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A mentor is a trusted advisor, teacher, coach, or counselor to a less experienced person. Throughout my life, I have been mentored by a diverse group of individuals, and I would like to share my experiences with a few of these people.

My early memories of Jack are from when I was about 10 or 11. He and his wife lived across the street and were very good friends of my parents. Much of my love of fishing, especially fly fishing, comes from Jack and his simple mentoring. When I was about 12, Jack told me I was going to take a class to learn how to tie trout flies, and then I was going to tie for him and a few of his friends. At that point, I think I had seen a trout fly but had no idea how to make one. I took the class, and learned to combine different types of feathers, hair, and other materials into a trout fly. Well-tied, a trout fly can be a work of art. In the beginning, mine were certainly nowhere close to that standard, but Jack bought them anyway.

During my learning stage, I attempted to tie an Adams, a well-known dry fly. Jack wanted a dozen, so I tied them (or at least I tried). Looking back, they were wrong in oh-so-many ways. Jack not only bought them, but he also had the kindness to try them. The flies caught fish, and Jack began calling the pattern the "Jason Special." With practice I learned to properly tie an Adams and many other varieties of flies. I also filled many more orders for the Jason Special.

The Impact of My Mentors

Jack's mentoring extended beyond fishing to other areas of my life. Even though I moved from my hometown about 30 years ago and my parents have both passed away, Jack still keeps in touch with me. His simple kindness and mentoring have made and continue to make a significant difference in my life.



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About 12 years into my career, an executive assistant was assigned to me for the first time. Having been an executive assistant for more years than I had practiced, she took the time to teach and mentor me. In one of our first meetings, she taught me what she could do to help me. She said, "Jason, I can do anything you can do that does not take a license." In other words, she could take care of all of the administrative details, while I focused on the technical aspects of my responsibilities. It took some time for me to understand how to work with her and to learn what I could delegate. She coached me on what to assign to her and others and on

how to be more efficient. I had the opportunity to work with and learn from her for about two years. I am still honing my delegation skills and probably always will be. But her mentoring and teaching help me, even now, to better serve clients and others.

As a young professional, I was mentored by a number of people. One particular mentor had a very strong personality. As a new, somewhat shy staff person, this relationship was challenging for me at times because of the significant differences in our styles. Even so, I learned a great deal from this mentor, and after a while, I came to understand him. He recognized abilities in me that I did not see myself. He pushed me to develop strengths in technical areas. I certainly experienced growing pains. But, looking back, I realize that he saw my potential and did his best to help me develop it. I wouldn't have the technical abilities I have today had it not been for the challenges this mentor provided.

These are just three of the people who are or have been mentors to me. I appreciate their investment of time and energy. As members, some of you may or may not have shared my experience with having good mentors. For those who did, please use those experiences to invest in others. For those who did not, please invest in others the way you wish someone had invested in you.

Your feedback is always appreciated and welcomed. Please feel free to contact me at ChairJason@orcpa.org.