



# MENTORS:

You Don't Have to Do It Alone

Auto dealers and top salespeople are, by their nature, men and women who take risks, dream big and work hard to make those dreams a reality. They are self-reliant and want to chart their own course through life.

The most successful professionals, however, know that there's a strength in learning from others and seeing things from a different viewpoint. Finding a mentor who has walked your path before and can teach you what they've learned is invaluable. Mentors can also be peers who can challenge you to maintain your momentum and do what's necessary when the temptation to take the easier path arises.

This is a topic I've focused on for the past 30 years. In that time, I've developed what I call "The Theory of 5," and this theory has shaped how I think and with whom I spend my time.

The Theory of 5 is based on the idea of finding mentors for different areas of your life, listening to their advice and asking them to guide and challenge you to walk the best path to your best self. Often, all it takes to gain the insight and attention of a mentor is to just ask for it. People are flattered to find someone admires them enough to ask for their counsel, and many times will agree to become a mentor to someone willing to learn and grow.

There are five areas I believe it's particularly important to focus on and find mentors to guide us:

1. **Business and Finance** — No matter what job you have or field you work in, finding a mentor who can give you advice in your career and in handling money is vital. Unless they were

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born into money or a family business, almost everyone starts from the bottom. Those who have worked themselves into positions you admire faced similar challenges and obstacles you'll face. Get their advice, listen to their stories and let them help you chart a course to the future you want for yourself.

2. **Marriage** — Most of us will marry a partner in our lifetime, but based on the 50 percent divorce rate in the United States, being an exceptional husband or wife doesn't come easy for most. Find that exceptional couple who you'd like to emulate and ask them how they've made their relationship work through life's challenges. It sometimes takes effort to stay together; learn how to put that energy to its best use.

3. **Parenting** — Raising a child is one of the hardest but most rewarding jobs a person can have in their life. Find a parent you admire, someone you see doing a great job with their children. Tell them why you admire his or her accomplishments and ask them to share with you some of the lessons they've learned, mistakes they've made and how they've become the parent you admire.

4. **Spirituality/Religion** — Our spirituality is

the lens through which we view the lessons the world wants to teach us and helps us make sense of them. Find a mentor who can walk with you through life's inevitable ups and downs and provide counsel from their point of view. Their guidance can provide a valuable counterpoint to those with a strictly secular point of view.

5. **Health and Fitness** — No matter what kind of success you have in life, it means next to nothing without your health. Our bodies need care, maintenance and good fuel to carry us through our days. Find a mentor who can not only model what a healthy, active lifestyle looks and feels like, but one who will also hold you accountable for your own habits and keep you focused on maintaining and improving your fitness.

In the coming months, I'll share lessons I've learned from my experience in the automotive sales field, along with lessons my mentors have taught me in business and the other areas of the Theory of 5. One of the great joys in life is we don't *have* to go it alone. No matter what area you're focused on at any given moment, sharing, talking and getting advice will help you meet and overcome each challenge you face. O



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