

Who Has Influenced You

In her book *Lanterns: A Memoir of Mentors*, Marian Wright Edelman stresses the point that most people are influenced by several individuals during the course of their lives, not just one or two people. This exercise provides an opportunity for you to reflect on the individuals who have helped shape your thoughts, ideals, purposes, and passions. In answering the following questions, think about the important changes you have experienced. Don't focus only on external events, rather concentrate on the developments or changes that occurred *within* you—the way you saw yourself, others, or events as a result your interactions with another individual. You may use initials or first names only.

1. Who provided an “aha!” experience which allowed you to pierce the core of meaning of some event or understanding of yourself? Write about one such experience.

2. Who intervened in your life at “just the right time” inspiring you to shift the direction of your life in a constructive way?

3. Who provided help, support, or tangible resources to help you grow in depth of feeling, character, moral integrity, or a deeper commitment to your values?

4. Who helped you develop an ability or a talent and gave you the confidence to overcome obstacles in achieving higher levels of competence in expressing that ability or talent?

5. Describe the specific actions, types of resources, verbal expressions, and nonverbal behaviors that characterized some of the influential mentors and coaches you have described in the preceding questions.

From: Bloom, P. J. (2003). *Leadership in Action: How Effective Directors Get Things Done*. Lake Forest, IL: New Horizons.