

Engage 360 | Episode 9: An Introduction to Training and Mentoring

Introduction: Welcome to Engage360 Denver Seminary's podcast. Join us as we explore the redemptive power of the gospel and the life-changing truth of Scripture at work in our culture today.

Dr. Don Payne: Hi. I'm Don Payne. I'm glad to be your host for Engage360. By this time in our podcast history hour, I probably need to give you a little bit of perspective, maybe some visual perspective, because each week, if you're with us each week or whenever you're with us. You hear us coming to you from what is the famous DNR Sound Booth. Now, the DNR Sound Booth stands for the Don and Rob Sound Booth, because Rob Foley, our Dean of Students, and I, built this sound booth in my garage. And despite the fact that our provost, Dr. Cohick, has basically questioned my character for wanting first billing in that acronym, we did build most of it in my garage and we hauled most of it with my truck. So, I'm going to shamelessly accept first billing in the DNR sound booth, which actually sits inside the Denver Seminary recording studio, which, if even if you are on campus or close to the Littleton Campus, you probably couldn't find it. It's at a sort of an undisclosed -- maybe highly classified -- location. Kind of like Norad and Cheyenne Mountain, so you probably couldn't find the sound booth or the recording studio. But you can find us on the Denver Seminary website and the Denver Seminary Facebook page, as well as your favorite podcast platform. So we hope you'll do that. You'll see some pictures there of our various guests. And if you get a chance and are interested, email us: podcast@denverseminary.edu.

So this week we've got another exciting topic to talk about. Over the past 30 years or so, across the U.S. and in several other Western countries, people in a variety of sectors of society have been scrambling to recover a lost art. A lost practice that's left a lingering and a deepening deficit in both personal and community life. And this lost art is not the art of riding a unicycle or origami or writing in cursive. This lost art is mentoring, the art of mentoring. Mentoring is often been viewed over these past 30 years as something of a passing fad. But we still see mentoring initiatives continue to receive attention and funding in the public sector, the government sector and in nonprofit sectors. A little bit of history, this concept of mentoring, a lot of people know the word but they don't know where it came from. It actually comes from Greek mythology. Homer's *Odyssey* is the story of King Odysseus, who went away to war. And when he did, he left his young son Telemachus, in the care of his friend whose name was Mentos. And it was Mentos' job to bring young Telemachus up into the ways of adulthood. And from this ancient tale in Greek mythology we get what we now call this concept of "mentoring", where a person, perhaps of greater age or experience or expertise, invests in someone who needs what the mentor has.

Over the last 20 years or so, or 20 years plus, Denver Seminary took the bold and rather vanguard step of placing mentoring in its core curriculum. And in

those 20 years, the seminary and its mentoring personnel have provided consultations and training and materials for seminaries and other organizations around the nation and in several cases, internationally. So, we have some leading experts in the field here this week to help us understand this vital endeavor, this mentoring endeavor, and why it's so important and how to do it. So I'm honored to welcome my friends and colleagues from the Mentoring Department at Denver Seminary. First of all, professor Laura Flanders, who is the Chair of the mentoring curriculum at Denver Seminary. Prior to Laura's arrival at Denver Seminary in 2005, she spent her career in national industry nonprofit management in the area of leadership development and training, actually with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. So for those of you who know the concept of a "life verse", Laura's life verse is "Beef, it's what's for dinner."

Laura Flanders: Very good, Don. I'm enjoying this so far.

Dr. Don Payne: I know. I just love that line. But I have not yet formally welcomed you to the podcast, so please, let me finish.

Laura Flanders: All right.

Dr. Don Payne: In addition to raising their two now-adult children, Laura and her husband Dale served in pastoral ministry for 24 years. The last 10 of those in church planting. She also consults for businesses, nonprofits and churches in the Denver area. Laura graduated from Seattle Pacific University with a BA and from Denver Seminary, with an MA in Leadership. She is an avid gardener. I might even say a neurotic or obsessive gardener and --

Laura Flanders: I'll give you that.

Dr. Don Payne: [inaudible 05:26] and kayaking, okay, thanks. Golfing and eating a home-cooked meal with others. Our other mentoring professor here is Professor Debra Anderson, who received her BA in Creative Writing from California State University, Long Beach and MA in Christian Education from Golden Gate Theological Seminary. She and her husband Chip have served in pastoral ministry and in church planting. She is a conference speaker, a Bible teacher, a theological researcher, and has written numerous articles and ghost rights for popular Christian authors. Now, if she could tell you what she has ghost written, it would no longer be ghostwriting. So, she can't speak about it. Like we can't tell you the undisclosed location of the Denver Seminary sound booth.

Debra Anderson: Just like this one.

Dr. Don Payne: Just like this room. However, you have probably read her stuff and did not know that you were reading her stuff. She previously served with the training and mentoring department here at Denver Seminary as a Formation Group Mentor. And off campus, I see that she is teaching her teens to drive, serves on a Cub Scout committee and hikes with Chip.

Debra Anderson: I do.

Dr. Don Payne: Welcome, Debra.

Debra Anderson: Thank you, Don.

Dr. Don Payne: Well, welcome Laura, too. I didn't welcome you. So, welcome, Laura.

Laura Flanders: I'm not offended.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. Good. Our third mentoring professor, and our guest today, is Dan Steiner. Dan joined the mentoring department as a Mentoring Professor in 2016. He spent 13 years working in churches in Oregon and Colorado with leadership experience in youth ministry, small group ministry, preaching, teaching, mentoring, and leadership development. Dan does a lot of work in the area of vocation, calling for ministry applications both inside and outside church contexts. Dan and his wife Ann have three kids: Josiah, Micah, and Cambria. And Dan is a really good photographer. In fact, one of his pictures hangs framed in my house.

Dan Steiner: It does.

Dr. Don Payne: It does.

Dan Steiner: It's still there.

Dr. Don Payne: Well, you don't know that, but I -- Yes, it is still there. Dan received a BA in youth ministry from Western Baptist College, which is now Corban University, and his MDiv and his ThM from Denver Seminary. And Dan is one of the many people around the Littleton Campus who make me feel really short. So he's one of the, there's this host of really tall people we have around here. And, I hate to say, Dan rocks a superb beard.

Dan Steiner: Thank you.

Dr. Don Payne: You're welcome. Actually, all three of these people, it occurs to me, have spent significant time in the Pacific Northwest.

Dan Steiner: Yes.

Laura Flanders: That's right. I guess I've never really put that together.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. And so, by this time, I suppose you're dried out and got a little bit of tan to your skin. So anyway, welcome to our three mentoring professors Laura Flanders, Dan Steiner, Debra Anderson. We're glad you all are here for the podcast Engage360.

Laura Flanders: Thank you, Don.

Dan Steiner: Glad to be here.

Debra Anderson: Good to be here.

Dr. Don Payne: Good. All right. I want you each to take a minute or two and tell us first, just a little bit about your own background, your own journey and how you got involved in mentoring in the way that you are. Laura, you're first.

Laura Flanders: I get to start?

Dr. Don Payne: You're the chief, so you get to go first.

Laura Flanders: Well, you've given a little bit of my bio, so I'm going to start by telling you that I'm involved in mentoring in the way that I am professionally because of my own mentored life and the mentors that I've had. I think it's safe to say that mentoring can sound like a really big word. And so, I like to invite people to talk about the people who've just simply had a kind influence in their life, so that they can identify those mentors that they've had, even if they didn't use that big word. So I want to talk about my Grandma Rose. I won't talk long, but she is the one that helped me become one of the - what did you call me? - a crazy gardener or whatever.

Dr. Don Payne: A neurotic gardener, I think. Or an obsessive gardener.

Laura Flanders: A neurotic gardener, yeah. Grandma Rose taught me about how to learn and how to ask questions and how to be okay with failure, how to grieve when something doesn't grow. She was a kind presence to me in all of that and taught me that life has its ups and downs and it has its things to celebrate. And she didn't even know she was doing that. But that's where, I think, how my career in mentoring started with my Grandma Rose. And I think it's really smart to go back into our lives and identify those people and name them as our mentors, even if we never used that word. So that's how my career got started was with my grandma.

Dan Steiner: What a great story.

Dr. Don Payne: I never knew that.

Laura Flanders: And I love that her name was Grandma Rose gardener, you know? Isn't that --

Dr. Don Payne: It took me a while to get that, but I got it.

Laura Flanders: Yeah. And you got it.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. What a great story.

Laura Flanders: But professionally speaking, when I was working in leadership development it became more and more clear to me that this need for interdependence was at play, even for the cattlemen that I got to meet working with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. Just the interdependence of the work that they do as cattlemen on the ranch and also with one another in their counties and their states, and the need that they had for each other in order to do their work well and to be the good businessmen and women, even though it's called the Cattlemen's Association, there were men and women in the field, and still are to this day but just watching how they operate with one another, they couldn't do their work without each other. So, that influenced me quite a bit.

Dr. Don Payne: I love what you said about mentoring, of some mentors not even knowing they're doing it.

Laura Flanders: Yeah.

Dr. Don Payne: We may want to come back to that.

Laura Flanders: Yeah, we might want to.

Dr. Don Payne: Thanks for that. Dan.

Dan Steiner: Yeah. I came to Denver Seminary after some years of pastoral ministry experience, and came because of the training and mentoring curriculum that was here. I came to realize that I had experienced quite a bit of mentoring previously but it was a certain sort of mentoring. And as I engaged the training and mentoring part of the degree program here, I learned about a much broader view of mentoring. I had experienced a lot of top-down mentoring and then was exposed to this idea of self-directed mentee-driven, where I can identify what I need to grow in and go out and seek out mentors that can help me grow in those ways. Viewing mentors, kind of like you would view books in the library, and recognizing different people can provide significant learning experiences to help me grow. And so, my vision of what mentoring can be was expanded in a significant way. And as I came as a student and experienced that, I had no idea that would ultimately lead to a position here at Denver Seminary. Now being in that role, facilitating that process for other students. So now I get a chance to help sit with them and help them expand their vision of what's possible in the world of mentoring. Not that we shouldn't have people that are directing us at times, but there are so many different forms of mentoring that we can and should engage based upon the circumstances of our lives and the needs for growth that we have at any given moment.

Dr. Don Payne: Thanks. Debra, how about you?

Debra Anderson: Yeah, mine dovetails a bit with Laura, in that my mentoring experiences are what led me to this room to talk to you today as a part of this team. I've had mentors that have been both formal and informal. Family member, for me as well. My mother's sister has been a lifelong mentor for me as a competent,

creative, thoughtful woman in ministry. I don't call her my mentor. I call her my aunt. But she's played that role for me in an informal way. But formally, I've had mentors too. In college when I was part of our student ministry on campus, my campus ministry directors formally mentored me at regular days and times with certain ideas and ways they wanted to see me grow, in ways that I asked them how I could grow better. And then, I've also been mentored professionally by the former director of training and mentoring, who gave me an opportunity to use some of my stronger skills and to cut my teeth on curriculum design and leading students in their own formation. And that has led me to this place today, where I get to work with students directly one-on-one in a broader way.

Dr. Don Payne:

Each of you have made some comments that I want to loop back to at some points during this conversation. But first, I came across a piece a few years ago from the Harvard Business Review from 2008, actually. And the article was entitled Why Mentoring Matters in a Hyper Competitive World. And this was obviously coming from the public sector. But even at that time, lots of attention was being given to the importance of mentoring as it was being discovered in lots of different sectors of our society. And they take note of how improving mentoring programs can help younger employees, younger workers, be part of a team, increase the likelihood of their loyalty to a firm. Things like that. So they're identifying some very specific deliverables and outcomes. But from your own experience personally and professionally, give us a sense of why this is so crucial and why so many people in so many sectors are giving the kind of attention to mentoring that they are. What's the need? What's the itch that this is scratching?

Debra Anderson:

I think that mentoring is really leadership development in relationship. I see every student here as a leader, but we all can benefit from this as the leaders in our various contexts in our lives. And so, mentoring gives us that space to discover something about ourselves, to discover something about the world and how we impact it, how we fit into it. So, when we don't have that capacity -- I've actually read recently that we are six times more likely to derail in our leadership for not having that capacity to know who we are and how we affect the world. So mentoring actually becomes an important tool for leaders in all contexts. So I see that as an important point.

Dr. Don Payne:

How do you think it helps people see themselves for who they are? That sounds like an important feature that you mentioned.

Debra Anderson:

Yeah. Mentors help us, mentors should hold up a mirror for us so that we can see what is more true about us than what our opinions might say about us. And so, when they do that, we have this capacity to reflect on our past ineffectiveness and yet move more toward how can we keep learning so that we don't repeat certain habits, patterns, behaviors, thoughts, actions.

Dr. Don Payne:

Okay. We tend to recycle ourselves.

Debra Anderson:

Yeah.

Dr. Don Payne: If that's something to bump us off.

Laura Flanders: And I'll add to that. You've heard me say I'll probably make my colleagues eyes roll in the back of their head, but you can't learn unless an assumption's been tested. And sometimes when an assumption has been tested, we get the freedom to still hold onto it. We find that it's true and right and still worthy of being held onto, and that empowers us to move forward with that assumption. But it also obliges us to it as well. It makes us responsible to it in an increased way because it's been tested. But I think more often than not, in that relationship with those questions being asked and those challenges and when that assumption gets tested, we have to either slightly alter or radically alter it. And to do that outside of a relationship without someone alongside us who we trust, I'm not sure we would have the courage to actually do the work of altering our assumptions so that we're changed and so that we do things differently. That just is a jumping off point from what Debra was saying. Mentoring, I've heard you say, Don, that we can't theologially reflect, apart from community. Did I hear you right?

Dr. Don Payne: I guess I would agree with that, if I said that. Yes.

Laura Flanders: Did you say that? Maybe you were quoting someone else when you said it.

Dr. Don Payne: Maybe. Yeah. I could've been. I could have been [inaudible 17:38] for all I know.

Laura Flanders: I don't know how we can disagree with that because the DNA of Scripture is relational, and we're made in the image of God, and God is a relational being. The interdependence of the God, Holy Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I don't think we can grow and change without one another. I might be overstating it. Because I don't think mentoring is everything or it's nothing. I could also be quoting you as well.

Dr. Don Payne: Well, let's talk about that a little bit. Because in the kind of weaving through a lot of your comments so far, are some assumptions about what mentoring is. But it strikes me that mentoring does not mean the same thing to everybody or in every context. There are, I think, a lot of different -- sometimes, maybe almost incompatible definitions of mentoring floating around. So, can you help us distill this a little bit into what some workable, maybe proper definitions of mentoring are? At least, as we're trying to do it here and as you see that really being effective with people.

Dan Steiner: Yeah. I've got, there's a phrase that I've picked up in a recent mentoring book that came out in the past couple of years. The book is called Mentoring: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives. And one of the contributors, Katie Cannon, describes mentoring as "embodied mediated knowledge." And there's something about that "embodied" term that I think is really valuable in a mentoring relationship, especially in a day and age where everything, or so many aspects of our lives are digitally mediated our relationships are digitally

mediated. And this is not to slight FaceTime, Skype, other ways in which we can connect and move on to other forms of typed mediated interactions, but there's something about physically being in the same room with somebody looking eyeball to eyeball, or as we describe it, breathing the same air -- where you are responsible to somebody else in the moment. You are being challenged as an assumption is tested. You have to do something with it. And that can be uncomfortable. That can be difficult, but that can also be incredibly formational as you're accountable to this relationship. There's somebody else there that is encouraging you, challenging you, pushing you, stirring you to something else, something different. So, that embodiment is, that embodied interaction is a really important aspect of mentoring, especially in our culture. Regardless of whether it's a faith-based or non-faith based context, there's something about that relationality that I believe is critical for a healthy and effective mentoring relationship.

Laura Flanders: And one of the words that we use in training and mentoring is "intentionality." So it's not only embodiment, but there is an intentional pursuit towards something.

Dr. Don Payne: Yes.

Laura Flanders: So we tell students over and over again: intentionality. You're going to hear that word from us until you get sick of it. What mentoring involves, it's relational, embodied relational experience, towards something, towards that pursuit of growth and transformation. So I can't call all my friendships that. I can't.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. How does mentoring relate to another very popular emphasis on coaching?

Laura Flanders: Well --

Dr. Don Payne: Are these just synonyms? Or --

Laura Flanders: Well here at Denver Seminary, when we educate our students on the different forms. I'm going to jump off of something that Dan was just saying, there's all these different kinds of forms of mentoring. We use mentoring as an umbrella term that, and we have a very baseline definition that allows all the different forms, all the different forms honors that baseline definition. And so, coaching is just one form of mentoring, out of many.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. So there are sometimes more directive forms of mentoring, sometimes less directive forms of mentoring?

Laura Flanders: Exactly.

Dr. Don Payne: More mutuality?

Laura Flanders: Less mutuality.

Dr. Don Payne: It can go in a lot of different directions.

Laura Flanders: Yeah. Sometimes in certain forms the intentionality comes more from the mentor than it does from the mentee. The shared learning is going to change from each form to form.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay.

Laura Flanders: So we don't say that spiritual direction is different than mentoring or mentoring is different than counseling. Counseling, spiritual direction, coaching, apprenticeship, are different forms of mentoring.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. So mentoring is the inclusive term?

Laura Flanders: And they all have some level of intentionality involved towards pursuit of some type of growth or transformation. Is that fair to say?

Debra Anderson: Yeah. Sounds good.

Dr. Don Payne: Good. Over the last 20 years or so, since Denver Seminary began this really intentional emphasis on mentoring, lots of seminaries around the country have emphasized mentoring in some form. What is it all? I'll give you a chance to toot your own horn here for a moment, what is it that distinguishes Denver Seminary's approach to mentoring from all the other things that are done in this arena, particularly in higher theological education?

Debra Anderson: Yeah. I can speak to this because I did not do my seminary degree here at Denver Seminary, so I had a different experience in that. We took a year of mentored learning that looked more like a multifaceted internship. It was really complex with a lot of different layers. I had the opportunity to meet with a supervisor and he was my primary mentor, as we would call him, and gave me feedback on my learning goals. I brought my own questions to a spiritual mentor, we called it, to talk about my personhood -- my issues of character. And then I also created a peer council that gave me feedback on how I impacted my area of ministry as they saw it. So, I had the opportunity for a lot of feedback but that whole opportunity was really based around primarily learning how to do something. We did talk about character, but it felt like a secondary piece of it and we flipped that on its head. We start with who you are. That doesn't mean that we don't talk about professional skill and have students engage in that. They do. But we begin with: "Who are you in Christ?" before we say: "What are you to do in the world?" So our work will certainly come out of who we are, but it can't be separated from --

Dr. Don Payne: We always bring ourselves with us. Don't we? As they say. And I think.

Debra Anderson: Yeah. So I feel like what we, the way that we incorporate that into our curriculum here really feels like we're enacting a theology. We're not just

writing reports here. We're engaging in a theology in the whole of our life about how it is that we were formed.

Dan Steiner:

I think another distinctive, and I know this having interacted with some of our peers in different institutions and the challenge of this being an academic endeavor and there's academic credit attached to it. So how do you assess a grade? How do you assess how a student did or did not perform? How effective were they? And when you're helping somebody grow in matters of personal character that can be a difficult, if not impossible, task of assessing how somebody grew in compassion or generosity. And so, the developmental aim of our mentoring curriculum is that students would grow in their adult learning skills. As they're discerning their formation needs and they're developing these learning plans, they're engaging the learning plans and then reflecting on it. It's this process, a very intentional process that we can then, not just assess a grade for the sake of assessing a grade, but it gives the students anchor holds to identify beyond just "well, I feel like I'm less patient" or "I feel like I'm more patient." But here are tangible tools that I now have that I can take with me for the rest of my life to continue on in my mentored formation, beyond just seminary. It's an equipping process, not just for the time in seminary, but hopefully for the rest of their lives.

Dr. Don Payne:

Yeah. So what are some of the outcomes or the deliverables that you've seen? Maybe give us a quick anecdote or two of how you've seen mentoring actually be productive, be fruitful, be transformative in people's lives. What are some deliverables?

Laura Flanders:

I'm going to jump off a little bit from what Dan was just saying and talk about four deliverables that I think my colleagues know I'm about ready to talk about. Is that fair? To talk about those four? But we, one of the. There's four words that we tell students we are wanting to see them grow in. And they are words that we call adult learning skills. So these are deliverables. Is the student, when they're getting ready to graduate or had they been given an opportunity to learn how to better discern learning goals so that when they're in a time of change or leadership and something new has happened, are they going to be able to figure out what it is they need to learn in that moment? Are they then able to figure out the practicalities towards that learning goal and how they could go about learning it? So, learning tools that they need in order to move towards that learning goal. Can they manage themselves in a learning experience that they've created for themselves? And Professor Anderson talks about this a lot: Can students better reflect on what they do so that formation occurs? Because you really can't learn without reflection. So if those four things, we see those outcomes. Now, we don't work to measure them. We don't do a Likert scale to measure them, but we see those in their last mentor team meeting. We see those things happening in students' lives as they're better able to do those four things. I'm sure you guys have something to add.

Dr. Don Payne:

Give us a quick story or two of how you've seen this happen.

Laura Flanders:

Yeah. Dan has one.

Dan Steiner:

I have my coffee mug here. And for our listeners that can't see this, I'll say what is on the mug. It says: "Trust the process." This was actually a gift given to me by one of my students in their final summit of experience. And as the student reflected on their overall mentored experience at Denver Seminary, they shared how they came in very resistant to this mentored life and this idea of identifying matters of personal character and professional skill to grow alongside a mentor. And had to engage the part of the curriculum -- because they couldn't graduate without it -- did so reluctantly. But by the time they got through to the end of the process, came to value this so much so that they -- the student wanted to just continue on in their own life, but also leave a memento for me to have in my office to show any other resistant students "Trust the Process". Because it's worth it. And it's something we can't control. We're really trusting. This was in conjunction with the work of the Holy Spirit. But we create an environment and a curriculum that gives students tracks to run on. And it is a process. And we see so many students come to the outs -- come to the end of it saying: "Wow, I have grown in so many ways and I've a vision for this sort of a life beyond seminary." So it's not just something in the past but it's for the rest of my life.

Laura Flanders:

It's scary for students to take responsibility --

Dr. Don Payne:

I'll bet.

Laura Flanders:

For their own learning. And that's what we're requiring. We don't --

Debra Anderson:

Yeah, because this is a very different form of learning.

Laura Flanders:

We don't vet their context that they're going to learn in. They have to vet it. We don't choose their mentors and assign their mentors. They need to choose those mentors. We provide orientation for them, but the student had -- her resistance -- his or her resistances were all about the fears associated with learning and the responsibilities that we have towards that end. So, trust the process.

Dr. Don Payne:

Yeah. Well, in some mentoring experiences I've seen, something you mentioned, Dan, has been repeatedly true. And that is what people envisioned at the outset of a mentoring relationship was quite different from what they actually experienced at the end of it, because you can't really predict or manipulate those specific outcomes. You can only create. What was your language? You can create certain conditions.

Dan Steiner:

There's a framework, some tracks to run on environment.

Dr. Don Payne:

A framework where the right kinds of things can happen, and then you, well, to try, to go with your coffee cup, we trust the process, right? Let's kind of stretch this beyond mentoring as it looks like here at Denver Seminary, and think about it in other contexts -- church contexts, public sector contexts. You know, if

somebody is looking to start something in their realm of mentoring, a mentoring program, a mentoring process. What do you think are some of the basic dos and don'ts for that? Or, what tips would you give them for how to get started in doing something that's going to be sustainable in a mentoring process?

Debra Anderson:

The first thing I would suggest, if you are looking for a mentor, perhaps as a position that you're in, consider your own strengths, assess your own strengths before you begin to evaluate who the mentors are around you. I think sometimes we think that mentoring will be successful if we get the exact right mentor to walk with us. And yet, we diminish what it is that we bring to the table. And so, that's one of the first things we ask our students to evaluate is: "Who are you? And what are those relationships that you have had that have been successful, and what did you bring into that relationship that made it work, that made it flourish, that made it beneficial not just for you but for the other that was in that relationship with you?" And so, we ask them to evaluate their own mentee skills. Maybe they were effective listeners. Maybe they really rocked it on follow-through. Maybe they could value differences with that mentor. Because, obviously, a mentor isn't like us. They are someone who's ahead of us in life, has a different experience of life. So we need to learn to value those differences. So the first thing I would say is assess your own strengths and what will you bring into that relationship.

Dr. Don Payne:

Okay. What are you bringing to the table? Good. Another tip or two.

Dan Steiner:

Yeah, I would say if you're looking to develop something formal within an organization, you have to start with yourself. So if you are in a position of responsibility and authority to bring something to bare, what does your mentored life look like yourself and how does that kind of bringing to the table? How do you bring that to the table and build from there? And if you aren't in a place of authority and responsibility to put together a formal program, that doesn't mean you shouldn't or can't try to pursue that and help shape a culture within an organization as you pursue mentors and even pursue being a mentor as opportunities arise. So just being aware of what opportunities are available, it's contextualized. You can't take what we have done at Denver Seminary just transplant that into your church or organization. There's the discernment process there. But, maybe start small and see how that flourishes and expands. We have, not just a mentoring program, we talk about a mentoring culture.

Dr. Don Payne:

Yeah. I wanted to follow up on that. What do you mean by that phrase, mentoring culture?

Dan Steiner:

I'll let Laura take off, because I know this is something, you've been here much longer and watched this develop over the years.

Laura Flanders:

Yeah. To jump off that, I'd say the first thing that an organization needs to do is have a goal of building a culture and not just a program. That doesn't say that a program is a bad thing. A program builds culture, but just pay attention to the programmatic elements and the culture it's building. Is it really building a

mentoring culture? So we have a, we've worked to define what we mean. And it's a working, it's a definition always in work about what we mean by mentoring culture. But basically, it's a way of life of people who have given themselves over to interdependence; to not only teaching, but to learning and growing; to not only be offering help, but to being able to be people who receive help. So, a mentoring culture is a group of people who that's just generally their natural way of being. So, what are your programmatic elements and how are you going to encourage that in the life of the people in your church, your nonprofit, and your for-profit? Are you going to be building a culture? And what's necessary for that is, I think, there's so many books in the field on the act of being a mentor, so many of them. I should've brought those statistics with me, because we looked at those this summer. But very few books are about being a mentee and being a learner. And so, if you're going to build a program that builds a mentoring culture, you really should focus more on training people to be a learner and a mentee than you are on focusing on training people to be mentors. Although, that's important too.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. That's a pretty counterintuitive approach.

Laura Flanders: It's very counterintuitive. And then I would say, practicalities of, if you want to kill your mentoring program, assign mentors to mentees. It's just, don't do that. It's just a disaster waiting to happen. And --

Dr. Don Payne: Mentees have to have some ownership of that, right?

Laura Flanders: They need to have some ownership. And, they need somebody to blame if it doesn't go well. And often, the person they should blame is themselves. I mean, sometimes the mentor is a bad mentor. But more often than not, it's myself I have to blame if it's not going well. So I, the ownership, you know, mentoring is intentionality and it's really best if the intentionality is coming from the mentor and the mentee.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay.

Laura Flanders: But boy, if it's, if we're not training. And I think, go back to your first question of why it's so important today, we haven't raised, I think, a generation of intentional young people. And so, can we provide a mentoring culture that allows these people to step in and to learn the life of being an intentional person?

Dr. Don Payne: My hunch is that this may peak or tweak a good bit of interest and follow up. So we may set ourselves up for a second conversation on all this. I think there's far more to be talked about than our time will allow today. And I want to kind of leave that leave the floor open for continuing this conversation or picking it up at another time. Give us, quickly, maybe a couple of the best resources for people who want to read more, study a little bit more, learn a little bit more about mentoring, in an accessible way, not a highly technical way. Where would you direct them? What are some of the best resources?

Debra Anderson: I just read a book this past year called Reading Your Life Story by Keith Anderson. It's very, very helpful, both for a mentee and a mentor to read.

Dr. Don Payne: Reading Your Life Story?

Debra Anderson: Reading Your Life Story.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. Keith Anderson. Good. What else?

Dan Steiner: There's a book that I've had a number of students engage. And I've actually learned from my students who have learned from this resource. But it's called Reclaiming Conversation. And it's taking a look at different kinds of layers of -- from the individual to one-on-one to a group. But within this digital age, how do we actually sit with others and have dialogue, have interaction? I don't think it's -- it's not explicitly about mentoring, but it's a great resource that can be applied to the field of mentoring.

Dr. Don Payne: Very [transferable]. Okay. Good.

Laura Flanders: Another book is one we have students read in TM500. I can't remember the author's name right now. You guys help me. Managers as Mentors. Sounds like --

Dr. Don Payne: Oh, Chip Bell.

Laura Flanders: Chip Bell. Thank you.

Debra Anderson: Chip Bell, Marshall Goldsmith.

Laura Flanders: Yeah. That book is, you know, it's a secular book. But boy, it's chock full of really good tips and tidbits about mentoring and being a mentee. So we have students read selected pages out of that. Don't let the title keep you from reading it. And then, of course, if you are in the field of managing people in an organization, obviously, that title is going to draw you to it.

Dr. Don Payne: Right.

Laura Flanders: But if you're not, let that book speak to you as well.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay.

Laura Flanders: There's a lot of good tidbits in it.

Dr. Don Payne: All right. I've got two final questions for each of you. First of all, and just answer this as quickly and without a lot of reflection as you can. What is the food that you like the best that is the worst for you?

Laura Flanders: Ice cream.

Dan Steiner: Paddington's pizza.

Debra Anderson: Cake.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay.

Debra Anderson: I love cake. I miss cake.

Dr. Don Payne: And that's a specific --

Dan Steiner: You miss cake?

Debra Anderson: I really want cake.

Dr. Don Payne: Like, right now?

Debra Anderson: Yes.

Dr. Don Payne: I wish I could help you with that, but we've got no cake here.

Dan Steiner: And that pizza is nowhere near Denver, Colorado.

Laura Flanders: And there's no ice cream.

Dr. Don Payne: And there's no Paddington's here.

Dan Steiner: No.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. Well, thankfully there is ice cream.

Laura Flanders: There is. There's always ice cream. Ice cream's always there for me.

Dr. Don Payne: There is always ice cream. Okay. If you were not doing what you're doing now, what would you be doing?

Laura Flanders: I think you can all answer that question for me.

Debra Anderson: Gardening.

Laura Flanders: Yes.

Dr. Don Payne: Professional gardening.

Laura Flanders: Yes.

Dr. Don Payne: Dan, what would you be doing?

Dan Steiner: I would be taking pictures somewhere scenic, serene, pretty. Yes.

Laura Flanders: Of my garden.

Dan Steiner: Yes. Pictures of --

Laura Flanders: You're going to be taking pictures of my backyard garden.

Dr. Don Payne: Debra, what would you be doing?

Debra Anderson: I would combine hiking with writing, and find that ideal cabin somewhere in the middle of nowhere and write something really brilliant.

Dr. Don Payne: You must all be independently wealthy, because the things you've chosen that you would be doing don't often pay very well.

Laura Flanders: Yes. But I'll be doing mine in the new heavens and new earth.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. Get theological on us.

Laura Flanders: I think you guys will be doing yours --

Debra Anderson: There will be words.

Dan Steiner: Cameras will be there.

Debra Anderson: You will have words.

Laura Flanders: Yeah. There'll be books written and, so --

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. Alright. Once somebody plays the theology card, what am I supposed to say? Conversation stopper. Thanks Laura, Dan, Debra.

Laura Flanders: Thank you.

Dan Steiner: Thank you.

Debra Anderson: Thanks, Don.

Dr. Don Payne: We had a great conversation. I hope we can pick this up again. If you would like more information on the Training and Mentoring curriculum here at Denver Seminary, you can find that on our website. And if you

would like to email us at podcast@denverseminary.edu with specific questions, we can probably dredge up a few more mentoring resources for you. This has been Engage360 from Denver Seminary. I'm Don Payne. Thanks again for listening and I hope you will check in again for another conversation next week.