platform he finds himself.
- **Sustains the ethos of the school of thought that he has subscribed into:** The legacy of values and the philosophy of his career parents must be maintained.



2. ROLE MODELS

Two words stand out here: ROLE and MODEL. A role is simply a part an individual plays in a given situation or circumstance. A model on the other hand is a representation of an expectation. Fisher (1992) describes a role as a **"group of related activities that an individual performs in fulfilling the varied requirements of a job."** Generally, a model is described as a simplified representation of reality. It is commonly associated with the term "representation." Halloun (2006) defined a model as a **"partial representation of a specific pattern in the real world."** A role model is an individual who performs activities in a way that another individual seeks to copy. Role Models are individuals that currently do what another individual intends to do. They simply model a role.



A simple way of explaining a role model is to say, "a person worthy of emulation and imitation." **In this series, I define a role model as an individual with an organized set of behaviours (in executing a number of activities) that represents the expected behavioural pattern to be emulated by another.**

The selection of an individual as a role model is only proper when there is an expected behaviour to be imitated. Many a time we fail to understand that role models are not just people who inspire us; they are people who are living the life others desire to live. They are currently experiencing the events of life that are set out as goals for others.

QUALITIES OF A ROLE MODEL

Given that a role model is an individual who currently has a lifestyle that another individual seeks to emulate, a review of the qualities expected in a role model is essential before a choice is made. In a bid to excel in career, individuals in the workplace must be certain as to the qualities a role model must possess. A number of these qualities are outlined here (they are by no means an exhaustive list):

- **Focus:** A role model must exemplify focus. He should be known for certain things. If he must fit as an example, he must have demonstrated consistency on a particular career path. John C. Maxwell is a leadership guru and known for his works in leadership. He is one of my role models. I like the way he writes and makes his presentations. He is focused on writing within the framework I captioned as R.E.A.L.M.S (Relationships. Equipping. Attitude. Leadership. Mentoring. Success). He has been on this for over 3 decades. His pattern inspired me to design my areas of focus in building a career. Just like Maxwell, I have areas of focus that centre around what I call **P.E.A.R.L.S. (Professional Development. Entrepreneurship. Administration {Workplace}. Relationships. Leadership {Organizational}. Success)**
- **Value Adding:** Anyone fit to be called a role model must be concerned with adding value in any field he has found himself. I will only select someone as my role model if he has demonstrable contributions he has made in his field of endeavour. The world often attaches the status symbol, VIP (Very Important Personality) to individuals worth celebrating and honouring. I think that a fresh perspective to this symbol for people worthy of honour should consider changing VIP to **VAP (Value Adding Personality)**. It is not a position that makes a man, rather it is his contribution. I want to emulate people who are adding value.



- **Lifelong Learning:** I will seek to emulate any individual who demonstrates to me that he does not know all that is required to lead in his field even though he is blazing the trail there. In my previous role as a university faculty member, I admired senior colleagues who were still seeking to unravel better ways to getting things done. Our ability to make contributions is only limited to what we are capable of doing. Our capability is informed by how much we have gleaned as new knowledge. My role model should have a library of resources that inspires him to excel in his chosen field of professional engagement. When I see this, I will follow.
- **Work Ethics:** A role model is an achiever. He has attained a height that others desire to reach. He is considered an outstanding personality. It is important however to note that attaining such a feat is not without a set of moral principles referred to as work ethics. My role model must have Integrity, a sense of responsibility, a sense of teamwork, discipline and a strong emphasis on quality. Excellence is never attained by mediocres. Success is not an experience for the slothful. Anyone seeking to be in the top flight of his career must follow the steps of those who attained by a proven path of diligence and not chance.
- **Visionary:** A role model must be marked by foresight. His actions are influenced by what he sees ahead. His foresight is based on trends of events or by an inspiration. This informs the steps he takes to remain relevant in his profession. In your quest for career success, endeavour to follow people who can influence the trend of events in your chosen field of engagement. These are individuals who lead change by creating new systems, improving upon working patterns and discontinuing unproductive approaches.





PATTERN OF RELATIONSHIP

The relationship that exists in a Parenting Relationship is that of a Father to a Child. It is a direct relationship. In a Role Model relationship, the case is different. The Influencer is a Role Model while the influenced is called a Follower. This relationship is maintained by keen observation of the follower.

The influencer is not likely to know the vast majority of people who see him as their role model, hence the need for him to always lead an exemplary life in all his engagements. He is been keenly watched and followed. His lifestyle goes along way to influence the decisions people take on their career journeys. The influenced carefully takes note of patterns of behaviour that are likely to aid his career goals. He is painstakingly following his role model with a view to gleaning ways of getting things done. In an **interview to mark his 21st birthday**, Prince William identified Queen Elizabeth II, his grandmother as his role model. Knowing fully well that he is the heir apparent to the throne, this claim makes a lot of sense to the future King.



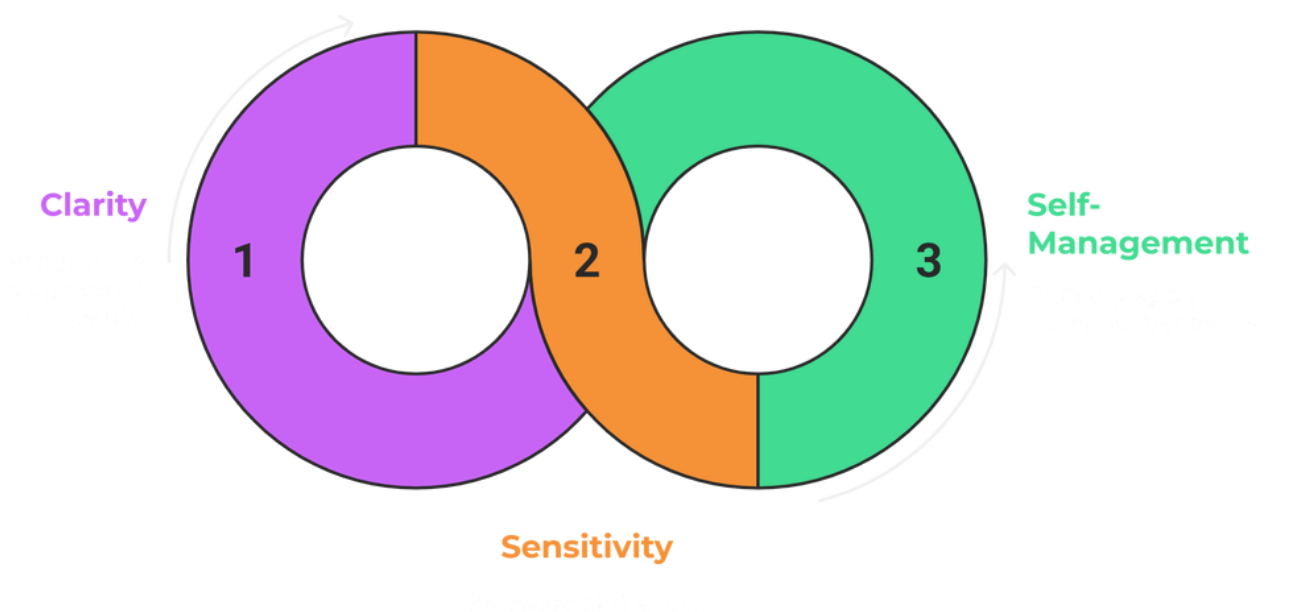
QUALITIES OF A FOLLOWER IN A ROLE MODEL RELATIONSHIP

The follower does not necessarily have a responsibility towards his role model as a child has towards the parent. It is important to list the qualities of a follower in this relationship. These qualities represent the distinctive attributes to be espoused by an individual committed to following the steps of the great in his career.

1. **Clarity:** Those who wish to excel in their careers by following the steps of industry leaders must be clear as to what they want in the relationship. In this kind of relationship, styles are most often the object of admiration. This could be writing, speaking, dressing amongst other styles.

2. **Sensitivity:** A role model is often unconscious of specific things others are imitating from him. He may be expressing different things based on the circumstances he finds himself. The responsibility is now on the follower to be sensitive to these in order not to pick that which may be inimical to career growth.

3. **Self-Management:** This refers to the ability to take charge of ones thoughts and actions. The role model is never responsible for the outcome of applied principles hence the need for the follower to be a critical and strategic thinker in applying the observed patterns of behaviour in his career.



3. THE MENTOR

A writing on mentoring cannot be accurate without a reference to the writings of Homer in *Odyssey* and Fenelon's *Les Aventures de Telemaque* (The Adventures of Telemachus). It was Fenelon's depiction of Mentor that clearly helps the modern adoption of that role as a trusted advisor, friend, teacher and wise person. Andy Roberts in his work; **Homer's Mentor: Duties Fulfilled or Misconstrued** helped to draw the differences and similarities in the roles.

The Greek root of the word Mentor suggests a combination of two words: "Men" and "Tor" where **"Men"** means **"one who thinks"** and "tor" is the masculine suffix. It can be inferred that a Mentor is a thinker.

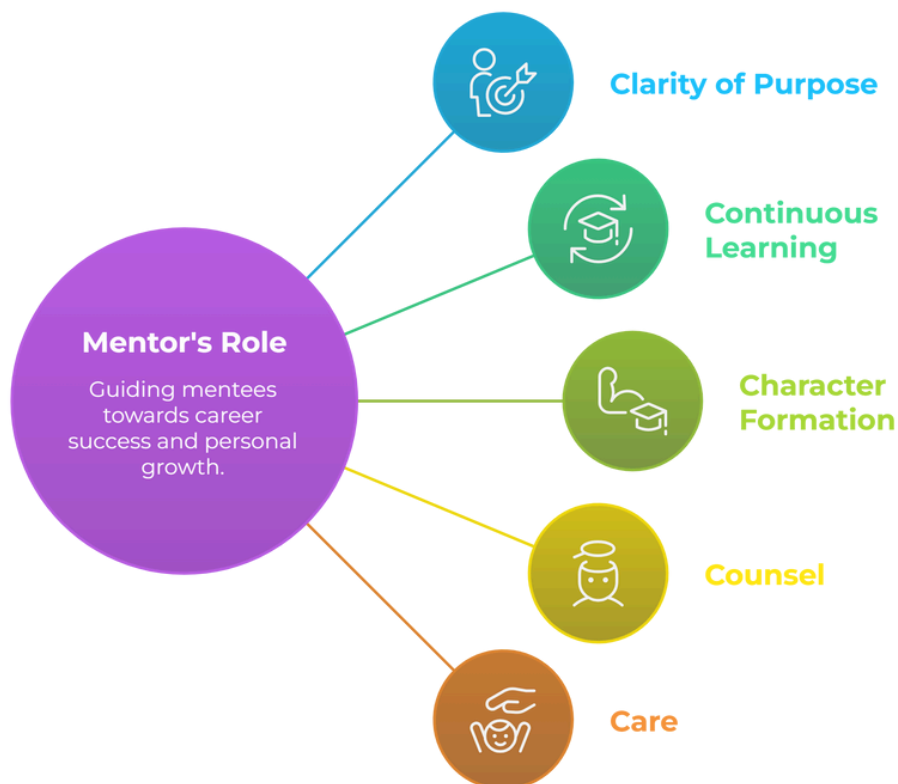
This section describes a Mentor **as an individual with a defined role to care for, teach, oversee, guide and impart wisdom on his Mentee in order to realise a predetermined career goal.** Many examples of this relationship exists from Socrates and Plato to Hayden and Beethoven to Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. A mentoring relationship is mainly focused on providing support for growth and development towards the attainment of a predetermined goal.

MENTORING RESPONSIBILITIES

A career mentor is an individual who has an understanding of the dynamics of your profession and is poised to ensure you acquire relevant competences required for the realisation of your career goals. A mentor is responsible for the following in the relationship he shares with his mentee.



- **Clarity of Purpose:** The quest before the mentee can be lost to distractions on the path towards career success. The mentor ensures that his mentee understands his quest and sustains his quest for no other in order to emerge great in the chosen field of endeavour.
- **Continuous Learning:** A mentor ensures that his mentee gets the right mix of academic credentials, knowledge and education fit for his career quest. He also fans the flame of continuous learning which is vital to capacity development.
- **Character Formation:** It is the responsibility of the mentor to ensure that his mentee develops the appropriate personality for the goals ahead of him. Having the right mental and moral qualities towards life events is essential to overcoming obstacles that are along the path of career success.
- **Counsel:** The mentor must provide advice to his mentee at all times and on all issues even beyond career matters. In this era of work-life balance, a mentor will be needful in providing tips to ensuring that the multiple roles the mentee holds are executed effectively.
- **Care:** A mentoring relationship is a relationship of responsibility and not dependence. When a mentor cares for his mentee, it is not with the intention to be the source of all his supplies, rather he demonstrates care by attaching importance to all that concerns his mentee.



PATTERN OF A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

In a mentor-mentee relationship, care must be taken not to see the mentor as a Father. He may take the form of a father, but he cannot possibly fulfil all the required obligations of a career father. A mentor may also fit the description of a role model but he is not one. He may even act an expert in the field of your professional engagement.

A mentoring relationship is focused on managing the **transition of the mentee towards maturity**. The mentoring relationship is built on mutual interest towards an agreed definite end. It is an intentional and purpose-driven relationship. It is a relationship of trust and guidance from an experienced person. A mentor is not defined by age, he is distinguished by wisdom and validated efforts of professional engagement in his own chosen field of endeavour. It is an experience of impartation of the grace upon the mentor. The relationship allows the mentee to draw courage for conquest on his career journeys.



THE ROLE OF THE MENTEE IN THIS RELATIONSHIP

The mentee is not in a servant-master relationship, hence he must not see himself as been subservient. His ability to make sincere and informed inquiries will enable him gain maximally from the relationship. The mentor is an embodiment of knowledge. He wise, experienced and trusted. All of these qualities informs what the disposition of the mentee should be. The list that follows is a guide but by no means exhaustive.

- **Decisive:** The mentee must show he has the power of making sound decisions. The mentor is not a decision maker rather he provides wisdom that guides decision making. He must be characterized by resoluteness and determination void of any hesitation.
- **Teachable:** The mentor has a responsibility to inspire the mentee towards continuous learning. The mentee must demonstrate an ability to learn by being taught. He must show humility and readiness to acquire greater knowledge and experience in the course of meeting a career goal.
- **Believing:** The mentoring relationship hinges on trust. The advise, counsel and suggestions come from a trusted person. The mentee must endeavour to believe in those counsels and advises if the relationship is to deliver maximally. In this relationship, the mentee demonstrates firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of his mentor.



4. THE COACH

The one person who can make your career succeed is not a supervisor, or even a coach. It is you. This is an adaptation of the statement credited to Sir Richard Branson (The one person who can make your business succeed is not an investor, or even a mentor. It is you.). The Chancellor of Covenant University, Nigeria; Dr. David Oyedepo holds a strong philosophy that an individual is 75% responsible for all the outcomes in his life. He draws an analogy from the 5 fingers. He said, if you point an accusing finger at someone, 3 other fingers are pointing back at you without effort and the thumb points to God as a witness bearer.

If your career success is up to you, why then do you require Influencers? Why are coaches essential? How important is that 25% contribution margin to the overall success of a career that may be pursued over a lifetime?

A google search of the meaning of the word "Coach" returns a seemingly unexpected list when trying to personalise the activity of Influence. However, the results convey a significant truth: A means of transportation from one location to another. It is simply a carriage used for long journeys. When we adapt this to the role an individual plays in the life of another, we admit that it connotes taking someone from where he is to a place he ought to be.



COACHING RESPONSIBILITIES

There are quite a number of responsibilities expected of a coach. Ultimately, he is responsible for ensuring that shared goals between him and influenced is achieved. He helps a subordinate achieve his goals by engaging the following roles:

- **Tutoring:** I deliberately did not use the word teacher because it will something different from a tutor. A coach takes the role of a tutor. A tutor is a teacher that imparts during private lessons. The key issues here are personalised private engagement for imparting knowledge. The root meaning of this word suggests that a tutor helps a less able student to excel in examination. The coach is responsible for acknowledging your deficiencies but works with you and walks you through the things that make for success in your career.
- **Developer of Skills:** A coach has the responsibility of developing the required skills of his trainee for success in his field of engagement. In your career there are certain skills that make for success and your coach helps you to develop that skill. There can be specialist coaches who have the capacity to equip you with certain skills in defined areas of your career life.
- **Strategy Formulator:** Your coach is also a master planner. He knows how to position you in the face of competitors to a target you both agree to meet. He tells the trainee what to do in the face of actual performance on a job. He works with the trainee on the job so as to enable him put the acquired skills have been developed to work.
- **Supporter:** The coach is a responsible for supporting the trainee who is a learner to achieve a specific personal or professional goal. He stands by him in times of weakness to see him grow into the person that fully achieve his calls. The coach supports the trainee to deploy his skills appropriately. Giving feedback is a key element of the role of a coach. His feedback are key inputs to the attainment of the next set of goals.
- **Resource Optimiser:** Coaches work their trainees to ensure that they fully organise and maximise all the resources at their disposal. These resources range from their time, energy, to education, and natural talents. The essence of coaching is to ensure that an individuals takes full advantage of all that is available to him in a career transition.





PATTERN OF A COACHING RELATIONSHIP

The coaching relationship is between two individuals that have identified and shares a specific goal for attainment. It is a relationship between someone who possesses greater depth of knowledge in a particular field of engagement. He has a lot experience in the dealing with the activities within that sphere of engagement. He is considered an expert that equipped with greater insight to aid the development of the trainee.

Coaching differs from mentoring in that mentoring seeks to be concerned with the overall development of an individual as he seeks to achieve both personal and professional goals while coaching is deliberate, intentional and specific on certain personal or professional desires. The key word here for coaching is specificity.



THE ROLE OF A TRAINEE IN A COACHING RELATIONSHIP

A trainee is a learner. An individual that has submitted himself willingly to be trained and developed for the purpose of achieving specific personal and professional goals. He positions himself to be equipped for the demands of the heights that he seeks to attain. It is expected that drawing maximally from a coaching relationship demands that a trainee possess the following:

- **Submissive:** There is a zen proverb that says "When the student is ready the teacher will appear." The trainee must demonstrate willingness and submissiveness to the regimen of the training that guarantees realisation of his goals. He must be ready to learn what it takes to be at the top of his career.
- **Specific:** A trainee must be definite on what he wants to be. He must be clear as to the heights he seeks to attain. Lending from the words of Zig Ziglar, he cannot afford to be a wandering generality, he must be a meaningful specific. Know what you want otherwise anything served will be your lot.
- **Self-Efficacy:** The theory of self-efficacy is credited to the Psychologist, Albert Bandura. It refers to a person's belief in his abilities to exhibit behavioural patterns required to produce specific performance outcomes that have been set out as goals. A trainee must be self-assured that he will excel in his quest to transit from a position in his career to another under a coaching relationship.



Submissiveness

Willingness to follow training



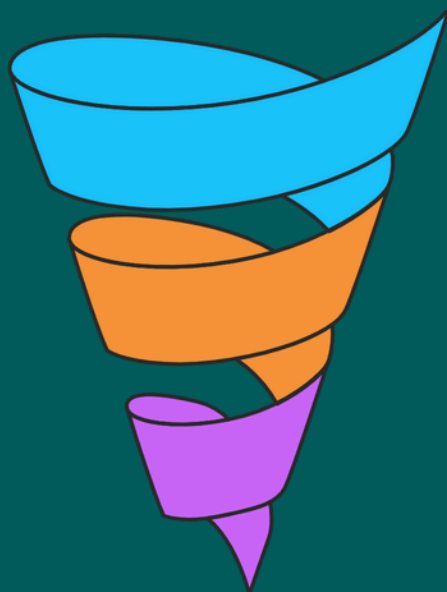
Specificity

Clarity on career goals



Self-Efficacy

Confidence in abilities



INDESPENSEBLE INFLUNCERS

5. THE SPONSOR

The widespread understanding of a sponsor is an organization or an individual that commits his/her resources to guarantee the successful execution of an event. Sponsors are supporters of the cause they believe in and would yield a return for them in some way.

Sponsorship in workplace relationships is an influential role that is completely different from the commonly understood sponsorship activities of providing funds for events, printing logos on event materials for visibility and future engagements of prospects. Sponsorship as an influential role in workplace relationships is more akin to a relationship built on trust and loyalty that allows the sponsor to advocate, promote and ensure the attainment of higher career heights for his protege.

Your career sponsor is an individual who is evidently influential within your field of engagement within and outside your company that believes in your ability to excel in a new level of career engagement in spite of obvious challenges and obstacles that may hamper this realisation. One of the leading advocates of this thought is Sylvia Hewlett, the author of *Forget a Mentor, Find a Sponsor*. She has described a sponsor as a "senior person who believes in your potential and is willing to take a bet on you." She sees career sponsors as advocates for your next promotion in your career.

Your sponsor as an advocate is in a position of authority and uses his influence intentionally to help you advance in your career. As you navigate the workplace, it is important to know how to get full understanding of this influential relationship. Sponsors are individuals that encourage you to take risks and have your back in its delivery and execution.



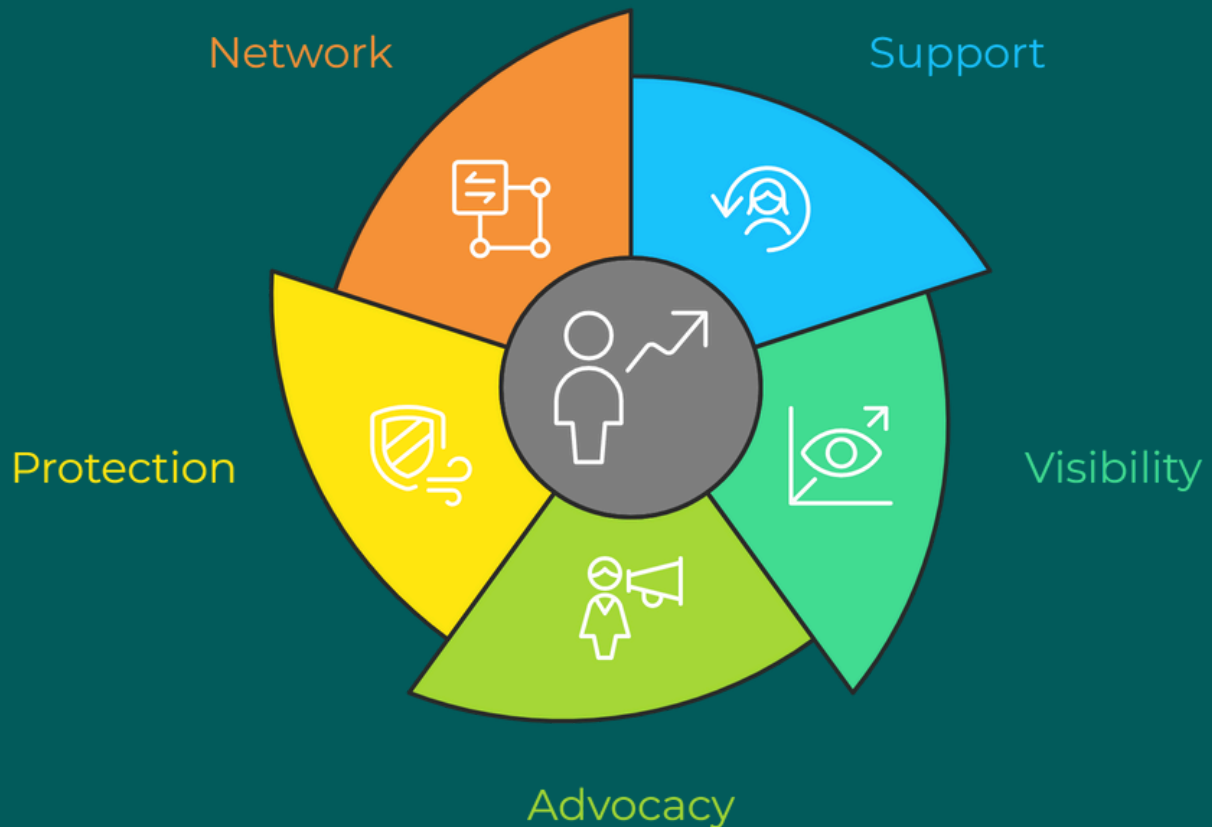
SPONSORSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

The sponsor has a list of roles that are essential to the success of his relationship with his protege. This article provides a number of them for the purpose of inspiring a relationship that yields dividends to both parties in the relationship.

- **Support:** Your sponsor is someone who contributes to the cost of your success. It takes skill, character and relationships to excel in your pursuit of career relevance and leadership. Your sponsor is on hand to provide the support that enables your career dreams to be fulfilled. This support ranges from providing tools and opportunities for you to gain career traction to holding you up as their champion. They help to bear part of the cost of attaining your career success. This support is an expression of believe in your ability to deliver exceptionally on tasks assigned to you.
- **Visibility:** Your sponsor is responsible for your visibility within your field of engagement. They ensure that they nominate and recommend you for higher roles. They ensure that doors are open to you to attain points of power and influence in your career. Beyond making people notice you, they also make you see your strengths and weaknesses. When a sponsor opens up a discussion on degrees of competence around strengths and weakness, it is with the mindset of putting you on a trajectory of gain for both of you in the long term. They will give you visibility by offering you platforms to display your abilities for others to experience.
- **Advocacy:** The responsibility of advocacy is not a hidden one. It is a public demonstration of the desire of your sponsor for you. More often than not in gaining career traction, Sylvia Hewlett said that sponsors put you on the path to power and influence by advocating for you in three areas: pay rises, high profile assignments, and career promotions. They deliver high-octane advocacy for you in every place they have the opportunity to do so.
- **Protection:** Sponsors provide "air cover" for their proteges. This is an act of securing their efforts from losses. In the military, air covers are provided for ground troops who are executing a mission against enemy attack. Your sponsor ensures that he builds a defence around you to guard against your adversaries strategies to nullify his expectation of your career success. When you are confronted with resistance or obstacles, your sponsor is there to ensure you excel in spite of their presence.



- **Network:** A sponsor leverages his network to achieve his intentions for his protege. He endeavours to make strong connections on behalf of his protege with senior leaders in the industry of interest. He also seeks to connect his protege with influential and relevant clients and customers. Relationships are key to workplace accomplishments and this is very well known to the sponsor. He ensures he opens up his protege to high level contacts that can get things done at the shortest notice.



PATTERN OF A SPONSORSHIP RELATIONSHIP

A Sponsorship relationship is between an individual with great desires to excel in his career and another senior person who is renowned in the same field of engagement and is willing to take the responsibility for an upward career transition of the protégé.

A sponsorship relationship demands that the sponsor commits his resources to the career goals of an individual he believes will excel if permitted to. It doesn't necessarily have to be between a sponsor and an individual that is considered disadvantaged. A sponsor doesn't look for the disadvantaged rather he looks for a game changer in the scheme of things within his field of engagement.

PROTÉGÉ RESPONSIBILITIES IN A SPONSORSHIP RELATIONSHIP

Having the backing of your superiors is key to excelling in your career. Your Loyalty and assurance of support towards senior colleagues positions you for a sponsorship relationship. A successful sponsorship relationship is two-pronged, there is what to give to your protégé and there is what to expect in return as a sponsor. High performing employees would naturally attract sponsors and loyal high performers will retain this relationship. In this relationship the sponsor and the protégé are contributors to the beauty of their union as they both give and receive for the relationship to be nurtured towards mutual success.



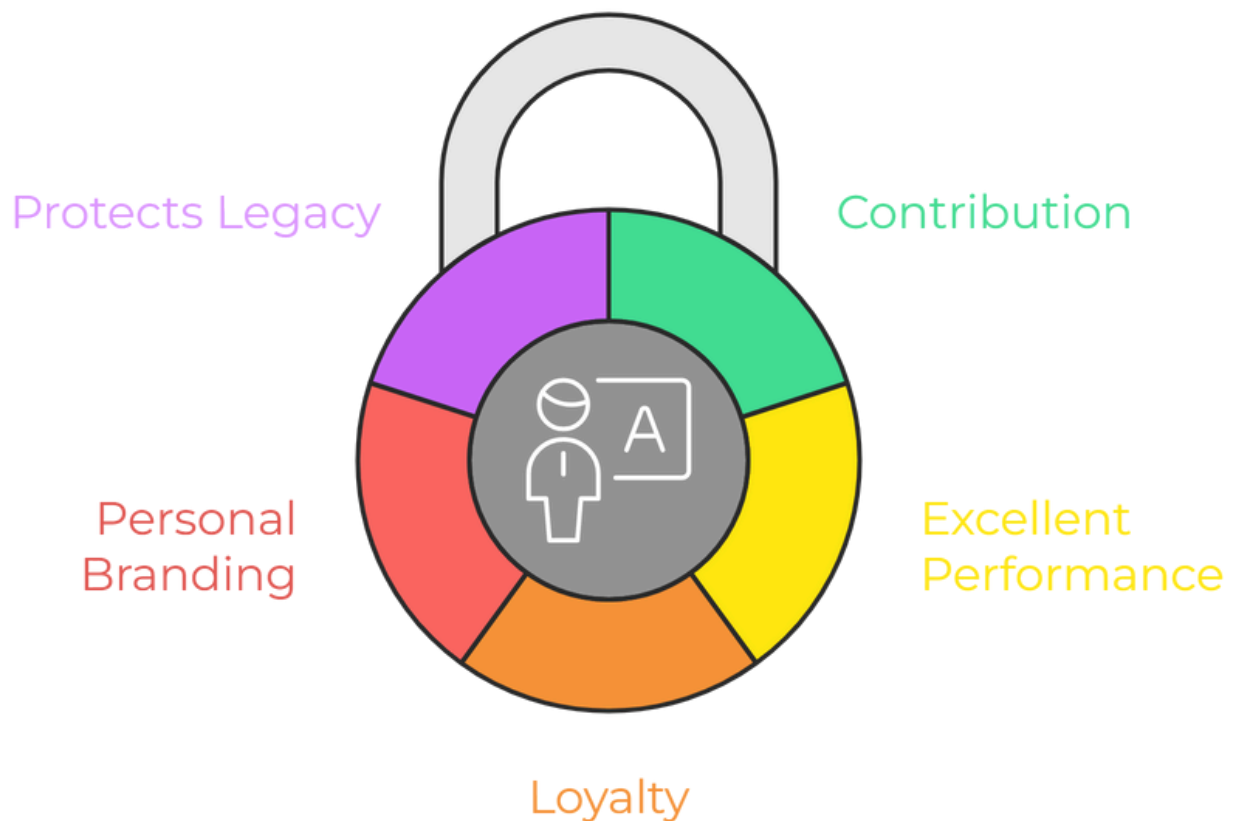
THE ROLE OF A PROTÉGÉ IN A SPONSORSHIP RELATIONSHIP

The protege must ensure that he attends to the following suggested roles in his relationship with his sponsor. The overall expectation of a protege is to deliver a superb support for the ultimate career desires of his sponsor. He is to make himself a platform for the brand of the sponsor to find expression. He is a representative and sounding board for the goals of his sponsor.

- **Contribution:** A protege must support the sponsor by playing a huge part in the realisation of his own personal career goals. The protege must cover the back of his sponsor, bring in fresh perspectives to issues of concern to his sponsor. He must make available his skill set and earn the position of a value adding personality.
- **Excellent Performance:** The protege must be a high performer. He must be above par in comparison with the other individuals in his field of engagement. His performance must be stellar because it will add to the credibility of the sponsor. Results are key to the sponsor thus the protege cannot afford to be casual in discharging assignments committed to him.
- **Loyalty:** Proteges must demonstrate loyalty to the sponsor and the organization they work for. The protege must display trustworthiness and discretion in his relationship with the sponsor. As much as stellar performances are key, loyalty secures the relationship beyond great outcomes from tasks.
- **Personal Branding:** This is the practice of marketing your career. You must position yourself as a person to be sought after. It is not enough to possess great skills and outstanding results, it must be put out there in the face of the world to stir a conversation and enhance your worth beyond your immediate sphere of influence. Your brand is an extension of the brand of your sponsor and it must speak not just within the organization but also around the field of engagement..



- **Protects Legacy:** Whatever your sponsor has chosen to bequeath to his profession is his legacy. He may have chosen to leave behind a leadership style, a new pattern of work or a new way of executing a task. He may even be leaving behind in his field a great product or service. Responsibility is on the protege to be the extension of the heart and hands of the sponsor. The protege must promote the legacy of the sponsor in and out of the organization. He is also offspring that will perpetuate those beliefs and philosophies that the sponsor cherishes so dearly.



Final Word

The employee that seeks to excel in his career must be able identify individuals who stand tall in their engagements and are able to remain relevant in the industry by virtue of their contributions.

The ultimate goal of a mentoring relationship is the attainment of a defined career goal. The mentor accepts the responsibility of guiding the mentee on this journey by ensuring that he acquires relevant skills and develops the requisite competences over the period. The mentor is an indispensable influencer for career advancement and achievement.

Every individual that has a height to attain must recognise that there are experts who can help him get to his destination safely without losses. He must set his gaze very high and possess the readiness to learn. Coaches are not gods but helpers of the individual who is passionate about making a journey to significance in his field of engagement.

Potential industry leaders require a push and a lift to excel in their profession and thats where the sponsors come to be. The sponsor goes out on a limb on behalf of the protege that possesses exceptional skills and generates outstanding results in his assigned role. Sponsors are advocates for your next big career move, they "root for you" because they believe you can deliver to their highest level of ideals in the workplace. In doing this they expect a high sense of faithfulness and loyalty from the employee. Every protege with a sponsor knows that their is sufficient defence for him while trying to work hard to excel in a role with high prospects. The scope of the sponsor is expanded as the protege builds a brand that fulfils and manifests the desires of the sponsor. This piece brings to a close my series on Indispensible Influencers. If you must excel in the workplace you will need these men and women of influence. You must make the most of their diverse personality, experience, expertise and network to fulfil your career goals. Ultimately you will also become an Indispensible Influencer.



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Profile for Dr. Olumuyiwa Akinrole Oludayo

Dr. Olumuyiwa Akinrole Oludayo is a transformative leader and consultant with a distinguished career across higher education, human resource management, and organisational development. His professional journey reflects an enduring commitment to influencing impactful change and advancing practices that drive growth and excellence at both individual and organisational levels.

With a strong foundation in academia, Dr. Oludayo has contributed extensively to higher education as a Member of Faculty for Human Resource Management, guiding the next generation of professionals and leaders. His roles as Dean of Students, Registrar, and Director of the African Leadership Development Centre have enabled him to influence institutional leadership and capacity-building across Africa, crafting learning environments that are centred on holistic development and resilience.

As a Research Fellow with the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria, Dr. Oludayo has made notable contributions to HR practice in Nigeria. His publications and development of frameworks have significantly shaped best practices within the industry, equipping HR professionals with contextually relevant strategies that address both contemporary and emerging challenges.

Organisations that engage Dr. Oludayo's consulting expertise benefit from a wealth of experience and a bespoke approach to people management. Through his work, he has supported a diverse range of organisations in optimising their talent strategies, enhancing leadership capacity, and creating resilient teams. His consulting work is marked by a commitment to solutions that are analytically robust and deeply aligned with an organisation's unique culture and objectives.

By partnering with Dr. Oludayo, organisations gain access to innovative approaches to talent development and organisational effectiveness. His strategic guidance encourages a culture of resilience, adaptability, and continuous improvement. His proven ability to integrate strategic insight with a people-centred approach makes him an invaluable asset for organisations striving for sustainable growth and a competitive edge.

In bridging the realms of academia, research, and practical consulting, Dr. Oludayo offers a holistic perspective that is both visionary and results-driven. His contributions go beyond enhancing performance; they cultivate lasting organisational value, enabling businesses to thrive through a stronger, more cohesive approach to human capital management.

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