

MENTORED FOR EXCELLENCE



A JOURNEY OF GOALS, GRIT, AND GROWTH

STELLA OMEPA

MENTORED FOR EXCELLENCE

by
Stella Omepa



The Creator Himself shall be your teacher, and great shall be your peace.

Copyright © 2020 Stella Omepa

All rights reserved.

ISBN:978-978-963-743-0

Published by Stella-Nursery Creations Ltd
Abuja, Nigeria.
Tel.: (234) 904-476-7756

To every young person with a dream, and every mentor who believes in another. You are the bridge to a better world.

Special thanks to Ms. Hussaina Audu — thank you for your invaluable proofreading support.

BACKGROUND

In Nigeria, young people often talk about role models. But many don't understand that personal transformation is a challenging journey, even with someone to emulate. Without proper guidance, brilliant dreams can fade. This lack of mentorship continues to limit individuals, families, and nations.

Mentorship is essential, especially in making life and career decisions. While parents and teachers play important roles, mentors provide personalised guidance in specific areas. Mentoring is not new; it has helped many succeed throughout history.

Think of Elijah mentoring Elisha in the Bible. Or Oprah Winfrey, mentored by the late Maya Angelou. Mark Zuckerberg was mentored by Steve Jobs. Behind every great person, there's often a greater mentor.

This story — Ime's journey — is meant to:

1. Inspire young people to recognize the value of mentorship.
2. Encourage self-awareness in seeking guidance.
3. Help identify the qualities of a good mentor.
4. Equip students to begin meaningful mentoring relationships.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

Choosing a Mentor..... 1

CHAPTER TWO

The Pursuit of Goals..... 7

CHAPTER THREE

Never Give UP.....13

CHAPTER FOUR

A Dad's Advice.....19

CHAPTER FIVE

Becoming24

ONE

CHOOSING A MENTOR

Fourteen-year-old Ime couldn't keep still.

She sat in the back seat of her parents' car, clutching a pen and notebook with nervous excitement. Today was the day she would meet her mentor, Dr. Nancy, a practicing physician with years of experience and a reputation for nurturing young minds.

Ime had dreamed of becoming a doctor since she was nine. Not for the white coat or the title; but because she had watched a neighbor lose a child to a simple illness. It stayed with her. From that day, she knew she wanted to help people live, not die from things that could be prevented.

Her parents, seeing her passion, arranged the mentorship through a youth development programme. Ime had no idea what to expect, but she hoped Dr. Nancy would help her navigate the path ahead.

At exactly 3:45 p.m., they arrived at the hospital and Ime went straight to the café. The room buzzed softly with quiet conversations and the gentle clinking of teacups. In a corner seat by the window sat a kind-looking woman in a navy-blue blazer, her long ponytail neatly tied and a notebook resting in front of her.

She stood and smiled as Ime approached. "Hello, Ime. I'm Dr. Nancy. Please, have a seat."

More Than a Conversation

Ime sat down, trying to calm her nerves. Dr. Nancy's voice was warm and calm, her presence surprisingly easy to be around. After a few pleasantries, she leaned in and asked the question that immediately made Ime come alive:

"So, tell me, why do you want to be a doctor?"

Ime smiled, her earlier anxiety dissolving. "I want to help people... and prevent deaths. I just feel like I can make a difference."

Dr. Nancy nodded thoughtfully. "That's a wonderful reason. You're already starting in the right place, which is service. Medicine is not about status or money. It's about heart."

They spoke for nearly an hour, diving into everything from school subjects to personal struggles, from fears to big dreams. Ime was surprised by how freely she spoke, and how attentively Dr. Nancy listened.



What Mentorship Really Means

As their tea cooled, Dr. Nancy explained the purpose of mentorship.

"A mentor," she said, "helps you grow; not just academically, but emotionally, spiritually, and professionally. They walk with you. They help you see what you might miss on your own."

"I've read about mentorship online, but I didn't really understand it until now." Ime admitted.

Dr. Nancy smiled, not with judgment but understanding. "I didn't have a mentor when I was growing up," she confessed. "I was the first in my family to become a doctor. I stumbled, guessed, and made avoidable mistakes. Mentorship would've made my path easier."

Ime's eyes widened. "So you did it all... alone?"

"Yes. But no one should have to. That's why I'm here for you, and why someday, you'll be a mentor to someone else, too."

That thought stuck with Ime. She'd always thought mentors were older, accomplished people. She hadn't considered that even she, a student, could offer something to others.

"You don't have to wait till you're a doctor," Dr. Nancy added. "You can help juniors now, with study tips, time management, exam strategies. The little things make a big difference."

Choosing the Right Voices

Before they ended the session, Dr. Nancy shared one more important insight:

"You won't have just one mentor in life. Some are for a season. Others stay forever. But you must choose wisely. Here's what to look for in a mentor:"

She listed them one after the other and I me wrote them down in her notebook:

1. A good reputation — someone who is respected for how they live and what they stand for.
2. Willingness to mentor — they should be intentional and available.
3. Knowledge and openness — someone who doesn't hoard wisdom but shares it freely.
4. Honest, constructive feedback — they help you grow, even when it's uncomfortable.
5. Transparency — always tell a trusted adult about your mentoring relationships.

"Mentorship should never be secret or confusing," Dr. Nancy added. "It should be safe, supportive, and empowering."

The First Assignment

As they stood to leave, Dr. Nancy handed Ime a final challenge.

“Before our next meeting,” she said, “write down two things:

1. What are your top goals; short-term and long-term?
2. What do you hope to gain from this mentoring relationship?”

Ime promised she would. But as she walked out of the café, she realised something important.

This wasn’t just about becoming a doctor.

It was about becoming a better version of herself; one conversation, one lesson, one choice at a time.

And with that, the journey began.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Who around me can I ask to mentor me?
2. How can a mentor help me grow personally or professionally?
3. How can I respectfully approach a potential mentor?
4. Who around me can I begin to mentor?

TWO

THE PURSUIT OF GOALS

Ime arrived ten minutes early for her next session. The air was crisp with possibility, and the quiet in the café offered space to think. She opened her notebook and reviewed the goals she had written during their last meeting; some personal, some academic, others still half-formed thoughts jotted hastily in the margins.

A push on the door broke her concentration. Dr. Nancy stepped in, radiant as always, carrying the warmth of someone who believed deeply in the power of growth.

"You're early," she said with a smile. "That's a good sign."

"Thank you, ma'am". Ime smiled back

Dr Nancy asked if she could see the assignment and Ime slid the notebook toward her.

She read through the list, nodding with interest. "These are great goals," she said at last. "But goals without action are just wishes. Let me tell you how to turn these into your reality."

She leaned back in her chair and began a story.

"When I was in secondary school," she began, "our agricultural science teacher handed each of us a small plant. We were told to care for it over a few weeks; water it, give it sunlight, and track its growth. Simple enough, right? But when the deadline came, only a few plants were still alive, let alone healthy."

Ime raised an eyebrow. "What happened?"

"Most students forgot. Or they watered it once or twice and assumed that was enough. But a few, just a few, took it seriously. They asked questions, made adjustments, checked on their plants every day. And guess what? Their plants flourished."

Dr. Nancy looked directly at her. "The difference wasn't intelligence. It was consistency."

The Hidden Ingredient of Success

"You see, Ime," she continued, "talent gets you started. But diligence keeps you going."

She opened a small folder and pulled out several printouts, placing them on the table between them.

"Look at Venus and Serena Williams," she said, pointing to a photo of the tennis champions as children. "They didn't become the best in the world by practicing when they felt like it. Their father woke them at 5 a.m. to train before school. Then again after school. Every day. Rain or shine."

She placed another photo down, a black-and-white image of a young factory worker.

"This is Li Ka-Shing. He lost his father as a teenager and had to support his family. He worked in a plastics factory by day, studied business by night. He didn't have connections or wealth, just persistence. Today, he's one of the wealthiest and most respected businessmen in Asia."

And finally, a painting of a boy teaching in a temple.

"Even Jesus," she said reverently, "at age twelve, stayed behind in Jerusalem, discussing scripture with teachers for days. That's the kind of focus and hunger for knowledge that shapes a life of purpose."

The Price of Neglect

Ime listened, her fingers now absentmindedly tracing the edge of her notebook.

"Negligence wastes time and talent," Dr. Nancy said, her voice quiet but firm. "People think they fail because they're not good enough. But more often, it's because they didn't try long enough. Or hard enough. You're not just here to pass exams, Ime. You're here to build the skills, habits, and character that will shape your future."

She leaned forward.

"Success doesn't come from one big moment. It comes from hundreds of small, disciplined decisions. Day after day."

Finding Your 'Why'

Ime hesitated before asking, "But how do I stay diligent? It's easy to start. Harder to keep going."

Dr. Nancy smiled softly. "You need a reason. A why. Mine was my father. He was always sick when I was growing up. I remember watching him struggle to breathe. I wanted to help him, but I didn't know how, so I studied. Hard. I told myself I'd become a doctor so no one else in my family would suffer like he did."

She paused, letting the silence do its work.

"When your reason is strong enough," she said, "you'll find the strength to keep going, even when motivation fades."

Dr. Nancy handed Ime a clean sheet of paper.

"Here's your assignment: Write down what you need to do consistently, every day, every week, to achieve your goals. Then write down your why. What drives you? What's worth the effort, the sacrifice, the late nights and early mornings?"

Ime looked at the blank paper and felt something stir; a mix of determination and clarity.

As Dr. Nancy packed her things, she added, "Remember, growth is like that plant. It needs care. Not just once, but every day. You can do this. But only if you stay committed."

Ime nodded, gripping her pen tightly...

This time, she wouldn't just set goals.

She would pursue them.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What is a goal?
2. What are my goals for the next five years?
3. What are the things I need to diligently do to achieve my goals?

CHAPTER THREE

NEVER GIVE UP

The third session felt different.

Ime sat in front of her laptop, the soft hum of the ceiling fan behind her barely noticeable as she waited for the call to connect. Her notebook lay open beside her, filled with scribbled goals, questions, and pieces of advice that had begun to shape how she thought. On the screen, Dr. Nancy's face appeared, framed by the soft yellow lighting of an office halfway across the world.

"Hello, Ime!" she greeted warmly. "How are you doing?"

Ime smiled. "I'm doing well ma'am, and I've been following the plan. Sticking to my routine. I even wake up thirty minutes earlier now to study."

Dr. Nancy beamed. "That's fantastic. You're building habits that will carry you far. But I want to remind you of something very important today, something many people forget once they start making progress."

She leaned slightly toward the screen, her tone shifting from cheerful to serious.

"Success doesn't come without struggle. There will be setbacks. Delays. Even failures. But hear me now, you must never give up."

The Struggles Behind Greatness

Ime's eyes widened slightly. She had been doing well lately; her test scores had improved, her confidence was growing, but a part of her wondered what would happen when motivation faded, or worse, when she failed.

"Let me tell you about some people you've probably heard of," Dr. Nancy continued. "But you may not know their full stories."

She shared her screen, showing a photo of two men standing beside a strange-looking wooden aircraft.

"The Wright Brothers," she said. "Dozens of crashes. Mocked by the public. No formal engineering education. But they believed humans could fly. And because they didn't give up, they built the world's first airplane."

The screen changed again; this time to a young boy reading a book.

"Ben Carson," she said. "He was failing in school. His classmates called him 'dummy.' But his mother refused to let him give up. She made him read two books a week. That same boy became a world-famous neurosurgeon who performed one of the first successful separations of conjoined twins."

Slide after slide, story after story:

- **Thomas Edison** tried more than 1,000 times before inventing the lightbulb.
- **Albert Einstein** was considered “mentally slow” and expelled from school—yet he revolutionised physics and won the Nobel Prize.
- **Oprah Winfrey** was fired from her first TV job for being “unfit for television.” Today, she owns a media empire and inspires millions.
- **Goodluck Jonathan**, who once had to walk barefoot to school, rose from poverty to become President of Nigeria.

I me listened in awe. These weren't just famous names anymore. They were people who had fought for their dreams.

Fuel from Failure

Dr. Nancy paused and looked directly into the camera.

“Don't fear challenges,” she said. “If you love your dream, failure won't stop you, it will fuel you. The pain of falling can teach you where to place your feet next time. The frustration of setbacks can push you to find better ways.”

I me thought of the times she'd almost quit; a hard math problem, a harsh teacher's comment, the sting of disappointment when she didn't make the school debate team.

“So... when is it okay to give up?” she asked quietly.

Dr. Nancy didn't miss a beat. "It's not," she said. "Unless your dream is only for fame, money, or applause. Those things fade. But if your dream is to solve a problem, to bring hope, to serve others... then it's worth the struggle. And you fight for it."

The Heart of Resilience

Dr. Nancy softened her voice. "Let me tell you something personal, Ime. When I was in university, there was a time I nearly dropped out. My mother was sick. I had no money. I was exhausted. I thought maybe it wasn't meant to be. But then I remembered my 'why.' I remembered my father, my community, the patients who needed someone to care for them."

She took a deep breath.

"I stayed. And today, I get to help people every day. Not because I'm the smartest, but because I refused to give up."

Ime felt a lump rise in her throat. She had never seen Dr. Nancy look so vulnerable. So human.

And in that moment, she realised something: strength doesn't mean never feeling like giving up. It means choosing to rise even when you do.

Before the call ended, Dr. Nancy gave her one more challenge.

"Ime, I want you to write about a moment when you wanted to give up, but didn't. What kept you going? Then, write about what you'll do the next time things get hard."

She paused, then added gently, "You are one of those who can bring change. But only if you keep walking, even when the path is steep."

Ime nodded slowly, feeling both humbled and energised. She closed her laptop with new resolve. The world might throw storms her way, but she now carried a fire within that no storm could put out.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What is my dream in life?
2. Is this dream of mine worth pursuing? If yes, why?
3. In what ways have I failed in the pursuit of my dream?
4. What lessons did I learn?
5. What can I do to keep moving forward?

CHAPTER FOUR

A DAD'S ADVICE

The sun had begun to set in the sky, casting a warm orange glow across the living room as Ime sat curled up on the edge of the couch. Her laptop was closed, her notes neatly stacked, but her mind was still spinning from her conversation with Dr. Nancy. The stories of perseverance, the challenge to stay diligent, the idea of being a change-maker—it was all inspiring... and heavy.

Her father, who had been reading quietly in his armchair, noticed her faraway look. He put his book down and leaned forward, elbows on his knees.

"Rough day?" he asked gently.

Ime sighed. "Not rough. Just... big. Dr. Nancy believes in me so much. It's kind of scary, honestly."

Her father chuckled, the sound both familiar and grounding.

"That's a good kind of fear," he said, walking over and sitting beside her. "It means you understand the weight of what's ahead. I wish I had that kind of self-awareness when I was your age."

Ime looked at him with surprise. Her father was wise, steady, always prepared. It was hard to imagine him unsure of anything.

A Father's Regret

"I made a lot of mistakes when I was younger," he admitted. "Not the loud, reckless kind. Mine were quieter. More subtle. I thought because I was smart, things would just work out."

He leaned back and exhaled slowly.

"I had good grades in university—better than most. But when strikes happened back in the day across government owned universities, when classes were suspended for months at a time, do you know what I did?"

Ime shook her head.

"I relaxed. Slept in. Watched movies. I figured I deserved a break. Meanwhile, some of my classmates took internships, volunteered, picked up side projects, learned new skills."

He paused, voice tightening with reflection.

"By the time we graduated, I had a certificate. They had experience. I wasn't exactly behind, but I wasn't ahead either. And in a world as competitive as ours, sometimes being average just isn't enough."

Ime listened carefully, the image of her usually confident father now shadowed by quiet regret.

"But I learned," he added. "Success doesn't come from talent alone. It takes strategy. Effort. And most importantly, wisdom."

The Power of Guidance

He turned to face her more directly now.

"Wisdom," he said firmly, "is knowing you can't succeed alone. You need guidance. From people who've walked the path before you, like Dr Nancy. And from God."

He reached into his wallet and pulled out a worn photo; an old picture of him with an older man in a clerical collar.

"This was my spiritual mentor when I was a young man. Pastor Ade. He wasn't famous. He didn't have a lot of money. But he was rich in perspective. He helped me when I felt stuck. Reminded me of what mattered. Encouraged me to keep growing."

Ime studied the photo. There was something comforting about the man's smile—even frozen in time.

"You're building your goals, Ime," her father said softly. "You're working hard. But always remember the need to strengthen the most important part of your foundation, your spirit."

Seeking the Invisible

Ime nodded, "Dr Nancy mentioned that I could have more mentors, but I don't see the need for a spiritual mentor. You are my own pastor Ade."

"True, I am," he smiled. "But you may need more, so you must know who to trust and who to learn from."

""How, Sir?"

You pray," he replied without hesitation. "Ask God for discernment. He knows your path better than anyone. And He'll bring the right people to help you walk it."

Ime nodded slowly, absorbing his words.

"Yes," her father said. "And it should always be someone you respect. Someone whose life reflects what they teach. It doesn't have to be a pastor. It could be a teacher, a coach, a relative—someone with a heart for God and wisdom to share."

He smiled and added, "And remember, the point isn't perfection. It's progress."

Ime looked down at her notebook again, flipping to a fresh page. This time, instead of writing goals or routines, she wrote a simple prayer:

"God, lead me to people who can guide me toward You alone. Show me who to trust, and help me grow in wisdom."

A New Kind of Step

That evening, Ime didn't do any extra studying. Instead, she helped her mother with dinner, then went outside to sit beneath the mango tree in their compound. The sky was clear, and the stars above seemed to whisper that she was on the right path, even if it wasn't always clear.

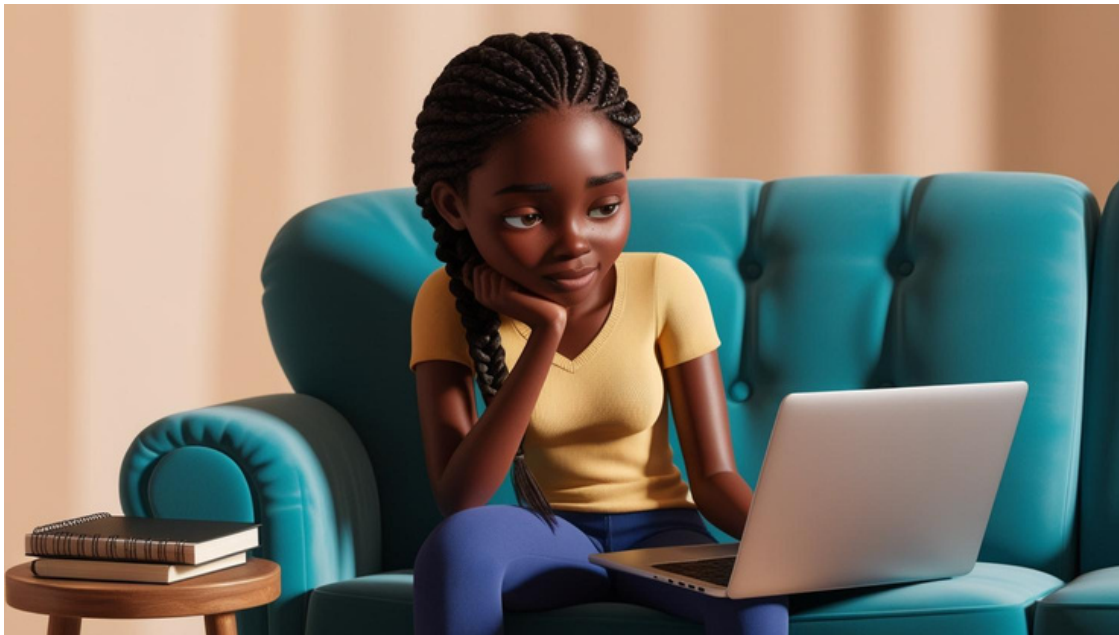
For the first time in a long while, she didn't feel like she had to figure everything out by herself.

She had her father's wisdom, Dr. Nancy's belief, and now... she was beginning to seek something greater than both: divine direction.

Her journey wasn't just about hard work anymore.

It was about walking with purpose.

--



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Is my dream big enough that it scares me when I think of it?
2. Does the fear of missing out on this dream challenge me to put in my best daily?
3. Am I committed to my spiritual growth or am I just religious?

CHAPTER FIVE

BECOMING

The air felt different that morning.

Not because the sun was brighter or the sky bluer, but because something inside Ime had changed.

She sat at her desk, flipping through the pages of her notebook, the same notebook she had once filled with doubts, questions, and scribbled goals. Now, it was filled with something else entirely: direction. Resolve. Growth.

Each chapter of the past few weeks had left a mark on her. Dr. Nancy had taught her how to pursue goals with focus and consistency.

Her father had reminded her that wisdom mattered more than speed, and that spiritual guidance could illuminate even the darkest path.

And through it all, Ime had begun to find something she didn't even know she was searching for: herself.

The Final Session

Her final session with Dr. Nancy was back in person. Ime arrived early, as usual. But this time, she wasn't anxious or unsure. She was simply ready.

Dr. Nancy welcomed her with a proud smile. "You've come a long way, Ime."

"I have," she said, her voice steady. "And I'm grateful. You didn't just help me set goals. You helped me believe I could reach them."

Dr. Nancy sat back, studying her. "That's what mentors are for; to walk with you until you can walk on your own."

Ime nodded. "And I found a spiritual mentor, her name is Auntie Tope. She's wise and patient. Praying with her has helped me focus... in a deeper way."

Dr. Nancy's eyes sparkled. "Then you've done more than learn; you've become."

Bringing It All Together

Dr. Nancy pulled out a final worksheet, but it looked different from the rest. At the top, it simply said:

"What Will You Do With What You've Learned?"

It wasn't a test. It was a mirror.

Ime took a deep breath and began to write:

- I will remain diligent, even when no one is watching.
- I will embrace challenges as part of growth, not as signs of failure.

- I will ask for help and stay connected to people who build me up.
- I will pray and trust God to guide my steps.
- I will use my education not just for myself, but to make life better for others.

When she finished, she handed it back to Dr. Nancy, who read it in silence.

"You're ready," she said softly.

"Ready for what?" Ime asked.

Dr. Nancy smiled.

"To lead. To serve. To live your purpose."

Passing It On

A few weeks later, Ime stood before her school's junior students, invited to speak as a peer mentor.

She looked out at the young faces; nervous, uncertain, full of potential.

She told them about goals and effort. About falling and rising. About a doctor who believed in her, a father who told the truth, and a God who gave direction.

"But most of all," she said, "I want you to remember this: You don't have to be perfect. You just have to keep going. One step at a time."

She left the stage to applause—but more importantly, she left them with hope.

A Journey Just Beginning

That night, Ime wrote one last note in her notebook before closing it for good.

“This isn’t the end. It’s the beginning. And I am becoming.”

The End.

(And the beginning of something greater.)



TESTIMONIALS

ENTREPRENEURS

The richest person in the world, Bill Gates, while referring to his mentor, businessman, and investor, Warren Buffet in an interview said, "I admire his desire to teach things that are complex and put them in a simple form so that people can understand and get the benefit of all his experience."

"As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others" - Bill Gates

The richest person in Africa, Aliko Dangote was raised and mentored by his grandfather, the late Alhaji Sanusi Dantata, who was one of the most successful entrepreneurs in West Africa until his death. Dangote's current financial status is a testament to the rudiments of entrepreneurship that he gained from his grandfather.

Referring to her mentor—the late Maya Angelou, Oprah Winfrey said, "She was there for me always, guiding me through some of the most important years of my life."

"Mentors are important and I don't think anybody makes it in the world without some form of mentorship." - Oprah Winfrey

Referring to the former Apple Inc. CEO—the late Steve Jobs, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said, "Steve, thank you for being a mentor and a friend. Thanks for showing that what you build can change the world. I will miss you."

"A small amount of time invested on your part to share your expertise can open up a new world for someone else." -Mark Zuckerberg

Concerning his mentor-mentee relationship, Virgin Group co-founder Richard Branson said, "It's always good to have a helping hand at the start. I wouldn't have got anywhere in the airline industry without the mentorship of Sir Freddie Laker." Sir Freddie Laker is a very successful British airline entrepreneur and his support helped get the multinational conglomerate Virgin Atlantic off the ground.

"If you ask any successful businessperson, they will always say they have had a great mentor at some point along the road." -
Richard Branson

PROFESSIONALS

Referring to his mentor, former super bowl champion Darrell Green said. "I had a coach who in a different way encouraged me that I could be a great running athlete... he was always encouraging me to participate, and I did. And so, I think he helped me to identify the possibilities, which I never even thought about."

Referring to his former teacher Fred Birney, former CBS anchorman Walter Cronkite said. "He taught me so much in those high school journalism classes, and by securing me those early jobs, he cemented my desire to be a reporter for the rest of my life. He was my inspiration. I always credit Fred Birney for my career."

Referring to her lifelong mentor and graduate school professor, Dr. Arthur Walker, the first American woman in space, Physicist, and astronaut Sally Ride said, "He instilled confidence, and made me believe that I could accomplish what I set out to accomplish."

RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Mother Teresa: She was a committed servant of God who spent her life helping others and was recognized as one of the most admirable people of the twentieth century, operating orphanages, AIDS hospices, and other charities worldwide. She led a remarkable and revered life, but may not have achieved all that she did if it were not for her mentor, Father Michael van der Peet. The two met while waiting for a bus in Rome, and quickly developed a close friendship. They spoke regularly and confided in each other over the years.

David Oyedepo: "I strongly believe every believer must have a mentor he looks up to, and to whom he is accountable. Every believer should belong to a spiritual family tree. A lack of this will result in irresponsible Christians and ministers of the gospel. I was divinely led by God to Pastor E. A. Adeboye, the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, in 1983, when it was time to be commissioned into full-time Ministry.

God told me to send for Pastor Adeboye, to lay hands on me for the impartation of the Spirit of Wisdom. I have since enjoyed a close relationship with Pastor Adeboye, whom I proudly and publicly call 'My father'.

God also divinely led me to the late Archbishop Benson Idahosa, Kenneth E. Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, T.L Osborn, and the oldest evangelist, Pa Sadela.

I enjoy the graces upon these men in life and ministry, causing me to produce results after their kind. I fondly recall the day I ministered in the graces on the lives of Kenneth E. Hagin and Kenneth Copeland.

Also, I frequently go to these men of God for counsel and the laying on of hands, for the release of fresh grace and unction to perform.

It is quite exciting and instructive that I still keep faith in covenant with all my mentors, including those who have gone to be with the Lord. I believe my life is an embodiment of multifaceted grace, flowing to me from different sources."

