

Mentor Pillar

Stu Weber talks about the facts of life in this chapter. He talks about making mistakes, encountering failure, and what to do about it. He says that midcourse corrections are one of those facts of life. He tells me that I've experienced a lot of life, good and bad - and I'm not allowed to waste *any* of it.

I've tried to invest myself in the lives of others. Sometimes it worked and I had the great joy and pleasure to see its fruit, and sometimes it was water off a duck's back. Stu says God didn't call me to force other people to follow the principles. He just wants me to pass them on. It's a kind of investment. Good investments usually come back and pay dividends, but it may take awhile.

So he suggests I hang in there, stay at it, finish the course, and run right past my reluctance. I need to be a student of failure. All of life - both success and failure - is for growth. "It is not the experiences themselves that make us wise mentors, but it is the way we process and learn from them that shapes us... Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him."

Why do virtually all books on leadership point back to the Bible? Stu gives the classic answer to why it is so valuable, even essential, to our success. "All Scripture is God-breathed, and it is profitable for teaching, admonishing, correcting, and training in doing what is right." (2 Tim. 3:17). That means it shows us the path to take, warns us if we get off course, guides us back to the right path, and shows us how to stay on track. He writes, "We must go to [the Bible] as a servant who honestly desires to know the designs and intentions of his Master."

Part of those designs involve the construction of individual hearts and minds. Stu says I need to be a student of people. "If a man is a poor student of his wife he cannot hope to help her reach her potential as woman, a wife, or a mother." A good mentoring dad knows his children, "what makes them tick, what tickles them, and what ticks them off." He reminds us from the Scriptures that we aren't supposed to frustrate our kids. "Fathers.... do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Discipline means training primarily by actions. Instruction means training primarily by words or precepts. It's a kind of show and tell. When I raised my kids, I primarily told and seldom showed. That was a big mistake, for me *and* for my children.

So what angers kids? Here's Stu's list:

- When they perceive we aren't being fair and just with them.
- When we don't spend time and attention on them that we know we could.
- When we're overly harsh with them.
- When we use cliches instead of compassion to correct them.
- When we don't give them enough room to grow up.
- When we don't give them healthy boundaries for growing up.

That list works with everyone - especially the folks in we're helping to attain their dreams. Stu's point is this: Mentors are students of people, all kinds of people, all kinds of relationships, all kinds of backgrounds. And the framework for studying and understanding them is found in Scripture. So I'm bound to become a student of Scripture before I can become a student of people - otherwise I might misinterpret their needs, and give them poor counsel. I've done enough of that already. Time for a midcourse change.