

## WHAT YOUR COLLEAGUES ARE SAYING . . .

*“Women Mentoring Women for Momentum: The Next Step in Leading While Female is a powerful call to action for women to be mentors for others as they journey through their personal and professional lives. As a mother of two daughters and a doctoral-level professor who mentors emerging leaders, this book deeply resonates with me. It illustrates how sisterhood, intentional mentorship, and the “tap on the shoulder” can ignite confidence, open doors, and build sustainable pathways for women in leadership. Women investing in other women is the key to changing the future for those watching us.”*

**Dr. Jaime Welborn**, Professor of Educational Leadership, Saint Louis University

*“This compelling book is an inspiring call to action for women everywhere, grounded in insightful research that underscores the critical importance of mentoring in leadership development. Through the heartfelt reflections of Dr. Trudy Arriaga, who shares the profound impact of the male mentors who shaped her journey; to Dr. Stacy Stanley’s candid account of the randomness and unpredictability of mentorship; and to Dr. Delores Lindsey’s powerful recollection of a challenging experience—an example of the subtle barriers women often face in their career advancement—this book illuminates the complex realities women encounter in professional mentorship. Women Mentoring Women for Momentum: The Next Step in Leading While Female challenges women to embrace their roles as mentors and leaders, emphasizing that mentorship is a vital pathway to creating momentum and advancing equity. It encourages us to see mentorship not just as a personal act, but as a collective movement to uplift women, foster growth, and shatter barriers. This book will ignite your passion to serve, empower, and lead with purpose. Whether you are an established leader or just beginning your mentorship journey, Women Mentoring Women for Momentum: The Next Step in Leading While Female offers valuable insights rooted in research and real experiences that will inspire you to shape a future where women’s leadership and mentorship are valued and transformative. A must-read for anyone committed to fostering growth, amplifying women’s voices, and building momentum toward a more equitable leadership landscape.”*

**Dr. Talisa Sullivan**, CEO/Founder of Transformational Leadership Consulting Services

*“Women Mentoring Women for Momentum: The Next Step in Leading While Female is a powerful and necessary call to action for women in educational leadership. The book speaks to my heart as a leader, a mentor, and a woman who has navigated the very barriers this book so clearly names. The authors honor our journeys with honesty and courage, shedding light on systems that were not built for us while reminding us of the collective power we hold when we lift one another up. More importantly, it offers a path forward through intentional mentorship, sisterhood, and collective empowerment. The authors beautifully illustrate how women can build one another up, accelerate leadership growth, and create healthier, more equitable systems for the next generation. This is an essential read for anyone committed to cultivating courageous women leaders—and ensuring they not only rise, but thrive.”*

**Julie A. Vitale**, Ph.D., Superintendent of Oceanside Unified School District

*“Women Mentoring Women for Momentum: The Next Step in Leading While Female elevates the impactful, tangible power mentoring provides in nurturing female leaders across educational sectors. As women lean into spaces that have often been inaccessible or arduous to enter, the authors artfully convey compelling experiences which are further grounded in research. This work is a gift to those in education and those who seek to lead in ways in and out of the classroom. As I read this work, I am reminiscent of my own female mentors who challenged me and gently prodded me to realize my own agency, helping me to spread my wings to seek and engage in leadership opportunities. As emerging female leaders navigate leadership opportunities, the role of female mentors serving in leadership roles proves invaluable as trusted supports who have encountered barriers and situations often unique to those leading while female. The authors illuminate those barriers women have encountered in attaining and sustaining leadership roles. This includes perceptions at the onset of applying for leadership positions, where implicit bias and stereotypes may cloud the belief that women can serve as leaders and excel in ensuring the successful implementation of district initiatives. The timeliness of this work reflects contemporary challenges where women serve as primary caretakers not just for their immediate family but for elderly parents while rising to meet the needs of their students and staff. In fact, the ability to support in multiple spaces and manage competing priorities highlight one of the greatest strengths of women in leadership positions.”*

**Mercedes Hubschmitt**, Director II of UCSD Doctoral Program

*“The authors have done it again. Women Mentoring Women for Momentum is a powerful and timely addition to the Leading While Female series, offering both inspiration and practical guidance for aspiring and current female education administrators. Dr. Delores Lindsay, Dr. Trudy Arriaga, and Dr. Stacie Stanley illuminate the transformative impact of mentorship, weaving together research, personal stories, and actionable strategies that speak directly to the realities women face in leadership. This book is more than a resource—it’s a call to action for women to lift one another, build confidence, and create lasting momentum in our schools and systems.”*

**Dr. April Moore**, Superintendent at Sierra Sands Unified School District

*“Throughout my journey as a woman in leadership, I’ve been deeply influenced by the wisdom and generosity of women who led the way before me—mentors, colleagues, and dear friends who believed in me and helped me believe in myself. The authors of this book have been that to me. This book is both a call to action and a source of inspiration. It reminds us that mentorship is not a solitary act, but a shared responsibility—and that when women lift one another up and invest in each other’s growth, we build unstoppable momentum.”*

**Dr. Candace Singh**, Superintendent (Ret.), Fallbrook Union Elementary School District Leadership Consultant and Creator, AASA’s Aspiring Superintendents Academy for Women Leaders



# Women Mentoring Women for Momentum

## Dedication

*I, Trudy, dedicate this book to my esteemed coauthors, valued mentors, and treasured friends, Stacie Stanley and Delores Lindsey. Our work to support women as leaders has resulted in deep and forever friendships with each other. I will always value our time around the Lindsey's kitchen table, with our relentless desire to support, lift, and promote educators who are Leading While Female.*

*I, Stacie, dedicate this book to my valued friends and mentors, Trudy and Delores. Through your mentoring, I continue to refine my craft as an educational leader. My hope is through our writing partnership and friendship, we have built something meaningful—a legacy of hope for the thousands of women leader voices we hear from as they seek to Lead While Female.*

*I, Delores, dedicate this book to my dear friends, coauthors, and mentors, Trudy and Stacie. Even though you did not know each other prior to our writing together, the three of us have become friends and colleagues. You are truly my mentors for creating the vision for Women Mentoring Women for Momentum: The Next Step in Leading While Female*

# Women Mentoring Women for Momentum

The Next Step in Leading While Female

Trudy T. Arriaga

Stacie L. Stanley

Delores B. Lindsey

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# FOREWORD

In May 2020, during the pandemic, #MeToo, and Black Lives Matter movements, Trudy T. Arriaga, Stacie L. Stanley, and Delores B. Lindsey published the book that female educational leaders did not know they were waiting for, *Leading While Female: A Culturally Proficient Response for Gender Equity*. The authors of *Leading While Female* had started a private Facebook page. When I was invited, I then invited all the females I thought would want to be a part of the community. As we were in the early months of the pandemic at that point, I posted on that page, “We should have a book study.” Dr. Delores Lindsey replied, “If you host it, we’ll come.” We planned for a four-Monday series, each night 1 hour and a half. I made a promotional flyer and promoted the book study for a month. By June 2020, we had over 500 educators sign up. I had to buy a bigger Zoom license, and the Leadership Book Chat was born. Close to 500 showed up. Those virtual meetings were full of connections, capacity building, and inspiration, in a time where so many felt isolated. With women attending across the United States, we found solidarity and validation on a national level. The *Leading While Female* Facebook group became a place for people to celebrate women’s accomplishments, as well as their rising in educational positions. *Leading While Female* became a national movement and an annual conference. The first *Leading While Female* conference was virtual, held on a Saturday, with hundreds of women in attendance and purple *Leading While Female* t-shirts worn proudly. It became a hashtag: #LeadingWhileFemale.

Something magical was happening. Women who had never considered earning a doctorate began signing up for programs. Others who had never considered entering formal leadership started to apply. And others who had resigned themselves to working as assistant principals for their career, applied for principalships, and so on. Women, like myself, inspired by the authors, began writing the books, like the authors say, that “we wanted to read.” Female educators were finding their voices. They were reaching out to each other for support outside of the book study. We witnessed a momentum of women claiming and taking up space. We saw more women of color rising. New educational #SisterCircles were being created across the nation. This is not by chance; this is by design.

In 2023, the authors gave us a way to reflect on our journeys in the *My Leading While Female Journey: A Guided Reflective Journal* asking all the right questions to assist us in being more reflective and intentional about our *Leading While Female* journey. The first in-person *Leading While Female* Conference happened in 2023. Although many women were connecting in spaces both virtual and in-person at this point, this was the first time we were coming together for a *Leading While Female* conference. The 2-day powerful experience grounded us in our why, journeys, and connections with one another.

The *Leading While Female* work is intentional work. In *Leading While Female: A Culturally Proficient Response for Gender Equity* Chapter 3 Confronting and Overcoming Barriers, we are charged with seeing *mentors as allies* and *supporting women educational leaders*. In *My Leading While Female Journey: A Guided Reflective Journal* the authors ask us to *reflect on having multiple mentors, ensuring that all leaders seeking executive leadership roles have a mentor who is mentoring us and who are mentoring others*. It is no surprise that *Mentoring for Momentum* is the next book. It is the piece that all need to engage in to keep moving women forward. In a profession that is dominated by women with females making up 87 percent of the profession, it is disproportional to have men make up 75 percent of the nation's superintendents. As educators, we are told to eliminate disproportionality in the data. *Women Mentoring Women for Momentum: The Next Step in Leading While Female* empowers us to do this.

In October 2024, the authors hosted the *Leading While Female* Conference in Minnesota. I had the privilege of attending, and it was incredible to be surrounded once again by so many women who have had their careers changed by the *Leading While Female* book and journal, as well as women who had not read the book yet. It was empowering to hear Minnesota superintendents and state leaders speak their truths about their journey. It was inspiring and galvanizing. I gained a sisterhood of educational leaders in Minnesota.

In 2020, with *Leading While Female*, we all gained three more mentors, sponsors, and coaches: Trudy T. Arriaga, Stacie L. Stanley, and Delores B. Lindsey. They have empowered us through their writing, speaking, and actions to do more and be more. Now they are empowering us to carry the torch to build the capacity of the next generation of female leaders to do the same, as well as this new generation of educators to know what to look for in a mentor, sponsor, and/or coach, to know the difference, what actions to take and questions to ask.

## FOREWORD

Now in 2025, we are seeing a pushback in society on the social, political, and economic gains made by women and people of color. We also see it specifically in education. During the pandemic, many women of color were hired as superintendents and several lost their jobs (Arundel, 2022; National Superintendents Roundtable, 2021). After many years of having a woman in education themed issue of a leadership magazine, in 2024 that theme was eliminated. After a decade of a region hosting a woman in leadership networking night, a man's voice was the loudest in an executive board meeting communicating that it wasn't necessary or fair that we continue the event, even though there were funds to support it. The networking event was eliminated. These are just a few examples and a microcosm of the pushback and momentum lost. This is not by chance, this is by design.

As I said of the other *Leading While Female* books, I wish this book would have existed earlier in my career. I am a firm believer in continuous growth and improvement for all, especially educators, so I am excited for all of you to have this guide to intentionally and explicitly “mentor with momentum.” Lack of mentoring was reported as a major barrier by female leaders throughout the nation. This is a barrier we can control. We are in a time where we cannot wait. There is urgency around this work to be sure that we are coaching and being coached to create even greater equity, opportunities, access, and success for not only our children/students/scholars but also our staff, families, and communities. We will not go backward. We will only move forward. If the system was perfectly designed to get the results it gets, then let us design a new system to get new results, one designed in a matriarchal and familial way of mentoring.

The *Women Mentoring Women for Momentum: The Next Step in Leading While Female* book is exactly the book we need now. It is time and this is a call to action for all of us to sense the urgency and mentor with momentum.

—Renaë Bryant, EdD.

Leader, adjunct professor, speaker, Your Story Matters podcast host, & *The Ed Branding Book* author “Your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else.”

—Toni Morrison

“I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept.”

—Angela Davis

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”

—Alice Walker

“We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist.”

—James Baldwin

“Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.”

—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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National Superintendents Roundtable. (2021). *Superintendents struggle during pandemic: Panic attacks, strokes, & threats of violence meet prayer, exercise, meditation, and booze. A report from the National Superintendents Roundtable*. <https://www.superintendentsforum.org/reports/report-superintendents-struggle-during-pandemic>

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We greatly appreciate the women leaders who participated in our inquiry study about barriers and support factors for mentees and mentors. We honor the women throughout the nation who are *Leading While Female* and took their precious time on behalf of other women to be a part of our study. We acknowledge the women who have blazed the trails and walked before us. We stand on your shoulders as we hand the baton to the next generation of female leaders. We give gratitude to the female superintendents of this nation. Your unique contributions are acknowledged, recognized, and appreciated. Because of you, young women and little girls who dream of leading, can look up and find themselves. If you can see it—you can indeed, be it!

We thank our families who support us and honor the work we do in our attempt to blend our personal and professional lives. Our husbands, Raymundo, David, and Randy are true feminists. They support, walk along side, assist, and celebrate our work. We recognize and appreciate your contributions, and for this, we offer gratitude and love.

As a writing team, we are deeply appreciative of the expertise and support of the Corwin team. Thank you to our editor, Megan Bedell, and the support team, Mia Rodriguez, Natalie Delpino, and Lucas Schneider. We continue to be grateful to Dan Alpert, who supported our work with his excellence and relentless advocacy prior to his retirement.

Thank you to the numerous authors who are cited in this book. We appreciate and acknowledge the work you have done before us to ensure equity and access for all leaders. We intentionally cited the first names of all contributing authors to ensure the female authors are highlighted and recognized.

Finally, we thank each other. We sang together in triumph and held each other up in times of hardship. We made it through and modeled the true meaning of mentoring for momentum.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**Dr. Trudy T. Arriaga** served the Ventura Unified School District for 14 years as the first female superintendent. She began her career as a trilingual paraeducator and enjoyed 40 years of service in education as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, director, superintendent, and university instructor at all levels.

Trudy retired as superintendent in July 2015 and was honored by the naming of the VUSD District Office, The VUSD Trudy Tuttle Arriaga Education Service Center. She is currently the Advisor

for Educational Leadership and Partnerships at Cal Lutheran University. Trudy is the coauthor, with her esteemed colleague Dr. Randall B. Lindsey of *Opening Doors: An Implementation Template for Cultural Proficiency*, which delivers a compelling account on how leaders can create and expand cultures of inclusion and equity by dismantling and crafting new organizational policies and practices on behalf of the students they serve. Her second book, *Leading While Female: A Culturally Proficient Response to Gender Equity*, coauthored with Dr. Delores Lindsey and Dr. Stacie Stanley, offers a counter narrative and strategies to overcome the barriers of women in educational leadership, followed by the companion journal, *My Leading While Female Journal*. It has been her privilege to assist educational districts, institutions, and organizations throughout the United States through keynote speeches, workshops, leadership and equity institutes, and online professional development to align the actions of organizations with their stated values and principles in their effort to build a culturally proficient and inclusive organization for each and every one. Trudy and her husband, Raymundo, are enjoying this grand chapter of life as grandparents to Rayo Mana and Sofia Anuhea. Trudy can be contacted at [trudyarriaga73@gmail.com](mailto:trudyarriaga73@gmail.com).



**Dr. Stacie L. Stanley** currently serves as the superintendent of Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS), the second largest school district in Minnesota. Prior to her appointment in SPPS, she served as the superintendent of Edina Public Schools. Stacie has served in a variety of education roles including math teacher, school principal, and director of curriculum, assessment and instruction, and prior to serving as superintendent, she served as the associate superintendent of Eden Prairie Schools. Dr. Stanley fervently believes that the “answer is in the room”

and building leadership capacity through dignity supports organizational transformation.

Dr. Stanley earned a doctorate degree from Bethel University in Saint Paul, Minnesota, where she researched the impact of intercultural development on K-6 administrative leadership practice. She is a fierce advocate for creating safe spaces of belonging for each and every student that allow them to know their worth and thrive. Stacie is the coauthor of *Leading While Female: A Culturally Proficient Response for Gender Equity*. Dr. Stanley also served as a contributing author for the text *Innovative Voices in Education: Engaging Diverse Communities*.

Dr. Stanley is a doctoral program adjunct faculty member and advisor at Bethel University in Minnesota. Stacie lives in a multigenerational home with her husband and 95-year-old father and enjoys being an empty nester, power walking, and spending time with their grandchildren. Follow Dr. Stanley on instagram @DrStacieStanley or LinkedIn Stacie Stanley, EdD.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**Dr. Delores B. Lindsey** served as assistant principal, principal, and county office administrator. She served as executive director of the regional school leadership center. Delores uses her skills as cognitive coach and adaptive schools trainer blended with her understanding and skills as a cultural proficiency trainer to design and implement the 10-Day Certification Program for Culturally Proficient Educational Practice. She served as assistant professor at California State University San Marcos for more than 10 years. She retired from the institution; however, she has not retired from the

education profession. Her primary focus is developing culturally proficient leaders. She helps educational leaders examine their organizations' policies and practices and their individual beliefs and values about cross-cultural communication. Her favorite reflective questions are, *Who are we?* and, *Are we who we say we are?* Delores and her husband, Randall (her favorite SAGE/Corwin author), continue to co-write about the application of the four Tools of Cultural Proficiency. Her most recent publications, which are on Corwin's bestseller list, are *Leading While Female: A Culturally Proficient Response for Gender Equity*, and *My Leading While Female Journey: A Guided Reflective Journal* with Trudy Arriaga and Stacie Stanley.



# INTRODUCTION

*Before I walked on stage to present, a woman I did not know, quietly and gently fixed my collar and whispered, “I wanted you to look your best.”*

Trudy Arriaga

## WHY WE WROTE THIS BOOK

One of our greatest strengths as women resides in our sisterhood with other women. This book is designed to guide women to mentor for momentum as we seek and become female mentors and mentees. We continue to identify a disproportionate number of females in roles that do not carry decision-making power within the profession that is labeled, the “women’s profession.” Our children are watching and waiting, and there is no time but the present to act in support of each other as women. Mentor programs are essential for the success of leaders and women gaining leadership positions (Burns, 2025). The literature suggests that women are less likely to have strong female leaders to guide them than their male counterparts. Lack of female mentors becomes an obstacle for women and puts them at a disadvantage in acquiring leadership positions. The “tapping on the shoulder” of women influences motivation to pursue leadership, gives women confidence, and serves as an entry into existing networks of women in leadership. Investing in women through capacity building, mentors can significantly enhance leadership potential. By prioritizing capacity building through mentorship, districts can enhance the leadership skills of women and contribute to long-term sustainability and career longevity (Burns, 2025).

As we researched the extensive and complicated realities of women who lead in our books, *Leading While Female: A Culturally Proficient Response to Gender Equity* (LWF) and *My Leading While Female Journey: A Guided Reflective Journal*, we set out to identify barriers that many women face as they strive to secure positions in educational leadership. The barriers are social constructs that function as negative core values that result in resistance to gender equity. We interviewed and interacted with female educators across the nation in our *Leading While Female* research, and if you were a reader, you may recall that we went into great depth to discover the most common barriers that women identified in their quest to move forward as educational leaders. The following are the eight barriers identified:

- ▶ Systems Not Made for Women
  - Elimination of job sharing, meetings going overtime in the late afternoons, lack of lactation stations, and biased family-friendly benefits are relatable and specific examples of systems not designed for working women with responsibilities outside of their professional lives. These examples of a lack of flexibility in the workplace resulted in gender pay inequities as the ultimate realities of systems that are not made for women. According to Maranto et al (2018), men are promoted after 10.7 years of teaching compared to women teaching an average of 13.2 years before taking leadership roles. Women also report that their perception is that school boards set higher expectations for female principals compared to male principals (Watson et al., 2017).
- ▶ Traditional Career Pathways
  - Women generally begin their careers as elementary teachers. If they move through the system, the pathway is often in curriculum and instruction with years of experience in positions such as the teacher on special assignment, curriculum coordinator for elementary education, and director of curriculum and instruction. This is not the pathway to the executive cabinet level and leads to longer and often unreachable career paths to the superintendency for women. The research substantiates secondary leaders have an advantage over elementary leaders in being selected for executive cabinet positions (Wallace, 2014).
- ▶ Traditional Interview Process
  - The interview process for administrative positions frequently revealed a process of embedded, unconscious gender bias. Women reported being questioned about their family commitments in the interview process (Sawchuk, 2022). Suggestions such as “this will be a big job” and questions like “who will take care of your children?” were articulated to the authors numerous times. The language in the advertisement of the positions, lack of diversity of the panel, questions asked, discussions following the interview by the panel, reference checking, and, ultimately, the process for the decision were all found to be laden with gender bias and often a resistance to a woman securing the position. Stories of critique of appearance such as the styling of hair, clothing, makeup, and even shoes

## INTRODUCTION

became subjects that often were coupled with women's experiences in the interview process. Research has shown that bias continues to exist in hiring practices. When women are successful in leadership positions, they are considered the exception (Burns, 2025).

- ▶ Cultural Norms and Dual Identities
  - Unapologetically, we are women with multiple identities and not limited to grandmother, mother, wife, daughter, aunt, and superintendent. Balancing careers with home lives can be difficult and even impossible in organizations that do not recognize nor honor the dual roles of women who lead. Women reported facing bias and stereotypes about their leadership capabilities as well as their home and family responsibilities.
- ▶ Delays Along the Way
  - Women reported delays along the way to achieving their next career steps. Delays included maternity leave, child rearing, care of elderly parents, and following their spouses to other communities for career advancement. These realities and responsibilities women face in their struggle to maintain their homes and family are recognized as barriers.
- ▶ Myths About Women's Qualifications
  - *Women do not have business acumen . . . women are too soft . . . women do not have the courage.* We heard these quotes throughout our research and continue to hear them today. Our response is, *do not mistake our greatest strengths as weaknesses.* Women have reported hearing biased statements such as, *you are not proficient with budgets and the political aspects of the job yet, and we are not ready for a female superintendent yet* (Arriaga et al., 2020, p. 60). Women are often the *risky choice* or the *let's give her a shot* choice, when indeed they rise and achieve.
- ▶ Lack of Confidence . . . not Competence
  - The profession said to be the women's profession continues to be led predominantly by men. Even though *nearly eight in 10 public school teachers are women*, men continue to fill the majority of leadership positions. Women are now the majority in educational leadership doctoral and master's programs. Yes, women prepare themselves well by earning master's and doctorates in education. The University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA, n.d.) reports

that 66 percent of their students in educational leadership master's programs are women. Although women have prepared themselves well, many lack the confidence to apply for higher level positions.

- Lambert (2025) of California's EdSource publication reported that, nationally, 53 percent of state superintendents in 2025 are female, up from 47 percent last year. Women hold one-third of the district/school superintendent's jobs in the United States. Half of all superintendents appointed to the top job in the largest 100 school districts are women. Despite that, at the current pace of change, it will take almost 30 years before there are as many women serving as superintendents as men.
  - The study reported that in the western United States, 37 percent of the superintendents are women—up from 30 percent last year. The highest percentage of female superintendents is in the northeastern part of the country, with 46 percent. The number decreased from 54 percent from last year. The southeast has the lowest percentage of female superintendents, with 22 percent.
  - EdSource's report came from The ILO Group, a national education strategy and policy firm.
- ▶ Lack of Female Mentors
- Women reported that they have greatly benefitted from male mentors and colleagues, yet many indicated they have not had a female mentor. This supportive environment for women did not always exist, and thus, they did not have the opportunity of shared experiences, confidence building, and navigating challenges through the lens of another female. The lack of opportunity for assistance with addressing the barriers listed previously prevented them from having valuable insights into those who had similar experiences specific to gender barriers, including work-life balance, self-confidence, networking, and, ultimately, finding success and satisfaction in their professional and personal lives.

As we have traveled the country and continue to meet, greet, and gather with women who lead, the subject of lack of female mentoring became the recurring theme. We realized the final two barriers, lack of confidence and lack of female mentors, were not only related but are the two barriers that we as women can control. Thus, we set out to dive deeper into the realities and research of females mentoring females. Our research has uncovered

## INTRODUCTION

the reality that securing female mentors directly impacts the confidence versus competence barrier. Building each other's confidence is a major focus of the mentoring process.

This book is not designed to disparage nor minimize the tremendous assistance we have received from our male colleagues as mentors throughout our journeys. Rather, this book is designed to clarify that female mentors can provide assistance, guidance, and support in ways that males cannot due to specific insights and experiences of female leader.

We encourage our readers to take advantage of the multiple best strategies on how to become a mentor or a mentee. Our research indicated that lack of time is the greatest barrier to seeking a mentor relationship. We have addressed possible strategies in Chapter 4 to find ways to free up time for mentoring. As sisters in leadership, we are here to support you to find time for yourself to mentor and be mentored.

We took some time to reflect on our own stories of mentoring and appreciate the opportunity to share our stories with you in this section. Perhaps you will find yourself in our stories and thus they will become our shared experiences.

### TRUDY'S MENTORING STORY

Randy, Rich, Joe, and Bob. I am so very thankful to the four most significant professional mentor colleagues in my career. Each one gave of their knowledge, resources, and connections. Each one believed in my ability to lead and my ability to make hard decisions in a soft and gentle way. Each one provided a sense of loyalty and comfort to me, yet were honest and direct with their feedback. I am forever grateful to four male allies, who became advocates. I could not have done the work that I did without their mentorship and certainly would not have enjoyed the level of success that I secured as an educator who was *Leading While Female*.

It does not go unnoticed that my mentors were all males. I had wonderful female friends, colleagues, mother, sisters, and daughters who supported my efforts, laughed with me in triumph, and cried with me in hardships, but I did not consider them to be my mentors. There were times when I desperately needed a female mentor. I would have benefitted from a successful female who was in the role or had successfully been in the role of superintendent. The opportunity to have had a female mentor to leverage mutual support and understanding would have been a tremendous asset in my growth as a female

leader. The connections and opportunities of women who shared common identities, backgrounds, and experiences would have been so valuable in the times that I needed a female perspective. I am pleased to say that in the twilight of my career, I have found female mentors. Among my mentors are my two coauthors, Delores and Stacie. They are dear friends and treasured mentors at this point in my journey.

When I became a superintendent in 2001, I was forty-four years old and the first female superintendent in the history of the district. In the same year, 14 percent of the superintendents in the United States were females. I was in a league of my own in many meetings and forums. There were a few other female superintendents in my county, but I did not want to bother them as I knew they were busy with no time to spare. I recall my very first superintendent's conference. I went to the registration table, and the woman at the table took one look at me and informed me that that teacher conference was across the street. When I told her I was a superintendent, she apologized profusely and told me I was just not what she expected. When I entered the large conference room, there were over 100 men in the room and very few women. I sat at a table with all men, and finally one of them acknowledged me and began by saying I must be a superintendent/principal of a small school district. I could have used a female mentor at that moment!

I recall the time a male colleague sent me an email in all caps and bold exclamation marks and called me a "bitch" in the text. I was devastated and did not feel that my four mentors could relate to the impact of that text. I recall the time that I wore my dress inside out! Yes, as a superintendent, I was on a campus with my dress inside out. I was beyond humiliated when it was finally pointed out to me. How I wish I had a female mentor at that moment to assure me that it will be forgotten by next week. Or perhaps the time I had to give lay-off notices and went to every person individually and knew that this decision was harming their families and their well-being. I lost sleep and friends . . . but it was my job, and I was going to face each one of them personally. I would have loved to have called a female mentor as I drove home in tears.

I have had the pleasure and privilege of mentoring many women in my career. I am honored to be asked and value the mentoring relationships established, which eventually become friendships. Sometimes it is just taking the call, keeping the lunch date, sending the article, or providing assurance that this, too, shall pass. Other times it is strategically assisting with the master plan or the relationships with the Board of Trustees. The informal and the formal moments can be equally beneficial.

To my formal past and present mentees—Rebecca, Sherrill, Michelle, Mary, Sara—I will continue to watch and support you with incredible pride as you make your marks as female superintendents. To my informal mentees, I hope that I have been there when you needed me and cleared the pathway to success through my actions of deep respect and admiration for each of you. Carry on!

## STACIE’S MENTORING STORY

I’ve had quite a bit of time to reflect on my journey with mentoring. As I journaled about my experience with mentoring, I realized that early in my career it was random, at best. Given that mentoring is an approach that is designed to provide specific guidance to “develop leadership skills, increase self-confidence, improve emotional intelligence, and navigate gender-specific obstacles to career advancement” (Kramer, 2021). I had a few indirect opportunities for growth. For instance, as a teacher, I was tapped on the shoulder by a principal to join the site-based leadership team. While there were not one-to-one meetings scheduled to discuss how this opportunity would develop my leadership skills, that certainly happened. During my tenure, I learned to listen more than speak. I learned the true meaning of compromise, and I began to see myself as a “leader” in our school. The next tap came from my superintendent who asked me to sit on a strategic planning committee. He shared that this was because of my extensive experience on curriculum committees. Again, he did not share that he saw promise and wanted to mentor me for the succession of district office positions. Yet, through this opportunity, I broadened my networks and developed a foundational understanding for the “why” of a strategic plan and the importance of ongoing monitoring. This opportunity also placed me in front of hiring authorities who were able to observe my abilities. I will never forget the moment that I was pulled aside and told by a cabinet member with hiring authority that they were surprised I hadn’t applied for a principal opening in the district. Wow, what a door opening experience *and* a confidence builder that allowed me to see myself beyond the informal leadership roles I had held up to that point.

Perhaps the tap that was the most life- and career-changing experience was when my assistant superintendent told me there was an opening for an assistant superintendent (a promotional opportunity) in Eden Prairie, MN, and wondered if I wanted her to put in a good word for me. Again, she had not officially mentored me to prepare for this role, and she modeled the importance of keeping an eye out for growth opportunities of the staff

I led even if it meant a replacement search. She also modeled the benefits of sponsorship. That tap led to what I see as the first formal mentor I had. My superintendent told me from the onset that he knew I was going to be a superintendent, and he wanted to make certain that I had the operations project management experiences I needed, including direct leadership in a bond referendum. He also helped me build networks with Rotary and the local Chamber. As I navigated experiences, he asked questions, provided mentor coaching, and truly prepared me for my first appointment as superintendent.

Ultimately, all those taps were meaningful and important and substantially prepared me along the way. In addition to building my skills in leadership development and systems management, increasing my self-assurance, and strengthening my emotional intelligence, the taps allowed me to build self-sufficiency and resilience. Each built confidence to move into positions with increasing influence and oversight. My formal mentorship experience intentionally prepared me for my first superintendency *and* my new position in a district where I now serve more than three times the number of students and families. My hope in sharing my journey is that readers will understand that the mentoring path may not always be direct or intentional, and yet with personal reflection and tenacity, women leaders will meet their career advancement goals.

## DELORES' MENTORING STORY

*I'm so sorry, Delores, but this assistant principal position is one for a man. He's the last one on campus in the evenings after events like sports events and community events. I just wouldn't be a gentleman if I asked you, a lady, to be the last one to lock up on campus at night. The next AP job, the one for curriculum and instruction, will be yours, I'm sure you understand.*

Do those words sound familiar? If you read our first book, *Leading While Female: A Culturally Proficient Response for Gender Equity*, then you recognize the words of my mentor, the principal of the high school where I had taught for several years. He was the first mentor I had, and he advised me to get my master's degree in educational leadership including my Principal's Certification and prepare myself to be a school administrator. He had always praised my teaching, school leadership, and community engagement. I had supervised many after-school and evening school activities that required me to be the last person on campus in the evening. So, I was caught by surprise when he said he could not select me for the assistant principal position because of my gender. Although he continued to

## INTRODUCTION

be my mentor for the next few years, our relationship was never quite the same.

Following my move from Louisiana to California in the early 1980s, I realized I needed a mentor to help me navigate along my new career path. I searched for someone who knew the application of California Educational Code as well as assessment, curriculum and instructional strategies that were different for me. I was a bit surprised when I first found a network of female leaders before I found that one mentor to guide me on my advanced leadership path. The women's leadership network was informative and supportive for my growth. I found myself relying on two female colleagues who held the same position I did for 5 years. We three were assistant principals of middle schools with male principals. Our relationship began when we met for early morning coffee once a week to talk about things our jobs had in common. As our relationship grew, we relied on each other for story sharing, lessons learned, and emotional support. We became peer-to-peer mentors supporting each other through personal and professional successes and challenges. The formal relationship ended when one of our colleagues took a lateral position in another district, one was promoted within the district, and I took a principal's position in another district. We remained connected informally for several more years, but our trio mentorship came to an end when our needs had been met.

When I became principal, I reached out to the male who had been principal when I was the assistant principal to be my mentor. I held such high respect for how he aligned his leadership skills with the values he held for serving all students. For the first time as an educator, I saw what it meant to publicly state your values and beliefs about education and leadership. I was able to engage in formal and informal conversations with him about, *Why do you do what you do?*

Once again, I found the technical support I needed from a mentor as well as the emotional support that comes from knowing the day-to-day challenges and successes in the world of middle grade students and their families. He remains my friend today even though our formal mentor relationship ended when I left the principalship.

I found myself at my career crossroad once I had earned my PhD and had served 6 years as middle grades principal. I had been on the career path to be superintendent, when my dissertation chair, a former superintendent, asked me, "*Given your skills as a professional developer and leader, what are*

*the reasons you want to be a superintendent? What might be an alternative path that is also attractive to you?"* I had never thought of these questions before. Now, what was I going to do?

My next step came because of a good friend's encouragement. She suggested I apply for an executive leadership position with a state leadership professional development organization. She was right to suggest that position would help me decide which road to take at my career crossroad. Once I engaged in my role of researching, developing, and implementing a statewide leadership program, the goal of superintendent was no longer my focus. As part of my new job, I became a member of a local five female member leadership team and gender mixed members of a statewide organization that sustained my growth for the next 5 years. This executive leadership role served as the transition role to becoming a tenure track faculty member at a state university campus. My good fortune led me to my mentor for all things higher education. She guided me from committee meetings through the feared tenure process. Although my time at the university ended, my friendship with my mentor continues.

My lessons learned have guided me to become a mentor to female mentees as they engage in their leadership journeys. I may be at the most enjoyable and rewarding point of my 50+ years career.

One of our greatest strengths as women resides in our sisterhood with other women. This book is designed to guide women to mentor for momentum as we seek and become female mentors and mentees. Mentoring for momentum is purposeful and intentional mentoring. It is a dynamic and supportive relationship that propels women to ensure that we do not lose ground. Together, we will partner to build confidence, gain skills, and accelerate our move forward as women who lead.

We have identified numerous barriers as we continue to promote our unique contributions as women who lead. Let us not create our own barriers! It is heartening to see over 2,300 people on our *Leading While Female* Facebook page! Women in leadership networks are popping up across the nation, and the formation of sister circles is bringing women closer together in sisterhood! Now is the time to mentor for momentum.

# CHAPTER 1

## FINDING OUR MOMENTUM

*A true mentor helps you find your own voice and strength.*

— Unknown

### A Mentor's Moment

*Delina Lopez*

#### **Administrative Coordinator: Induction, Credentialing, & Contracts**

Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer

Division of Human Resources

*I have mentored emerging female leaders as part of our Doctoral Program for over 10 years. I've found a constant clash exists between my female candidates and their male supervisors' authoritarian leadership approaches. The emerging female leaders' styles, which often are more collaborative, community building, and relationship-based than their male mentors' are, simply looked down upon by their male supervisors. It seems some men view these women as "idealist" and "ineffective" leaders. Many of the emerging female leaders see male leaders in their higher positions as role models and emulate these behaviors. Sometimes the advice women hear is, as a woman leader, you don't have time for that.*

*The top-down approach is seen as a necessary trait for administrators. I have seen females' ideas blatantly shut down, dismissed, and ignored. Seems I see it most often with male leaders of color as they work with females of color. The patriarchy patterns are often repeated unless they are interrupted. Female leaders have typically conformed to the male-dominated system or challenged it. Conformity is viewed as a strong, intimidating force. Even when women present an alternate approach to resolve an issue, they risk being seen as insubordinate. Often, when a female leader engages in the discussion and presents an appropriate or innovative response, she is ignored or criticized. As mentor to these emerging female leaders, I offer breakthrough, mediational questions to help them think about what it will take to overcome the barriers of "we've always done it this way."*

Delina's story is one example of the value of coaching within a mentoring relationship. As you think of mentoring relationships you have experienced, in what ways have coaching skills informed the mentee's pathway to a new job? And secondly, in what ways has the absence of coaching skills served as a barrier for you as mentee or mentor?

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### THREE THINGS FOR YOU, OUR READER COLLEAGUES

The following are the intended goals of this book:

- ▶ First, this book presents and values the importance of educational leaders serving as formal or informal mentors and/or role models for emerging female leaders. The authors define and apply the Tools of Cultural Proficiency to provide momentum in narrowing and closing the gender equity gap.
- ▶ Second, this book shares related research emphasizing the importance of women mentoring women leaders, survey data illustrating barriers for female mentees and mentors, and female executive leaders' stories from women mentoring women.
- ▶ Third, this book offers a pathway for emerging leaders (mentees) to locate and utilize the guidance of mentors.

This is a stand-alone book, or it can be used as a companion workbook/guide for *Leading While Female* and *My Leading While Female Journey*. The content is a continuation of review of related research and of storytelling to provide readers opportunities to record their personal experiences of being mentored, providing guidance to others, and serving, in turn, as role models for colleagues just beginning their journeys in leadership. In each chapter, we share stories of female mentors as examples of formal, informal, and peer-to-peer mentor relationships. Using their support factors to overcome barriers, mentors guide their mentees forward in their career paths.

## Delina's Mentoring and Coaching With Ashanti

As we learned earlier, Delina mentors emerging female leaders engaged in their doctoral programs. She relies on coaching skills when her mentees are faced with gender equity issues in the program or in their organizations. Recently, Delina met with her mentee, Ashanti, director of instruction at a local district. Ashanti is a rising star in her district and is on target to complete her doctorate this year. She is one of a few women of color candidates in the program and is well-prepared to compete for assistant superintendent positions available in the area this spring. She contacted Delina to meet with her about a situation that occurred in a class session:

**Delina:** *I'm glad you stopped by Ashanti. One of your friends told me about what happened in Dr. Alfred's seminar session. I wanted to hear from you. Tell me what you want me to know.*

**Ashanti:** *Oh, Dr. Lopez, I'm so upset! I can't believe he said that. We were having a class discussion about current issues in education and how different local district leaders were responding to these issues. Mark Peters said something about it seems there are more female superintendents in this area than ever before, and he asked Dr. Alfred if that is a good thing or not. Dr. Alfred said, 'Well, Mark, it seems we have more problems these days, so what do you think? Are those two things related?' Then he chuckled and smirked. None of the women laughed. Then, he looked at me and asked, 'So Ashanti, why do you think there more female executive leaders now than we had 5 years ago?' I said in my most confident voice, 'Dr. Alfred, are you really asking, can women do the job? Women have always been qualified, but they've faced more challenges than their male counterparts. Now, the whole system is changing. It's no longer the good ole boys club. In my district, women are being seen as highly qualified candidates. He looked at me and said, 'Maybe we all need to do more research on this question.' Then, he dismissed class. Am I wrong Dr. Lopez?*

**Delina:** *First, let's talk about how that question and response made you feel.*

*Ashanti described how demeaned she felt and added she felt Dr. Alfred was demeaning all female leaders.*

*Delina paraphrased Ashanti's comments and continued to listen as she explained they had never talked about the challenges*

women leaders faced in becoming leaders compared to how quickly men in the program had gotten leadership roles. Ashanti shared how the women often met after seminar to talk about similar challenges they were facing. Then, Delina asked Ashanti mediational (breakthrough) questions designed to help her mentee assess her cultural knowledge and manage the inequities of the gender gap.

**Delina:** *Ashanti, as you think of the gender gap that has existed in this country, what are some ways you and the other females in the seminar could demonstrate the need for understanding the inequities of the gender gap? What might be some ways for the organization's members to understand the advantages for female leadership in organizations?*

Ashanti looked at Delina with wide open eyes and a smile on her face: *That's it! I hadn't thought about that. I'll get back to you and let you know how it goes. Thank you, Dr. Lopez.*

Delina was confident her mentee would engage other females in the seminar in thinking about ways to manage the diverse views in the class.

## Reflection

What were some things you noticed about Delina that makes her a culturally proficient mentor?

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Over time, effective mentors leave their mentees with practical, actionable leadership skills they can use in any future professional pursuits. Leadership topics covered within the mentee-mentor relationship include, but are not limited to, effective communications, conflict resolution, decision-making, problem resolution, managing organizational culture, building trust, and developing diverse and inclusive environments. Additionally, the mentee and

mentor develop a reciprocal relationship built on trust and confidentiality. Mentors share lessons learned along the way with their mentee while the mentee has opportunities to ask questions that might feel too risky in other work-related situations.

As sustained growth and relationship development require more than a *one-and-done experience*, we maintain well-developed mentor programs with planned events, and post-event follow-up sessions have offered critical turning points in mentees' careers. Mentor programs have provided networks of personal and professional support and given mentees the confidence they need to apply, interview, and take on new leadership roles. In Chapter 5, we provide details for designing and implementing highly effective, equitable mentor programs.

### Equity Tools for Support

As self-identified equity warriors, we believe current organization systems too often have suppressed women's opportunities at all levels. We find systemic oppression of women and people of color continues to exist and persist in school districts and other organizations where women work to achieve the same leadership levels as their male counterparts. As a part of the United States' history, traditions, and economic status, many white men have enjoyed power in the form of privilege and entitlement, as in legacy access to leadership roles. Certainly, we are not suggesting white men haven't worked hard for what they have, as we have all heard. However, too often, white men are not fully aware of their power because they have never experienced the absence of it (Delpit, 1988).

We offer the Tools of Cultural Proficiency to guide the mentor in planning meaningful, intentional conversations with her mentee. The stories are examples of how female mentors bring support to their mentees to be aware of this system of privilege and entitlement and develop skills to work toward a culturally proficient response for gender equity. In combination, the Tools of Cultural Proficiency—Overcoming the Barriers, the Guiding Principles, the Continuum, and the Essential Elements (Lindsey et al., 2019)—provide a framework for analyzing her beliefs and values and behaviors as a mentor. Once she has an awareness of who she is (actions aligned with beliefs and values), a mentor intends for the relationship with her mentee to be reciprocal and culturally responsive. The mentor and mentee are aware of the Tools of Cultural Proficiency and the importance of leadership practices to overcome barriers toward gender equity. The Tools are further defined in

Chapter 3, and the importance and benefit of the tools are explored further in each subsequent chapter.

## TERMS IN CONTEXT

We employ and describe a variety of terms to support and enhance your learning about establishing equitable mentoring programs, creating pathways for gender equity in the workplace, and for developing culturally proficient practices in support of colleagues who are *Leading While Female*.

The following terms are defined in the context of this book using the lens of cultural proficiency:

***Belonging:*** The feeling of security and support along with a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity. Belonging is not about fitting in but about being accepted, loved, and respected for who you are. When one feels included and connected, she can flourish without fear of judgment.

***Diversity:*** Unique differences, including but not limited to gender, ethnicity, race, language, religion, faith, age, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, physical and mental ability, and cultural backgrounds.

***Equity:*** Fairness and justice of treatment of women and men according to their respective needs. Individuals may need different supports to achieve similar outcomes. All individuals do not start from the same place; therefore, effort must be made to acknowledge and adjust for imbalances that impede or block pathways to leadership. Opportunity is not limited simply on the basis of gender. Correcting for gender biases, however, ensures outcomes improve for all.

***Inclusion:*** Vision and practice of welcoming, valuing, and supporting people across varying identities so they feel represented and heard. In an inclusive environment, people feel they fully belong, are authentic, can contribute to the collective, have a voice, and fully participate in a diverse society.

***Inquiry:*** Author collected data from participant interviews and surveys used in this book.

***Sponsoring:*** Often a senior employee in the workplace invested in the growth and career progression of an employee, the boss, the leader of an adjacent business unit, or even a C-suite executive. Sponsors are advocates, endorsers, and champions of another's professional

trajectory. Sponsors often take an active role in colleagues' advancement by identifying high-potential individuals and providing them with stretch assignments or high-visibility projects. Some risks may be involved in sponsorships if the employee does not perform well.

We have noticed the words *coaching* and *mentoring* are sometimes used as if they are interchangeable. However, each word has its own definition. Here's how we define and use these important terms:

***Coaching:*** One person mediates the thinking and behavior of another person by asking mediational (thinking) questions. The mentor as coach is reflective and mediational, not advising.

***Culturally Proficient Coaching:*** Intends for the person being coached to be aware of the cultural connections within the community they serve and to be culturally responsive to the diverse needs of individuals and organization members.

***Culturally Proficient Mentoring:*** Intends for the relationship with her mentee to be reciprocal and culturally responsive. The mentor and mentee are aware of Tools of Cultural Proficiency and the importance of leadership practices to overcome barriers toward gender equity.

***Mentoring:*** A learning relationship focused on long-term career development for the mentee. The primary purposes of mentoring are to drive personal growth and to build leadership skills, knowledge, and understanding. Mentors may use coaching skills in their conversations; however, the mentor role is wider than that of a coach and may include opening doors, making connections, and sharing experiences (Leadership Alliance, 2024). The relationship between mentee and mentor is reciprocal. Both the mentor and mentee may benefit from the relationship. Given the hierarchical nature of supervision of employees, it is recommended a person's manager is not her mentor.

***Reverse Mentoring:*** One individual considered younger shares knowledge, experience, and skills in a specific area with someone who is less knowledgeable, more senior, older, and/or typically less experienced. For example, this method of mentoring can improve diversity and inclusion cultures in an organization as a junior member educates a senior member about the challenges she faces as a member of the LGBTQAI+ community that the senior member may not be aware or truly understand. Reverse mentoring is a powerful model for school leaders to consider tapping into for improved communication and a broader sense of inclusivity.

**Role Modeling:** A person whose behavior as a leader in a particular role is imitated by others. An educational leader behaves in ways other educators admire and wish to emulate.

## Reflections

Given the Terms in Context used in this book, what stands out for you?

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Which of the terms would you like to explore more in depth, and why?

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As you review the list, what term (or terms) is missing? What else would you like to know more about within the context of this book?

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## What's the Relationship Between Coaching and Mentoring?

The learning relationship between mentee and mentor requires both members to be focused on the career development of the mentee. Ideally, reciprocal mentorship is a broad, outcomes-based relationship requiring

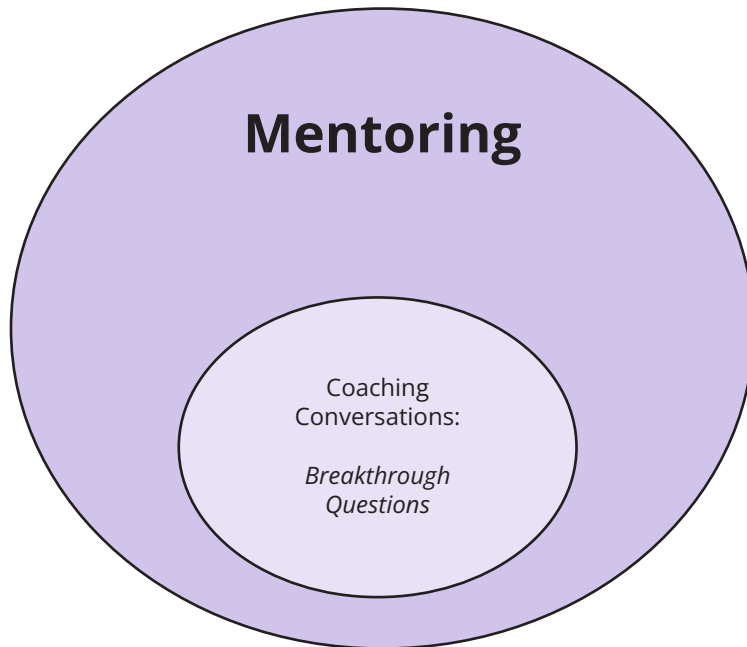
mentee and mentor to be nonjudgmental and aware of long-term career growth for mentee and mentor. While the central goal of the relationship is focused on the mentee, the mentor benefits from assessing cultural knowledge of the mentee, demonstrating the value she holds for the mentee, and learning to manage and adapt to the dynamics of difference arising from discrepant experiences of gender, ethnic, racial, and social class membership. The mentor learns to guide conversations based on needs of the mentee and searches for resources to enhance and improve the career path of the mentee.

Coaching occurs within the context of the mentor's role in response to concerns about equitable access opportunities and continued professional advancement. For example, a mentor builds a long-term relationship focused on the mentee's goals for career advancement. Within that context, the mentor uses culturally proficient coaching skills to help mediate the mentee assessing her cultural knowledge as an interview candidate. Let's suppose the mentee, a high school principal, schedules an appointment with her mentor to talk about an upcoming interview for director of secondary instruction. The mentor is a role model for emerging leaders in the district. Her leadership inspires the mentee and other emerging leaders. The mentor uses her coaching skills to mediate the principal from her current role to the desired role of director. The principal and her mentor are aware she is the only candidate of color in the interview process. The mentor listens closely for the principal's values and beliefs aligned with the vision of the district. Her coaching questions focus on her mentee's cultural knowledge of self and the organization. The mentor also benefits from the conversations, developing her coaching skills and maturity as a mentor. The reciprocal relationship the mentee and mentor develop ensures a greater possibility for each to grow and reach her professional goals.

**Exhibit 1.0** depicts the relationship between mentoring and coaching. Notice the “big picture” or long-term relationship of mentoring is sustained by coaching conversations over time. The mentor uses the breakthrough questions protocol to mediate the mentee's best thinking about her career path.

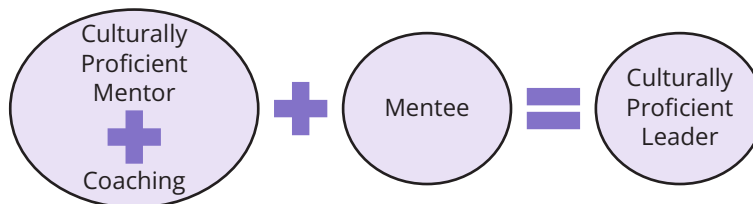
As illustrated in Exhibit 1.0, coaching is part of mentoring; however, mentoring may not involve a coaching conversation, depending on the skills of the mentor. Mentoring and coaching may stand alone as leadership skills; yet, when the skills are joined together, the relationship of mentee and mentor is enhanced, and the career development for the mentee is improved.

**Exhibit 1.0 • *The Relationship Between Mentoring and Coaching***



As shown in Exhibit 1.1, the combination of a culturally proficient mentor using coaching skills guides her mentee along her path to become a culturally proficient leader.

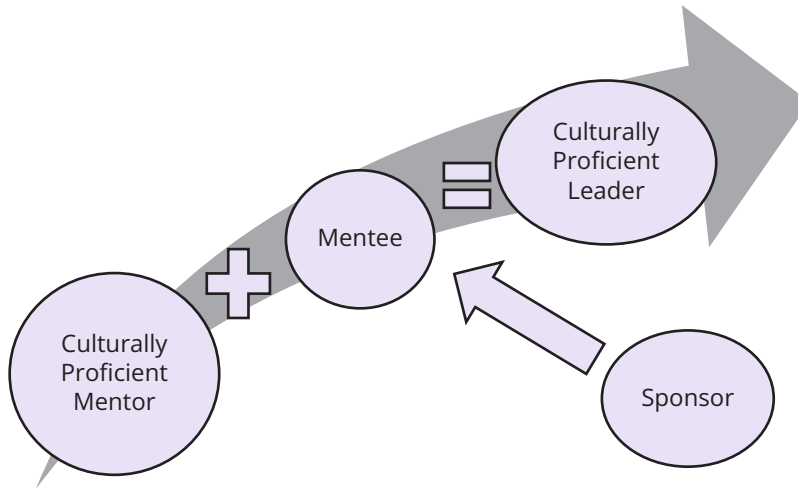
**Exhibit 1.1 • *Role of Mentor***



**A Word About Sponsors**

As observed in Exhibit 1.2, mentorships involve two people, the mentee and mentor; whereas sponsorships must involve a third person. A sponsor is asking someone to think about or see their mentee differently.

**Exhibit 1.2 • Role of Sponsor**



An effective sponsor presents the mentee with evidence for success to guide the mentee on her career path. The sponsor might also provide direct connections and opportunities for next steps. The performance evidence is more meaningful and requires fewer risks than a recommendation based on potential. An equity-minded sponsor is not necessarily a person of power but a leader mindful of the importance of representation, equity, diversity, and inclusion of leaders of color keeping performance evidence in mind. We have more to say about sponsorships in Chapter 5.

**Reflections**

As presented at the opening, this book can be used as a companion to *Leading While Female: A Culturally Proficient Response for Gender Equity* or can serve as a stand-alone book. As you think of the triple goals of the book, in what ways do they resonate with you and your interests in the mentee/mentor’s relationships?

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What do you look forward to discovering as you read this book? What intrigues you about what's ahead for you?

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We have found that lessons from the corporate world transfer well to the education field as you will see throughout the book. Our momentum builds as we explore more about forming equitable relationships in Chapters 2 and 3. We found mentors have expressed needs for self-care. Chapter 4 provides answers to many questions about making time for self. Chapter 5 describes roles and responsibilities of mentors and growing your own mentoring programs. Momentum increases as we detail the relationship between coaching and mentoring in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 offers additional strategies and our closing thoughts. And now, Chapter 2 shares the importance and strength of affinity groups.

Here is something to think about:

What are some things you're noticing about the relationship between mentee and mentor? And sponsor?

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