

# Mentoring your way to success

By Jo Eady, Rural Women in Business ([www.rwib.com](http://www.rwib.com))

***Over the last couple of years we have seen the business world validate mentoring as a key personal and professional development activity. It is a great way to learn, grow, share experiences and develop business knowledge, skills and confidence.***

I have always thought that there is something reassuring about wisdom and knowledge passed on by those that have had successful business experiences. So, if you are thinking of being a mentor or if you are looking for a mentor, here are some hints that will help.

## WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring can be formal or informal, long or short term. It has wide application for providing both personal and professional development opportunities for individuals, groups and entire organisations.

The best definition of mentoring I have come across is 'mentoring is a process to facilitate an individual's self-development'. Mentoring is about developing relationships, developing knowledge and skills, sharing in an experience or journey and achieving goals and plans.

## HOW DOES MENTORING HAPPEN?

Mentoring occurs through conversation. Conversation is the core process, it's the way most of us learn, and with some structure I think the sky is the limit to what you can achieve. Committed conversation means that there is always purpose and outcome at the centre of the mentoring exchange. It is these conversations that spark the magic of mentoring.

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD MENTOR?

Can anyone be a mentor? I believe they can. What is more important, though, is that if you want to be a mentor or find yourself in a mentoring role, then be good at it, be the best you can be. Responsibility underpins the success of mentoring so it is important to work at being an effective mentor and an effective mentee. Talk to colleagues about their mentoring experiences, what worked, what would they do differently next time, and so on.

Mentors are people, just like you. Some have a natural aptitude, while others undertake training programs to understand and learn to use more explicitly the qualities and attributes that can make a great mentor.

Whatever category you happen to fall into there are some qualities and attributes that greatly enhance the role of the mentor.

The major ones include:

- openness and patience;
- being an encourager, effective listener and supporter;
- interpersonal and negotiation skills;
- a genuine interest in the development and growth of others;
- a commitment to change; and
- a readiness to commit expertise, wisdom and experience for the benefit of others.

Likewise, the role of the mentee can be enhanced through a set of qualities and attributes. The major ones include:

- openness and patience;
- a willingness to share, be coached and receive feedback;
- a commitment to change and to progress potential;
- independence;
- acceptance of responsibility; and
- being a risk taker.

## EIGHT PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE MENTORING

### Principle 1 – Listen generously

Listening is the starting point with mentoring: listening leads to understanding and it is understanding that is needed in every mentoring relationship.

### Principle 2 – Ensure 100% presence

Be there and be present without distractions.

### Principle 3 – Value contributions from others

There is no one way or right way: value all contributions.

### Principle 4 – Be true to yourself

Mentoring is 'real life'. Focus on the real life context and understand your strengths, weaknesses, vulnerabilities and the limitations in the process.

### Principle 5 – Commit to take action

Take learnings and put them to action. Mentoring is about growth: take opportunities to put learnings into real life contexts.

### Principle 6 – Have fun

Relax and enjoy the mentoring experience.

### Principle 7 – Be prepared to change your reality

Mentoring will expose you to new ways of thinking and will trigger thoughts relating to your own work-life context. Keep an open mind.

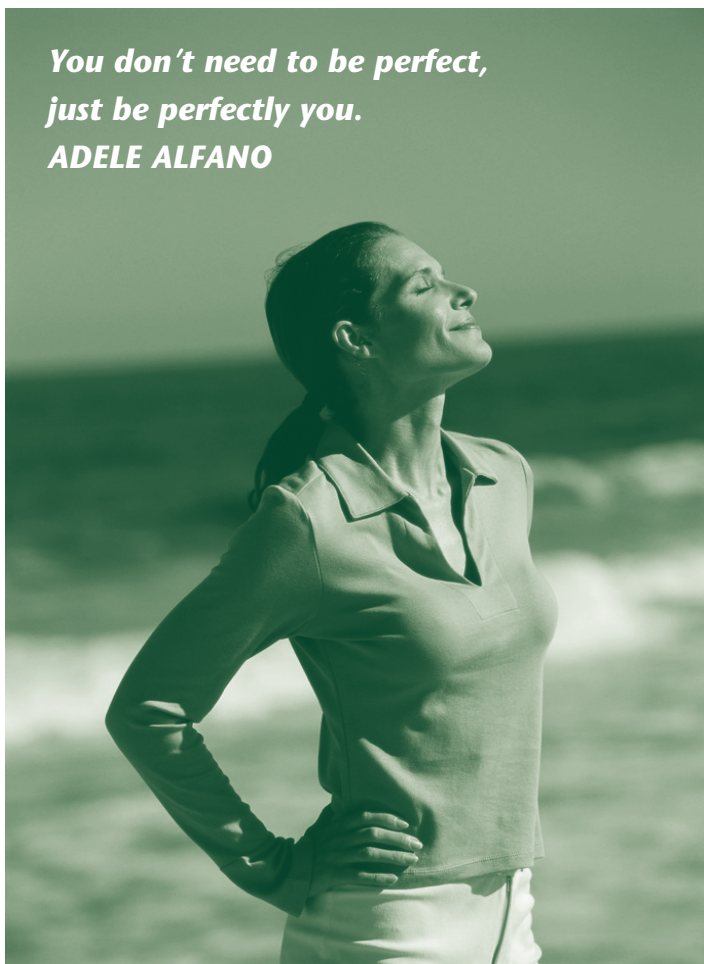
### Principle 8 – See new directions and futures

Take time to review your learnings and see what they are telling you about your future directions.

**For more information on leadership and mentoring visit: [www.rwib.com](http://www.rwib.com) or [www.ruralscope.com](http://www.ruralscope.com)**

***You don't need to be perfect,  
just be perfectly you.***

**ADELE ALFANO**



## Creating the life you want

*By Kim Deans, Inverell*

***Do you have goals and dreams for your future? Do you wish your life was different in some or many ways? Are you so busy you don't have the time to stop and even think about where you are heading? Do you feel that your partner, kids or the farm needs are more important than your own and your role in life is to give your time and energy to them instead of doing anything for yourself?***

Without goals and dreams for our future we have no way of creating the life we want and end up getting dragged along by other people's dreams or we simply just continue to exist as we are now. These options may be perfectly OK by you but if they are not then it is time to do something about it!

The wonderful thing about life is that we have the ability to imagine the life we want and the power to create it. Consciously choosing to create a wonderful life for ourselves and taking steps towards achieving our goals are the first steps. You can choose to start this at any time, wherever you may be, and however bad things may seem.

My journey into creating the life I wanted began about five years ago after my first marriage ended. I was at a low point in my life and a love of reading drove me to the local library. I was drawn to the self-help section as I tried to make sense of why my

life was such a mess. As I devoured self-help books I decided that I was finished with being a victim of circumstances and blaming other people and events for my unhappiness – it was time to take responsibility for my own life and so I set about creating the life I wanted.

The first step in this journey was consciously taking responsibility for my own happiness and my own life. Then I decided how I wanted my life to be. Having this vision to work towards has helped to guide my decisions and keep me on track. During the past few years as my dreams have become reality I have been amazed by the results. I now enjoy a rewarding career, a beautiful home and garden in the country, and I share my life with a wonderful partner and our children. None of these would have been possible if I had chosen differently and decided to settle for where I was five years ago.

The Rural Women's Network (RWN) Shaping Our Futures Together (SOFT) course is a must for all women who are interested in creating the life they want. Whether you are just starting out on the journey of manifesting your reality or you have been in conscious control of your life for some time now you will still benefit hugely from the SOFT experience. Back in March a group of women gathered in Inverell to participate in the SOFT course. We had come for a variety of reasons ranging from curiosity, the suggestion of a friend, for fun, and just because. Some of us had no idea why we were there or what we would achieve. Myself... I had read about the SOFT course in *The Country Web* and thought that it sounded like a great idea. I emailed the RWN and asked how we could get SOFT in Inverell and, with the help of our local Drought Support Worker, the idea became a reality.

For me SOFT was an opportunity to enhance my self-awareness and goal setting. My expectations were well and truly exceeded by the SOFT course – it was great fun, inspiring and empowering. The presenters Sonia and Kathy were wonderful, and at the end of the two days I felt renewed and excited by what I had learnt and what we had achieved as a group.

How often do we take the time to really connect with other women on a real level, not a superficial one? As a diverse group of women from a range of rural backgrounds we were able to tap into all of our own experiences, contacts and wisdom to help each other solve problems and achieve our goals. We all went home with an achievable goal and a way to begin putting it into action.

This course is for all women regardless of background, education, career, age or the type of goals you have. If an opportunity arises for you to join a SOFT course don't let it pass you by or make up excuses not to get there – YOU are worth it! If the opportunity doesn't arise and you would love to participate as I did then it's up to you to make it happen!

***For more information about SOFT contact Sonia Muir,  
Rural Women's Network on Ph: 02 6391 3611 or Email:  
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*Jane has been at the cutting edge of social leadership in Australia for more than 20 years. She is the Chief Executive Officer of Nonprofit Australia, an independent organisation established to assist the non-profit sector in Australia to be more cost-effective and innovative.*

*Previously, she was the Chief Executive of The Benevolent Society, a major social enterprise providing innovative programs in high-need communities, and, before that, Jane held senior positions in the NSW Government, where she was responsible for advising the Government on its social agenda across departments.*

*Jane serves on a number of boards, including Nonprofit Australia, Social Ventures Australia, Indigenous Festivals of Australia, The Taxation Board of Australia and the Sydney Medical Research Foundation.*

# Great Australian Leaders – Interview with Jane Schwager

Article from Our Community ([www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au))

## Who do you consider to be the three great leaders of our time?

I think that Mikhail Gorbachev, Chou En-lai and Nelson Mandela would be among the three great leaders of our time. For me leadership is about achieving a vision which is bold, significant and changes the shape of history for the better. A bold vision also needs to be achieved in a way which aims to be peaceful and respectful of humanity. It does not preclude bloodshed but the vision for change must seek to minimise human loss.

All three men led major transformations of their countries, changing the face of history for the better without major collapse and revolutionary bloodshed. This was achieved in very fragile environments where the excesses of the current administrations were becoming destructive and tyrannical. All three men appeared to operate with a strong moral compass and with a level of humility which avoided the excesses of arrogance and hubris. All three put their vision well ahead of their own personal comfort and survival.

## What are the three attributes you would consider to be essential to a leader?

1. A bold vision and the capacity and skills to execute it.

2. A strong moral or ethical framework, personal humility and an ability to put vision ahead of personal comfort and survival.

3. Passion and a determination to never give up until a vision is executed.

I believe that these three qualities are essential to transformation. Leadership is about transformation.

## What are the three greatest barriers to new leaders emerging in Australia?

1. The tyranny of mediocrity – like delivers like.
2. A culture of restraint and control.
3. A moral compass of 'us and them'.

## What advice would you give to a potential leader to take them to the next stage?

Fear is the greatest barrier – fear of rejection, fear of slander, fear of our own potential power – it is hard to turn back once a path is taken. Fear is about losing something – I like the Buddhist teaching of letting go of our grasping, needy natures. There can be a great

freedom in pursuing this discipline and realising the more we fear and hold onto the safe zone we are in the more we suffer.

Happiness and leadership power to me is about living lightly and seeking to do good and not being swayed from the simplicity of this way of being.

## Nature/nurture – are leaders born or bred?

I do think some modelling is necessary as we develop. I also believe that certain temperaments seem to be driven to search and to make a difference. The two must go together in my view – otherwise the latter can build destructive behaviours.

## What do you consider to be the three top leadership issues facing the nation?

It worries me that there is an emerging complacency in Australia – a cosiness – that means people are reluctant to move outside their comfort zone. I believe this is a dangerous zone and one where human travesties can happen and we run the risk of turning a blind eye. This is not a culture that nurtures leaders as they tend to be viewed as irritants that disturb the comfort zone we are all in.

**Community Leadership is the courage, creativity and capacity to inspire participation, development and sustainability for strong communities. SIR GUSTAV NOSSAL**

I sense a culture which is less tolerant and more judgemental – this creates a climate of fear, of rejection, of us and them.

Difference and boldness must be valued and nurtured – otherwise it tends to be repressed before it emerges.

**What insights have you gained personally on your leadership journey and how have they impacted on your style of leadership?**

It is a lonely journey as leadership is inherently about taking the less travelled path. This is not about 'leading the charge'. It is about working with and through others and respecting and listening.

The added value of leadership is a capacity to make sense of the trends and to skilfully steer a path which better the human condition. Loner versus consultative dichotomies are far too simplistic when talking about true leadership.

Being true to ourselves and our vision is fundamental – even if it is a lonely journey.

Living lightly, and openly and being happy are essential human qualities that need to underpin the boldness, the skill and the vision of leadership. We're all pretty clumsy players.

**Who have been your own leadership mentors and how did they assist in developing your own leadership style?**

No single person stands out. I tend to be a bower bird that collects something from everyone I meet – sometimes it's a way of viewing, sometimes it's a reminder to review my ethics, my moral compass, sometimes it's about the creative process, sometimes

it's about the skill of diplomacy – so much to learn!

The most important lesson for me is that every interaction teaches us something and keeps us in touch with others.

My parents – with all their foibles – were my strongest mentors. To be loved and

believed in provide such solid foundations. These give us a level of personal courage and a sense of place in the world.

*Article reproduced with permission from Our Community. For this, and other interviews with great Australian leaders go to:*

[www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au) and click on the 'Leadership Centre' section. This centre has been established to help community leaders, potential community leaders and community groups find the resources to assist in developing the skills to provide true leadership in their chosen area.

**Mentoring and Leadership: 12,000 women strong!**

*By Elaine Armstrong,  
Wagga Wagga*

The Country Women's Association (CWA) of NSW was formed in 1922, out of a desperate need by country women who were fighting isolation and seeking better facilities for their families, with access to health, education and transport. Baby health centres, bush nurses, maternity wards, schools, rest homes, seaside and mountain holiday cottages were among the first projects that were supported by fundraising. Mentoring and leadership has been the name of the game for CWA since it began almost 84 years ago.

Isolation in remote areas is still a major obstacle and hindrance to women. Yes, Information Technology has brought contact between properties, but the face-to-face contact and giving a helping hand do not travel well along the lines of email! In 1923, Hillston Branch of the CWA opened and has been actively involved in serving women and their families in that community

ever since. Establishing hospitals and schools brought the women of communities together. Through a huge consolidated community effort The Hillston Maternity Hospital was opened in 1926, and within the first ten years 900 babies were born. Mentoring was provided for women living in the harshness of the outback, as well as developing home skills through handicraft, cookery, mothercraft and nutrition days.

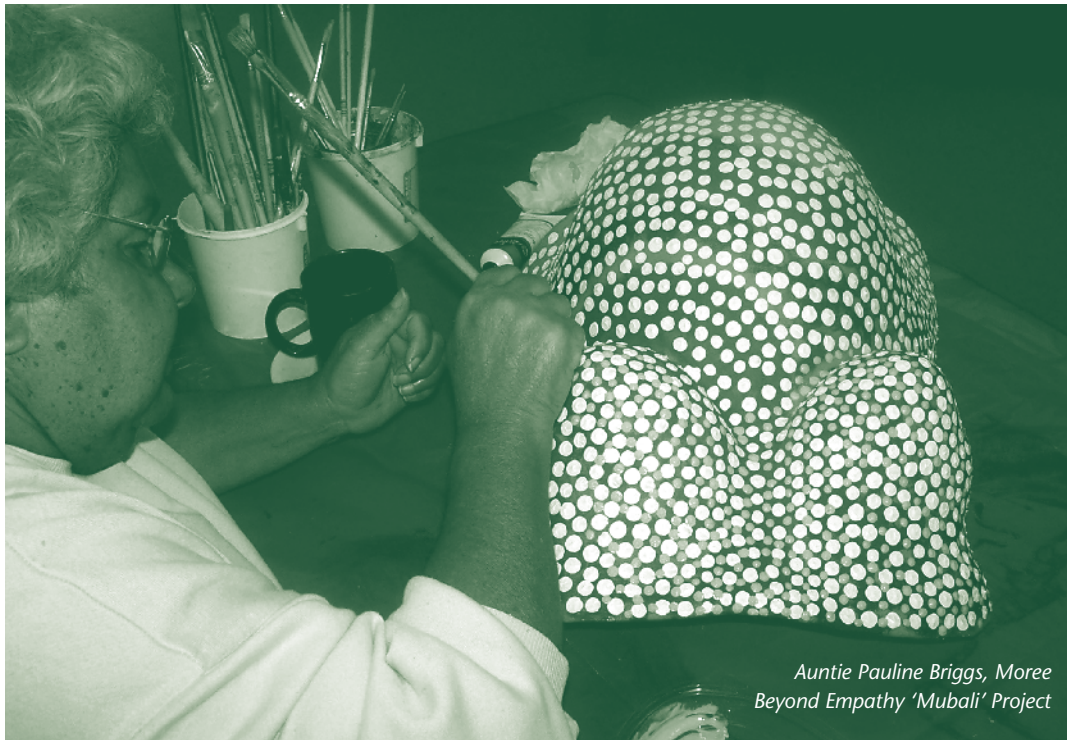
Today's CWA still proudly holds to our Motto, and supports women in whatever roles they feel they need. There is scope for women to pursue whatever interests they wish and opportunities for training in meeting and committee procedures, personal development, handicraft and cookery skills, international interests, and lobbying for better conditions for rural and remote communities, with our new Agricultural and Environmental Committee keeping our issues and concerns to the fore. Our Association has for many years raised funds for our work by inventive methods (including tea and scone sales!). The Kiosk at the Royal Easter Show in Sydney is a working holiday for members: the friendship and camaraderie well compensate for the time away from home.

During the past twelve months CWA has given to various needs within NSW, nationally and internationally, over \$400,000 – that is a lot of money. Our members are happy to work together to help out wherever we can, for example through State Educational Grants, medical research (this year haemophilia), international support, aid for South Pacific areas and emergency funds, and by knitting garments for the needy in the metropolitan area.

Within our 12,000 members we have almost anyone who can be a mentor for you or lead you along the path where your interest lies. If you need to know how to improve your home routine, become involved with the local Mother's Club, form an after school kids club, make up a garment, cook a cake, present a speech, form a committee, raise funds through parades, stalls, lamington drives, bus trips... we have the information, the mentors and the leadership place for you!

**For more information contact, Judy Richardson, NSW State President on Ph: 02 6643 3813 or Visit: [www.cwaofnsw.org.au](http://www.cwaofnsw.org.au)**





Auntie Pauline Briggs, Moree  
Beyond Empathy 'Mubali' Project

## Leadership: the 'just do it' model

By Kim McConville, Executive Director, Beyond Empathy

**Late in 2004, the midwives of the Gamilaroi Midwifery Strategy (Hunter New England Health) realised they had some community development money but were unsure how to use it to build capacity in community. They knew there were a lot of young women in the community who were pregnant and the first intervention they had was when they presented at Moree Hospital to give birth. They wanted to reach these young women and had an inkling that conventional health methods were not going to do it.**

Then one of the midwives thought of Beyond Empathy (BE). BE is a not-for-profit arts-based organisation that uses the arts to address the recurring hardship experienced by people in rural and regional communities. The founders of BE, working in Moree since 1999, had gained success reaching the young people in the community who fell outside the community safety net.

Denni Scott Davis (BE project development and management) and I sat down with the

Gamilaroi Midwifery Team and presented an idea. Denni and I knew the young women in the community who were pregnant and that engaging them was the easy part. We knew we could capture the commitment of the young women through our proven arts processes and, by doing this, re-engage them in the midwifery strategy and ensure they had regular antenatal care. The challenge lay within teaching the arts processes to the health workers (midwives) and our BHAG (big

hairy audacious goal) was that, with the right support, they would begin to use the arts as part of their core delivery.

The initial idea of making plaster casts of the young women's bellies, painting them and creating a visual arts exhibition shocked the midwifery team. At first, they thought it would not work. There was little understanding of how art could actually make change in the context of antenatal care. They did however trust us and our relationships in the community and felt confident we could get the girls to participate. We had a starting point.

So we went out into the community and talked with the young pregnant girls and talked up the idea of having a cast made of their belly as a 'memento' of their pregnancy. We tried to create an image for the girls of the final product and how beautiful these pieces could

be as testimony and a record of 'Baby's' journey into the world.

Eventually one girl decided to step up, and there was no looking back for the midwifery team. Alongside Denni, we engaged a professional visual artist, Jo Davidson, and gained the commitment of local artists, elders and Aunts, Marg Adams, Pauline Briggs and Lyla Carr. They would also paint alongside Jo and the young women. 'Begin with the end in mind', an exhibition planned for the Moree Plains Regional Gallery, gave us a purpose and a goal to work towards. Next step was to teach the belly cast making skills to the midwives.

'Mubali' means pregnant in Gamilaroi and soon word quickly spread through the community and more young women visited the Hospital to have a cast made of their belly. Before long, midwives were skilling up as 'artists' and 20 pregnant girls were participating in the strategy, turning up each week to a special room at the Moree Hospital.

While the young women and their aunts and elders painted stories of birthing and family onto the bellies, they were joined by nutritionists, mental health workers, dental health workers and other professionals and the midwives. They talked about the birthing process and about ante and postnatal care, postnatal depression, Centrelink support, dealing with their partners and the changes in their relationships.

The exquisite casts and paintings resulting from the process were showcased in a two-week exhibition at the Moree Plains Gallery. The launch of the exhibition was run by the young mums and their partners and was attended by over 200