

The Power of One: Understanding Key Variables in Transformational Mentoring Relationships

Katerina Malat

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of
The Chicago School of Professional Psychology
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Psychology

May 29th, 2014

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2014

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Dedication

Having that one good influence in your life is vital, because it can be completely dark in the room, and you light this tiny LED light in the corner, and suddenly the whole room is much brighter, and you can actually see what you're doing...and that was kind of cool...because there are so many negative things at once, that just a few little sprinkles of good change everything.

—Mentee who was interviewed, explaining the impact of her mentor

This dissertation is dedicated to every individual who has been in a dark room, and to the courageous souls who have rekindled the light.

Acknowledgements

I wish to extend my deepest appreciation to Dr. Paul Sanders for his sincere enthusiasm and championing this topic—you gave wings to this dream. Thank you also to Dr. Michael Gaubatz for your ceaseless support and guidance. Above all, I am grateful to both of you for being role models for my professional journey by being who you are.

I am also indebted to the agencies that supported this research—without you this would not have been possible. Thank you to Mercy Home for Boys & Girls, Urban Life Skills Program at New Life Centers of Chicagoland, and The DREAM Program. I am especially grateful to Mary Quinn, Matt Buehler, and Mike Loner, for your time, support, and belief in this study.

I am immeasurably grateful to, and deeply appreciate, those who had the courage to share their experience—you made this work come alive, and I hope it gives your voices the recognition they deserve. I am incredibly honored to have had the privilege to get to know each of you. You will never know how much your stories touched and inspired me—you reminded me why I sought this profession and have refueled my dreams of where I hope to take it.

Finally, I can never thank enough those who have lit my room...Not only are you the reason why I am so passionate about this topic, but it is because of you that I now bask in sunshine: To my other mother, Jana, I always felt so visible, wanted, and loved in your presence...you not only gave me precious hope of a different life, but by your side I lived it. In loving recognition and memory of Greg Croteau, who lit more than a room for the love of my life...who in turn lit mine. And to the love of my life, Michael, your belief in and genuine love for me gave me insight and courage I didn't know I was missing—you opened my eyes to a new world, which has shaped dreams beyond my imagination. This work is one of those dreams...that have now become my life, with you.

Abstract

The Power of One: Understanding Key Variables in Transformational Mentoring Relationships

Katerina Malat

What often stands out in people's life stories is the presence of one person who seemed to change the course of their life. Although such life-changing relationships are portrayed in literature, and can be found all around us, there has been limited research on what makes these experiences possible. Many relevant studies have been conducted within the field of mentoring; however, the transformational elements of such relationships have remained elusive. This study, through phenomenological qualitative research, involving semi-structured dyadic interviews, explores mentorships that have been identified as "transformational" and aims to discover the key attributes common in these relationships. Thirteen mentees, whose lives have been significantly changed by their mentorships, agreed to participate, along with their mentors. Several themes emerged from these narratives of transformational relationships: Commitment and Caring, Involvement, Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, the mentor being a Role Model and Contextualizing the Relationship, and the mentee having a Unique Experience. These common elements may provide a way to enhance mentoring efforts and facilitate life-changing relationships between adults and youth in need.

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Chapter 1: Background

For as long as I can remember, I have been captivated by the impact that one person can have on another's life. These seeds of curiosity were first planted during my own childhood. Every summer, my homesick mother would return to her birth country of the Czech Republic (formerly Czechoslovakia), and it was there that one of my mother's acquaintances—a cottage neighbor from her childhood—took a special interest in me. In just the handful of days that I spent with this lady each year, I felt visible, appreciated, and genuinely loved. Through simply her way of being, she gave me hope that the world could be a brighter place, and that the people within it could be patient, honest, and good. But her greatest gift to me, through the slight but most genuine action of seeking to spend more time with me, was a clear and poignant message that I was good too. Being visible to such an attuned adult figure rooted beginnings of confidence within, which evolved into a sense of self and gave me (at the time a passive, fearful, and extremely complacent child) the courage to speak up and to eventually create my own life.

Beyond my own experience, my interest in transformational relationships was further fueled as I noticed, over the span of many years and friendships, that many of my closest friends also had transformational relationships in their lives. The person whom they would credit with facilitating their life change was usually someone who took a special interest in them, who they knew through their everyday lives (such as an extended family member, a teacher, a coach, a manager) and whose presence, usually over a period of time, inspired a significant shift in perspective and/or fuelled embarking on a new trajectory.

In addition to personal experiences, I have seen dramatic examples of transformational relationships in the world. In popular culture alone, there have been countless novels and movies made about such non-fictional instances of life-altering interpersonal experiences, and similar

stories seem to be documented daily in radio and television programs. Hearing such accounts of human connections that have transformed lives spurs the question of why some people have such experiences and the desire to understand how more people could.

The benefit of transformational relationships is quite clear, but the need for them seems particularly pertinent today. Within current Western culture, there seems to be a trend of children lacking sufficient adult connections in their lives, and this continues to affect them into adulthood (Cook, Herman, Phillips, & Settersten, 2002). It is becoming more common to have isolated families (away from extended families), single parent homes, and less involvement with other adults in the community (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Brashears, 2006). In our increasingly busy and disconnected lives, it seems that there is no readily available solution to the isolation and connection gaps that many grow up in. Based on the impact that transformational relationships can have, and the rarity with which they occur, the purpose of this dissertation is to explore the rare connection in and key ingredients of transformational relationships, insight that ideally could then be used to find a way to make such interpersonal connections a more common experience.

Very little research has focused directly on transformational relationships. Areas of study that come closest include explorations of mentoring (formal and natural), resiliency, and social support in the community. This review highlights such studies that contribute to understanding transformational relationships, although few of those studies actually focus on the notion of transformation and the elements that might distinguish a relationship as truly transformational. This dissertation takes a step in that direction by exploring experiences that consistently mark mentoring relationships identified as life-changing, or transformational, in impact.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Existing Narratives

Stories of transformational relationships abound in movies, books, songs, and throughout news media. Perhaps it is because of their inspirational message that we are drawn to such examples of lives being forever changed, or maybe it is a deeply seeded desire of gleaning what it is that makes such transformation possible in the hopes of replicating it. Whatever the reason for their popularity, narrative accounts of transformational relationships are found throughout popular culture and, upon review of such life-narratives, seem to have much in common.

In reviewing publicized life-changing stories, it seems what most have in common is that before the transformational relationship began the person had no or very limited support, and in many cases was abandoned. This is evident in the heart-wrenching case of Dawn Loggins (Kuo, 2012)—a high school student who had been literally abandoned by her drug-abusing parents, and prior to that had endured frequent moves from town to town, often living with no running water or electricity in her home. Other examples include football player Michael Oher, who went from homelessness to the NFL (as depicted in the motion picture *The Blind Side*), and the musician Nathaniel Ayers, who moved from musical prodigy to homelessness and then to fame (as portrayed in *The Soloist*); both of these men were engulfed by isolation and abandonment before their transformational figure stepped into their life.

There also seems to be a common theme in how these transformational relationships began. In all of the life narratives reviewed, the relationships occurred by chance. In other words, there was no formal or planned element of bringing the two people together for the purpose of one helping the other. Although in some instances the transformational figure was a teacher, initially the helper had no responsibility for the other person's well-being beyond their

teaching role. Despite the element of chance, amazingly transformational experiences developed. For example, in the narratives mentioned above, Dawn's opportunity to transform her life came from a teacher and a guidance counselor noticing her situation and taking an interest in working with her; Michael Oher's adoptive family found out he did not have a place to stay and opened their home to him for a night, which turned into a lifelong invitation; and Nathaniel Ayers left a life of living on the streets after a reporter noticed his playing, and formed a transformational bond from what began as a good news story.

Throughout the transformational relationships in media, there are several common attributes within these unique connections. In all of the accounts the transformational figure took a special interest in the person, beyond what was required, expected, or common. This element was present regardless of whether the transformational figure had an existing role in the person's life, such as a teacher as in the case of Dawn Loggins or the famous story of Helen Keller's tutor (depicted in the book and motion picture *The Miracle Worker*), or whether they had crossed paths by complete chance, such as Michael Oher's or Nathaniel Ayers' experience. Also common throughout these stories is a helping figure who maintains regular contact with the person and provides a consistent, reliable, and supportive connection. The importance of such consistency is clear in the life of Ron Glodoski (2012), now a motivational speaker, who in adolescence began to slowly turn away from his life of crime and academic failure when a new principal took a particular interest in him. The principal asked that Ron come to his office at a set time every week. Week after week Ron would meet with the new head of the school and yell at him, question the purpose of the meetings, and often physically trash his office...but Ron kept on coming, and he eventually let in the principal's words and presence. Another characteristic that seems common in these relationships is the transformational figure's

relentless refusal to give up on the other person. It is possible that one of these qualities or all of them combined are critical ingredients in helping someone transform their life.

From reviewing transformational relationships that have been publicized, it seems that these connections can occur on a few different levels. In some instances, a transformational figure simply gives someone an opportunity that ends up changing the person's life trajectory. This can be seen in the story of Jackie Robinson (portrayed in the motion picture *Jackie Robinson Story*), who broke into the record books and paved the way in Major League Baseball for black players; the Brooklyn Dodgers' manager created an opportunity, took a stand for Jackie by bringing him into the league, and combatted opposition to ensure he stayed on the field. Another example of someone opening a life-changing door is seen in Chris Gardener's life story (as portrayed in the movie *Pursuit of Happyness*), when an executive gives him a highly coveted internship in the finance industry, even though he arrives shabbily dressed and late to the interview; this internship transforms Chris' life from living on the streets with his son to finding a new career and prosperity. These two stories demonstrate instances in which the person was already prepared for the change and had worked hard to achieve their goals, but just needed a break to make the critical step.

The second kind of transformational relationship is characterized by the transformational figure providing more than just an opportunity or an open door; although the receiver of such help may not have been on a negative or self-devastating path, he or she needed more involvement and facilitation in order to flourish. This instance can be seen in the recent case of Dawn Loggins, whose teacher and guidance counselor reach out to the community to provide Dawn with a home, find her a job, and enable her to step onto a more promising path. Dawn

already had the desire to do well, and was on the right track, but these relationships helped her transform her desires and abilities into a different life trajectory.

Finally, the most dramatic instances of transformation are when a helper offers not only an opportunity, but also actually facilitates an internal transformative shift in the other person's mind and spirit. One such example is the story of teacher Erin Gruwell (portrayed in the motion picture *Freedom Writers*) whose transformation of an entire class of high-risk high school students, for whom there seemed to be limited hope, saw many of them graduate and go on to college, most as the first in their families. Ron Glodoski's story of impressive transformation also falls into this category; he went from a life of crime and drugs to becoming a nationally recognized motivational speaker who teaches others how to connect with "at-risk" kids. The story of Willie Sosa, described by Bernard Lefkowitz (1986) in *Tough Change: Growing Up on Your Own in America*, also exemplifies such a transformational relationship. Willie emerged from a life of poverty and abuse to find himself, per his own self-report, heavily involved in crime and drugs. He attempted a break from this life trajectory by joining the Marine Corps, but he stepped back into his old habits after returning home from his first deployment. It was the perceptiveness, sensitivity, and courage of a marine sergeant that later facilitated Willie's permanent life-change and saw him go on to take a lead in helping street kids in his neighborhood, after being honorably discharged from the Marine Corps. All of these narratives provide impressionistic accounts of important transformational relationships, including some examples of how they are formed and what makes them powerful.

Transformational Relationships

For the purposes of this study, the term *transformational relationship* is used to describe a relationship between two people in which the life of one person has been significantly

transformed as a result of his or her connection with the other person. Unfortunately, there seems to be very limited research to date about such relationships, including how they form or what makes them pivotal. Literature within several different academic domains, including sociology, anthropology, psychology, and resilience literature, was reviewed in search of relevant studies; however, little was found beyond discussions of religious transformations and life-changes resulting from romantic or love relationships. The literature that comes closest to explicitly addressing the transformational relationships discussed here is confined predominantly to the topic of mentoring.

Although mentoring will be discussed in detail later, it is worth noting at this point that the focus on mentoring research presents conceptual limitations. Mentorship does not always imply a transformational relationship; mentoring is a term that applies to many sorts of relationships—some more profound than others. In addition, mentorship sometimes carries a connotation of formal pairing through a mentoring program, despite the fact that not all such pairings are transformational, and the fact that not all transformational relationships arise from such formal pairings. Finally, the mentoring-related research focuses mainly on adolescents, and so there is a void regarding transformational possibilities in adulthood.

As detailed above, the most information about unique life-changing singular relationships is captured within the fabric of real stories that are woven throughout popular culture. The transformations within these stories are clear, but what also needs to be considered is whether those who were transformed brought something to the relationship that made such dramatic change possible. Using Willie Sosa's case as an example, although the marine sergeant played a critical role in Willie's pursuit of a different life, by seeing the good inside and taking a chance on him, Willie's own role in his reformation is also critical to understanding the impact of their

relationship. Was it something in Willie that made this marine sergeant take an interest in him? Did Willie in some way seek out a connection with the sergeant? The possibility that Willie, and others with similar life-changing experiences, somehow enabled the transformational relationship relates to the idea of resiliency.

Factors Affecting Resiliency

In the many stories where someone's life took on a diametrically different trajectory after connecting with a particular person, it is difficult to assess how the transformation occurred and what it was within that relationship, or within either of the people involved, that made it possible. It is possible that persons who are transformed are predisposed to seeking and benefiting from such key relationships. Thus, it is imperative to consider resiliency in seeking to understand how lives change through transformational relationships, since it may play a critical role in enabling such connections.

In an extensive resiliency study, the Kauai Longitudinal Study in Hawaii tracked the development, over the span of several decades, of 698 children identified as having four or more risk factors before the age of two. Of these vulnerable children, 72 did not exhibit destructive behaviors typical of their cohort and managed to become stable and productive adults with improved prospects (Werner & Smith, 1992). These resilient children, who were subject of the book *Vulnerable but Invincible* (Werner & Smith, 1982) and also discussed in *Overcoming the Odds* (Werner & Smith, 1992), were found to have certain common characteristics when compared to the others: temperaments that elicited positive attention; a tendency to interact positively with the world (they were alert, autonomous, sought novel experiences, had a positive social orientation); many interests; positive self-concept; and internal locus of control by their late teens. However, part of this resilience may have stemmed from another common

characteristic of these children: most did not experience separation from their primary caretaker during their first year, and all of them had the opportunity to form a close bond and receive regular positive attention from at least one caregiver. As a result, Werner and Smith (1992) hypothesized that an essential aspect of any supportive encounter is feeling special to the other person, since all of the resilient youth in this study had at least one person who accepted them unconditionally.

Resiliency development seems inextricably linked to seeking, forming, and benefitting from interpersonal ties. In fact, resiliency research identifies connections with and attachment to others (specifically competent and caring adults) as one of the most prominent protective factors (conditions or attributes that minimize risk) (Masten, 2000; Werner & Smith, 1992). Connection with other competent adults has been identified in longitudinal studies and cross-sectional research as playing a significant role in resilient youth across a variety of situations (Masten, 1994). Although social support is an important element of resilience, studies of adolescents confirm that it is the meaning individuals attribute to the social support, rather than any objectively measured differences, which is critical to diminishing stress while promoting recovery, and the benefits of subjectively perceived support exist regardless of whether the support is ever used (Barker, 2007).

Another element of resilience that impacts the formation of connections is internalized coping behaviors—that is how well children learn their help-seeking behaviors from their adult role models (Barker, 2007). Using external support systems is one of the protective mechanisms in resilience, since those children who seek connections, identify role models, and have a network of informal relationships are more likely to engage supportive adults in their lives when coping with stress (Luthar & Zigler, 1991). It is notable that the other factors associated with

resiliency, including cognitive and self-regulation skills, self-confidence, an internal locus of control, and motivation to be effective, are also common elements identified by youth regarding the impact that mentoring and similar relationships with important non-parent adults have had on their lives (Masten, 2001). These elements will be further addressed in the discussion on mentoring.

Mentoring

The most extensive research related to transformational relationships is in the area of mentoring. The term *mentoring* is broadly used to denote a relationship between two people, one of whom is providing some form of guidance to the other, assisting them with some form of personal development. This term is used in several contexts, including job training, but only more general mentoring, specifically related to enabling growth/development of youth and facilitating a significant change, will be reviewed here.

Research on mentoring in general suggests that there are certain functions common to effective mentoring relationships with youth. These include enhancing social and emotional functioning, improving cognitive skills, and encouraging positive identity development (Rhodes, Spencer, Keller, Liang, & Noam, 2006). Mentors do this through several different roles, such as by being role models and advocates.

The effectiveness of the mentoring relationship also depends on the youth's previous relationships, whether they regard their mentor relationship as meaningful, and the duration of the relationship (Rhodes et al., 2006). Other studies have found that having a similar background is important, as is sharing similar interests (Pawson, 2006). More often, studies found that the mentor's investment in the relationship (including time spent together, availability, reliability)

and working effectively with the mentee's environment (including family, school, etc.) is imperative (Pawson, 2006).

An important consideration often overlooked is the characteristics of mentors. A study by Hughes (1997), for instance, focused on males previously involved in crime who had made positive changes themselves and sought to mentor others. The main influencing factor in altering their behavior, which contributed to seeking to be mentors, was a regard for children—their own and in their communities. Participants in this study all reported difficult childhoods and thus the researcher hypothesized that this may have made them particularly sensitive to children in similar situations now at risk. Hughes also found that these respondents believed that they would have the greatest impact with children who came from similar backgrounds and shared similar experiences. Mentor characteristics identified from other studies as important to mentees have included being able to trust their mentor, feeling that the mentor has integrity, and credibility of the mentor (Stanton-Salazar & Ursospina, 2003). Understanding mentor characteristics may be imperative given that studies on coping have found that whether a young person seeks help is not determined by the need for help, but by trust—specifically with regard to past disappointments with previous help providers (Barker, 2007). Another study by Hendry, Roberts, Glendinning, and Coleman (1992) found that the majority of mentees want to feel appreciated, be taken seriously, and feel that their mentor has confidence in them.

One particularly extensive community-based study of over 200 adolescents found that in the early stages of the relationship adolescents would test the mentor to ensure trustworthiness (Beam, Chen, & Greenberger, 2002). These adolescents noted that the most important factor was feeling that the mentor was interested in them because of their personal qualities, showed them respect, provided emotional support, could speak openly and frequently with them, and

supported their participation in various activities. For mentorships to successfully endure, it also appeared critical that the mentor actually enjoyed the relationship and was emotionally invested in their mentee. Mentors appear to fill a role different from that of peers or parents, although they exhibit elements of both. Most notably, those mentors reported to be most impactful by adolescents engaged in more frequent supportive behavior and also had more contact with the adolescent.

Research on mentoring that is related to this review can be further divided into formal mentoring (structured programs) and informal or natural mentoring (those relationships that develop naturally in life).

Natural mentoring. There is a clear delineation in literature between formal mentoring programs, which are structured and exist in order to match those in need (predominantly youth) with a volunteer mentor, and naturally occurring mentorships. Naturally occurring mentorships with significant non-parental adults have been found to be important for adolescent development, as demonstrated by several key studies of child outcomes, but they have not been readily recognized as a form of intervention (Beam et al., 2002). These informal connections occur in everyday life, and include teachers, coaches, aunts, uncles, cousins, neighbors, managers, to name a few. Natural mentors can be further segregated into kin and non-kin. Research in natural mentoring is particularly relevant since transformational relationships often occur by chance, as is evident in reviewing narratives from popular culture. In a study using a community sample, Beam et al. (2002) found that a large majority (82% of 243) of adolescents reported having a non-parental adult who plays a vital role in their life. Most of these relationships developed naturally and gradually—they did not start as a result of a significant event.

Although many studies suggest positive effects of having a natural mentor, the findings are unfortunately not consistent and in some instances are even contradictory. This difficulty of assessing informal support is confirmed throughout available literature (Barker, 2007). A five-year longitudinal study found that having a natural mentor improved certain health outcomes of mentees (including having less depressive symptoms), thus demonstrating that having a mentor can enhance resilience in youth, as mentioned above. However, this protective factor was not universal, as certain behaviors, including substance use, were not impacted (Hurd & Zimmerman, 2010). On the contrary, other research suggests that natural mentoring relationships are protective, specifically in terms of substance use (Black, Grenard, Sussman, & Rohrbach, 2010). Yet another study found that having a natural mentor decreased delinquency and smoking marijuana, while improving attitude toward school, but it found no effect on anxiety or depression (Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002). This study also found that the protective factor (modifying effect) of a natural mentor was greatest in relation to school attitudes. These favorable outcomes related to school or work were also confirmed by other studies (Black et al., 2010; Dubois & Silverthorn, 2005). It seems that findings regarding increase in positive scholastic/work associations are the most consistent.

One aspect of continued debate within natural mentoring is whether familial or non-kin mentors are more effective. It appears that the answer depends on what the desired outcome is. One study looked at the impact of natural mentors, most of who were extended or immediate family members, on Latino high school students (Sanchez, Esparza, & Colon, 2008). Overall, having a mentor was found to improve school-related attendance, expectations, and sense of belonging. The differences between kin and non-kin mentors were that mentees who had relatives as mentors generally had longer relationships, but lower expectations for success (this is

possibly related to the fact that kin mentors tended to have lower levels of education). An understanding of non-kin mentors is particularly important for those who do not have access to extended family, or are in foster care (Munson & McMillen, 2008). Also, Beam et al. (2002) found that kin mentorships entailed long-term and diffuse relationships, while non-kin involvements were shorter-term and focused on more specific aspects of the mentee's life.

Mentorship researchers continue to disagree regarding the benefits of natural mentors. Although some argue that such informal social support may be better suited for youth not identified as at-risk (Dubois & Silverthorn, 2005), benefits to natural mentorships have been demonstrated, including a faster and deeper connection formation (they are easier to trust because they are not set up through a third party), being familiar to the mentee, and being more likely to share a similar background (Barker, 2007; Rhodes, 2008). Also, by being more familiar with the youth's cultural and personal background, they are likely to provide more impactful and appropriate guidance, compared to an agency-matched mentorship (Rhodes, Roffman, & Grossman, 2002). Finally, if such relationships do not work out, the mentor is more likely to continue whatever role they previously held in the mentee's life, and not disappear completely, which would likely mitigate the negative impact of terminations that occur in structured mentoring relationships.

Geoffrey Canada (1998) shared a poignant example of the importance of natural mentors, while also offering some critical considerations, in his description of real-life events in *Reaching up for Manhood: Transforming the Lives of Boys in America*. Canada described his own experience as a child with men trying to reach out to a group of fatherless boys to offer guidance. Through this story, and his own life dedicated to helping at-risk youth, Canada described mentoring as a critical activity that can make the difference between success and failure in a

child's life. Although he recognized that the most powerful force in a child's life is a caring adult, he warns that the adult must get involved personally if they hope to enable real change for a child. His story also cautions that, unless a mentor is already trained in such work, they need to start off slowly, be accepting of the child's perspective, and be patient with gaining their trust. He warned that if a mentor does not understand and appreciate the daily living circumstances of the child, they can do more harm than good. Canada also champions the idea of looking around and reaching out to a child close by, rather than joining a formal organization—reminding us that children who are not overtly “at-risk” are falling through the cracks and could have dramatically better lives with the help of one caring adult.

Formal mentoring. As with the findings related to naturally occurring mentoring relationships, the findings from research of formal mentoring programs are not conclusive. In a meta-analysis of 55 evaluations of mentoring programs, the typical effects of a program were found to be minor compared to other interpersonal interventions focused on helping youth, likely due to the wide range of program quality (Dubois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002). Although most studies confirm some positive effect for mentees, the magnitude of the effect is often modest and the variation of effectiveness is significantly different across programs, with the most structured programs, which include clear goals, having the strongest effects (Rhodes, 2008).

One study of a school-based mentoring program focused on inner-city youth found that mentees' social ability increased as a result (O'Donnell, Michalak, & Ames, 1997). Another study of a highly regarded high-risk youth program cites that the presence of one caring adult at school has been shown to increase resilience (Crime and Justice Institute, 2006). An Australian study of indigenous students reviewed the impact of mentoring on motivation and similarly

found that students supported by a mentor for an hour per week exhibited improvements in relationships, enhanced self-confidence, valued school more, and increased class participation (MacCallum, Beltman, & Palmer, 2005).

As in the case of natural mentors, some studies of formal mentoring programs assert that the match of mentee and mentor is critical to the success of the relationship (Crime and Justice Institute, 2006). Mentees who identify having a strong relationship with their mentor are found to benefit significantly more on a variety of measures (Dallos & Comley-Ross, 2005; Dubois et al., 2002). However, with research into resiliency, what has been found to be most critical in the relationship is how the mentee perceives the quality of their connection with their mentor and whether they regard the mentor as significant in their life. The quality of the mentoring bond is affected by contact regularity and frequency, as well as the duration of the relationship. One study found that these two attributes of quality and duration of relationship are actually linked (Rhodes et al., 2002b). Relationship longevity significantly affects the impact of mentorships, as positive effects (including improvement in academic, psychosocial, and behavioral outcomes) have been found to emerge only after at least one year, and in fact short matches may result in negative outcomes—this is especially critical to consider since mentees often have experienced a history of disappointing relationships with adults (Rhodes, 2008). Accordingly, the matching of mentors may be one of the factors that have led to opposing research results—in fact one study of a mentoring program for high-school students found that, although there appeared to be a minimal effect overall, when the study was segregated into those with effective mentors (determined by the mentee’s evaluation of his/her mentor on five criteria) and those with ineffective mentors, the results were significantly positive for those with effective mentors and detrimental for those with ineffective mentors (Slicker & Palmer, 1993). The importance of the

relationship between mentor and mentee is further supported by a study of various mentoring programs (Jekielek, Moore, & Hair, 2002), which identified that the most protective factor for developing strengths and capacities in youth is having a positive relationship with a caring adult.

The relational process also seems to be an integral component of effective mentoring relationships. In one study (Spencer, 2006), enduring and successful mentorships were explored more in-depth by conducting comprehensive interviews with pairs of mentees and mentors from a community-based program. The findings were that authenticity and empathy were found to be critical in the early formation of the relationship—this enabled the mentee to develop trust in the mentor. It was also important that the mentor made an effort to understand the challenges faced by the mentee and spent time promoting positive development rather than fixing problems—this focus, along with a regular, direct involvement, and feeling that they mattered to the mentor elicited self-confidence in the mentee. The mentees also reported the importance of feeling that the adult believed in them and that they were “deeply known and seen” by them. Also critical to these lasting bonds was that they both enjoyed each other’s company and were integrated into each other’s lives naturally (i.e., it did not feel obligatory)—these pairings had become significant to each other, and they expected to remain so indefinitely. This study encapsulates the ideal that formal mentoring experience, which begins with a well-matched pair, and after significant effort and building trust, turns into a natural, lasting connection over time. The success of those interviewed was also attributed to a shift from the adult seeing this as a shorter-term relationship to becoming truly vested in the mentee, and desiring to help them reach their full potential by recognizing and encouraging their strengths. It was also important that the relationship was equal and both parties shaped their interactions.

The difficulty with assessing mentoring programs as an intervention is enhanced by the

fact that some studies have actually found, as mentioned above, that mentorships can result in detrimental effects on mentees. One critique regarding the limited evidence for mentoring program effectiveness highlighted that failed or prematurely terminated mentoring relationships may actually leave youth worse off, citing a three-year study in which the youth were more likely to be arrested after they had participated in a mentoring program that ceased than those who were not mentored (O'Donnell et al. as cited in Roberts, Liabo, Lucas, DuBois, & Sheldon, 2004).

Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (2000) conducted one of the most extensive mentoring program studies on the Big Brothers and Big Sisters organization. This comparative study of 959 youth who had applied to the BBBS programs compared those youth who were assigned a mentor with those who remained on the waiting list. The study found that mentoring programs can have a positive effect on youth: After 18 months, those youth who had mentors reported more positive changes in a number of outcome measures. However, this study also highlighted that the structure of the program, including screening mentors, and providing supervision of matches is critical. In fact, this study also confirmed that an unstructured mentoring program, in which mentors are not adequately assessed, trained, or supervised for their roles, can actually have negative consequences. An important delineation was also noted between developmental and prescriptive mentoring—developmental mentoring relationships, which provide general, consistent, and frequent support in navigating any aspect of life (such as the BBBS program mentors) were found to have more of a positive impact than prescriptive mentorships, which focus on a particular topic and/or end goal (Tierney et al., 2000).

The difference in effectiveness of mentoring programs, based on their structure, has further been confirmed by other studies. It has been found that mentoring programs that lack

screening, training, and supervision have a modest, if not a neutral or negative, impact on mentees (Dubois, Neville, Parra, & Pugh-Lilly, 2002). Programs that implement structured training and activities, and which include more frequent contact between mentor and mentee as well as closer monitoring of the relationship, demonstrate more positive results for mentees (Rhodes et al., 2002b). However, even with structured programs the effectiveness varies widely across mentees—some benefit greatly, while others experience no positive effect (Dubois et al., 2002).

Unfortunately, inconsistent findings regarding formal mentoring initiatives may also be a result of insufficient information about the programs. In a meta-analytic review of 39 mentoring studies spanning 35 years from 1970 to 2005, it was found that, although there were some moderate positive findings, the results were not interpretable due to limited detail about the mentoring programs (Tolan, Henry, Schoeny, & Bass, 2008). Accordingly, if future reviews of mentoring programs are to inform and benefit the design of effective interventions, they must include a more detailed analysis of specific variables. A further need, highlighted in mentoring literature, is to assess the relationship characteristics of these bonds and how they impact outcomes, which would ideally enable an expansion of mentoring applicability (Dubois et al., 2002).

Theoretical Views of Transformational Dynamics

Although minimal research (apart from extensive literature specific to change factors in psychotherapy) has been published on the nature of transformational relationships, there are several theories of transformational dynamics that can apply to such life-changing connections.

Developmental. From a developmental perspective, the role of a significant non-parental adult in the life of a child or adolescent can be viewed as filling a void of support not

adequately provided by an individual's parents. Such relationships often occur in normal development, which is supported by one study in particular (Beam et al., 2002) in which more than 75% of relationships that adolescents had with "very important" non-parental adults in a large community evolved from consistent interaction, rather than being triggered by a significant event. Non-parental significant adults can be seen as critical to developmental tasks of adolescents in preparing for adult life, by enhancing their adaptive efforts through motivating, teaching, and providing emotional support as needed. In fact, the relative distance from mentors, compared to parents, may be an advantage during this phase of life that is often marked with parent-child conflict (Hirsch, Mickus, & Boerger, 2002). Mentors can also serve the needs of identity formation through modeling a successful transition into adulthood and also by seeing an adolescent for who he or she is. Study findings suggest that non-parental mentors complement parents, rather than substitute for them (Hamilton & Darling, 1996).

Bandura's (1997) work on self-efficacy can also be utilized to understand transformational relationships; he hypothesized that when success is reflected it will impact one's view of self-effectiveness, and in turn enhance motivation. The self-efficacy cycle enables one to master their environment; this is what both effective parents and mentors facilitate by making a person feel worthwhile and valued, modeling competent behavior, providing information and access to knowledge, and teaching competent behavior; providing guidance and constructive feedback, helping to avoid pitfalls, supporting new challenges, being advocates, and providing opportunities for competence and confidence-building experiences (Masten, 1994). For youth whose lives consist of focusing on surviving from day to day, there is little opportunity to build a vision of who they want to be, and thus it may feel futile to have dreams (Lefkowitz, 1986), but, as argued by Daniel Levinson (1978) in *Seasons of a Man's Life*, these dreams may

be critical for navigating a successful path into adulthood. Thus, a mentor may also be critical in such a youth's life by fostering the development of hope and a vision of the future, and helping to find one's way to it.

Erikson's (1993) psychosocial stage of identity vs. role confusion can also be used to understand the developmental view of mentoring. Specifically, as children transition from focal relationships with their parents to external relationship needs, the process of mentoring may become a natural developmental aspect in the stages between early childhood and young adulthood (Haensly & Parsons, 1993). Mentors may also play a role in the formation of identity, the primary task of adolescence. According to Erickson, this phase is the first time when youth conceptualize themselves and their future and seek someone to model. During this stage experimentation is seen to be critical, so youth often do not involve parents who may have set views of what they want for their child and discourage trial and error. Adolescents, according to Erikson, find it desirable to have an adult whom they can identify with, yet who can offer developmental opportunities. Having a negative parental role model can further instigate a greater need to seek out non-parental adult figures (Taylor, 1989). Also, the development of the internal world, including sense of self and the ability to engage with others, during Erikson's transitional stages is seen as critical and affects future relationship building if it is not met (Dallos & Comley-Ross, 2005). Further, Erikson's psychosocial stage of generativity vs. stagnation accounts for the role played by mentors in transformational relationships—specifically, the normative role of adults to take a special interest in a young person as a way of contributing to the world or leaving a legacy.

Attachment. Attachment theory is also helpful in explaining transformational relationships. Similar to Erikson's model, attachment theory focuses on development of trust as

a central task (Dallos & Comley-Ross, 2005). Bowlby (1982), a central exponent of attachment theory, hypothesized that there is an evolutionary need among humans to stay connected and attached to parents, and that sense of self is shaped by how these needs are met. Specifically, those with insecure attachments are more likely to develop mental health problems or antisocial behavior. In an exploratory study that examined young people's experience of mentoring, Dallos and Comly-Ross (2005) found that, although fractured attachments resulted in lack of trust and self respect, over time mentees were able to develop a sense of trust, through mentors providing genuine affection and consistent support, and could generalize this trust to other relationships. Another study, which followed African American adolescent mothers for two years after giving birth, found that those with enduring mentorships (lasting for at least two years) were more likely to report positive outcomes at the end of two years (Klaw, Rhodes, & Fitzgerald, 2003). Notably, participants with consistent mentorships identified their mentors as providing more emotional support than their mothers, and that these relationships were more important to them than that with their mother. These studies demonstrate the applicability of attachment theory to mentoring. The evidence of attachment in significant non-parent adult relationships has shown that youth take a long time to trust mentors, but then consider them a key person in their life (Dubois et al., 2002).

Object relations. Transformational relationships can also be understood from the perspective of psychoanalytic object relations theory. Internalized object representations develop from impactful lived experiences (Stadter, 1996). Over time, patterns of interactions are organized internally in order to help make sense of and respond to the world. When this internalization process goes astray, as when experiences are extreme, it can result in rigidly identifying objects/experiences as either all good or all bad, rather than recognizing the entirety

of an object or experience. Such internalized object relations are argued to often lead to seeking out connections that replicate disrupted/or dysfunctional interpersonal experiences, while other times idealized object relations are sought (Stadter, 1996). In the Spencer (2006) community-based study, descriptions of mentors were found to include positive terms, similar to what theorists describe as a good object, while participants seemed to lack experiences with such good objects prior to the mentoring relationship. Mentees also appeared to value characteristics in their mentor that embodied what a “good” parent might be like, which seemed to enable them to have the kind of relationship they had hoped for with their parent.

A unique perspective on transformational change, combining developmental and object-relations theories, is offered through cybernetics theory (Brown & Miller, 2004), which focuses on the necessity of structural change in the self. In order to change functioning, one must step outside of their habitual relational patterns. Cybernetics theory posits that in order to make this change an internal structural shift must occur (resulting from conflict or discontent), which ruptures the current system and opens the closed system to new input from an “other”—essentially opening up the self to connection. The new structure, according to this model, also opens the way for growth and development. An attachment is thus made with the other, and their influence is internalized by the experiencing individual to form a more complete self. Brown and Miller (2004) noted that with this comes a change in priorities, giving up on old objects and seeking a new organizing force that leads to a new purpose and direction.

Relational theory. Another view of transformational relationships is based on relational theories, which link psychological health to being engaged in positive relationships that foster growth. These theories entail the process of authenticity in the form of relational responsiveness—having access to each other’s inner world, sharing thoughts, feelings, and

intentions; empathy, through which both partners build relational competence; and the need of being meaningful to someone important (Spencer, 2006).

Relational-cultural theory (RCT), championed by Jean Baker Miller, also sees growth as occurring through relationships with others (Walker & Rosen, 2004). This theory emphasizes that throughout the lifespan people seek to connect with others, and psychological development occurs through increasingly complex relationships. Mental health and relational issues are seen as resulting from chronic disconnection (Sparks, 2004). Being in disempowering long-term relationships leads to distorted relational images, stifles one's ability to connect, and contributes to decreased self-worth. In addition, according to RCT, when feeling isolated, people will try to connect with whomever is closest by whatever means necessary, which provides one explanation of why troubled individuals may be attracted to involvement in gangs and crime. Thus, from this perspective, by contrast, positive transformational relationships might be seen as serving a role of providing a healthy reconnecting experience, by enabling an individual to be seen, heard, understood, and known again, and thus reigniting once-stunted psychological growth.

Social theory/supportiveness. Finally, from a sociological perspective, non-parental adults play an important role in certain cultures by helping youth form identities embedded in history and culture. One such example is the recent research supporting the importance of extended family for African American youth (Hirsch et al., 2002). Although early attachment influences supportiveness, it seems that later experiences can also shape these behaviors (Turner & Brown, 2009). Social support has been found to be protective by providing a sense of stability and permanence—specifically, by bolstering self-esteem under stress (Sandler, Miller, Short, & Wolchick, 1989). However, as noted in various studies, the perception of support, in particular knowing that someone loves you and thinks highly of you, appears to be critical for youth and is

one of the most protective elements against distress and depression (Turner & Brown, 2009). An important consideration regarding support comes from reactance theory, which predicts that if help in any way restricts an individual's freedom of choice then the helper will be resented (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985); this could explain the consistent finding that successful mentorships require a genuine and caring bond that feels very natural.

Chapter Summary

As noted, very limited research has focused on understanding transformational relationships. In addition, despite extensive research on both formal and informal mentoring, findings are inconsistent and often contradictory. The most promising findings have been consistent attributes of what mentees respond to in their relationships with mentors—this is especially true for natural mentorships. Such insight is useful but still insufficient for fully understanding what makes these relationships work.

Given the often contradictory and limited findings regarding mentoring effectiveness, many studies and reviews noted that a beneficial direction of future research would be a more in-depth analysis of such relationships, in order to identify what elements make them successful or ineffective (Klaw et al., 2003). In many instances of the literature reviewed, authors point towards, and often explicitly acknowledge, the need for a better understanding of transformational relationships. Some call for knowledge of specific processes at work in effective mentorships, and how such connections develop (Spencer, 2006), and one specifically noted that it would be “interesting to interview pairs of mentors and mentees” (Dallos & Comley-Ross, 2005, p. 382) to understand the evolution of their relationship. This undertaking—understanding transformational relationships in more depth, by interviewing both participants in such pairings—is the aim of the following study.

Chapter 3: Methods

There has been limited research focused explicitly on transformational relationships to date. Although relevant studies have been conducted in the area of mentoring, conclusions regarding the effectiveness of mentoring relationships are still unclear. One common theme within mentoring research is a call for a deeper understanding of those mentoring relationships that have seemingly made a significant positive impact on the mentee's life. This dissertation explores apparently transformational mentoring relationships, including the experience of both people involved, with the objective of identifying common variables in these life-changing connections.

Due to the limited research on transformational relationships (outside of the therapeutic environment) and the lack of in-depth understanding of what occurs in such relationships, this dissertation uses an exploratory inductive approach, in which in-depth interview data is examined through phenomenological qualitative analysis. This strategy of empirical phenomenological inquiry (Creswell, 2012) enables detailed exploration of transformational relationship experiences, and identification of patterns and commonalities amongst the experiences, in the hope of capturing the essence of these significant connections. Due to the limited time and resources available, it is beyond the scope of this study to use grounded theory qualitative analysis, which would lead to generating a theory for the commonalities. The scope of data analyzed in this study allows exploration of what makes transformational relationships possible; but committing to generating a theory would require greater breadth of data, ensuring that all configurations of such relationships are included. However, such a broad study could be the focus of further research.

Participants

The sample consisted of 11 mentee and mentor pairs, as well as two mentors and two mentees whose pair partner did not end up participating. For the purposes of this study, a mentor is defined as a non-parent adult who had a significant presence and an enduring interpersonal relationship with the mentee, and to whom the mentee would turn for guidance; most importantly, the mentees in this study identified the relationship with the mentor as facilitating positive transformation in the mentee's life. Although it is difficult to bracket transformational relationships, to ensure that this study captures experiences that are similar in nature (Cone & Foster, 2003), some specific criteria was used to identify the type of relationships examined: (a) the mentor or mentoring relationship was identified by the mentee as having significantly changed their life for the better; (b) the mentor was identified as being a significant positive figure in the mentee's life; (c) and the mentee's life before and after the transformation met at least three pre-mentorship and post-mentorship criteria respectively (see Appendix A). The pre and post-mentorship criteria are each relevant because they are indicators of whether someone is on a positive or negative life course; they include vision of the future, education/employment status, working towards positive goals, hopefulness, self-responsibility, engaging in criminal activity, self-care, confidence, and involvement in positive relationships.

Due to the difficulty of finding informal, naturally occurring mentor-mentee pairs, participants were recruited primarily from established community mentoring programs. This recruitment method also allowed the agency to facilitate connections to potential participants. Although focusing on a few agencies decreased the randomization and limits the generalizability of the study, discrepancies found were less likely due to major differences such as geography or program structure. Participants were also recruited via "word-of-mouth," whereby someone who

is familiar with the study provided the researcher's contact details to individuals who were qualified for and interested in participating in the study. Participants were recruited primarily from mentoring agencies in the Chicago area and Vermont. The participants represented male-male and female-female pairings from a range of racial and ethnic backgrounds. Mentee participants were all over the age of 18 at the time of interview. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants were informed of their rights and limits to confidentiality. Institutional Review Board approval was received from all agencies involved in the study (as applicable) before proceeding with the sampling process and interviews.

Procedures

Qualitative interviews were used to gather data from the participants. Specifically, a semi-structured interview format was employed in which a limited set of scripted questions (see Appendix B) was asked as a general framework to guide the interview content. However, the responses of each participant were fluidly explored after each question, through follow-up questions, in order to excavate what was most important and meaningful for the participant. This fluid interview format facilitated exploration of what was most salient for the mentors and mentees in their experiences, and thus enabled access to the common and critical elements in transformational relationships.

Participants were primarily recruited by mentoring organizations that agreed to facilitate recruitment for the study by sending a flyer (see Appendix C), along with a letter describing the study, to potential participants. The flyer included a brief description of the study, issues of confidentiality, mention of a gift certificate for participation, and contact information for registering interest in participating. Participants were given the option to contact the researcher by phone or email to enable ease of contact, maintain anonymity, and provide a forum for asking

questions by whatever means was most comfortable. The voicemail message for the phone number provided had a scripted message (see Appendix D), which included instructions for leaving contact details, advised prospective participants that the voicemail is confidential, and committed to a prompt response.

The first contact with a prospective participant included a description of the study, details about the interview process, expectations (including time commitment), and some screening questions (see Appendix E). Limited qualifications needed to be met, including that both the mentor and mentee were over 18, that they were both available and willing to participate in the study, and that the criteria for a transformational relationship was satisfied (see Appendix A). If any of these qualifications were not met, the prospective participant was advised as soon as possible. If only one party (the mentor or mentee) expressed interest or provided consent for participation in the study, and the other did not, then the participant was thanked for his/her interest, reminded that the study involves interviewing both parties in the relationship, and advised that he/she can only participate in the study if the other party does as well. If the participant met the required criteria and was interested in participating in the study after the initial discussion, an interview time and location was set up and further details about the interview were provided (including advising that the duration of the interview would be approximately one hour). The researcher tracked participant interest, as well as all contact with the participant throughout the study. Interviews were held in a quiet and conducive environment (such as the respective agency or local public areas), or over the phone if meeting was not possible due to geographic or scheduling constraints. At this stage, participants were informed of confidentiality, that the interview would be taped, and that the researcher would conduct all

interviews. A confirmation notice was sent to the participant with interview details (see Appendix F) by their preferred method of communication (text, email, or mail).

Each person in the mentor/mentee pair was interviewed in isolation, in order to minimize the possibility of responses being influenced by one another. At the beginning of the scheduled interview, the consent form (see Appendix G) was provided to the participant and discussed in detail, including: describing who will have access to the interview data, what will happen to tapes and transcripts after the interview, and how transcripts will be coded to ensure confidentiality. The researcher reminded the participant at this time that the interview will be taped and described how the participant's confidentiality will be protected, including eliminating identifying information from the transcript. Once the participant was comfortable with and signed the consent form, the researcher described the interview procedure, reminding the participant that they are free to not respond to questions and can withdraw from the study at any time.

The researcher employed a semi-structured interview approach, using customized, predetermined questions focused on understanding key variables in transformational relationships to guide the interview (see Appendix B). The researcher used an open, active listening style, encouraging in-depth and detailed responses while avoiding influencing or guiding the participant. The fluid nature of the interview, including using follow-up questions based on individual responses, helped to build rapport with the participants and enabled the gathering of meaningful data. The interviews were recorded on an audio-recording device. At the end of the interview, participants were given a gift certificate for their participation in the study. The participant was then informed when to expect receipt of the study findings (if they expressed such an interest). Taped interviews were transcribed by the researcher after the

interviews, and both tapes and transcripts were coded with a participant number rather than identifying information. In instances in which an interview recording was incomplete (for example, if the recording device stopped recording for a period of time), hand-written, non-verbatim notes taken by the interviewer during the lapsed time were used. Any material used from the interviewer's notes in the analysis was clearly identified. Consent forms were secured separately from transcripts or tapes, as was the participant-coding list. All of the interview-related data was retained in password-encoded files in secure, password-protected locations.

Analysis of Data

The data in this study was obtained using semi-structured in-depth interviews. The data was then analyzed using an empirical phenomenological approach. First, each interview was analyzed to identify meaningful statements, in which the content and/or affect of what the interviewee shared seemed significant. Once the meaningful statements were identified, they were coded first according to categories, which were delineated either by the content or the question that led to that response. An example of a category is “most valued element in relationship” —this category encompassed any interview content that included such details, or by responses to questions such as, “What was most important or most meaningful for you in the relationship?” These categories were used as initial groupings of responses.

Once responses were grouped into categories, they were then coded according to themes. One response could have several themes. For example, the following statement:

...It was totally different because before...[I] just didn't have [any]one come out of the blue and...take care of [me]. You [have] to earn to take care of someone, so that's what he did...kept on coming and seeing me, and as time [went] on, he earned a lot of respect from me...

falls within the category “what made this relationship different from others” and includes themes of (a) “mentor showing genuine care,” and (b) “mentor earning mentee’s respect through consistency.” Once themes of all meaningful responses were identified, they were grouped together into various subthemes, which fall under larger global themes. Examples of responses that are grouped together into the subtheme of “treating mentee with respect” are: (a) “...He would talk to me with respect...which I like... I really I love respect. I started to trust him with some secrets and stuff...he wouldn’t tell nobody...I can just tell him, I felt comfortable...” and (b) “It was nice because [Mentor] was never judging...and she was always patient.” In turn, this subtheme was grouped with the subtheme “belief in and encouragement of the mentee,” to form the broader theme group, “affirmation of the mentee.” Once the coded statements were grouped into broader categories they were analyzed by mentee responses, mentor responses, and the convergence of these themes by pairings. Finally, all the categories were summarized in order to establish any patterns in transformational relationship experiences in response to the research question.

The goal of this exploration was to better understand relationships that have proven to be life changing. Although a specific hypothesis was not tested, these transformational relationships were explored in the hope of illuminating common key variables or processes that could be further investigated in larger or more focused studies.

Chapter 4: Results

A total of 26 participants were interviewed for the study, including 11 mentor-mentee pairs, and four participants (two mentees and two mentors) whose pair counterparts initially expressed interest in the study but did not follow through with setting up an interview time. Participants were primarily recruited through agency-directed contact. Three agencies had expressed interest in the study and assisted with recruiting participants. Two of these agencies sent out fliers along with a letter describing the study to former mentees (who had graduated from the mentoring program) and their mentors—the mentees and mentors then contacted the researcher to set up an interview time. A third agency gathered prospective participants who were still in the program (and over 18 years of age) by verbally telling them about the study and setting up a day for the study interviews to take place. Finally, two pairs were recruited by word-of-mouth, whereby they learned about the study from receiving the study information directly, and then they contacted the researcher expressing interest in participation.

All of the interviewed pairs were matched through a formal mentoring or tutoring program, with the exception of one pair who had an informal mentorship that began as a student-teacher relationship. Table 1 shows the pair data, how they met, how they found out about the study, and the duration of the mentoring relationship (defined by maintaining regular and frequent contact). Table 2 shows the demographic information for the mentees and mentors at the time of their mentoring relationship, including age, gender, race, SES, and occupation (for mentors). All of the mentees were matched with or met their mentors between the ages of 9–16, while mentors ranged in age from 18 to over 60 at the time of pairing. While all the mentees came from backgrounds of low SES, the mentors were mostly of middle to high SES and included a wide range of occupations, including working in a corporate environment, teaching,

college students, and mentoring as a profession. The formal component of the mentoring relationships (while the pair was still under the oversight of a program and keeping in regular contact, as applicable) lasted from 1–9 years. Regardless of the nature of the relationship, and how they met, all pairs are still in some form of contact to this day, and several have an ongoing mentoring relationship (having regular and frequent contact).

Table 1

Pair Data – Mentorship Type, Referral Source, Duration

Pair	Mentorship Type ^a	Study Referral	Duration (Years) ^b
A	1:1 formal mentoring program	Mentoring agency	7+
B	1:1 formal mentoring program	Mentoring agency	4+
C	1:1 formal mentoring program	Mentoring agency	3+
D	1:1 tutoring program	Word of mouth	4+
E	No program - teacher-student relationship	Word of mouth	25 (cont'd)
F	1:1 formal mentoring program	Mentoring agency	7+
G	1:1+team based formal mentoring program	Mentoring agency	1 (cont'd)
H	1:1+team based formal mentoring program	Mentoring agency	6 (cont'd)
I	1:1+team based formal mentoring program	Mentoring agency	4 (cont'd)
J	1:1+team based formal mentoring program	Mentoring agency	3+
K	1:1+team based formal mentoring program	Mentoring agency	4+
<i>mentor only 1</i>	<i>1:1 formal mentoring program</i>	<i>Mentoring agency</i>	<i>9+</i>
<i>mentor only 2</i>	<i>1:1 formal mentoring program</i>	<i>Mentoring agency</i>	<i>5+</i>
<i>mentee only 1</i>	<i>1:1+team based formal mentoring program</i>	<i>Mentoring agency</i>	<i>4+</i>
<i>mentee only 2</i>	<i>1:1+team based formal mentoring program</i>	<i>Mentoring agency</i>	<i>3+</i>

Note. Italicized rows mean that only one member of the pair completed an interview.

^a1:1 means pair was matched in a one-on-one relationship through a mentoring or tutoring program; 1:1+team based means support to mentee was provided through a team approach, in addition to having a primary one-on-one mentoring relationship

^b+ means the pair is still in contact, although they do not see each other on a regular basis; (cont'd) means the mentoring relationship continues, including regular and frequent contact

Table 2

Mentee and Mentor Demographics

Pair	Mentor					Mentee			
	Sex	Age	Race	SES	Occupation	Sex	Age	Race	SES
A	M	55+	Caucasian	M to H	Retired	M	11–18, then informally	African American	L
B	F	25–35	Caucasian	M to H	Business	F	14–18, then informally	Caucasian	L
C	M	35–45	Caucasian	M to H	Business	M	9–12, then informally	Hispanic	L
D	F	25–35	Caucasian	M to H	Business	F	12–16, then informally	African American	L
E	M	55+	Caucasian	M	Teacher	M	10 onwards (35 today)	African American	L
F	M	25–35	Caucasian / African American	M to H	Business	M	9–16, then informally	Caucasian	L
G	M	35–45	Hispanic	L to M	Mentor	M	17–18 (continued)	Hispanic	L
H	M	35–45	Hispanic	L to M	Mentor	M	13–19 (continued)	Hispanic	L
I	M	45–55	Hispanic	L to M	Mentor	M	16–20 (continued)	Hispanic	L
J	F	18–25	Caucasian	M	College Student	F	14–17, then informally	Caucasian	L
K	F	18–25	Caucasian	M	College Student	F	16–18, then informally	Caucasian	L
<i>mentor1</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>55+</i>	<i>Caucasian</i>	<i>M to H</i>	<i>Retired</i>				
<i>mentor2</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>35–45</i>	<i>Caucasian</i>	<i>M to H</i>	<i>Business</i>				
<i>mentee1</i>						<i>F</i>	<i>10–14, then informally</i>	<i>Caucasian</i>	<i>L</i>
<i>mentee2</i>						<i>F</i>	<i>15–18, then informally</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>L</i>

Pairs qualified for the study by the mentee identifying that his/her experience with the mentor was transformational. In addition, pre-mentorship and post-mentorship criteria were used (see Appendix A) to determine whether the mentee exhibited a positive transformation—these were ascertained when a prospective participant expressed interest in participating in the study, if possible, or confirmed during the interview. The pre and post-mentorship criteria for each mentee (from each full pair) are listed in Table 3.

Table 3

<i>Mentee Transformation Criteria</i>											
	Pair										
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Before Transformational Relationship											
Very limited vision of future		X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X
Drop out of school and unemployed										X	
Not working towards any positive goals				X		X		X	X		
Hopelessness/apathy	X	X	X				X		X		X
Criminal activity/delinquency/severe recklessness								X	X		
Heavy substance use										X	
Severe insecurity/lack of sense of self	X				X	X	X			X	X
Absence of positive stable relationships	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
After Transformational Relationship											
Positive vision of future	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Working towards positive goals	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hopeful/Active in managing own life	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Good self-care											
Confident/strong sense of self	X	X	X		X	X				X	X
Stable, positive relationships (beyond mentorship)		X	X								X
No longer involved in crime								X	X		
Has re-enrolled in and is on track to completing school									X		
Has long-term employment or educational prospects	X	X		X	X		X		X	X	X

This chapter presents the results of the interviews with mentees and mentors, based on the recorded and transcribed interviews. First, the process of analyzing the mentee interviews will be presented, followed by a thematic analysis of the mentee experiences. Then the same process, describing how interviews were analyzed followed by a thematic analysis of their content, will be repeated for the mentor interviews. Finally, the narratives of each pairing will be reviewed separately to compare the mentee’s and mentor’s experience in each pair. Names of participants and any other identifying information have been changed or removed to protect identities.

Mentee Interview Analysis—1st Batch

The first round of analysis of mentee interviews focused on the first three completed mentee interviews (from pairs A, B, and D). First, the content of these interviews was reviewed

in detail, and any significant passages (which included heightened emotion or affect, language that seemed to signify a particularly important event or thought, or comments about the mentoring relationship) were highlighted. As passages were reviewed, they were tagged with the general topic of the narrative. These topics were then compiled and coded into broad groupings, constructed by first gathering remarks that clearly mapped onto one another, and then extracting their main focus. Initially, the groupings focused on topics and included the following: relationship qualities, evolution of relationship, how mentor became a significant part of mentee's life, what was learned from mentor, how things were learned from mentor, most important element in mentoring relationship, perception/influence of mentor, difference from other relationships, impact on development, and general thoughts about mentoring.

Then, within these topic categories, each passage was reviewed again and coded according to themes that emerged in the narrative—specifically, this analysis focused on salient patterns throughout the passages, regardless of what topic they touched upon. For example, the initial grouping topic of “relationship qualities” included the mentor being committed and being trustworthy, which were also themes that emerged in the “difference from other relationships” topics. The purpose of moving the analysis to themes from topic groupings was to shift the focus from content type to ingredients of the relationships. The themes that emerged, once collapsed into high-level groupings, were: (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Affirmation of Mentee, (c) Positive Sharing, (d) Role Model, and (e) Elements of Transformation. In addition, there was an added element of the mentee's family being supportive of the mentoring relationship. Subcategories or themes exist within these larger groupings.

Commitment and Caring includes (a) focus on mentee and mentee's needs, (b) consistency of relationship—always being there for mentee, earning mentee's respect through

consistency, (c) support initiated by mentor, wanting to help mentee, being involved in mentee's life proactively, taking an interest in mentee's life, being able to rely on mentor, (d) commitment—being engaged in mentee's life, being dedicated to relationship, (e) genuinely caring about mentee, and (f) being involved with mentee beyond required contact (including helping mentee's family through difficult times).

The theme of Affirmation of Mentee includes (a) mentor's belief in mentee, including having confidence in mentee's abilities, seeing potential/good in mentee, seeing value in mentee and his/her enjoyment, (b) mentor's encouragement of mentee, including hoping and pushing for mentee to do better, being the mentee's cheerleader, pointing out qualities, enabling/directing mentee to new experiences, and (c) the mentor treating mentee with respect, including not judging mentee, being patient, not treating mentee like a child.

Positive Sharing includes (a) enjoyment of time with mentor, which includes generally a positive energy, such as the mentor being a positive person/focusing on positive things, sharing common interests, the time together being fun/novel and peaceful/stable, having time focused on mentee, getting out of the home environment, and (b) the mentor sharing his/her life with mentee, which includes introducing the mentee to his/her family, bringing mentee into his/her home and sharing his/her interests, the relationship being respectful and somewhat reciprocal, whereby the mentor shares aspects of him/herself.

The thematic grouping of being a Role Model encompassed the mentor acting as role model—teaching implicitly through actions and lived example, learning by experiencing a different reality with mentor, the mentee respecting and appreciating the mentor's life beyond their relationship, importance of knowing mentor, mentor being a good person/intelligent/capable, hoping to be like the mentor, the mentor helping the mentee to handle

things better, leading mentee to awareness of others and new possibilities.

Finally, the theme of elements of Transformation included internal and external aspects of transformation. Internal aspects included (a) the relationship impacting mentee's perspective, and (b) changes within mentee during relationship—such as desire for independence, consolidation of learning from mentoring experience, wanting to experience/learn rather than be protected, becoming independent and self-reliant, making own decisions, being assertive, looking at success differently, feeling like have purpose/value, being and wanting to be a better person, being less anxious/worried, valuing/believing in self, wanting to do well for mentor, making life easier, awareness (both within and beyond self), and courage. While external transformation was noted through (c) deepening relationship/ trust over time—initial skepticism, increased trust/closeness/openness/comfort over time, realizing relationship was a constant part of life, confidentiality leading to increased trust, valuing relationship by keeping memorable items in safe keeping, and (d) that the relationship impacted mentee's approach to others/life—transformed view of relationships through experience with mentor, understood what it is like to have a healthy relationship, different/opened perspective on people/life, realizing it is okay to need others, improved academic/school attitude and performance, improved interpersonal relationships and skills, hopeful of future/seeing possibilities, life-changing, grateful for relationship, seeing importance of mentoring, trying to help others not go through what mentee themselves has experienced, and the mentee becoming a mentor to others.

Mentee Interview Analysis—2nd Batch

The process for analyzing the mentee interviews was then repeated for the remaining 10 mentees (this included two mentees whose mentors did not end up participating in the study).

The analysis of significant passages from the 2nd batch of mentee interviews followed the method

for the 1st batch. The identical approach was applied, while ignoring the results of the first batch, in order to test the reliability of the categories and theme groupings that emerged from the 1st batch.

The independent analysis of the 2nd batch of mentee interviews resulted in the same topic categories and content themes, with one additional significant theme emerging: the mentoring relationship as a Unique and/or Needed Experience in the mentee's life. Beyond this additional theme, expansions of or alterations to existing themes emerged from the second analysis. The theme of Commitment and Caring expanded to include creating an environment for the mentee to talk and share. The Positive Sharing theme changed to "Involvement" with the mentee, which included having a reciprocal relationship in which the mentee and mentor are a significant part of each other's lives. Affirmation of Mentee changed to "Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee," which expanded to include dealing with difficult situations in a direct and honest manner, while still treating the mentee with respect. Within the Role Model theme, the mentor providing learning, new opportunities, and a different perspective to the mentee also emerged as a significant component. Table 4 (p. 45) shows the theme frequency by grouping and subgrouping for mentees.

Mentor Interview Analysis—1st Batch

As with the 1st batch of the mentee interviews, the mentor interviews were first analyzed using the first three mentor interviews (from pairs A, B, and D). Again, identical to the 1st batch of mentee interview analysis, the content of these interviews was first reviewed in detail, and all significant passages were highlighted. These passages were then compiled and coded into broad groupings. As with the mentee pairs, passages were tagged with the general topic of the narrative and these topics were then compiled and coded into broad groupings, constructed by

first gathering remarks that clearly mapped onto one another and then extracting their main focus. Initially, the groupings focused on topics and included the following: mentee's engagement, effort/investment in relationship, mentee's reaction to mentor, establishing connection, trust/mentee opening up, continued contact, how treated mentee/approached relationship, what was most important about the relationship to mentor, perception/thoughts of mentee, perception of impact on mentee's life, other influences on mentee's life, role in mentee's life, and changes in mentee over time.

Then, within these topic categories, each passage was reviewed again and coded with themes that emerged. The themes that emerged, once collapsed into high-level groupings, were for the most part the same as mentee theme groupings: (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Affirmation of Mentee, (c) Positive Sharing, (d) Role Model, and (e) Elements of Transformation. However, there was an added grouping of the mentor (f) Contextualizing the Relationship, which included the mentor engaging with the mentee's family, if possible, and/or recognizing the mentee's environment. As with the mentee analysis, there were subcategories or themes identified within these larger groupings.

Commitment and Caring encompassed (a) contact and presence—being consistent, available, and reliable—includes frequent contact, checking in with mentee, having continued and consistent interest in the mentee's life, spending time with the mentee, providing consistent support, investing significant time, staying in touch/continuing to be involved in mentee's life after the formal match (as applicable), being present, being committed, (b) placing a high importance on the relationship, their role and trust—wanting to do the right thing for the mentee and never wanting to let the mentee down, understanding the importance of confidentiality, (c) concern for the mentee, including looking out for the mentee's future, facilitating mentee's

independence over time, enabling opportunities for mentee/investing in mentee's growth/future, helping mentee achieve goals, supporting mentee's growth through education and activities, and (d) going beyond the mentor role was a distinct subcategory, including supporting mentee in daily life needs, using own resources to support mentee's family when needed, being willing to become involved in mentee's life, seeking further support for mentee, acting in a parent role if required (such as attending school meetings), and considering self to be an extension of mentee's family.

The theme of Affirmation of Mentee included (a) recognition of mentee's attributes, character, struggles—including recognizing mentee's strengths, talents, weaknesses, and growth; observing mentee's struggles and difficulties; and noticing mentee's qualities, character, personality, and approach, and (b) considering interests of mentee, and recognizing that the relationship is about the mentee—including participating in activities important to mentee, supporting mentee's interests/activities enjoyed by mentee, providing a fun place for mentee, considering how they can connect with mentee, observant of mentee's needs and interests, and showing an interest in the mentee's life.

Positive Sharing included (a) enjoying spending time with mentee—seeking out and engaging in common interests, enjoying seeing mentee do well, genuinely liking mentee, enjoying having impact on mentee, feeling that mentee is enjoying time and putting effort into relationship, appreciating the relationship, recognizing mentee's contribution to relationship, and (b) sharing own life with mentee, including opening up own family to mentee, and having mentor's family directly engage with and support mentee.

The thematic grouping of Role Model included being a role model, teacher, friend—including providing guidance, wanting to make a positive difference in mentee's life, seeking to

teach mentee life skills, providing constructive yet supportive feedback to mentee while acknowledging mentee's feelings, helping mentee navigate difficult situations, providing mentee different perspectives, not giving advice, not pressuring mentee to talk about things, working through problems together, gently encouraging mentee to share by asking about difficult situations, letting mentee bring things up, being a positive influence, using experiences as learning opportunities, giving feedback without judging/putting mentee down, using challenging times as learning experiences, helping mentee become independent, encouraging mentee's resourcefulness/self-reliance, being helpful while supporting mentee to grow.

Elements of Transformation encompassed such observations as the mentee sharing/opening up more, becoming less awkward, and becoming more independent over time.

Finally, the unique mentor thematic group of the mentor Contextualizing the Relationship, included (a) the mentor engaging with the mentee's family by having contact/engaging with the mentee's family, working with the mentee's family to support the mentee, being cognizant of dynamics between him or herself and the mentee's family, the mentee's family supporting mentoring relationship and recognizing it as significant, and (b) recognizing the mentee's environment, including positive and negative influences in the mentee's life, being aware of the mentee's family and home environment and other systemic variables, observing the mentee's life and relationships, awareness of the mentee's support network, or lack of it, appreciating the mentee's challenges, crediting the mentee's family and other influences with positive impact on the mentee, and meeting the mentee where he/she is at regarding recognizing his/her own environment/family situation.

Mentor Interview Analysis—2nd Batch

As with the mentee interviews, the process for analyzing the mentor interviews was then

repeated for the remaining 10 mentors (this included two mentors whose mentees did not end up participating in the study), and the analysis of significant passages from the 2nd batch of mentor interviews followed the method for the 1st batch. The identical approach was followed, while ignoring the results of the first batch, in order to test the reliability of the categories and theme groupings that emerged.

The independent analysis of the 2nd batch of mentor interviews resulted in the same topic categories and content themes, with one additional significant theme emerging: the mentoring relationship as a Unique and/or Needed Experience in the mentee's life. Beyond this additional theme, expansions of or alterations to existing themes emerged from the second analysis. The Positive Sharing theme changed to "Involvement" with the mentee, which included being grateful for benefits of the relationship. Affirmation of Mentee changed to "Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee," which was expanded to include treating the mentee with respect/like an equal and being accepting of mentee and mentee's feelings. Within the Role Model theme, the mentor introducing new experiences/perspectives to the mentee and questioning own impact on mentee also emerged as a significant component. Table 4 shows the theme frequency by grouping and subgrouping for mentors.

Thus, the final themes that emerged, and will be used for the pair analysis, were: (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) Contextualizing the Relationship (mentor only), (f) relationship as a Unique Experience, and (g) Transformation.

Table 4

Theme Frequency for Mentees and Mentors

Theme	Mentees (13 Mentees; 409 Statements)				Mentor (13 Mentors; 534 Statements)			
	# of mentees	% of mentees*	# of stmts	% of stmts**	# of mentors	% of mentors*	# of stmts	% of stmts**
Commitment and Caring	13	100%	112	27%	13	100%	130	24%
Consistency, support, commitment	13		76		13		76	
Mentor going above & beyond	4		5		8		26	
Space for mentee to talk/share	9		31					
Concern for mentee/ future					7		28	
Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee	13	100%	42	10%	13	100%	114	21%
Belief in/ encouragement of mentee	13		20		6		14	
Mentor treats mentee with respect	8		19		5		13	
Recognizes mentee's attributes, struggles	2		3		12		43	
Accepting of mentee/mentee's feelings					10		44	
Involvement	13	100%	59	14%	13	100%	109	20%
Significant part of each others' lives	8		18		11		30	
Enjoying time together	13		41		11		52	
Grateful for/benefits from relationship					7		27	
Role Model	13	100%	70	17%	13	100%	77	14%
Learning from mentor	12		48		11		54	
Providing new opportunities/perspectives	9		22		7		11	
Questions own impact on mentee					8		12	
Transformation	13	100%	76	19%	11	85%	27	5%
External transformation	7		27		6		15	
Internal transformation	11		45		8		12	
"Life-changing"/general transformation	3		4					
Unique Experience	13	100%	50	12%	7	54%	16	3%
Relationship as unique experience	13		48		7		13	
Race not issue	2		2		2		3	
Contextualizing the Relationship (mentor)					13	100%	61	11%
Mentor engaging with mentee's family					7		17	
Mentor recognizing mentee's environment					13		44	

*Percentage of number of mentees or mentors that spoke about each theme. E.g., 54% of mentors (7 of 13) spoke about unique experience

**Percentage of mentee or total mentor statements that included each theme. E.g., 24% of mentor statements (130 of 534) were about caring and commitment

Pair Analysis

Pair A. Andy and Al were matched through a formal mentoring program when Andy was 11 years old. Andy, an African American youngster who came from a background of low socioeconomic status (SES) and lived with his grandmother, had infrequent access to his drug-addicted mother and never knew his father. He had few positive male adult role models, and so he was matched with Al, a retired Caucasian male, through a mentoring program for seven years.

Andy noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) Unique Experience, and (f) Transformation. Specifically, in terms of Commitment and Caring, Andy shared that Al was always there for him, that the relationship was consistent, which earned Andy's respect, and that he felt Al genuinely cared for him. Andy also spoke about Involvement, including enjoying spending time with his mentor, and that the relationship was reciprocal in terms of respect and sharing each other's lives to some extent. Affirmation/Recognition also seemed important to Andy, including that Al had treated him with respect and saw potential and good in Andy. Andy also placed a great deal of emphasis throughout the interview on Al as a Role Model—he spoke about Al teaching him implicitly through actions, "...it was natural...his interactions with me taught me...without him knowing that he taught me these things..." He also discussed the example of how Al lived his own life, the importance of knowing Al, and how much he respected and appreciated Al's life beyond their relationship. Further, Andy shared that his relationship with Al was a Unique Experience:

It was totally different because before...[I] just didn't have [any]one come out of the blue and...take care of [me]. You [have] to earn to take care of someone, so that's what he

did...kept on coming and seeing me, and as time [went] on, he earned a lot of respect from me.

Finally, Andy focused most (measured by the number of times a theme came up) on the theme of Transformation. He discussed at great length the changes within himself during the relationship, including seeking to become more independent, wanting to use all that he had learned, becoming self-reliant, making his own decisions, having an increased awareness of both self and others, and being a better person: “[Al] saw better in me, I think that’s what changed me because he saw something better in me. I think that [brought] out the better person.” He also spoke about how the relationship impacted his perspective and approach to others and life, including improving his academic performance and interpersonal relationships. Andy spoke about the importance of mentoring, and how he himself now acts as a natural mentor to his peers. Andy also reported evidence of a deepening relationship, as demonstrated by his self-reported initial skepticism that was followed by developing trust and comfort with the relationship over time, as Al exhibited trustworthiness and confidentiality.

As Andy’s mentor, Al noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) Contextualizing the Relationship, and (f) Transformation. Specifically, Al focused most on Commitment and Caring, including contact and presence (spending time with Andy, being consistent, staying in touch post-match, being present and committed), and placing a high importance on the relationship, which is evidenced in his statement,

I would never let a kid down. I would never. That’s one of the things people ask me when they’re considering being [a mentor]—you’re committed. This is not a throwaway after a few months or a year. You have to have a hell of a reason not to continue it.

He also focused a great deal on going beyond the role of mentor, including seeing himself as part of Andy's extended family by getting involved in Andy's day-to-day life, helping his family not get evicted, using his own resources to support Andy's family, and taking on a parent role as required, such as in school meetings:

I attended parent-teacher meetings...to see what kind of plan they had for him in terms of progressing and behavior, and focus...this may sound a little racist but I really believe that when those counselors at school saw a white face that was helping this kid it wasn't just a grandmother on her own, you know, one more poor African American family that gets set aside...And I think many of those families are stereotyped so maybe having, you know, a middle-aged white male saying, hey this guy is important to me, could make just a little difference in his life.

In terms of Involvement, Al discussed having common interests with Andy, enjoying their time together, genuinely liking Andy, Andy being accepting of Al's involvement in his life, and bringing Andy into his own family regularly:

...It's a relationship about the two of you. But I did have [Andy] over at the house a few times. He met my wife, he met some of my kids...and I think he felt a little closer through that connection...

Al also discussed Affirmation/Recognition of his mentee, including acknowledging Andy's attributes, character, talents, and weaknesses, as well as how important it was to focus on Andy's interests and what is most important to him in order to establish a connection. Al was also focused on being a Role Model by wanting to make a positive difference in Andy's life, not pressuring him to talk, discussing challenging situations, not giving advice, but instead working through problems together, providing another perspective, and setting a positive example. Al

also put forth effort to Contextualize the Relationship by maintaining regular and frequent contact with Andy's grandmother, working with her to support him, and noticing that she supported the mentoring relationship. He also recognized Andy's environment, influences, relationships, and systemic variables, acknowledging their impact and importance. Finally, regarding the theme of Transformation, Al noted that Andy had opened up and shared more over time.

For this pair it seems that they both recognized the importance of Commitment and Caring, Involvement, Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, the mentor being a Role Model, and Transformation in the mentee. The most salient aspect for the mentee was his Transformation. Specifically, he focused a great deal on the importance of taking what he learned from Al and becoming independent:

...He did what he was supposed to do...as a mentor he pointed me in the right direction I needed...because I graduated from high school...so he put me in the right direction, so I knew it was time to cut that... leash between us...It's not that I didn't want to be his friend, but...out of respect for him too...he has his own things to deal with, so now it's my time to grow up and do what I have to do to be successful in life...I can't have [Al] always holding my hand every time...I have to let go of his hand and grow up.

Whereas for the mentor the most salient theme was the Commitment and Caring invested in the relationship, as he most emphatically focused on going above and beyond the typical expectations of the mentor role:

There were some very unusual things...where...I felt the need to enter in their lives very demonstratively, and immediately...I think in these kinds of relationships, as a mentor, you have to expect some of the unexpected, and be prepared that it's going to happen and

you may have to take another step that doesn't fall in the traditional mentor-mentee relationship, at the very least make some phone calls, do something, because you're relied upon by the family, as somebody that may have some influence or may have some knowledge of the situation, you just can't be put into a box and assume this is my role...Or at least find some resources to help them.

Pair B. Brittany and Beth were matched through a formal mentoring program when Brittany was 14 years old. Brittany, a Caucasian girl from a background of low SES, who took care of her three younger siblings, had little support from her working mother while her father had been sent to jail for abuse. She had few positive female adult role models, and so she was matched with Beth, a marketer in her mid twenties, through a mentoring program for four years.

Brittany noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) Unique Experience, and (f) Transformation. Specifically, Brittany noted that Beth was focused on Commitment and Caring by being consistent and engaged. In terms of Involvement, Brittany spoke about enjoying spending time with Beth, because she was a positive person to be with, they had common interests, and that it was a fun, novel, peaceful, and stable time that was focused on Brittany and allowed for an escape from her home environment:

I was actually a social hermit a lot through...high school...just because I took care of my siblings a lot and my mom was at work all the time...So I had basically no free time, and the fact that I got to spend some time outside with someone who wasn't asking me to do stuff all the time was just magical for me. It kind of made me feel like, oh wow, I have purpose besides taking care of other human beings!

Affirmation/Recognition of the Mentee also seemed important to Brittany by Beth valuing Brittany and her enjoyment and treating Brittany with respect by not judging her and being patient with her. Brittany also discussed Beth as being a positive Role Model and referred to her as “one good influence in life.” She said that Beth taught her by her lived example, and that she learned by experiencing a different reality with Beth, who also expanded Brittany’s awareness of others and herself. Brittany acknowledged that her relationship with Beth was a Unique Experience, sharing how impactful it was to have a “normal” relationship, compared to the others in her life, and that she was able to connect with Beth differently than she had with anyone else. Finally, Brittany focused most (measured by the number of times the theme emerged) on Transformation. She discussed at great length the changes within herself during the relationship, including being more assertive, courageous, aware, less anxious, feeling like she had a purpose and value, valuing herself, and having a redefined notion of success. She also spoke about how the relationship impacted her perspective and approach to others and life, including transforming her view of relationships:

Seeing her relationship with her husband was really important for me...because looking back I don’t think I had very many adults in my life, in my childhood that had functional marriages and functional relationships at all. And I saw my mom date these people that were either abusive or just not good for her in other ways...That was definitely transformative in the way I viewed relationships later on. I think that was the biggest impact she made on my life.

In addition, Brittany shared that being with Beth helped her to understand what it is like to have a healthy relationship (after experiencing one with her), have a different and more open perspective on people and life, improve her academic performance, and instigated a desire to

help others not go through what she had. She also spoke about how grateful she was for the relationship and called it “life-changing.” Throughout the interview there was also evidence of a deepening relationship, demonstrated by her increased openness over time, as she realized that her relationship with Beth was a constant part of and long-lasting relationship in her life.

As Brittany’s mentor, Beth noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) Contextualizing the Relationship, and (f) Transformation. Specifically, Beth focused most on Commitment and Caring, including contact and presence (having frequent contact with Brittany, providing consistent support, being available for her, and continuing to stay in touch and be involved in Brittany’s life after the formal mentoring program ended), placing a high importance on the relationship, by wanting to do the right thing as a mentor, and going beyond the role of mentor by taking on the role of a parent as required:

...She was moving to college and I asked her if she needed help, and she said, ‘yeah, maybe.’ So I showed up, and...she came out with three garbage bags for her stuff for school, and then we drove to her dorm room and of course everyone around her is moving in with like happy moms and dads and brothers and sisters and new binders, and there she is with her garbage bags and me. So I was really glad that I could be there to be a support for her. It was really meaningful for me...it’s about the connection and having somebody there...[it was] a great moment for the both of us.

In terms of Involvement, Beth discussed having common interests with Brittany, enjoying their time together, the importance of seeing that Brittany was also putting forth effort and enthusiastic about their relationship, and bringing Brittany into her own family, including inviting Brittany to her wedding. Beth also discussed Affirmation/Recognition of Brittany—she

spoke about her qualities, strengths, and personality, as well as how important it was to support Brittany's interests and provide a fun environment for her:

I think we just shared a lot in common, and a lot of time, and a lot of understanding about how difficult things can be. I wouldn't say that we always had deep conversations, or there weren't many of them. She pretty much raised her brothers and sisters, so she was really mature for her age, so...I could just be a stable person to have fun with.

Beth was also focused on being a Role Model by being conscious to not give Brittany advice, but rather help her work through struggles and live by example. Beth was also able to Contextualize the Relationship by recognizing Brittany's challenges and home environment. Finally, Beth noted Brittany's Transformation of becoming less awkward over time.

For this pair it seems that they both recognized the importance of Commitment and Caring, Involvement, Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, the mentor being a Role Model, and Transformation in the mentee. The most salient aspect for the mentee was her Transformation, some of which seemed to stem from the Unique Experience of her mentor's presence in her life:

Having that one good influence in your life is vital, because it can be completely dark in the room, and you light this tiny LED light in the corner, and suddenly the whole room is much brighter, and you can actually see what you're doing...and that was kind of cool...because there are so many negative things at once, that just a few little sprinkles of good change everything.

On the other hand, for the mentor the most salient theme was the Commitment and Caring invested in the relationship and through that filling a needed role in Brittany's life:

I would see her pretty frequently, and some of our events was really me just being a participant in something she was doing...I could be that adult that was always there

celebrating...Her mom...worked a lot, her dad was not around, and she was the oldest of the kids, so I felt like the adult that could support her in some of that.

Pair C. Carlos and Chris were matched through a formal mentoring program when Carlos was nine years old. Carlos, a Hispanic boy from a background of low SES, who lived with his mother and two siblings, moving in and out of various housing and shelters, never knew his father. He had few positive male adult role models, and so he was matched with Chris, a Caucasian male in his mid thirties, through a mentoring program for three years. After the third year the formal match had to end due to Carlos being admitted to a residential program, in which it was determined that it was in his best interest to cease his mentoring relationship with Chris because of the intensive individual support provided in the program. However, Carlos and Chris remain in touch intermittently until today.

Carlos noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) Unique Experience, and (f) Transformation. Specifically, Carlos noted that Chris's Commitment and Caring, specifically Chris's investment of time and support, was most impactful for him, and he sensed that Chris appreciated him. He also spoke about Chris providing a space for him to talk and helping him with his emotional struggles. Carlos emphasized how important it was for him to have someone listening. Carlos spoke about Chris's Involvement, including having positive memories of shared activities with Chris, and how Chris was positive, engaging, relaxed, and funny. Affirmation/Recognition also seemed important to Carlos—specifically that Chris helped Carlos believe in himself and affected the direction of his future by encouraging Carlos to make choices:

That is something that [Chris] taught me...you can't let anyone else decide your future for you, you have to figure it out for yourself, you can't let anyone else tell you what to do, you have to believe in yourself...everyone has their own path, everyone has their own choices in life that they have to make. There is no right or wrong.

Carlos placed a great deal of emphasis throughout the interview on Chris as a Role Model—he spoke about Chris teaching him implicitly through actions and the example of how he lived his own life. Chris taught Carlos how to treat others and how to appreciate life: “[Chris] would always teach me to appreciate the things that I do have, he would always teach me to think about how much worse it could be...he would make me feel like my life wasn't that bad...” Carlos shared that these lessons have endured over the years, despite their formal match ending seven years ago, and that he credits Chris for being a role model of how Carlos himself engages with the world today. Carlos also focused heavily on the importance of Chris introducing him to new activities and different perspectives, which challenged him at times. Carlos shared that Chris's friendship was a Unique Experience, as it was different than other relationships, which he did not have a father-figure growing up, and that Chris was his only friend for a long period of time and provided a unique, life-changing experience. Finally, Carlos spoke about his Transformation—he shared that Chris's love and friendship changed his life, by teaching him to believe in himself and stand up for his beliefs.

As Carlos' mentor, Chris noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) Contextualizing the Relationship, (f) the relationship as a Unique Experience, and (g) Transformation. Specifically, Chris discussed Commitment and Caring, including contact and presence (staying by Carlos' side and remaining supportive through ups and downs while drawing his own boundaries, being consistent and

committed, spending a lot of time together, showing Carlos unconditional love and telling him how he feels about him, being patient), and having concern for/thinking of Carlos' future, by speaking with him about goals, wanting what is best for him, keeping an eye on his needs and progression, and thinking of how to help him along. Chris speaks to Commitment and Caring when sharing what helped to establish their relationship:

There was the level of trust. You know he'd say to me, 'I know I can trust you.' We had been together for like three-and-a-half years at this point, and he said, 'You're really with me no matter what, huh?' I'm like, 'Yeah, it's called unconditional love,' I said. 'We're more than mentor and mentee,' I said, 'We're friends and I really respect you and care for you and love you and I want your life to be...beautiful.' So that's where I felt he broke through...

In terms of Involvement, Chris discussed having common interests with Carlos, enjoying their time together, being open with Carlos, including sharing his own life, interests, and experiences with Carlos, and being grateful for their relationship and benefitting from it. Chris also discussed Affirmation/Recognition of Carlos—he spoke about Carlos' strengths, qualities, perspectives, and potential, as well as how important it was to treat Carlos like an adult (being respectful, but firm during difficult times, while continuing to be loving and supportive), recognizing Carlos' struggles, accepting his feelings, and giving him a safe space to share at his own pace. Even though he questioned his own impact and whether he was doing what was best, Chris was focused on being a Role Model, by trying to teach him life skills whenever the opportunity presented itself, and recognizing the influence he has on Carlos' life:

He'd come see my band, that also helped a lot...sharing different parts of my own life with him...I think that meant a lot to him, because he saw me in a different light then. I actually took him to one of my shows, and that was very powerful for him.

He also put effort into giving Carlos new experiences and opportunities. Chris also Contextualized the Relationship by recognizing Carlos' life circumstances and family situation. Additionally, Chris noted that their relationship was a Unique Experience, including that he tried to be a friend first, that Carlos was like family to him, and that he saw the relationship as a partnership in which they could learn and grow together. Finally, Chris recognized the Transformation in Carlos, specifically that Carlos seemed to internalize and respond to teachings and wisdom, that his awareness had been raised, that he learned that he has choices in life and can trust people who care about him, and that over time he had opened up and acknowledged his pain.

For this pair it seems that they both recognized the importance of Commitment and Caring, Involvement, Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, the mentor being a Role Model, the relationship as a Unique Experience, and how that led to some Transformation in the mentee. The most salient aspect for the mentee was the mentor being a Role Model:

He's a pretty cool guy. He's very laid-back, he's very chilled, he is always smiling in a joking mood. I guess that's why I'm kind of that way...whenever I wake up I'm pretty optimistic...I am always...talking and laughing and making people feel better, and that is what he did. He would always...try to make me feel better...it's...where I got that aspect of me...

While for the mentor, Affirmation/Recognition of the mentee was most pertinent in their relationship:

... One of the biggest changes is that he acknowledged how he's been hurt...And so you would think he would get better after that, but I think that's where he... had to start living through that and processing it and going to therapy and so he was living this...[He was a] really deeply hurt angry, sexually abused, not cared for boy who needs to heal. So what I saw was the new guy coming out, and really it was like we were going backwards, but I knew it was that we were going forwards. So that's kind of a place that we sat for a while, and almost fighting that, both of us were like, hey this is good, this is right, sharing this with people and this is nothing to do with you, your fault or what you did you...so that's what I saw, it really got worse, and then there was moments where I could see him like popping out again and it was like okay he's going to heal...

Pair D. Danielle and Dana were matched through a formal tutoring program when Danielle was 12 years old. Danielle, an African American girl from a low SES background, who lived with her mother, siblings, and many extended family members, had little support from her mother and had never known her father. She was enrolled in a structured tutoring program through her school for additional support, and there she was matched with Dana, a publisher in her mid twenties. The formal tutoring match ended after four years when Dana left her job, and thus the tutoring program, but they remained in frequent contact and continue to do so.

Danielle noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) Unique Experience, and (f) Transformation. Specifically, Danielle focused most (as measured by the number of times a theme came up) on Dana's Commitment and Caring, noting that Dana was focused on Danielle and her needs, initiated support, wanted to help Danielle, was consistent, supportive, available,

committed, cared about Danielle, and was involved with Danielle above and beyond her required contact:

Just...knowing that you've got somebody who believes in you and wants to see you do good...not trying to bring you down or telling you, 'You're a terrible person' or 'You ain't gonna make it.' It's like having somebody on your side. Like having somebody on your team and you know that if...something happens they're going to be there for you.

Danielle spoke about Involvement with Dana, including enjoying spending time and having fun with her, and that Dana opened up and shared her own life with Danielle, including introducing Danielle to her siblings and parents: "I was like, oh I guess she likes me, I guess she thinks I'm a nice person, if you...bring me around your brother, and your mother, and your father."

Affirmation/Recognition also seemed important to Danielle, including that Dana did not treat her like a child, that she believed in her, and pushed her to do better, while enabling new experiences for her. Danielle also discussed Dana as being a positive Role Model, by being a good person ("I think she's the nicest person I've ever met"), being intelligent, and capable. Danielle said Dana helped her to handle things better, and that she hopes to be like her one day. It was also clear that Danielle valued the relationship as a Unique Experience by her sharing that she had never had anyone believe in her and support her like Dana did. She also spoke about racial difference being irrelevant in mentoring relationships. Finally, Danielle discussed the Transformation that took place within her because of the relationship, including believing in herself, wanting to do well for Dana, and wanting to be a better person: "...It made me really want to be a better person...not to disappoint her...[to] be successful...just to tell her...you're the reason why I'm here...thanks to you...it's like me thanking her...by being [somebody] that [she] would be proud of..." She noted that Dana's presence made life easier for her and eased her worries. Danielle

also observed that her relationship with Dana led to improved academic performance, and it greatly affected her view of her future, which is now hopeful and full of possibilities. Danielle noted that her academic performance, way of handling challenging situations, perspective, and view of her future had significantly improved due to her relationship with Dana.

Dana noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) Contextualizing the Relationship, and (f) Transformation. Specifically, Dana focused most on Commitment and Caring, including being available, checking in with Danielle, being consistent, investing significant time, and having continued contact and interest in Danielle's life after she left the tutoring program. She also focused on concern for Danielle and looking out for her future, including helping to guide her and looking for and enabling opportunities that may help Danielle. There was also a strong theme of going above and beyond her tutoring role, including using her own resources (without Danielle knowing) to help her access certain opportunities and supporting Danielle whenever possible. In terms of Involvement, Dana discussed enjoying having an impact on Danielle, appreciating their relationship, and also bringing Danielle into her own life and family:

...My mom sends her birthday cards, and little care packages...She's met all my family members and she always asks about them...and so everyone in my family knows who she is and ask about her all the time...When we my mom and my sister and I went to see her at [college] we took her to get some stuff for her dorm, my mom pitched in and got her some stuff...my family try to do little things.

Dana also spoke about Affirmation/Recognition of Danielle, by acknowledging her character, strengths, and weaknesses, as well as how important it was to recognize and support Danielle's interests. Dana was also focused on being a Role Model, by being a friend and providing

guidance without judging, letting Danielle bring things up at her own pace, teaching Danielle life skills, providing constructive yet supportive feedback, helping Danielle navigate difficult situations, using challenging times as learning opportunities, and helping Danielle become more independent by encouraging her resourcefulness. For example, she shared an instance in which Danielle had asked Dana to come pick her up from college to give her a ride home:

I sort of wanted to push her to... ‘If it comes down to you have no one else to get you, I can come get you,’ but I said, ‘I do have some other plans so I want you to be resourceful and think of what are some other ways you could get home’...She was...really understanding, and she ended up contacting one of her teachers from high school that...went to get her. So she’s come a long way...She’s become just more resourceful and independent...

Dana was also able to Contextualize the Relationship by engaging with Danielle’s family, being cognizant of dynamics between herself and Danielle’s mother. Finally, Dana noted Danielle’s Transformation—that she had become independent and also opened up more over time.

For this pair it seems that they both recognized the importance of Commitment and Caring, Involvement, Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, the mentor being a Role Model, and how that led to some Transformation in the mentee. The most salient aspect for the mentee was the Commitment and Caring that the mentor invested in the relationship: “I know she has my back and is going to be there for me...I feel like no matter how old I am, or whatever, she’s always going to be there.” Commitment and Caring also seemed to be most important for the mentor:

...Consistency...that's something that's really important to me and...I value...that we have had a consistent relationship [for six years]...there's other types of relationships or

mentoring relationships that are more off and on, or maybe just time based...and this transcended me being in three or four different jobs, her being in middle school, high school, college, her being in that reading program, her graduating from the program...[I feel] good that I've been able to have some impact on her over the course of several phases of her life.

Pair E. Evan and Ed met when Evan was 10 years old. Evan, an African American from a low SES background, who lived with his mother and two sisters, took care of his sisters after school, experienced neglect and abuse, and had little adult support. He had no positive male adult role model until Ed, his math teacher, took a special interest in him. When Evan was 15, and his mom needed to move but could not take all three children with her, Ed opened his home and his life to Evan.

Evan noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) the relationship as a Unique Experience, and (f) Transformation. Specifically, Evan spoke most about Ed's Commitment and Caring, consisting of support, reliability, and consistency, such as supporting Evan through difficult times, feeling that Ed was caring and trusting, feeling unconditionally supported, being attended to, and never being given up on. Ed also provided space for Evan to talk and share, by showing interest and engaging with Evan, listening to him, and enabling Evan to have a voice. Evan also noted that Ed went above and beyond his role from the very beginning, including providing resources to Evan and his family. Evan also spoke about Ed's Involvement. He shared that they became a significant part of each other's lives, that Ed engaged with and respected Evan's family from the beginning, and that Ed saved his life by being a good person:

I was a kid that was abused and neglected and...what [Ed] did for me, it was life or death for me... to have someone come into your life and you're in a place where it's truly life or death, and just give to you, just by being a good person...

Affirmation/Recognition also seemed very important to Evan, including that Ed encouraged Evan to find his own version of himself, rather than following a predetermined plan, that he treated Evan like an adult and with respect by establishing trust through action, dealing with difficult situations in a direct yet supportive manner by being honest and transparent, allowing Evan to make mistakes while providing unconditional love and support, using humor and his ability to talk about things instead of judging him, and holding him accountable by being an understanding and supportive adult rather than punishing him:

I was coming from pain and lots and lots and lots and lots of it. And so to go... from a place like that to a place where I can make all these mistakes and you're not going to put me out, you're not going to belittle me, you're not going to shame me, you're not going to make me feel guilty, you're not going to do any of that, but you're going to hold me accountable by using kind words or kind gestures...And it's those kinds of things that allowed me to grow...

Evan placed a great deal of emphasis throughout the interview on Ed as a Role Model—he spoke about Ed nonverbally exemplifying qualities, modeling a way of being genuinely and consistently, and that learning to become nurturing and supportive through Ed's example changed his life. He also discussed how Ed opened up a new world for him, by introducing him to new experiences and perspectives. Evan clearly communicated that his relationship with Ed was a very Unique Experience. He spoke about Ed being a father figure, an adult who cared, and how this was a huge change for him coming from a life of abuse and neglect. The most

challenging thing was learning how to trust and receive love, which took years. Finally, Evan described his Transformation through his experience with Ed. He identified Ed's calm approach of providing unconditional support as being life changing. Along with creating safety in Evan's life, Evan learned from Ed's example of how he lived, and Evan transformed drastically from being shy, not speaking, and having no voice, to being in love with words and now using his voice for a living and his own experience to help others. Evan said that Ed would never realize the magnitude of the impact he had on Evan.

As Evan's mentor, Ed noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) Contextualizing the Relationship, (f) the relationship as a Unique Experience, and (g) Transformation. Specifically, Ed spoke about Commitment and Caring, including contact and presence (being available for Evan, supporting Evan in whatever was most important to him, loving Evan, giving him unconditional support and consistency, taking a chance on him, continuing to be involved in Evan's life), and going beyond his role by always being open to deeper connection and presence in Evan's life. In terms of Involvement, Ed discussed enjoying his time and relationship with Evan, sharing his own life and family with Evan, and appreciating their relationship and valuing being part of Evan's life: "...Things just worked out well for both of us. You know, he was a blessing for me..." Ed also respected Evan's feelings, while recognizing his qualities, strengths, and accomplishments—he clearly voiced his pride in Evan and how much he appreciated him. In addition, Ed spoke about Affirmation/Recognition of Evan, including recognizing Evan's attributes, character, talents, and weaknesses, as well as how important it was to focus on Evan's interests and what is most important to him, in order to establish a connection. Ed also talked about having a positive influence on Evan and being a Role Model to him, including his belief in the importance of

mentoring, and how his role was to bring out Evan's inherent strengths while allowing him to learn through trial and error. Ed was also focused on providing Evan with new experiences, but he was uncertain about the degree of impact he had on Evan: "People say that it was me, well I say to them a lot of it comes from within him. He had it in him, he just needed someone to help bring it out." Ed also did a great deal to Contextualize the Relationship by being respectful and aware of Evan's family and environment, maintaining regular contact with Evan's mother, and taking the opportunity to become more engaged in Evan's life by spending time with his sisters. Ed also recognized the Unique Experience of their relationship—he regarded Evan as part of his family and noted that their racial difference was never an issue. Finally, Ed noted that Evan's greatest Transformation over the time he has known him has been his self-confidence.

For this pair it seems that they both recognized the importance of Commitment and Caring, Involvement, Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, the mentor being a Role Model, clearly recognizing their relationship as a Unique Experience, and Transformation in the mentee. The most salient aspect for the mentee and mentor was the mentor's Commitment and Caring. The mentee gives a powerful example of this from the very beginning of their relationship:

There was one pivotal point in my life that I can really closely remember, and it was at a place where I was really, really down in the fifth grade and really sad, I think I was getting picked on, and I started crying about it, alone...and I remember [Ed] came up and...asked me a question that I don't think I had ever been asked before by an adult...He asked me what was wrong with me or what had happened, and then he simply just allowed me to talk...for the first time in a long time, some adult that cared allowed me to have a voice and what was going on with me. And so I think that set the stage of

allowing me to be able to trust him as a teacher, but even more so just as an adult that cared about me.

For the mentor, it is poignantly summed up by how he continues to feel to this day: “I am an emotional mess sometimes, you know. These kids are my kids. They are my family and sometimes I have a hard time talking about it because I wish they were closer...”

Pair F. Finn and Fred were matched through a formal mentoring program when Finn was nine years old. Finn, a Caucasian adopted boy who struggled with social interactions, was matched with Fred, a biracial (Caucasian/African American) male in his mid twenties, through a mentoring program. After seven years, the formal match had to be terminated due to Finn moving out of state. However, Finn and Fred continue to remain in contact regularly.

Finn noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) the relationship as a Unique Experience, and (f) Transformation. Specifically, Finn noted that Fred’s Commitment and Caring in the form of his willingness and presence was most impactful, along with his being a friend and knowing that he cares. He mentioned Fred’s regular contact and that he values how Fred continues to make an effort to stay in touch:

I value the fact that he is still willing to keep up with me. It is hard for me because I don’t do social networking...and it is kind of hard I can imagine for him...I think it is really remarkable that he tries to stay in contact...

He also spoke about Fred helping him through some very difficult times and helping turn them into something productive. Finn also spoke about Fred going above and beyond the role of a mentor—that his presence was greater than that of a typical mentor. Finn also spoke about Fred’s Involvement, including Fred using humor to connect and that they became a significant

part of each other's lives, even spending holidays and special occasions together.

Affirmation/Recognition also seemed important to Finn, including that Fred encouraged him to consider his future, and he dealt with difficult situations in a direct yet supportive manner by creating boundaries and "facilitating changes in a non-disruptive way." Finn also spoke about Fred being a Role Model—he valued being close to Fred and being like him and that Fred encouraged him to help others, introduced him to new experiences, including life-long habits, and facilitated social contact with others. Finn also spoke about his relationship with Fred as a Unique Experience—that Fred was an adult, but yet was in the middle ground between a friend and a mentor. Finally, Finn discussed his Transformation, in particular that Fred made him feel more at ease with himself and being social.

As Finn's mentor, Fred noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) Contextualizing the Relationship, (f) the relationship as a Unique Experience, and (g) Transformation. Specifically, Fred discussed Commitment and Caring, including contact and presence through being a consistent source of support, spending time together, being patient, maintaining regular contact, and never giving up on him:

I never got frustrated; I was never like oh I'm going to give up on you. I was always pretty consistent...I would just always at least call to check in to make sure, even if I didn't see him, I would call to make sure that...I was thinking about him, and having a consistency, and I think that's important in any type of relationship is being consistent about keeping in touch...so that's what I try to do.

He also focused on Finn's future and went above and beyond the mentoring relationship by continuing to stay in touch with Finn and seeking resources to help him with his next steps in

life. In terms of Involvement, Fred discussed being grateful for the relationship with Finn, which was also fulfilling for himself, and helped him to grow and put things in perspective. Fred focused most on accepting Finn's feelings, which included being aware of them, giving Finn a safe place to talk, and respecting Finn's pace in the relationship.

Fred also discussed Affirmation/Recognition of Finn by acknowledging his strengths, supporting his talents, and encouraging him to think critically, as well as step out of his comfort zone and develop skills while supporting him. He also shared that he treated Finn with respect by being firm and using difficult situations as teaching moments. Even though he questioned his own impact, Fred was focused on being a Role Model and setting an example for Finn, wanting to be a positive and guiding influence, and being a continued presence in Finn's life. He also tried to use personal examples rather than give advice, and he wanted Finn to be happy. Fred also Contextualized the Relationship by recognizing Finn's life circumstances, support system, and family situation. He also felt like he was part of Finn's life and understood the importance of having a good relationship with Finn's family and appreciating the impact they have on Finn. Fred also noted that their relationship was a Unique Experience since he tried to be a friend first:

[I tried] to show [Finn] that I'm your friend. I don't really like to tell the people that I mentor that I'm their mentor, I always try to characterize it more like I'm [their] friend...

It's just I'm here, you know we hang out, talk, and eventually, over time, it seems like they open up more.

Finally, Fred discussed Finn's Transformation, including Finn becoming more open, emotional, comfortable, expressive, mature, socially aware, and engaged over time. He also observed that Finn's trust in the relationship and in him increased.

For this pair it seems that they both recognized the importance of Commitment and Caring, Involvement, Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, the mentor being a Role Model, recognizing their relationship as a Unique Experience, and Transformation in the mentee. The most salient aspect for the mentee was the mentor's Commitment and Caring, which is captured in the advice he would give to people wanting to become a mentor:

Don't just be a mentor, be a friend. Most people wouldn't think that there is a difference, but there is a line...I think that is to be there for them, to care about them, and to make sure that they know that you do.

For the mentor, the strongest theme seemed to be Affirmation/Recognition of the Mentee, which is apparent in his description of Finn's pursuit of his writing talent:

I remember having conversations about... 'what do you want to do when you grew up?' ...and for a long time it was like... 'I don't know if I want to go to college' ...I think he was scared of being in an environment that he wasn't familiar with, and all these people that he didn't know. And I almost think that that was holding him back from [wanting to be a writer]...So recently...I put him in touch...with this resource that helps kids with post secondary education...and we had this conference call about going to college...And he was saying now, 'I think I want to go to college to be a writer.' So, it was kind of cool to see him change because he's a really good writer.

Pair G. George and Gus were matched through a formal mentoring program when George was 13 years old. George, an Hispanic male who struggled with using drugs and crime involvement, was matched with Gus, a Hispanic male in his thirties, through a program that works with youth on probation. Gus is a full-time paid mentor. They have been matched for six years and continue in their mentoring relationship.

George noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) the relationship as a Unique Experience, and (f) Transformation. Specifically, George focused most on Gus's Commitment and Caring, including Gus supporting and encouraging him through the good and bad, being there whenever needed, spending time with George, the effort and time he put into George, feeling Gus's unconditional support, that he wasn't going anywhere and wanted to be part of George's life, always being reliable and available, and never giving up on George. He also noted that Gus gave space for George to talk and share, that he shared opinions and things to consider, rather than giving advice and being commanding, and that he was able to have deep conversations with Gus. George also spoke about Gus's Involvement. He enjoyed Gus's company, sharing common experiences, and doing activities together. He also talked about trusting Gus because he opened up his life to George, including having George over to spend time with his family, and that Gus had been very honest and open about his own experiences. George noted that this was critical, "...because if someone doesn't open up to you, how do they expect you to do the same?" Affirmation/Recognition also seemed important, as Gus frequently encouraged George to do better. George also spoke about Gus being a Role Model—he discussed his respect for Gus, that he looks up to him because of the changes he has made in his life and where he is today, and noted that Gus is a good role model who has introduced George to new perspectives, opportunities, experiences, and people, suggesting different paths and opportunities to help George with his future. George also spoke about his relationship with Gus as a Unique Experience, since he had "...never really had a good relationship with an adult," and that Gus is his friend and the "only adult that [George has] ever been close to." Finally, George discussed his Transformation. He shared that spending time with Gus made him more conscious of his

actions and doing the right thing, helped him mature, and provided him an opportunity to change his life.

As George's mentor, Gus noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, and (e) Contextualizing the Relationship. Specifically, Gus discussed Commitment and Caring, including contact and presence by being there when George reached out, showing George that he cared, and supporting him through difficult times: "...Whenever he picked up the phone and reached out to me [I was there]...I think him knowing that I was always there...when he would call [was critical to forming the relationship]." He also went above and beyond the mentoring relationship by finding resources for George and providing him with practical support. In terms of Involvement, Gus discussed being open with George, by sharing his own life and family with him, and making it clear that their relationship is reciprocal. He also talked about enjoying spending time with George, building rapport with him, and encouraging his interests. Gus also focused a great deal on Affirmation/Recognition of George, including accepting his feelings, listening to and engaging with George, being aware of his way of interacting and his choices, accepting his way of processing, encouraging George, and giving him space to talk. He also recognized George's strengths and characteristics. Even though he questioned his own impact on George, and was observant of other influences on him, Gus was focused on setting an example and being a Role Model for George, including introducing him to new activities. Finally, Gus also Contextualized the Relationship by being aware of George's activities and environment.

For this pair it seems that they both recognized the importance of Commitment and Caring, Involvement, Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, and the mentor being a Role Model.

The most salient aspect for the mentee was the mentor's Commitment and Caring; in regards to the most impactful part of the relationship, George said,

...The effort and time he just put into my life, because if he really wanted to he could've just been like 'man I am not going to waste my time with you anymore,' because...I wasn't really open to the idea of having a mentor...instead, he just kept going, no matter how mad or annoyed I seemed. I guess I just realized like he's not going, he's real about it, he really wants to be part of my life...I've never really thought about it like this, but...it all makes sense now.

For the mentor the most salient aspect was balanced equally among Commitment and Caring, Involvement, Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, and being a Role Model. It seemed particularly important to engage with the mentee and give him space to voice his inner world, ultimately leading to Transformation:

I just try to get [him] to talk, whether it is insignificant in [his] eyes or not. The reason being...I believe that the more you talk the more [you] commit...there is a difference between saying it in your head and voicing it and hearing it at the same time—I think that is so much more powerful...

Pair H. Howard and Hugh were matched through a formal mentoring program when Howard was 17 years old. Howard, an Hispanic male who struggles with a difficult family situation and crime involvement, was matched with Hugh, a Hispanic male in his thirties, through a program that works with youth on probation. Hugh is a full-time paid mentor. They have been matched for one year and continue in their mentoring relationship.

Howard noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) the relationship as a Unique Experience,

and (f) Transformation. Specifically, Howard focused most on Hugh's Commitment and Caring, including feeling Hugh's care and affection through his actions, his extensive support, providing Howard practical resources and thinking of his needs, and always being there for Howard. He also noted that he was able to talk and share his feelings with Hugh, and that he could sense Hugh wanted him to open up. He also recognized that Hugh went above and beyond the role and expectations of his job as a mentor. Howard spoke about Involvement with Hugh. Specifically, that he enjoyed spending time with Hugh, and that Hugh also opened up his life to him, including having him over to spend time with his family. Affirmation/Recognition also seemed important, including that Hugh gave Howard hope and made him feel better. Howard also noted that Hugh was able to be honest, even when it was not pleasant, while still being supportive. Howard also spoke about Hugh being a Role Model—he shared that Hugh provided guidance and was a role model by how he lived his life, and also by knowing that he had a similar past yet managed to have a good life. Howard shared that "...[Hugh] was once the same...and now seeing him, that he has a wife, a house, and several other things makes me realize that I can do it too." He also noted that Hugh inspires him to be better and provides new perspective on possibilities. Howard also spoke about his relationship with Hugh as a Unique Experience, since Hugh was one of the first people who Howard had opened up to, that he experienced "a rare feeling of being loved by Hugh," and that even though it was difficult to accept Hugh's care and support at first, he was able to open up and engage with him more over time as he began to trust him. Howard refers to Hugh as the "older brother that I have always wanted." Finally, Howard spoke about Transformation. He shared that his relationship with Hugh makes him try harder and not give up as easily, that over time he has learned to trust Hugh because of the consistency, love, support, and interest that he has shown in him, that he now believes he has a future because

he has Hugh to show him the right path, and that, thanks to their relationship, "...he has helped me change...most of the time I was always depressed, but...he actually...rebuilt that... I would always feel depressed and think I was worthless, and he would show me otherwise."

As Howard's mentor, Hugh noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) Contextualizing the Relationship, and (f) Transformation. Specifically, Hugh discussed Commitment and Caring, including finding resources for Howard, being very present in his life through regular contact, loving Howard, and telling him how he feels about him:

... I just want to make sure that I am there. Constantly. Like make a phone call, house visit...I think that is crucial. And then today he opened up quite a bit he was like, 'All I want to do is be loved. All I want is for my mom to hug me.' And I was like, 'So, for what it's worth, I understand you and ...' I looked him in the eye and I told him, 'I love you...I don't know how much you believe it, I don't know if you feel the same way about me, but I truly love you.'

In terms of Involvement, Hugh discussed being as open with Howard as he expects him to be, including bringing Howard into his own family and life, and openly relating to him by sharing his own experiences and his own life as an example: "I'm just as open as they are...I told him how I grew up, how I was ashamed of my home." Hugh focused the most on Affirmation/Recognition of Howard, including accepting him and his feelings, listening to him, being interested in his life, not judging him, providing a safe place to share, and going at Howard's pace. Even though he questioned his own impact on Howard, Hugh was focused on exposing Howard to his everyday life as a Role Model and introducing him to new experiences. Hugh also Contextualized the Relationship by recognizing Howard's home and social

environment, which is why he says he was able to relate to him so well. Finally, Hugh also recognized Howard's Transformation, including his increased motivation and connection to others over the past year, and his beginning to pick up hobbies that Hugh introduced him to.

For this pair it seems that they both recognized the importance of Commitment and Caring, Involvement, Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, the mentor being a Role Model, and Transformation of mentee. The most salient aspect for the mentee was the mentor's Commitment and Caring, as well as the Unique Experience of the relationship, as demonstrated by Howard's own words:

...I just felt that I could trust him and he was actually showing me love...[by] calling, asking how I was doing, coming to my house to check up on me, seeing if I needed anything else, taking me out to eat...or talking if I had any problems, he would just sit there...and try to help me out.

For the mentor, the Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee seemed to be the most prominent aspect of the relationship; he demonstrates this in recounting an interaction with Howard:

He started opening up, and I knew immediately that there was hurt and pain. I felt that, and so I sympathized with him, and I didn't say much, but I think he knew that I felt that...I was able to hear him out and just feel his pain.

Pair I. Iggy and Ian were matched through a formal mentoring program when Iggy was 16 years old. Iggy, an Hispanic male who struggled with a difficult family situation and drug involvement, was matched with Ian, an Hispanic male in his forties, through a program that works with youth on probation. Ian is a full-time paid mentor. They have been matched for two years (prior to this Iggy had another mentor who later moved), and they continue in their mentoring relationship.

Iggy noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) the relationship as a Unique Experience, and (f) Transformation. Specifically, Iggy focused most on Commitment and Caring, including the importance of his mentors feeling trust and confidence in him, receiving support and resources from his mentors, especially during difficult times, offering help and being available, and being able to rely on them. Iggy also noted a special time with his first mentor when he was able to share and open up with him while hanging out, because his mentor asked him questions and showed interest in him. Iggy also spoke about Involvement, the importance of trust, support, and genuineness in the mentoring relationship, and that he did a lot with his mentor.

Affirmation/Recognition and being a Role Model also seemed important to Iggy, specifically that his mentor inspired and encouraged him. Iggy spoke about his relationship with both Ian and his previous mentor as a Unique Experience, saying that his mentors have both been a friend and a close adult, and they were role models by being “somewhat of a parent.” He referred to the mentors and program as “the family that [he] never had” and said that being able to rely on and talk to his mentor was unique for him. He also noted that being of a different race from his first mentor was not an issue. Finally, Iggy spoke about Transformation. He shared that his relationship with his mentors allowed him to develop trust and made him a better person, including being more outgoing, expanding his perspective, and inspiring him to consider his future and career. In fact, he is now interested in school and learning for the first time in his life, feels happy, and feels like he is part of a family. He is also considering being a mentor himself.

As Iggy’s mentor, Ian noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of the Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) Contextualizing the Relationship, (f) Unique Relationship, and (g) Transformation. Specifically, Ian discussed Commitment and

Caring, including expressing care and love for Iggy, showing him unconditional support, even through difficult times, thinking of his future, and going beyond the mentoring relationship, such as by finding resources for Iggy. In terms of Involvement, Ian discussed making it clear that their relationship is reciprocal and discussed being open with Iggy about his own life and struggles, and thus encouraging Iggy's openness, sharing things that help Iggy connect, using himself as an example, of which he says, "...that is what is going to break down their walls. They say how can I not tell you this if you told me that, and there is no reason for them to hide." He also spoke about engaging in enjoyable activities with Iggy. Ian focused the most on accepting Iggy, helping him deal with his feelings, being aware of his inner life, struggles, and relational patterns, and accepting his pace of sharing. He also focused on Affirmation/Recognition of the Mentee, sharing several thoughts about Iggy's strengths, recognizing his progress and accomplishments, challenging Iggy constructively, and encouraging him to go beyond his comfort zone, while always being honest with him and treating him with respect. In addition, Ian discussed being a Role Model for Iggy, sharing that their relationship was an example for Iggy to follow, and that Iggy trusting and respecting him enabled Iggy to change. Ian spoke about being a Role Model, while identifying their relationship as a Unique Experience:

I'm seeing now [that I may be] the male role model, the male relationship that he never had. We have a special relationship with each other, it's...beyond [mentoring] it's beyond anything, like something you can't even express in words...

He also spoke about introducing Iggy to different perspectives and options. Ian also Contextualized the Relationship by being aware of Iggy's family environment and struggles.

Finally, Ian also recognized Iggy's Transformation, including that he is no longer involved with drugs and is now being proactive with his life.

For this pair it seems that they both recognized the importance of Commitment and Caring, Involvement, Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, Role Model, the relationship as a Unique Experience, and Transformation of mentee. The most salient aspect for the mentee was the mentor's Commitment and Caring, as well as the Unique Experience of the relationship, both of which are captured in Iggy's description of the relationship:

...I felt like I was his son because we did a lot of things, we did a lot...And if I needed help...he would be there. He would have no problem helping me with whatever, every situation I went through, he was there, he would help me...I felt like he was just somebody I could rely [on]...

For the mentor the most salient theme seemed to be Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, which he demonstrates in his current thoughts about Iggy:

... [He] is still going through a lot of issues, he's got family issues...and [he] doesn't like to come out and talk about...the actual issue, he will beat around the bush...[I try to get] him to think through [whether he is] going to hold on to anger and resentment or...let it go because...not everything is in his control, but he can control how he reacts to it...I think he is kind of hurt by it...I think he doesn't know how to express it because he expresses a lot of things in anger.

Ian seems to not only recognize Iggy's ongoing struggles with his family, but also his way of dealing with them.

Pair J. Jessica and Jane were matched through a formal mentoring program when Jessica was 14 years old. Jessica, a Caucasian girl who came from a low SES background and

lived in a tumultuous family situation with several siblings, had little support from her parents. She was entered into a structured mentoring program in her community for additional support, and there she was matched with Jane, after having one previous mentor who did not work out. Jane was a college student at the time, in her late teens. The mentoring relationship ended after three years when Jane graduated from college, but they remain in contact.

Jessica noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) the relationship as a Unique Experience, and (f) Transformation. Specifically, Jessica focused most (as measured by the number of times a theme came up) on Jane's Commitment and Caring, noting that Jane was consistent, reliable, always there for her, and showed her unconditional affection. She noted that she was able to depend on Jane any time with anything, and that she continues to stay in touch with her, feeling continually supported by her. She also shared that Involvement was important to her, including spending a lot of time talking with Jane, because she was always there to listen, sharing, "I found myself very easily, without even having to think about it, being able to open up to her because she listened very intently and never pushed me to [talk]..." Jessica spoke about sharing interests and activities with Jane, and that their similarities enabled a natural connection. Jessica shared that Affirmation/Recognition was also critical, and that Jane provided encouragement and instilled a sense of belief in her. Jessica also spoke about the importance of Jane being a Role Model, and that her relationship with Jane provided a healthy example of what a relationship should be like and how she wants to be with others. She also learned, by observing Jane and also through her own experience with her, that with hard work and the right support she can conquer anything. In addition, Jessica recognized the relationship with Jane as being a Unique Experience—she noted how different it was to have someone to talk to, relax with, and to be

taken care of, sharing that Jane “provided [her] with the support that [her] parents couldn’t provide...it was a substitute for [her] parents’ support and love in some ways.” She admitted that she considered Jane to be the older sister that she never had, while also being her best friend. Finally, Jessica discussed Transformation and the changes that took place within her because of the relationship, including breaking out of her shell, contributing to her sense of self and belief in herself, feeling worthwhile, being more confident, and becoming an advocate for herself. She also credits the relationship with enabling her to trust others and show her what a healthy friendship is, which she says is the foundation of her happy marriage.

As Jessica’s mentor, Jane noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) Contextualizing the Relationship, (f) the relationship as a Unique Experience, and (g) Transformation. Specifically, Jane focused on Commitment and Caring, including showing up when expected, being accountable to Jessica, being consistent, having regular contact with her, and providing her with mutual and long-term love. In terms of Involvement, Jane discussed enjoying activities with Jessica, as well as having a strong bond and connection with her. Jane also discussed the importance of Affirmation/Recognition, including listening to Jessica and giving her a safe place to share:

I also tried to establish right off the bat that...I was a person she could trust, and that...I was going to try and offer...the wisdom I felt...I had at 18 or 19 and...be a grounded and listening ear, but that I also would not pass judgment on her...and that she could share whatever she needed to share with me and I think she really did feel that from the beginning, that that was there.

She also recognized Jessica’s strengths, qualities, growth, and accomplishments. In addition, she liked Jessica, believed in her, and supported her goals. Although she was unsure of her ability to

engage with Jessica at first, given their relative proximity in age, Jane felt responsible to be a Role Model and provide Jessica with a positive experience, recognizing that the relationship was important to Jessica. Jane was also able to Contextualize the Relationship by being aware of Jessica's home and family environment and engaging with her family. In addition, Jane recognized their relationship as a Unique Experience by the fact that they were "best friends." She also observed Jessica's Transformation, and that Jessica had become more grounded and confident over time.

For this pair it seems that they both recognized the importance of Commitment and Caring, Involvement, Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, the mentor being a Role Model, the relationship as a Unique Experience, and Transformation in the mentee. The most salient aspect for the mentee was the mentor's Commitment and Caring—Jessica describes this in sharing what was most important for her in the relationship, and she also highlights how that led to having a Unique Experience and some of her Transformation:

I think the most important thing for me was...just knowing that there was always someone there for me. Like my parents should've been those people but they weren't and that was really hard for me to get over as a kid and to wrap my mind around...so having [Jane] to talk to about that stuff...and knowing that if anything ever happened that there was going to be someone who cared about me, even if I felt like my parents didn't. I think that was the biggest thing, knowing that I could actually depend on someone no matter what time of the night it was, no matter what the circumstance was, no matter what I said or did, it was more unconditional than the affection that my parents had for me. That was a really big deal. It...taught me that I could trust people in that way and I think it also helped in romantic relationships later on...being able to open up to someone.

For the mentor, Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee seemed to be the main focus of the relationship. Jane's comments show a strong appreciation and recognition for Jessica:

[From the start] she seem[ed] like a great person...She was very easy to be with...I was blessed because [Jessica] was very open from the beginning, maybe because she was looking for someone to share with, or maybe because that is also part of her nature...

Pair K. Katie and Kim were matched through a formal tutoring program when Katie was 14 years old. Katie, a Caucasian girl who came from a low SES background and lived with her sick mother and younger brother, took care of the family and had little adult support. She was entered into a structured mentoring program in her community for additional support, and there she was matched with Kim, a Caucasian college student in her early twenties. The mentoring relationship ended after three years when Kim graduated from college, but they remain in contact.

Katie noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) Role Model, (e) the relationship as a Unique Experience, and (f) Transformation. Specifically, Katie focused most (as measured by the number of times a theme came up) on Kim's Commitment and Caring, noting that Kim helped and supported her as needed. She also mentioned several times that Kim helped her to relax and feel better about her home and her future by providing her with attention as well as the space to talk and be heard. Kim helped her with interpersonal struggles, and Katie was able to discuss various topics with her. Katie also noted that Kim went above and beyond the mentoring relationship by providing support to Katie's family. In terms of Involvement, Katie spoke about doing activities with Kim; she shared that getting out of the house and meeting new people with Kim was welcome. She was also grateful for doing activities that she enjoyed, and she found her time with Kim to be fun

and exciting. Katie shared that Affirmation/Recognition was important, that Kim noticed and encouraged her interests and “treated me like a person...like I was a real person and not just another kid...” Katie also said that Kim was a needed Role Model, providing her with guidance about her future, different perspectives, and inspiring and encouraging her just by her own lived example. In addition, Katie recognized her relationship with Kim as a Unique Experience, different from other experiences—she regards Kim as an older sister, that the time with her was unique since it was relaxing and all about Katie, and noted the importance of Kim exemplifying that not all adults are the same. Finally, Katie discussed the Transformation that took place within her because of the relationship, including helping her to talk and be proactive, be more engaged, and being shown that she is capable:

[The relationship] helped me grow...when I was in high school I didn't talk very much...I think it helped me talk...and be proactive about what I wanted to do...I did so much stuff that I wouldn't have done if I hadn't had...someone to show me that I could do it.

As Katie's mentor, Kim noted themes of (a) Commitment and Caring, (b) Involvement, (c) Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, (d) being a Role Model, and (e) Contextualizing the Relationship. Specifically, Kim focused on Commitment and Caring, including having regular contact with Katie, investing time and effort to get to know Katie, and having hopes for her future. In terms of Involvement, Kim discussed appreciating Katie, enjoying activities with her, sharing common traits and interests with Katie, being grateful for, and learning from, Katie. Kim also discussed observing Katie's life and struggles and creating a space for her to share what she needed. She also addressed Affirmation/Recognition of the mentee by recognizing Katie's strengths, characteristics, and qualities: “...I never worried that she wouldn't be okay,

because she was driven, and really smart, and she was getting herself into programs at school...And so she had a plan for herself.” Kim was unsure about her impact on Katie, and she did not identify herself as a Role Model explicitly, but she did express that she tried to impart any wisdom and guidance she could from her own experiences. She was also able to Contextualize the Relationship by being aware of Katie’s home and family environment and engaging with her family.

For this pair it seems that they both recognized the importance of Commitment and Caring, Involvement, and Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee. The most salient aspect for the mentee was the mentor’s Commitment and Caring, which comes through in her description of Kim: “...She would ask me, ‘What do you want to do?’ way before [meeting]...She helped me with my college applications, she helped me with my resumes, and she still helps me all the time...She has always been so helpful.” For the mentor, several themes seemed to be equally prominent in the relationship, including Involvement, Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, and Contextualizing the Relationship, which comes through in her description of Katie’s family:

I always thought that [Katie] had [a difficult] family [situation]...I don’t know if [her mother] was really sick or she was a hypochondriac or if she was just very controlling...[Katie] was more of a mother figure for her younger brother and took on a lot of responsibilities in the home...

Kim seems to recognize Katie’s family environment and how it shaped Katie’s role at home.

Chapter Summary

Although the pairs vary in terms of their ages, races, walks of life, and the struggles that the mentees were dealing with, there are strong similarities amongst all of them. Without exception, each and every mentee and mentor in these pairs spoke about important aspects in

their relationship that touched upon themes of Commitment and Caring, Involvement, Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, and the mentor being a Role Model. In addition, every mentor spoke about Contextualizing the Relationship, and every mentee emphasized that their connection with their mentor was a Unique Experience and shared how the relationship led to Transformation within them (internally and/or in relation to others/the world). Table 5 shows the number of times each mentor and mentee (as well as the total number of times each pair) mentioned each theme. Although the relative focus on each theme clearly differs not only between pairs but also between mentees and mentors within most pairs, these elements were common across all 11 pairs who shared their journeys, and thus seem to represent the ingredients that were required for making these relationships transformational.

Table 5

Theme Frequency by Pair

Theme/ Pair	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Commitment & Caring	28	11	20	41	26	16	16	13	15	15	10
Mentee	4	3	5	16	14	7	12	9	9	11	7
Mentor	24	8	15	25	12	9	4	4	6	4	3
Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee	10	9	23	14	18	18	7	9	11	13	9
Mentee	2	3	2	8	7	3	2	2	1	2	3
Mentor	8	6	21	6	11	15	5	7	10	11	6
Positive Sharing/Involvement	7	18	20	7	14	7	12	8	9	4	11
Mentee	2	11	2	2	3	4	7	2	2	2	4
Mentor	5	7	18	5	11	3	5	6	7	2	7
Role Model	13	5	20	20	17	11	14	7	7	6	5
Mentee	6	4	10	5	10	5	10	5	1	3	4
Mentor	7	1	10	15	7	6	4	2	6	3	1
Transformation	18	19	6	13	9	8	2	6	10	8	2
Mentee	16	18	2	9	8	1	2	4	8	7	2
Mentor	2	1	4	4	1	7	0	2	2	1	0
Unique Experience (mentee)	1	3	2	9	8	1	2	4	8	7	2
Contextualizing the Relationship (mentor)	10	1	3	8	8	6	2	2	2	3	7

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore transformational relationships in depth. The goal was to elucidate common ingredients that consistently emerge in such relationships, with the hope of learning how to replicate those elements. In order to identify these key attributes, pairs of participants, in which one member had a transformational experience because of the relationship, were recruited, and a semi-structured interview, focused on relational elements, was conducted with each individual.

Transformational relationships occur across a broad spectrum of ages and situations, including both formally organized connections, through agencies or employers, and naturally occurring relationships, such as with teachers, relatives, and managers. In this study the majority of pairs (9 of 11) were formal mentorships, assigned by agency-based mentoring programs, while one pair had begun their relationship through a tutoring program, and one pair met as a teacher and student. In order to extract the key elements of these transformational relationships, a set of questions was used to guide the interviews (see Appendix B), focusing on the relationship experience and attributes of the pair partner; however, interviewees were generally encouraged to explore whatever was most meaningful for them in the relationship.

Summary of Findings

Each and every person interviewed, both among mentees and mentors, described salient experiences of Commitment and Caring, Involvement, Affirmation/Recognition of Mentee, and the importance of the mentor being a Role Model. In addition, every mentor also spoke about the importance of Contextualizing the Relationship, and all the mentees identified their mentoring relationship as a Unique Experience leading to some form of Transformation. Accordingly, the themes of Commitment and Caring, Involvement, Affirmation/Recognition of

Mentee, the mentor being a Role Model, Contextualizing the Relationship (mentor), having a Unique Experience (mentee), and leading to Transformation (mentee) are the common and seemingly key reported ingredients of these transformational relationships. It is notable that not only were these themes present in all of the transformational relationships studied, but also it seems that these ingredients may be interwoven as such connections develop.

Commitment and caring. First, Commitment and Caring seemed to form the foundation of the interpersonal experience. Each mentee reported experiencing trust, reliability, and support through the mentor's investment in the relationship; such experiences are also salient in publicized accounts of transformational relationships, such as *The Blind Side* (2009) and *Miracle Worker* (1962). Similarly, regularity of contact, consistency, reliability, supportive connectedness, trustworthiness, empathy, authenticity, credibility, and integrity have been cited as imperative in previous research of successful mentorships (Beam et al., 2002; Pawson, 2006; Spencer, 2006; Stanton-Salazar & Ursospina, 2003). Several participants in the current study noted that the mentee initially exhibited a lack of trust towards the mentor and built confidence in the relationship over time, which aligns with research findings that mentors may be tested for trustworthiness during the early stages of the relationship (Beam et al., 2002); it seems critical for the mentor to accept the mentee's pace and be patient with building trust (Canada, 1998).

Every mentee in this sample noted that the mentor went above and beyond the mentoring role and expected involvement. Examples included the mentor helping the mentee's family with housing issues (at times through use of personal resources), acting in a parental role at school meetings, driving several hours to visit the mentee (even after the formal mentorship had ceased), and helping the mentee move residences. This theme echoes other accounts of transformational figures taking a special interest beyond what was expected or common (such as

in *The Blind Side*, *Miracle Worker*, *The Soloist*). It seems that going above and beyond expectations signifies something especially meaningful to young mentees, because it concretely demonstrates how much the mentor cares and can truly be relied on; this would be an impactful experience for anyone, let alone those who may expect little after being consistently disappointed by significant others. As Taylor (1989) has pointed out, “what is important is not just the presence of role models or significant others, but individuals committed to a sustained effort to secure a brighter future for these youths” (p. 171).

Involvement. In the context of such sustained efforts, the bond between mentor and mentee seemed to grow through Involvement, which included engaging in shared positive experiences, enabling them to get to know and develop affinity for one another. Other studies have also supported the importance of Involvement for an enduring successful mentorship, finding that it is critical that the pair enjoy each other’s company (Spencer, 2006) and that the mentor is emotionally invested in the mentee (Beam et al., 2002). Further, in each of the relationships explored in this study, it seemed critical that the mentor shared aspects of his or her own life with the mentee—even, in some cases, introducing the mentee to family; in one notable instance, the mentor’s sibling and parent visited the mentee at college, several hours away, took her out for lunch, and bought her school and home supplies.

Affirmation and recognition. Resonating with the development of trust and a growing bond, another critical component in establishing a transformational relationship involved the mentee feeling visible and supported. This occurred through the mentor providing Affirmation/Recognition of the Mentee, by encouraging the mentee, treating him/her with respect, and dealing with difficult situations in a direct yet supportive manner. Other studies have similarly pointed to the importance of mentees feeling that their mentors are interested in

them, believe in them, show them respect, appreciate them, support their participation in activities, and genuinely know them (Beam et al., 2002; Hendry et al., 1992; Spencer, 2006).

Contextualizing the relationship. Across all of the pairs, it seems that a critical component of affirming and recognizing the mentee was the mentor Contextualizing the Relationship, which encompassed the mentor understanding, considering, and engaging with the mentee's world. Each and every mentor interviewed expressed awareness of the mentee's daily environment, and this awareness seems to be a critical element in appreciating the mentee's life and enabling a transformational experience. Other studies have similarly found that the mentor making an effort to understand the challenges faced by the mentee enhances the mentee's confidence (Spencer, 2006), and that making an effort to work effectively with the mentee's environment is imperative (Pawson, 2006). In fact, if a mentor does not appreciate and work with the mentee's circumstances, it can lead to more harm than good (Canada, 1998), which makes this element particularly vital.

Role model. Once the mentee feels connected to the mentor, understood, visible, and hopeful, the mentee is in a better position to accept guidance, inspiration, and sometimes a path to follow, so that the mentor can become a Role Model. Explicit teachings by the mentor, the mentor's introducing the mentee to new opportunities and perspectives, and most of all learning implicitly through the mentor's everyday way of being seem to facilitate the mentee's transformation. Several of the mentors shared that they were acutely aware of being a Role Model in the mentee's life. This finding aligns with other descriptions of the ways role models contribute to developing coping behaviors and resiliency (Rhodes et al., 2006; World Health Organization, 2007).

Unique experience. All of the above ingredients seemed to culminate in what every one of the mentee's identified as a Unique Experience in their life. This experience took different forms and filled distinct roles, seemingly depending on the mentee's needs and history. For some the mentor took the role of an older sibling that the mentee had yearned for, and for others the mentor's care gave the mentee what their parents never could. Other research has found that mentors seem to fill a unique role, somewhere between peers and parents (Beam et al., 2002); that providing students with such a relationship just one supportive hour per week led to improvements in relationships, self-confidence, valuing school, and class participation (MacCallum et al., 2005); and that just the presence of one caring adult at school increases resilience (Crime and Justice Institute, 2006). The experience of the relationship as a unique fulfillment of a personal need may be the final and decisive piece of what makes the relationship transformational.

Incidental Findings

Demographics. The themes identified were common across all the pairs, regardless of demographics, duration of the formal match, or how the relationship was formed. Based on the 11 pairs interviewed, it seemed that a shared background between the mentee and mentor was not imperative, since the majority of pairs were from different socioeconomic backgrounds, spanned mentee-mentor age gaps of two to over 50 years, and half were interracial; yet, the mentees all had a transformative experience.

The role of race is particularly interesting, as three of the five mentees in a mixed-race pairing made a point of sharing that race did not affect their relationship; this finding resonates with a study in which 26 youth of mixed-race matches unanimously reported being happy and having little or no issues with being in a cross-race match (Morrow & Styles, 1995). Other

published research has varied on this topic; some studies have found that having a similar background is important for an effective mentoring relationship (Pawson, 2006), while contrasting findings suggest that interracial matches are almost equally likely to form long-lasting successful relationships and that such mentors may in fact be more vested in the relationship as they need to overcome racial differences (Rhodes, Reddy, Grossman, & Lee, 2002a). Although the current study represents a small sample, and other factors interacting with race are likely important, the effectiveness of cross-race matches stands out since the pairs that continued to be most involved after their formal or initial connection ended, and became part of each other's extended family networks, were of mixed-race. The impact of race is undoubtedly complicated: for example, Rhodes et al. (2002a) found that mixed-race matches fared better with respect to mentee alcohol use, while same-race matches were better off regarding mentees' self worth, suggesting that race may be a complex, if not determinative, factor.

Formal vs. natural mentoring. The two pairs who connected through natural (i.e., not formal) mentoring programs responded to interview questions with themes that were almost identical to themes from those in more formal, assigned, programmatic arrangements. One difference, however, at least within this limited sample, was that the two informal relationships seemed to be more enduring; they are the only two pairs who continue—well into the mentee's adulthood—to be in very frequent contact (several times per month) and still include each other in personal functions. Although most of the other pairs were still in contact after the formal match ended, the contact was sporadic—usually not more than once every few months—and relegated more to phone, email, or social media.

Given that depictions of transformational relationships within popular culture tend to involve naturally evolving connections, it is interesting that the two informally matched pairs in

this study also seemed to exhibit the strongest long-term relatedness to one another. This naturalistic element resonates with the results of an in-depth study of enduring successful mentorships, which found that being integrated into each other's lives naturally, without feeling obligation, added to the longevity of the connections (Spencer, 2006). The impact of formal versus informal mentoring on transformational relationships seems to warrant further exploration.

Termination/separation. Another theme that came up during the course of interviews was termination or separation of mentoring relationships. Two mentees shared their experiences of prior mentoring relationships that had been terminated abruptly; one mentee had a mentoring relationship terminated due to the mentor not showing up as promised, while the other mentee had been enrolled in a residential program that decided to terminate the existing mentorship. Both mentees shared that this experience was very difficult, impacted them a great deal, and took a long time to recover from. As one of them shared,

... She was the first person that I opened up to...I completely gave her all of my trust and she broke it. She kind of broke my heart in a way, and made me afraid of opening up like that to someone again...it took quite some time for me to be comfortable with being that open with people again from that point forward.

These reported experiences highlight the importance of handling separation carefully, and they point to the fact that failed or prematurely terminated mentoring relationships may leave mentees worse off, as documented in previous research (Roberts et al., 2004).

Implications

In summary, almost all of the key ingredients found in the current study seem consistent with prevailing research on mentoring relationships. The importance of Commitment and

Caring, engaging positively and enjoying Involvement with the mentee, Affirmation/Recognition of the Mentee, being a Role Model and advocate, Contextualizing the Relationship, and providing a Unique Relationship have all been established in various research as important components of successful mentorships, and they emerged as key ingredients in the current study. The contribution that this study makes is the description of elements that seem to be common to mentorships specifically identified as transformational.

One question emerges when comparing the themes of this study with previous research on successful mentoring relationships: What are the elements that make a successful mentoring relationship truly transformational? In transformational relationships, it seems that youngsters experience an enduring personal transformation that broadly impacts their internal, as well as external, way of being. On the other hand, it may be that successful, but not transformational, mentorships impact a specific area of struggle or need in the youngsters' lives, which is often what formal mentorships try to target. This study explores transformational relationships, but it does not delve into the differences between these and relationships that have more modest or targeted outcomes; this difference warrants further exploration.

One potentially valuable contribution of this study was the reported relative unimportance of mentor pairs being from similar backgrounds. Given that the involvement and duration of mixed-race pairs exceeded that of pairs of the same race, and that some mentees explicitly spoke about the irrelevance of race in their interracial mentoring relationships, this seems to be an area worth further exploration. This is an especially important topic because many programs take pains to match the backgrounds of their mentors and mentees when creating pairings.

Going beyond the findings of this study, one wonders whether certain variables might predispose a mentee to engage in a transformational way with a potentially effective mentor. In other words, are there certain personal qualities that are preconditions for participating in a transformative relationship? Along these lines, several groups of factors might be considered: (a) temperament and resonance of mentee and mentor, (b) relational readiness, or openness to connect, which may be shaped by a person's relational foundation and past experiences, and (c) developmental readiness, or openness to change, which may be impacted by developmental stages.

Temperament. One possibility is that certain characteristics of temperament of one or both of the individuals affect whether a relationship can become transformational. Specifically, is there a particular element within one or each person that captures or connects (or repels) the other? Does the mentor implicitly offer exactly the sort of emotional responsiveness that the mentee needs? Do the resiliency or internal coping behaviors of the mentee play a role? In the Kauai study, Werner and Smith (1992) found that certain qualities of the mentee, such as favorable temperament and a tendency to interact positively with others, led to more positive connections, thus increasing the possibility of transformational relationships.

One such personal variable is the mentee's capacity to perceive and respond to environmental support (Masten, 1994; Rhodes et al., 2006). The capacity to perceive support may well derive from attachment styles, which may involve the interaction of biological and early relational factors. Attachment related experiences, such as past experiences with help providers, may lay the groundwork that impacts mentoring effectiveness of later encounters (Barker, 2007; Rhodes et al., 2006).

Capacity to connect. Although early relations influence responsiveness to support, even those who have experienced fractured attachments may still be able to develop trusting relationships over time when provided genuine affection and consistent support (Dallos & Comley-Ross, 2005). Despite the fact that most of the mentees in this study came from disrupted home environments, in which they may have experienced fragmented attachments, they seemed to bring some sort of eagerness for a relationship. Attachment style and subsequent capacity for relational connectedness can be changed by experiencing new relationships, which can lead to restructuring of the self and ultimately changing attachment patterns to a secure relational model (Wallin, 2007). Each one of the mentees interviewed identified the mentor relationship as a unique experience, and several specified that it felt like a substitute for an older sibling or parent. This finding aligns with evidence that mentees appear to value mentor characteristics that resemble those of a “good” parent (Spencer, 2006). Perhaps the mentoring relationship becoming a substitute for an ideal parent relationship facilitates such a strong connection.

Another striking theme consistent in published stories, which merits mention in the context of relational readiness, involves the limitation of emotional support prior to the transformational relationship—one of the more extreme examples is the story of Michael Oher (*The Blind Side*). Each of the mentees who were interviewed for this study also seemed to experience some degree of isolation, such as having limited access to positive adult relationships, before connecting with their mentor. Perhaps something inside of these mentees kept sufficient hope and/or openness alive for a positive relationship, despite their isolation. Although the mentee’s relational history was beyond the scope of this study, it seems that it is an area worth further investigating, as will be discussed later in the chapter.

Developmental readiness. Personal transformation often involves a major shift in

identity, including the loss of old and the acquisition of new identifications. Thus, a mentor can also play a significant role in shaping a youth's sense of self since identity formation is the primary task of adolescence, according to Erikson's model of development (Feldman, 2010). Adolescents will often seek out adults with whom they can identify and who foster developmental opportunities and experimentation. This search for a facilitating non-parental adult figure, or object of identification, may be a key factor driving the responsiveness to a potentially transformational mentoring relationship (Taylor, 1989).

Another important aspect of identity development is feeling self-efficacious. As Bandura's work hypothesized, when success is reflected, it impacts self-effectiveness, in turn enhancing motivation (Lefkowitz, 1986; Masten, 1994). Successful mentors enable youth, especially those who have only experienced a mode of daily survival and have not had the luxury to focus on aspirations, to feel competent in their environment. Studies (Lefkowitz, 1986; Masten, 1994) have found that youth feel more in control when mentors make them feel valued, model competent behavior, offer opportunities and perspectives, provide guidance and feedback, and are supportive, all of which are also reflected throughout this study's findings. Therefore, we should consider the role of mentorships in enhancing mentees' self-efficacy and resulting motivation.

Another way of understanding the results of the present study is through cybernetics theory, which combines the above constructs and focuses on structural change in the self (Brown & Miller, 2004). In order to change functioning, such as that described in all of the mentee interviews, one must step outside of habitual relational patterns. Opening up to new connections, growth, and development requires destabilizing the existing structure, which usually occurs because of a rupture, triggered by conflict or discontent; such conflict can even emerge from

experiencing a genuinely caring adult for the first time, as evidenced by the mentee initially fighting against the connection. Again, this openness may be a result of certain variables that the mentee brings with them to the relationship. Over time, as attachment forms and the other's influence is internalized, there arises a transformation of purpose, direction, and/or self, such as that described by each and every mentee in this study.

Limitations

The phenomenological qualitative methodology of this study evoked semi-structured narratives that allowed for the identification of common elements of transformational relationships; however, this method of investigation involved several limitations, which call for further confirmatory research.

First, although elements common to all 11 transformational relationships were identified, it is not clear that all of these elements are necessary in order for a helping relationship to be transformational. This study did not establish that such a relationship requires each ingredient to be present; perhaps, a transformational relationship can occur with only some of the elements. Further, although it is encouraging to find common ingredients across all the transformational relationships that were explored, this does not demonstrate causation; for example, even when all of these ingredients are present, it is not assured that a transformational relationship will develop.

Certain other aspects of this study's format allow for the possibility of confounding variables. As outlined earlier in the chapter, there may be other elements required for a transformational relationship to occur—for example, certain characteristics of the mentee or mentor—that did not emerge during the semi-structured interviews. In addition, reverse or reciprocal causation must also be considered; it is possible that experiencing a transformational relationship led to the emergence, or the enhancement of, the common elements identified. For

example, the mentor may have become more supportive and caring because of experiencing a significant relationship with the mentee, or the mentee may have become more open to the mentor's efforts in the wake of certain early transformational stirrings.

In addition, although the ingredients found may transfer to other types of mentoring relationships, the generalizability of the study is limited due to the number of participants, method of recruiting, and the majority of pairs being from formal mentoring programs. Since the data is from interviews that rely on the self-report of subjective experience, reliability cannot be assumed, and method effects might contribute to the sort of results found here. However, interviewing the pair partner of each interviewee separately, and looking for common variables across several pairings, diminishes this issue.

Another limitation of the study design relates to participant selection. Since the study only included participants whose relationships were transformational, it is not known why other pairs did not have such an experience. Thus, it is possible that another mentee may have had similar relational experiences to those interviewed here, without having a transformational, or perhaps even positive, experience. There is also unavoidable selection bias, since (a) participants had to agree to be interviewed, (b) both parties in a pair had to express interest, and (c) in the case of pairs referred through an agency, the agency had to make initial contact with the pairs to uphold confidentiality. While the use of specific pre- and post-relationship criteria (see Appendix A) provided some external control over inclusion guidelines, it is possible that only a special subgroup of qualified pairings actually chose to participate, and this might have skewed the range of responses to the interviewer.

The findings are also limited because only the connection between the mentor and mentee was examined. This study did not explore the mentee's early history and internal

resources, or the background and personality characteristics of the mentor, which could be critical components of what makes a transformational relationship possible. For example, perhaps it is vital that the mentor, to be effective, be able to adopt a particular role that parents were not able to fill, not unlike the notion of “role responsiveness” as an important element in therapist effectiveness (Sandler et al., 1989). It has been suggested that early identifications influence and limit the range of object identifications (Taylor, 1989), and thus the impact of role models. In turn, the potential to engage in transformational relationships may be affected by a youth’s prior experiences and consequent capacity for such a relationship. Another required element for receptiveness may relate to self-esteem, as it may impact one’s capacity to experience the esteem of others (Turner & Brown, 2009).

Finally, how the mentoring relationship was formed, through natural connection or a formal program, may also have an impact on whether and how the relationship is transformational. Although the sample size in this study was limited, and the majority of pairs were from formal mentoring programs, the two pairs who experienced a natural mentorship seemed to have a longer lasting bond and be more involved with each other. However, the limitations in methodology inherently impact the strength of such conclusions, and as such these are only suggestive interpretations that need more exploration in order to bear weight.

Future Directions

As addressed throughout the discussion, there are many questions and issues raised in this study that warrant further research. To more fully understand the applicability of the findings, we must determine whether the key ingredients found are necessary and sufficient for transformational relationships, or whether other aspects are required, such as duration of relationship, characteristics in mentee or mentor, and certain previous experiences of the mentee.

Although the mentee's relational history was beyond the scope of this study, it seems that this is an area worth further investigating.

Another question worth considering is whether certain key ingredients identified here are more foundational than others. Is there some special priority of some of these thematic factors associated with transformational relationships, or some sequence in their establishment, that favors an eventual transformational outcome? Addressing such questions might enable the development of more effective programming.

A specific area of examination is how applicable these findings are for formal (through mentoring programs) versus informal (from natural settings) mentoring, and also which types of formal programs are the most effective. As previously discussed, although it is a limited sample size, the two informally matched pairs in this study exhibited the strongest long-term connections. It is possible that such informal mentorships tend to be stronger since they evolve naturally, without any governing program or commitment. The difference in impact between formal and natural mentoring connections seems to warrant further exploration; if one format has a greater impact, then it could inform the most effective use of resources. For example, if reaching out to a familiar child, rather than referring that child to a formal program, is much more effective, then efforts may be more valuable if redirected to more community-based personal connections. This consideration is especially critical for children in need who have not formally been identified as "at-risk," yet who could become less vulnerable through the informal intervention of a caring adult.

It seems especially worth exploring whether the common background of the mentee and mentor is important, since this proposition conflicts with the findings of this study. While the current sample of transformational relationships is small, almost half of the pairs were

interracial, and most were from different socioeconomic backgrounds; furthermore, pairs who continued to be most involved after their formal connection ended were of mixed-race. If these findings are replicated, it may diminish the perceived need for strenuous efforts on the part of certain programs to match mentees with mentors of the same race, socioeconomic, and/or ethnic backgrounds.

Finally, studies of transformational relationships in general, including adults in arenas outside of mentoring, would be enormously valuable. The life-changing nature of transformational relationships is evident from lives recounted in literature and, if we look closely, examples all around us. The more that we can understand about the development and the constituent elements of such connections, the greater is our chance to alter the trajectories of lives.

Summary

This study sought to discover key ingredients of transformational relationships in the hope that elucidating these essential elements might allow them to be replicated for any child who did not grow up in a wholly nurturing environment. Several ingredients were identified, which were common across every relationship that was studied, through the intimate stories shared by the mentee and mentor of each pair. Ideally, if these findings are supported by future investigations, they might be shared with every adult who wishes to help facilitate positive transformational mentorships. Such findings may have an impact on the design and implementation of programs that connect adults with youth in need. Also, given that many, if not most, transformational relationships evolve from everyday connections (such as with teachers, coaches, family friends), these findings, if supported, may be useful beyond the formal mentoring community. Transformational relationships can provide healthy reconnecting

experiences, reignite psychological growth, foster hope, and help to navigate the road to adulthood.

Having had the honor to hear these transformational stories firsthand, and see the life in the eyes, and hear it in the voices, of those shaped by such a relationship, this author witnessed the wondrous power of one. Hopefully, capturing the core elements of life stories that have been touched and transformed through the presence of another will give rise to more research on how to work most effectively with vulnerable youngsters. May it bring us one step closer to igniting a light for every child who could use help to find their way out of the dark room of their life.

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Appendix A

Criteria for Transformational Relationship

Directions:

Three criteria from each of the following lists (before and after transformational relationship) are required in order to determine whether a transformational relationship occurred for the purposes of this study. These criteria will be established during the initial contact with each participant, using input from both participants. If there is discrepancy between appraisals, which results in insufficient criteria being met, then the interviewer will engage in follow-up discussion to determine source of discrepancy and confirm eligibility to participate in study.

Before Transformational Relationship

- Very limited vision of future
- Drop out of school and unemployed
- Not working towards any positive goals
- Hopelessness/ apathy
- Involved in criminal activity/ delinquency/ severe recklessness
- Heavy substance use
- Severe insecurity/ lack of sense of self
- Absence of positive stable relationships

After Transformational Relationship

- Positive vision of future
- Working towards positive goals
- Hopeful/ Active in managing own life
- Good self-care
- Confident/ strong sense of self
- Stable, positive relationships established (beyond mentoring relationship)
- No longer involved in crime
- Has re-enrolled in, and is on track to completing school
- Has long-term employment or educational prospects

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Mentee Interviews

1. When did [mentor's name] first become a significant part of your life?
2. How did this relationship compare to other relationships you had?
3. What about [mentor's name] or the relationship was/ is most important to you?
4. Describe the changes in your life that took place.
5. When did you first feel a change within yourself?
6. Looking back on that time, what do you think helped you change?

Mentor Interviews

1. When did you first sense that you had become a significant part of [mentee's name] life?
2. How did you go about making a good connection with [mentee's name]?
3. What about [mentee's name] or the relationship was/ is most important to you?
4. Describe the changes in [mentee's name's] life that took place.
5. When did you first feel a change within [mentee's name]? What were the signs of that beginning change?
6. Looking back on that time, what do you think most helped [mentee's name] to change?

Appendix C

Participant Recruitment Flyer

DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR LIFE HAS CHANGED BECAUSE OF SOMEONE BEING
PART OF YOUR LIFE?

- Are you over 18?
- Do you have a mentor or other person who has changed your life?
- Would you be willing to share your story?

I am conducting a research study on relationships that have changed lives, in order to better understand what makes these relationships possible.

If you answered “yes” to the questions above, and you and the person who changed your life are each willing to spend one hour sharing your story, you are eligible for this study.

You will each receive a \$15.00 gift certificate for your participation.

Participation is voluntary and confidential.

This study is being conducted under the guidance of The Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

If you are interested, please contact Katerina Malat at [REDACTED] or
[REDACTED]

Appendix D

Voicemail Message

Hello, you have reached the confidential voicemail of Katerina Malat. Thank you for calling. If you are calling about the research study on life-changing relationships, thank you for responding and for your interest in participating. I look forward to providing you with more information about the study. After the tone, please leave your name, phone number, and the best time to reach you. I will return your call as soon as possible. I look forward to speaking with you.

Appendix E

Initial Contact Script

Hello, my name is Katerina Malat, may I please speak with ____? Thank you. Hi _____. My name is Katerina Malat. I am calling because you expressed interest in participating in my research study on life-changing relationships. Do you have a few minutes to speak now? [If no, ask “When would be the best time to reach you? Thank you, I will contact you then.”]

Great. I want to tell you a bit about the study to see if you are still interested in participating. I am interested in learning more about the experience you had of your life changing because of someone you know. We would meet for one interview, which would last approximately one hour. The interview will only be with you and myself – I will interview your mentor/ the person that changed your life at a separate time. Is this ok with you? [If no, “Since this is a requirement of the study, I will have to decline your generous offer to participate. Thank you for interest in the study, and offering your time.”]

Great, I will tell you a bit more about the interview. During our discussion I will ask you about how your relationship with your mentor [or other as appropriate] began, how it developed, and how it changed your life. Does that sound ok? Good. I just need to ask you a few questions to make sure you meet the study criteria.

Are you over 18? Do you feel that your life changed because of someone being a part of your life (in the form of a lasting relationship rather than a one-time experience)? I am now going to ask you a few things about your life before and after it changed. Before your life changed did any of these apply to you [read list from Appendix A]? After your life changed did any of these apply to you? [If did not meet criteria, for any of the above questions, “Unfortunately, you do not meet the criteria for participation in this study. Since this is a requirement of the study, I will have to decline your generous offer to participate. Thank you again for interest in the study, and offering your time.”]. Great, you meet the necessary criteria to participate in the study. The last criterion is that your mentor agrees to an interview as well. If you have already discussed participation in the study with your mentor and he/ she has agreed to have me contact him/ her you can provide me with your mentor’s contact details. Otherwise, can you please have him/ her contact me in order to set up a separate interview? Thank you. I will be in touch with you if he/ she does not agree to participate.

As was stated in the advertisement, you will receive a \$15 gift certificate for your participation in person at the end of the one-hour interview. I want to emphasize that participation in this study is entirely voluntary. The interview will be recorded, but all of the information you share will be confidential – your name will not be in the study nor be linked to the recording. I will be the only one (other than your mentor) who will know you are participating in the study, but your mentor will only know that you are participating – he/ she will not know what we discuss. Are you ok with all of this?

It would be most convenient if we conduct the interview at [NAME OF AGENCY] – is that ok with you? [If no, offer other suitable public locations, such as local libraries]. Ok, let’s set up a

time to meet. What day and time would be best for you? I will send you a confirmation letter that states the date, time and location of our interview – would you prefer this by mail, email or text? [OBTAIN ADDRESS IF REQUIRED]. I will also call you the day before just as a reminder about the time. If you have any questions, concerns, or need to reschedule or cancel the interview, please call me at [REDACTED]. Do you have any questions now? Thank you very much for your time and I look forward to meeting you.

Appendix F

Interview Reminder Letter

Dear _____,

Thank you for your interest in participating in my research study on life-changing relationships. This is to confirm that you voluntarily agreed to be interviewed by me, Katerina Malat, as part of this research study. Our interview will take place on [DATE], at [TIME] at _____, and will last approximately one hour. I will contact you the day before the interview to reconfirm the time and location.

If you have any questions or concerns before then, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED], or at [REDACTED].

I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Katerina Malat, M.A.

Appendix G

Confidentiality Agreement

Title: The Power of One: Understanding Key Variables in Transformational Relationships

Investigators: Katerina Malat

I am asking you to participate in a research study. Please take your time to read the information below and feel free to ask any questions before signing this document.

Purpose: During this study I will be speaking with people who feel that their life has changed because of knowing one person. The purpose of these discussions is to get a better understanding of what makes such life-changing relationships possible. The goal is to find out what is common amongst these experiences, which may help to create and/ or improve programs that are focused on helping people make positive changes in their life.

Procedures: You will participate in an interview where you will be asked questions about the relationship that you feel changed your life. There will only be one interview, which will take approximately one hour. You will receive a \$15.00 gift certificate after the interview for your participation.

Risks to Participation: The risk involved in this study is minimal. However, discussion of your experience may be emotional for you.

Benefits to Participants: You will not directly benefit from this study. However, I hope that the information learned from this study might benefit society in understanding how to make programs that help people change their lives more effectively.

Alternatives to Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from study participation at any time without any penalty.

Confidentiality: Only the investigator will have access to the recorded interviews. The investigator will transcribe the interview into written form. Neither the recorded interviews nor the transcripts will have the participant name included, and instead will be identified with a number. Participant names will be kept in a separate file and will be kept confidential in a secure, password-encoded file, on a secured computer. Only the researcher will be able to access this information. The interview recordings and transcripts will be kept for five years, per American Psychological Association guidelines, and will then be permanently deleted.

Questions/Concerns: If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Katerina Malat at [REDACTED], or at [REDACTED]. *If you have questions concerning your rights in this research study you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is concerned with the protection of subjects in research project. You may reach the IRB office Monday-Friday by calling 312.467.2343 or writing: Institutional Review Board, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, 325 N. Wells, Chicago, Illinois, 60654”*

Consent

Subject

The research project and the procedures have been explained to me. I agree to participate in this study. My participation is voluntary and I do not have to sign this form if I do not want to be part of this research project. I will receive a copy of this consent form for my records.

Signature of Subject: _____

Date: _____

Signature of the Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Date: _____