

Foreword by SIG BERG

MENTORSHIP MASTERY

A HOLISTIC GUIDE
FOR VIRTUOUS LEADERS



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INTRODUCTION

Leadership starts with you, but is not about you.

~ Sig Berg

“You need to do this. They need more women, mentors like you. You were made for this,” my husband, Chris, encourages me.

Pins and needles. My skin is bursting with excitement, including the tip of my nose. It is my first meeting with the Severn Leadership Group (SLG) Mentors. SLG Founder Sig Berg, a tall, distinguished-looking gentleman, welcomes us with a firm handshake and a warm smile.

Men in suits, sport coats, jeans, Hawaiian T-shirts and shorts, and a few women in dresses, or blazer with jeans—my fellow mentors, from all industries and walks of life, greet me with handshakes and hugs welcoming me on an adventure that will change the leadership journey for me and so many others. A journey of virtuous leadership and mentorship, so profound and powerful that years later, these mentors and those who follow can look back in amazement and awe at something that seemed so simple, has transformed the lives of so many leaders, their families, and their organizations.

We begin with the logistics, receive our materials, a book, a thumb drive of biographies, and a promise.

You will receive more than you give.

Nothing is truer than that.

Over the past ten years, I've had the privilege to learn from all of our selfless mentors, including the 24 mentor authors who had the courage to write a chapter in this special book. Their authentic stories of setbacks, failure, firm foundations, self-awareness, faith, recovery, resilience, and success embody the LITER virtues of love, integrity, truth, excellence, and relationships. They walk the talk of a virtuous leader as they walk alongside those they mentor.

It often sounds something like this...

He doesn't sit in the executive meetings.

His name isn't on the organization chart.

But when the SLG Fellow feels the ground shifting under her, she calls him.

They meet in a quiet coffee shop. No strict agenda.

She vents about two of her team members who are at odds over priorities. Her staff can't move forward, and she is at an impasse.

He doesn't give her a checklist.

He listens. Really listens.

Then he says, "What would it look like if you didn't try to solve it?"

She pauses. A lightbulb moment.

He asks, "What's the story you're telling yourself about what you should control?"

She smiles and looks up, appreciating this sacred moment, a new fire in her eyes.

Back at the office, she begins showing up differently. Less fixer, more facilitator, building up, not breaking down relationships. The team notices. Their behavior changes.

Weeks pass. Her confidence grows, not because he gave her answers—but because he made space for her to find better ones.

She gets promoted again.

He's not at the celebration dinner.

But her remarks are full of his fingerprints.

He never wanted credit.

But he lit the fuse of transformation.

The purpose of the mentor is not to just provide advice or to play the expert, but to walk with you during the process: to help you see yourself clearly within a lived context at the testing point and to encourage you to incrementally level up to achieve the best version of yourself.

~ Sig Berg, *The Virtue Proposition: Five Virtues That Will Transform Leadership, Team Performance, and You*

Mentors are the linchpin to SLG and leading a better life. Leadership (and mentorship) starts with you, but is not about you.

The SLG exists to cultivate a new generation of leaders and followers who embrace timeless and transcendent virtues, empowered to catalyze virtuous transformation in our world. We could not do that without our mentors.

I can't be more excited to share just a piece of who our incredible mentors are, their why, their how, and their impact. I invite you to read through each of our stories and feel encouraged and inspired to mentor with the Severn Leadership Group or wherever you lead and live.

Mentoring holistically is not about the career; it's about the person. Each chapter is steeped in a beautiful story and practical strategy that you can immediately implement as you continue your journey as a holistic mentor. Don't be surprised if you reap the rewards of reverse mentoring, along the way, too. It's worth every second!

PART: 1

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF HOLISTIC MENTORING

CHAPTER ONE

WHOLE PERSON MENTORING

CULTIVATING COURAGE, CHARACTER, AND TRANSFORMATION

Julie Campbell, President/CEO, Severn Leadership Group

*Mentoring is a fluid process—as a discipline, as the mentor,
and for the mentee—all three are changing and growing in real time.*

Love it, even as I am challenged by it.

~ SLG Mentor

MY STORY

COURAGE

I have been summoned.

“Commander, can you meet me in my office?”

Heart pounding, stomach churning, my boss wants to see me in his office, privately. Let me be more specific. The Commander of the White House Communications Agency wants to speak to me now!

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I am a rule follower.

I am the leader of an 80-person Presidential Communications Command composed of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines in a high-visibility, zero-defect, critical national security organization. Our mission is to provide secure and emergency communications for the President, Vice President, and First Lady of the United States, both domestically and internationally, while they are away from the White House.

“Close the door. We need to talk.”

While I didn’t get in trouble that time, I learned how my behavior and the behavior of my team while on a presidential visit to Atlantic City (prior to the President’s arrival) could have been perceived as reckless, poor judgment, and certainly not virtuous. I swallowed my humble pill and walked out of his office, enlightened and determined to do better for my team.

Don’t worry, nothing scandalous, illegal, or untoward happened on that trip. But if you know me, I enjoy playing a good game of cards. Cha-ching!

COL Howard (Howie) Cohen, USA (Ret.), was my first holistic mentor. As I look back now, most of our long mentor-mentee conversations were about my why, my trajectory, where I saw myself in 5, 10, and 20 years, and what I could do to reach my aspirations. Those conversations were driven by me but guided by a master. Unbeknownst to me at the time, he was instilling in me the virtues that ground us at SLG:

Love, integrity, truth, excellence, relationships (LITER), and courage.

“Do you want to be a speedboat, sailboat, or rowboat?”

What?

While sometimes cryptic, he helped me see things about myself that I had not seen. He gave me the **courage** to do things I never thought I could do (speedboat!). And challenged me to **excellence**, not to just sail through life without a care or row without direction.

“What is under that big rock?”

Do I really have to turn it over? You are the leader, Julie – yes, you do!

Find the **truth** in the situation.

“What will you do when you find what’s beneath it?” he’d encourage me to think it out loud.

*Do what you say. Practice what you preach and hold others accountable to the standards we have set. Lead with **integrity**.*

And that day, he called me into his office – he taught me about tough **love**.

COL Cohen and I got to know each other through our **relationship of shared purpose**. Our mission was our guiding light. Over time, it became a treasure, a relationship of mutual respect. He was like a big brother, one who changed the trajectory of my life and how I lead today.

CHARACTER

Fast forward three years, and my career in the Navy is coming to a natural end. My why and values are changing. I’ve met the love of my life. My 5–10-year goals that I shared with COL Cohen:

- *Meet someone (check)*
- *Get married (check)*
- *Start a family... is happening!*

But I still desire to work and make a difference.

What can I do that is meaningful work, is close to our new home, allows me time to support my new husband, is different, and FUN?

Like a kid in a candy store, I do all the things to prepare:

- The Navy’s Executive Transition Assistance Program (TAP), where I learn how to write a “civilian” resume.
- Dig into *What Color is Your Parachute*, by Richard N. Bolles, and dream of a job that meets all of my criteria.
- Schedule endless “informational interviews” where I ask thousands of questions of people who appear to have the ideal job.
- Career fair after career fair, I feel like I’m fresh meat at a meat market.

Nothing.

I'm stuck.

"You should talk to Brian, one of the leaders, where I work." One of my Navy colleagues encourages me.

This colleague is a Navy Reservist whose civilian job is at a defense contracting business.

Ugh. That's not different. How can it be FUN?

"They have an office in Annapolis," he says optimistically.

A glimmer of hope. Maybe?

What do I have to lose?

So, I scheduled yet another informational interview with Brian Dewey, Director of Operations at the Defense Systems Engineering and Services Division at ARINC. I don't expect much.

Donning nice slacks, blouse, and heels (*is this what I'm supposed to wear?*), I drive to our neighborhood Panera Bread for the first of many such meetings over the next six months with Brian Dewey.

With butterflies in my stomach, I walk up to the door and see a nicely dressed gentleman, shorter than me (in my heels), with a short gray military haircut, glasses, and smiling eyes. He welcomes me warmly, buys my coffee, and guides me to a table.

"Let's talk!" His enthusiasm is unexpected. It feels different.

Month after month, we met at that Panera. Brian asked question after question and really listened.

"Tell me your life story."

"What are your goals and dreams?"

"Tell me about your family."

"What energizes you?"

"What drags you down?"

As we continued to meet, Brian always started by asking how Chris and I were doing and how my job search was progressing. I would ask him about his boys and what he was working on at work, about his team, their mission (supporting "America's sons and daughters" – the Department of

Defense), and about his boss, the Vice President of the division (a retired Army general).

TRANSFORMATION

And then slowly, the discussions became different.

“What would you do if you were in my shoes?” he quips.

“How would you solve this problem?”

“Tell me what it means to lead?”

And then,

“I’d like you to meet my boss.”

The fog was lifting.

Brian was building a relationship of trust. He was mentoring me!

But he was also preparing me for my transition. And helping me find a job that was: meaningful work, close to our new home, allowed me the time to support my new husband, was different, and FUN!

The day came to meet his boss. Dressed in slacks, blazer, and heels, I walked into Panera to be greeted by Brian and Major General Monty Montero, USA (Ret.).

He’s SHORTER than me! Why didn’t Brian tell me not to wear heels?

I was offered a job the next day, heels and all.

Brian became my boss for the next four years, but that did not stop him from mentoring me and many of the others who worked for and with him.

Every day, he would stop by my desk and check the weather.

“How are things?”

I could go to him for anything.

He supported my decisions.

He challenged all of us, celebrated our successes, provided constructive feedback, and asked for input, new ideas, and feedback on how he was doing, how our VP was doing, and where we could improve as a team. Brian considered his role on “Team Monty” an honor and privilege. As

Monty's right-hand man, he kept the pulse of our business unit. And he did it with humility and grace.

On Saturday, May 7, after a long week at work, something was not quite right.

Was it something I ate?

38 weeks pregnant, I time my contractions.

I think it's time!

On Mother's Day, May 8, 2011, our first son was born.

For what seems like too long, the nurses have him on a high table, under a light, lots of fussing.

Is this what's supposed to happen?

And then we get to hold him—a beautiful, round (*blue*) faced, little boy.

It's not long before the pediatrician comes and sits at the end of my bed.

"I'm sorry. We think your baby has Down syndrome."

No, he doesn't! Look how perfect he is!

The nurses snap a picture. Chris and I, holding our son, were in a state of total shock. It still haunts me.

One of the first calls I make is to Brian.

"I need more time. We must move to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). I don't know what our future holds."

"That's okay. Take the time you need." Brian's voice is soft but firm and oh so reassuring.

He clears my calendar, covers my work, and gets the short-term disability and FMLA paperwork moving. I don't need to worry about a thing at work.

Weeks later, Brian invites us into the office to celebrate our homecoming. He's the first to greet us with tears in his eyes, a long hug, and a handshake.

"Congratulations!"

I want to lead and mentor like Brian.

I want others to be blessed with mentors like Brian.

THE STRATEGY

How does one become a holistic mentor? What is a mentor, anyway?

Mentor, coach, consultant, therapist, and spiritual director, who do you aspire to be?

- **Mentor:** An experienced traveler, walking next to you, helping you navigate your own road.
- **Coach:** A GPS helping you set your destination and reroute when needed, or a trainer who helps develop your skills and reach your potential to navigate the challenges of competition.
- **Consultant:** A mechanic diagnosing and fixing a car.
- **Therapist or Counselor:** A healer helping you understand the old wounds that still hurt.
- **Spiritual Director:** A gentle guide helping you open your mind as you listen for the divine.

My co-authors have chosen the path of mentorship, even though many of them also work in professions such as coaching, consulting, therapy, counseling, and spiritual direction. More specifically, they have chosen the path of holistic mentoring. Holistic mentors focus on the whole person. It's not just about career mentoring, skill mentoring, or faith mentoring. Holistic mentoring is all that and so much more.

It's about walking alongside another to help them see themselves clearly, encouraging their journey, and holding them accountable to achieve the best version of themselves.

It starts with a firm foundation. At the Severn Leadership Group, our holistic mentoring is grounded in a set of virtues that we believe every leader should ascribe to. **LITER + C: love, integrity, truth, excellence, and relationship**, catalyzed by **courage**.

At SLG, we mentor leaders who desire to develop their character using these three precepts:

1. Leadership is defined by one's character.
2. Character is shaped by timeless and transcendent virtues.

3. Selfless courage and service to others is not a style of leadership, but a learned behavior.

All serious athletes need a coach to perform at their best, so, too, all serious leaders need a mentor who is personally aligned to these transcendent virtues to call them to the best version of themselves in practice. Serious formation in virtues requires a mentor.

- ~ Sig Berg, The Virtue Proposition. Five Virtues that Will Transform Leadership, Team Performance, and You.

Consistent mentoring that cultivates courage, character, and transformation across individuals from all industries, walks of life, and experiences requires a systems-based approach to mentoring.

If you'd like to develop mentors for your organization, here's a place to start.

MENTOR CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

Commitment

Your mentors must voice commitment to the organization's mission and to those they will mentor.

Severn Leadership Group mentors are committed to inspiring a fellow to 'live a life of selfless courage and service to others, before self'. Mentors listen, question, encourage, challenge and provide feedback to their fellows. They serve as the face of the Severn Leadership Group, model its perspectives, and 'walk the talk'.

- ~ Severn Leadership Group Commitment Form

Step 1: Create a mentor commitment form that mentors review and sign annually. It should include specific expectations:

- Roles and responsibilities
- Training required
- Minimum time commitment
- Communication
- Fees or materials required
- Feedback and assessments

Formal Training Certification

The certification should include interviews, a foundation, and a curriculum.

Step 2: When developing your formal certification, must-haves include:

- Interviews for experience, alignment, availability, and most importantly, for character.
 - **Some of the best mentor candidates are referred by other mentors.**
- A foundation grounded in consistent principles or ethos.
 - **At SLG, our foundation is virtue.**
- A robust curriculum that works toward a common goal and includes self-study, instruction, reflection, discussion, observation, and post-certification continuing education.
 - **At SLG, our common goal is virtuous character.**

Community of Practice

Mentors need other mentors.

*The best way to become a virtuous leader is
to surround yourself with other virtuous leaders.*

Step 3: Cultivate a strong and dedicated community.

As a new mentor in an organization, it is the experienced mentors who surround them as they navigate the “system.” Consider assigning a sponsor for new mentors. A sponsor is a mentor who has successfully mentored in your organization and can be another sounding board for the mentor in training.

Consider employing regular check-ins, mentor gatherings, surveys, two-way feedback sessions, accountability partners, celebrations, and opportunities for mentors to become trainers and facilitators.

And don't forget **gratitude**. Celebrate sharing precious time together.

Why mentors?

Developing mentors to develop leaders amplifies our mission at SLG to develop and support leaders and teams to be catalysts of transformational change.

Our mentors deeply care for the mission and the mentoring they do.

The SLG approach to the mentoring process has brought tremendous clarity...and structure to what was a tangle of long-held and important ideas and concepts. Above all, understanding the role and importance of courage has had a profound personal and professional impact.

~ Sheldon Church, SLG Mentor and Chairman of the Board

Do you want to transform the culture of your organization? Consider adopting a culture of mentoring. It will do more than transform your culture. It will perpetuate well-being in the world.



Julie Campbell, President and CEO of the Severn Leadership Group (SLG), is making the world a better place through virtuous leadership. She is the mother of two strong-willed boys and the wife and head cheerleader for her college athletics coaching husband and his team. She served for 20 years in the U.S. Navy, holding various leadership positions in space systems, electronic warfare, and communications, followed by 15 years of

leadership experience in the defense, information technology, and nonprofit industries. With a passion and curiosity for people and their purposes, Julie is a lifelong mentor and collaborator with a mission to help others level up their leadership as they change the world.

When she is not knee-deep in creating partnerships, fundraising, writing, and growing the SLG network of mentors, fellows, and supporters, you can find her volunteering at her son's school, shuttling her boys to sports, playing board games, or walking, listening to podcasts, and reading (sometimes all three at once)!

Join Julie at SLG and level up your leadership with virtue, emotional intelligence, and grace.

Connect with Julie:

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SLG Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/slg_org/

SLG YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@severnleadershipgroup8168>

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