

Recapture the  
*Sisterhood,*

Embrace the  
**MISTERHOOD**



Connecting, Coaching, and Mentoring  
Today's Army Spouse

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# Embrace the **MISTERHOOD**

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# Foreword

*Prudens futuri*—wisdom and strength for the future. We have designed the U.S. Army War College experience to equip our students to think globally and to challenge them to provide the wisdom and strength to lead our Army into the future. With our Military Family Program, we offer an array of opportunities to hone existing skills and gain new ones. As our Army transitions from a decade of near constant deployment, countless Family readiness group functions, team training, and far too many memorial ceremonies, we hope this helps spouses as they navigate the changes to the military that are on the horizon.

This booklet serves as a clarion call to recapture and embrace one of our Army's oldest and most treasured traditions—older spouses connecting, coaching, and mentoring younger spouses; telling the story of the Army as only an Army spouse can. I am pleased to salute the authors of this project, *Recapture the Sisterhood, Embrace the Misterhood: Connecting, Coaching and Mentoring Today's Army Spouse*. Through countless hours of research as well as personal, telephonic, and electronic interviews, this team of senior spouses has created an awesome resource to assist fellow spouses with supporting and helping one another. I hope that this booklet becomes a valuable resource for you in the future.



Gregg F. Martin  
Major General, U.S. Army  
48<sup>th</sup> Commandant

## *And The Award Goes To...*

When our group of volunteers met in the fall of 2011, we tossed lots of topics around—lots of them. There are several elements to military life and many of us now have at least 20 years or so of experience under our belts. We discussed doing an update of a current project (like the Company Commander's Spouse Battle Book), researching something new like non-traditional units, or even writing about what to do in Carlisle with kids. Fine ideas all, but we felt there was a topic that really warranted our attention; that was timely, important, and not always openly addressed in many circles today. This topic is coaching and mentoring.

For our purposes, we are using a broad idea of mentoring. For military spouses, it really takes on the form of coaching, guiding, advising, and being available to help or answer any questions as they arise. We remembered well how it felt to walk into a room of other spouses, all of whom have been doing this for years. Our initial conversations centered around our own experiences—and most (if not all) of us could point to at least one spouse who had gone out of her way to make us feel, in a word, connected.

We contacted Army wives and husbands—via telephone, email, social media, and in person—and asked for their input. The feedback we received indicated that we were on the right track, and our hope is that others will come after us and continue the work we started on this all-important topic.



We would like to thank the following for their contributions:

Donna Carr	Ann Dunleavy	Dawn Phillips
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Lisa Houston	Leslie Eichelberger	Melissa Quantock
Donna Madden	Sherry Eifler	Carmen Segalla
Debbie Miller	Chelle Evans	Jennifer Soika
Caryn Tomkins	Christy Fatula	Lisa Smokes
Vera Williams	Christina Fischer	Emi Stapler
Donna Barger	Megan Foreman	Dawn Stephens
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Jean Berry	Patty George	Danielle Tanner
Karen Corey	Kathleen Guieb	Kelly Taylor
Beth Hinton	Cindy Harding	Whitney Thomas
Vicki Patridge	Trish Howerton	Elena Thompson
Karen Andrade-Foreman	Angela Huddle	Tammy Thrash
Samantha Arndt	Frankie Hungerford	Holly Toy
Viviane Arnold	Cory Kirkland	Ken Tuschhoff
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Grace Dorta	Melody Mamma	Delilah Wieman
Stephanie Dominguez	Rose McConnell	

We wish to warmly thank Christine Yuengert, Military Family Program Coordinator, the Command Team spouses, Jennifer Nevil and the Carlisle Barracks Public Affairs Office.

Working on this project was both challenging and encouraging. We were all reminded of the wonderful women who had poured their lives into ours, and we are spurred on to do the same for those with whom we will meet. We have really just scratched the surface of this topic; there is so much that can be added. Our hope is that those who come after us will do just that: Keep adding to the wealth of knowledge already existing, keep the ‘sisterhood’ strong, and enable the “misterhood”—those male spouses who assume a role—to flourish.

This project could not have come to fruition without these wonderful Army War College AY12 spouses:

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# *Introduction*



*[Be] approachable and relatable... Get involved and  
volunteer... Be the change you want to see...*

*Laura Wheeler*



Reaching out. Feeling a part of things. Connected. In today's Army, really in all of society, it is increasingly difficult to be truly connected. Sure, we live in the age of social media/networking where we have 400 friends or followers and spend hours a day 'liking' status updates, photos, and posted links. We text each other instead of placing a phone call. We are overrun with information, but it does not always result in the connection we seek. We can use a computer or tablet and have a large portion of our questions about a certain topic answered ("How do I sign up for TRICARE?") but that is not a replacement for the human touch—a meaningful relationship with another person. While the Internet provides ways to send and receive information, one unintended consequence of technology is the ability to communicate without actually looking directly at another person. Sadly, reaching out, connecting, and mentoring in person are not happening as often as they used to. There actually seems to be quite a large disconnect at the very time when we need it the most.

Life in the military today is filled with challenges. During the past decade, we have experienced a revolving door of deployments, long work hours and uncertainty. Families, as well as service members, are weary and in need of something that's missing. Our military has embraced families and provided a dizzying array of programs designed for support and assistance, but there is something still missing. This missing piece could very well be the personal touch—commonly called coaching and mentoring. It's becoming clear that there is a lack of this *special relationship* in today's Army. One of the things we constantly hear from younger spouses is that they actually crave someone to show them the ropes. Whatever the reasons, more working spouses, senior spouses unwilling to reach out, or simply not knowing where to start, the fact remains: young spouses are often left to their own devices to navigate the complex and somewhat impersonal 'military machine'.

If you were to ask senior spouses if they have had at least one positive role model or mentor during their journey, the vast majority would say yes. They can quickly recount to you what that person did that went above and beyond. For some it was being taken under a wing or shown the ropes. But for many it was another spouse just being there, knowing that person was available to answer questions or offer advice when situations warranted it.

Eventually, you find yourself as “that wife” when your husband has achieved some rank and/or a position of leadership, and suddenly others are looking to you to be the mentor/coach/advisor. During recent years, there has been a lot of reluctance about filling this role, and understandably so. Spouses feel that stepping into this position means that we have to know everything, be at others’ beck and call 24 hours a day, all the while sacrificing self and family to do it. But that is not what coaching and mentoring calls for at all. So, how on earth do you go about accomplishing this? Glad you asked! You will find some practical answers and tips in this booklet. It’s not as hard as you think.

Let’s take a quick look at the difference stepping into this role can make.

**Jennifer** is a new military wife; she hasn’t even received the proofs from her wedding photographer. She has just moved across the country and her husband goes right to work. Jennifer looks around her new surroundings, and begins to wonder, “How did I get here?!” She opens the folder of brochures and pamphlets describing activities and programs offered on Fort Inthearmynow. They are full of acronyms and terms she has never seen before. When her husband comes home from work, she asks him for some answers; he responds that maybe one of the other wives could be helpful, after all, some of them have been “married to this” for years! He tells her that he thinks there’s a group of some sort where the wives get together, but even he doesn’t know how it works. Later that month, Jennifer and her husband go to the battalion picnic; her husband introduces her to his boss and his wife, who shake her hand, smile politely, and essentially walk away. Jennifer is crushed. She spends the rest of the picnic looking at her watch, wondering how much longer until they can go home. Fast forward several months, Jennifer’s husband is now preparing his gear to go to the National Training Center (NTC). Jennifer feels so alone. Her uncertainty gives way to fear and anxiety, and Jennifer decides the only answer is just to go home to her parents’ house and wait out the NTC rotation.

**Angela** is also a new Army wife—she left a job, family, dear friends—and has moved to a foreign country. Her story is similar to Jennifer’s: offsetting the excitement of being newly married is the fear and lack of knowledge about being a military wife. She decides to go online and search for further information. Her search results in even more acronyms and official-sounding definitions, all which serve to confuse her further. She gets an invitation to a coffee and meets a few wives in her husband’s unit including the wife of his boss, Melanie. Melanie talks with Angela, and ensures that Angela has the contact information for the Family Readiness Group (FRG) Leader and Family Readiness Support Assistant (FRSA). As the evening progresses, Melanie helps other wives interact with Angela. Another officer’s wife gives Angela her phone number and email; they discover that they live fairly close to one another. “Call when you have questions or want to go for coffee,” she says. Angela goes home feeling that she has been welcomed and included in a pretty neat group of women and all she had to do was show up. Fast forward several months, Angela’s husband is also gearing up for deployment, and while Angela will miss him terribly, she knows that she has friends around her who are experiencing the same thing.

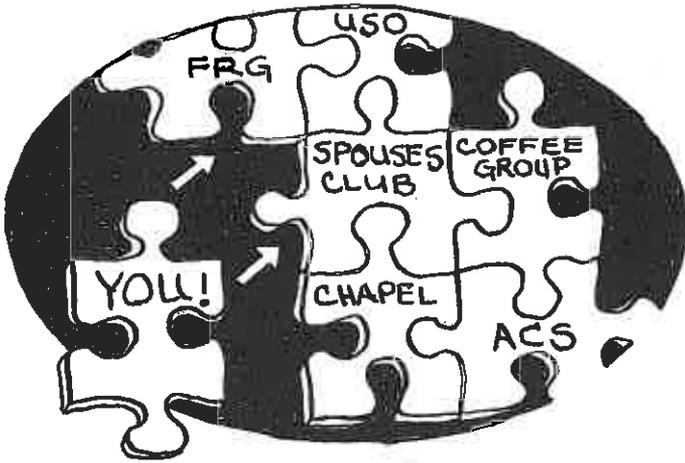
Why such different experiences? Personality certainly plays a part, as does education, prior life experience, and age of the spouse. A person’s ethnic, racial, or cultural background can play a part as well.

*“What I experienced and still see is the very small pool of minorities as far as mentoring/coaching/advising is concerned. Out of 23 years with the military, I have only had the pleasure of being in the company of two African American role models. [That’s] not to say that my other mentors were not great, but let’s face it, the air is very thin at the upper echelon of the rank structure. You do lose many of the younger minority spouses because they don’t see someone that looks like them [who] can possibly relate to some of the things that they feel and/or are going through. Some get tired of being the ‘only’ one at coffees and social events and feel alienated. Some think*

*they have nothing in common with the other spouses, and some have had horrible experiences through words and interactions. Some Senior Spouses don't think this is an issue at all, but I beg to differ. How can Senior Spouses become more culturally sensitive and aware when mentoring and advising?" –Lisa*

But we should not underestimate the power of a positive role model in the lives of others. This spouse does not have to know everything; indeed, merely telling others what to do isn't truly mentoring. But allowing another into your life, even a little, so they can watch how you live it, can greatly help others.

# *Digging Your Own Foxhole*



*[?] appreciate those who challenge me forward  
in my career...displaying their confidence in me  
and giving me autonomy to succeed.*

*-Laura Weimer*



Let's face it, we all know that at times military life is unpredictable at best. If there's one thing that is important for all military spouses to understand it would be that you are in charge of your experience. Some of us have our own careers, others volunteer but all of us are an important part of the puzzle. Once you decide what piece of that puzzle you want to be, it is up to you to learn as much as you can about your part. Classes, websites, social networking, meetings, connecting with your peers (a.k.a. the sisterhood and misterhood) are all resources available to us if only we participate, ask questions and make a commitment to make a difference. Like our spouses have to dig their own foxhole during a training exercise, we also have to learn so we can teach others.

Throughout history military wives have followed their husbands and played an important role in supporting not only their spouse but also other service members and their families. A wonderful example of this is Catharine Greene, wife of Major General Nathanael Greene, the first Quartermaster General. She did not want to stay at home so she made it a point to try and join her husband at different encampments during the Revolutionary War. She was an impromptu interpreter between the American and French officers and she opened her home as a temporary hospital.<sup>1</sup> Another example is Elizabeth "Libbie" Custer, wife of Major General George Armstrong Custer. She went with her husband, riding in the ranks, wherever he was stationed. When he was posted at Fort Lincoln, in the Dakota Territory, she set "the social tone for the post".<sup>2</sup> Libbie even managed to write books about her experiences during this time. A modern example is Julia Compton Moore, wife of Lieutenant General Hal Moore. During the Battle of Ia Drang in autumn 1965, Julia reacted when taxi drivers delivered telegrams notifying family members that their soldier had died. She followed those taxis, offered comfort, and attended funerals for many of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry troopers buried at the Fort Benning, Georgia cemetery.<sup>3</sup>

When we think about the hardships and struggles that these women must have endured supporting their men, we find ourselves in awe. We'd like to believe that they ask the same questions that husbands and wives are asking now: how can we help and what role do we want to play in support of our troops and our spouse? How are we going to make that happen? All it will take is for us to decide to choose to be a part of the network of Army spouses.

*“They’ll figure it out is a good thought, but we need to let them know that they can do it; if they don’t have the experience or the confidence, then they won’t try.  
–Donna C.*

Sometimes this is easier said than done. For those of us who are shy or uncomfortable just walking up and talking to new people, it can be a real struggle to become part of the group, much less become a leader. But if we don’t put ourselves out there, we miss out on the truly amazing experiences that being a military spouse have to offer us.

*“This is a tough life and a thick skin is a must...get involved from the very beginning; the more involved you are the more knowledgeable you [become about] the workings of the Army. Because of [senior spouses] I stayed, I volunteered, I mentored others, I became a strong Army Wife.” –Angela*

We look to those in our Unit Family Readiness Group (FRG), experienced spouses, or mentors for guidance or we reach out to friends from previous units for their advice or counsel. But in the end it is up to us to ask questions and seek out the information.

*“I used to carry a little tag she gave me on a gift as we left Fort Bragg. It said “Believe in Yourself”. I carried that tag with me for over 10 years, and when I had a challenge I always whispered to myself, “What would (she) do?” And, I knew if I did that I’d do the right thing. I asked myself that for almost 10 years, until one day I stopped asking the question because it was part of who I was and I trusted myself... I believed in myself.” –Melissa*

No one will regret putting in the time that it takes to learn how and why things are done certain ways. Plus, we can pass what we know and learn onto other spouses and empower them!

Connecting, coaching, and mentorship—using the human touch—can provide the missing link to make a spouse feel they have control over their life as a military spouse.

*“[She] taught me that the ability to converse with all will make the difference. Not just talking to talk but being sincere. She spoke to all as though we were worthy of living a comfortable lifestyle. She validated our presence by treating us like we mattered. We had something to offer and she was going to empower us.” –anonymous*

Having the tools and means to conduct our everyday lives and business within the military world is a key factor in being self-sufficient and proactive which in turn means we feel empowered.

*“ I’m the S3 wife, and the XO’s [Executive Officer’s] wife and I have to do a farewell for the [Battalion Commander’s] wife, and hail the incoming wife—we have no guidelines! So I asked someone who used to be an XO’s wife, and she had kept an instruction booklet on it; we ended up passing that information around to the other Major’s wives in our sister units because they didn’t have anything either.” –Rose*

Allowing Rose to connect with other wives who are in her peer group let her develop long-lasting networks and provide a feeling of accomplishment that she otherwise wouldn’t have if she received guidance from the outgoing and incoming wives.

There is always someone within your spouses’ network who has “been there and done that”. They have the knowledge to pass on to others of their own struggles and triumphs. The lessons that can be learned are endless. All we need to do is reach out to one another, share our experiences and ask for help in navigating our own path.

#### Endnotes:

1. Association of Quartermasters, < [http://www.associationofquartermasters.com/cg\\_info.htm](http://www.associationofquartermasters.com/cg_info.htm)> Accessed April 20, 2012
2. Mandan Historical Society, Mandan, ND. <<http://www.mandanhistory.org/biographiesak/elizabethcuster.html>> Accessed April 27, 2012.
3. “We Were Soldiers Once... And Young”, Lt. Gen. Harold G. Moore (Ret.) and Joseph Galloway. Harper Collins Publishers, New York, NY. 1992



*It's All About Personality!*



*Flaming enthusiasm, backed up by  
horse sense and persistence, is the quality that  
most frequently makes for success.*

*-Dale Carnegie*



Personality plays a large role in whether connecting, coaching, or mentoring can or will be effective. Not everyone has a HOOAH attitude or, what we like to say, “wants to drink the Kool-Aid”; some people just don’t love being a military spouse. You will meet all different types of personalities, it is important that you have a better understanding of yourself and personalities of others. Knowing your audience will help you connect with them.

But before you can begin, there are a few points that are the basis to being a great coach and mentor. First is to know yourself and be yourself. Don’t try to be someone you are not, it gets old and frustrating in the long run.

*“What they all had in common and what seemed to work is they were just themselves.” —Kathleen*

*“I guess the greatest qualities [she] possessed was [she was] approachable and relatable.” —Laura W.*

*“It is so important to be steadfast in your convictions because the Army in general, as well as people you will encounter, can sometimes throw you for a loop.” —Christy*

If you are not a touchy feely kind of person, don’t be afraid to let them know what to expect. If you know it’s “not your thing” to reach out to others, don’t do it!

*“...trying to be something you’re not. You just can’t keep it up—eventually the real you just starts oozing out so you need to figure out how to embrace the good parts of you as a leader and mentor and name and change the things that aren’t so great about you as a leader and mentor. Self awareness is critical”. — Patty*

If you are not a patient person, take time to develop patience and flexibility. Many of the spouses who gave us input for this project talked about respecting people who were, “able to accept change, go with the flow.” These were ladies who could “give people the benefit of the doubt”.

Senior spouses who are present in conversations or make themselves available just to listen are in a good place to be patient. Making time for people can be a balancing act. There will be times when you’ll have to say, “I need to get back to you” or “Can I call you later?” If you’re

distracted, you will not be able to listen effectively or offer answers and guidance. You might even pass on conflicting or wrong information.

Successful mentors are positive, keep things in perspective, and keep an open mind; sometimes that is easier said than done.

*“Sometimes you do have to choose the “hard thing” and may not like it but in the long run it may be very gratifying”. —Andrea*

*“I have always gravitated toward and respected the advice more if delivered in a positive upbeat manner. I have never been able to seek advice from a Negative Nelly, equally, I do my best to guide and advise in a positive point of view” —Trish*

It’s hard to remember what it was like to be a new spouse. You will meet those spouses who don’t have a clue; those are the ones that you need to reach out to and wrap your arms around them. Teach them all you know and then some; teach by example.

*“She really taught me how to be an enlisted wife and she did it with a lot of humor.” —Holly*

There may be people who you recognize need something—a connection, information, or just someone to listen—but you aren’t able to connect or get through to them.

*“Not everyone loves being an Army wife like I do. This doesn’t take them out of the equation; it does, however, complicate how we can reach out!” —Susan*

You may need to find creative ways to connect; fellow senior spouses can be helpful and may be able to offer tips.

*“My mentor made me feel special and took time out of her day to help me , she kept me involved with all activities and planning processes, this made me feel included and needed.” —Mallory*

On the other hand, you may be confronted with someone who just is not receptive. Realizing you can’t help everyone is a hard thing to master.

Relationships develop; they're not forced. If you're trying too hard to connect with spouses, that will show through and you will probably come across as pushy, insincere, or snobbish. If you look for opportunities, it's more likely that the spouse will be receptive.

*"There was a spouse in our unit who could be very difficult; she was always a know-it-all. One day, she needed a ride to a coffee; the senior spouse offered to drive. That gave the two of them time alone in the car. While it was not a positive mentoring experience, the senior spouse knew she'd gotten through when the woman would repeat the gems of wisdom she imparted during that car ride."*  
—Theresa

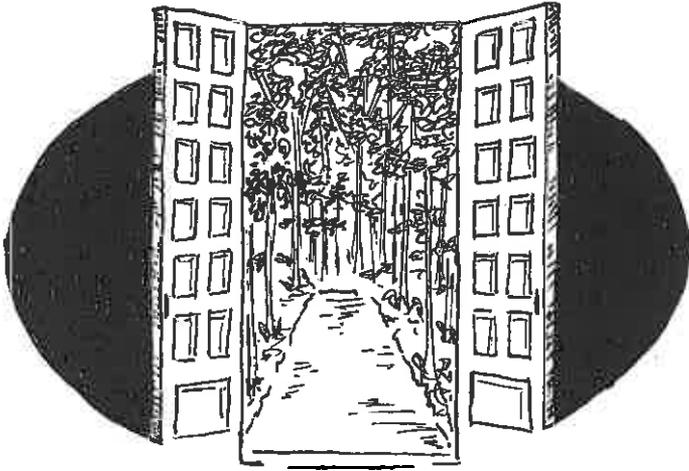
There is nothing worse than a person who doesn't have the knowledge to back up their ability to coach and mentor—so know your stuff! On the other hand, be honest and don't be afraid to let spouses know when you don't know something. Tell them you will find out the answer and get back to them, in a timely fashion of course, or better yet show them the avenue to find out for themselves (but ask them to get back to you so you'll know for the future).

*"Learn, learn, learn. I took advantage of all of the resources and wealth of information offered. I volunteered at the Welcome Center, took all the AFTB [Army Family Team Building] classes, became a Master Trainer, and read lots of books!"* —Donna B.

If you know yourself and are comfortable in your own skin, you can make choices about the level of participation you want to have with other Army spouses. There will be challenges, speed bumps and potholes but also good things. The Army has a wide array of classes, websites, and community services, all offering information that will help you learn, and then some!



*When Opportunity Knocks,  
Open the Door and Walk Through*



*Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear  
and the blind can see.*

*-Mark Twain*



One of the difficult things to recognize is when a spouse is receptive to coaching or mentoring. Sometimes you've got to wait for them to open the door so you can walk through. Patience and waiting for the right moment will pay off when opportunity knocks.

*"I attempted to mentor in social settings which can [be] perceived simply as my own opinion or suggestion. For example, at our last battalion, the chaplain's assistant's wife would come to our social meetings. At one of our gatherings, the wife started talking about the chaplain [in a negative way]. As soon as I had the opportunity, I suggested that ... it did not look good for her to be talking about him in an open setting like that." —Viviane*

Being a role model is, in many ways, a way of coaching and can provide an opening for a mentor/mentee relationship to form.

*"I saw and learned more from watching than from hearing—meaning that seeing what a military spouse did with those around her—being helpful and present when needed, backing off when not." —Karen*

If people see you saying "thanks for your hard work" or "thanks for coming", they see warmth and appreciation which in turn will make them feel at ease and potentially approach you when they need assistance.

*"[She] always made a point to thank people who had contributed." —Holly*

You can also take the opportunity to show what right looks like. But, just make sure you are right!

*"I feel that the people that influenced me the most did so by example, probably without even realizing they were doing it. They knew the right thing to do and they did it, even if it was hard." —anonymous*

*An experience with a Battalion Commander's wife "showed me that the commander's wife can set the atmosphere for the type of relationships that can be built in the Army." —Christy*

*“My grandmother, Jean, tells the story of her first introduction to Army wife-hood this way: the four of us (new brides) got off the boat and found our husbands. The next afternoon the General’s wife met with us and explained what we had to do and what was expected of us. She really laid down the law. Can you believe that I had to have my living room and powder room ‘company ready’ by 9:00 a.m. every day? Some of the wives had a difficult time with this but the General’s wife talked to us with such warmth, grace, and humor that I really didn’t mind. I always tried to remember her example when I coached new Army wives.” —Lela*

It is good to be aware that spouses can be intimidated by you as a senior spouse. While you probably think, “I’m just me”, it is hard to see yourself from another person’s point-of-view, especially if their parents are your age!

*“I hoped to mentor these younger wives...in a positive, encouraging way so that they didn’t feel threatened; I’m finding a general defensiveness and almost resentment of authority.” —anonymous*

You can look for opportunities outside of the unit structure to connect with spouses; this may help avoid the “authority figure” problem. Organizations such as Protestant Women of the Chapel (PWOC), Military Council of Catholic Women (MCCW), Spouses’ Clubs, and other volunteer-based groups are a great place to reach out.

*“I find that most of my mentoring (both receiving and giving) has been through Protestant Women of the Chapel (PWOC)... I’ve [attended] Army Family Team Building and Pre-Command Course classes... there were gaps in that training, and I sought out women I knew through PWOC to fill those gaps.” —Rose*

There may be sometimes when you think an opportunity presents itself, but it is not a good one. For example, don’t ask a spouse to volunteer or fix baked goods for a fundraiser, then try to coach on another topic.

*“One spouse... told me that I was the first spouse to call her that didn’t want something from her.” —Vicki*

A general rule of thumb with mentoring is called “two up and two down”. This means that the mentor and mentee’s spouses should be two ranks up or down from one another. For example, a Private First Class’ wife likely wouldn’t be mentored by the Command Sergeant Major’s wife. A better fit for the PFC’s wife would be a Sergeant’s or Staff Sergeant’s spouse. One reason is that the military changes, and the past experiences of the CSM’s spouse would be very different from the current experiences of the PFC’s.

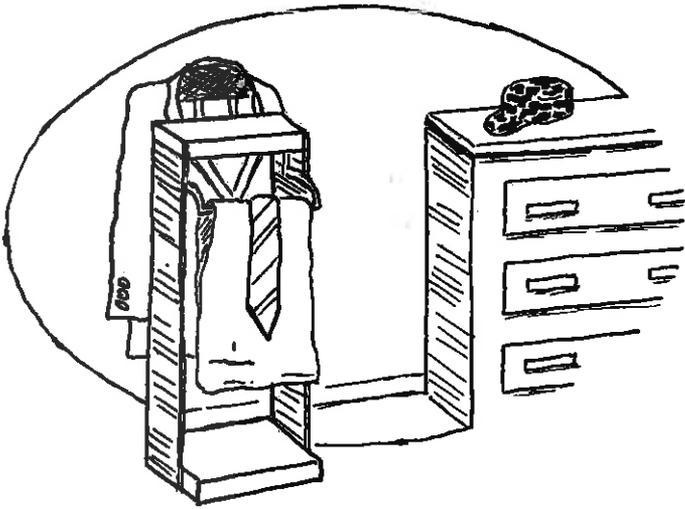
*“During the Bosnia conflict in 1995-1996, I remember getting so frustrated with wives who complained because their husband didn’t call everyday. I remembered Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 1991 when I got three phone calls in 9 months! It amazed me how contact during deployments had changed.” —Theresa*

Biding your time and taking advantage of an opening will give you the chance to make a difference. When you’re looking for an opportunity, remember:

*“[Some spouses] are more likely to learn from those with whom they feel comfortable than those who are more focused on passing out advice.” —Tammy*



*Honey, You Sure We're Still  
in the Army?*



*"It is not about being a teacher, but about being  
a family, supporting, and making life as easy as  
possible in a not so simple environment/world"*  
-Ken Tuschhoff



Ask someone to describe a traditional Army unit and you can expect to hear something like:

Well, there are a lot of privates and specialists. They are all really young. Then you have the sergeants—not as many of those. You have a few senior Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs), like platoon sergeants or First Sergeants. They are old and know everything. Last, you have the officers. They tend to stick together and are either really young or really old.

Sound familiar? This is the unit featured in books, on television, and in the movies. We forgot to add that all the soldiers in this unit are men and their wives, if they have them, all stay at home. Whoa....wait a minute, this exact unit has not existed, well maybe since World War II! Our Army is far more varied and diverse than this.

We have many different types of units. What do we really mean by traditional and non-traditional units? Purely for this book, a traditional unit is a tactical unit, the ones who do and support the fighting at company/battalion/brigade within a division. There are variations since there are no cookie-cutter traditional units. Non-traditional units are everything else: training and doctrine, disciplinary, recruiting, educational/Reserve Officer Training Corps, Garrison commands and higher headquarters, Reserve and National Guard just to name a few.

A wide variety of spouses are included in these units. We have female and male spouses who work outside and inside the home and dual-military couples at all ranks—junior enlisted to senior officer. Connecting, coaching, and mentoring spouses in non-traditional units is just as important in these as in traditional units. It can be more challenging because schedules and geography don't always make face-to-face communication possible.

Keep in mind that men are willing to fill the roles as Army spouses. These men are few and far between but they are out there.

*“Of all the awards and certificates I’ve received in my [Army] career, the very best and actually the funniest is my ‘Army Spouse Certificate’ that I got when my wife retired.” —Wayne*

Most will have full time jobs and may only be able to help with evening or weekend functions. Don't discount their volunteering and help because they are male. Also, many people assume that because they are men and working that they don't need help, ideas, or advice.

*"Both having served in the Navy for seven years and an Army fiancé/spouse for ten years, I have a different thought on this. When first arriving to a new duty station, you are welcomed into the family. First off, being in the military in either role—spouse or member—is in a way becoming a part of a family, part of a bond." —Ken*

*"I have contacted many male spouses who are genuinely shocked that I cared enough to check on them during difficult times and deployments." —Sheila*

*"A sense of caring is initiated, when the service member is deployed, calling trees for contact purposes/support, having potlucks to get the kids together to play or just to lend an ear for someone who is far from home and lonely." —Ken*

Active Duty females and working spouses are another group to whom to reach out. You will run across many women in the Army today who are actively involved with mentoring or who are craving the influence and knowledge of a willing mentor. Many times, Active Duty women end up being a forgotten entity. Spouses sometime see females in the unit as threats to a happy home life because male and female soldiers share so much during long work days and deployments. Senior spouses need to cultivate relationships with women and learn from them as well. Many female soldiers have one or more professional mentors but some are lacking someone to guide them through life as a woman associated with the military.

*The "Battalion Commander's wife and the Command Sergeant Major's wife took me under their wing as a single female Captain and were informative about spouse struggles and successes, invited me to coffees/socials, and kept me in the loop with the Family Readiness Group. I thought they were both great examples of communication and teambuilding as well." —Laura W.*

Including female soldiers in typical spouse and unit functions will help them feel included as well as demystify and humanize them to all the spouses in the unit. Do not get discouraged if they are not able to make it to many or all things having to do with the unit for social activities, in addition to working they may also be a wife and mother.

As with Active Duty females, working spouses have similar challenges. Again, you will find that they may not attend many functions due to family and work commitments. Do not give up on them, these women may end up needing a lifeline when you least expect it.

*“I have always been able to continue my career as a Physician while still following my husband and supporting him. I therefore have been able to show by example that it is possible to combine both.” —Rachel*

Reserve and National Guard units, as well as Recruiting units, are a mystery to most Active Duty spouses. Most of the challenge for the Reserve and National Guard units is geography. You will find that some units cover multiple states and regions depending on the type of unit.

*“I went to many, many drill weekends just to meet my husband’s soldiers first. I felt if I knew them I would know more about their families and when we met at Christmas and Family Days, I was a little ahead.” —Cindy*

Being included in a Reserve or National Guard unit will open up different challenges for coaching and mentoring. Many spouses will not understand anything, or at least very little, about the military. Also with these times of persistent conflict, there will be spouses who are even resentful of their soldiers’ dedication to Country. These are the spouses to whom you need to reach out.

*We all “know that a wife who [complains] about him going to drill does not make for a happy soldier at home or at work. We lose good soldiers because the wife does not understand the importance of what a Guard soldier does.” —Cindy*

Another situation you may find yourself in is a military unit that is not of this country and has no precedent for the mentor or coach in the unit spouses organization. In these situations, you may end up coaching spouses on the benefits of coaching and mentoring junior level spouses. What a wonderful gift that would be to leave another country with.

Other types of units, such as disciplinary, educational, training and doctrine, are very unusual in which to connect, coach and mentor. Many times in the training realm you find yourself younger than many of the people that surround you and you may have the desire to coach these spouses even though they have been associated with the military longer than you. There are things that you can help with which others have not learned, have forgotten, or haven't bothered to pay attention to previously. Delivery needs to be done in a very delicate way so as not to put off the, potentially, older person. You also need to realize that although there is a traditional role of mentor or coach, the flow of knowledge goes both ways.

With a training unit, the potential mentor or coach should be open to unconventional ways to connect with those in the unit. Take, for example, Drill Sergeants' spouses. There are huge stressors and cycles of amazingly hard work for their service member. You, as someone who wants to connect with these spouses, should take training schedules into consideration. There will be some spouses who resist anyone or anything that tries to take up precious time that they could be spending with their soldier. One idea is to organize a 'take your family to work' day during their breaks in training. This will take the mystery out of what the soldiers do during their workday.

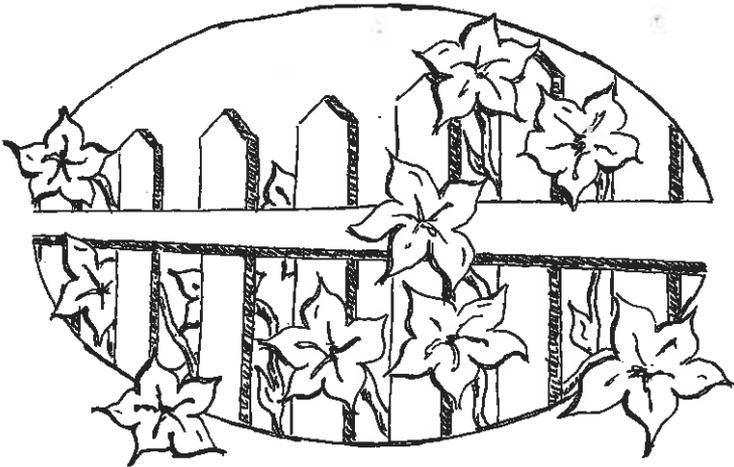
Other non-traditional types of units will possess their own challenges. Education and training and doctrine units may have similar age groups and ranks working together. Those situations will more than likely challenge you to mentor or coach a peer. This can easily result in friendship between two similar personalities but also can be a friendship ender if not handled delicately. This might not be the time to try to change a friend's or peer's way of doing something!

This section is by no means complete as far as non-traditional unit and spouses are concerned. Many in conventional military units will fall under this heading at one time or another. There is so much to learn and much to give to those in these units. Do not hesitate to reach out to

someone who seems to be out of the normal mentor/mentee realm. You may end up pleasantly surprised as to what you learn from this person or group of people.



## *Building an Invisible Fence*



*"I was able to recognize that the need was there,  
but I was not the person to address that need."*

*-Lisa Houston*



Because you are considered a Senior Spouse, you are likely to have people who want to connect with you. One spouse spoke of having a young woman approach her and indicate that God wanted her to mentor the younger spouse. The woman's response was forthright: she said that God did not send her that message.

One of the hardest things is identifying and managing expectations, of yourself and what others have of you. At a basic level, everyone wants to be liked, wants to do a good job, and be a good person. Few people set out to do a bad job of things. If you approach your life as a military spouse knowing that others will have expectations and perceptions of you, you'll be able to grow, quantify what you want and expect, and be able to set boundaries to protect your, and your family's, well-being. As one wife put it:

*"Yes, folks will treat you differently especially if your spouse is in a higher leadership position. That is what comes with the territory." —Kathleen*

Think of it like a celebrity—many of them have a public and private persona. Some actresses and singers wouldn't be seen dead without makeup and wearing the latest fashions. A photo of an actor with ratty sweats and a day's worth of beard stubble may be a turn-off for some; others may think, "Wow, he's a real person like us!"

Whether you've been married less than 5 years or more than 20, you can make choices about your role, whether it's as part of a command team or just as a good neighbor.

*"With regard to the truth behind the commitment we as wives feel pressured to uphold... I never realized the level of commitment increased exponentially with the spouses' rank. Fortunately, I don't mind "the job", but I know tons of ladies who have an issue with the assumed role as a spouse." —Trish*

If you are someone who likes to be the big sister, coach, or the person-who-everyone-asks-questions-of, great! If not, it's okay to outline the role that you'd like to assume.

*"Be transparent—tactfully—about your commitment level." —anonymous*

Many spouses have been around people who want to participate in a small way or not at all. You do not have to be part of a Command Team to be in this position. You may be the person who has lived on post the longest on your street whom everyone asks, “What is the best restaurant, veterinarian, dentist, or nail salon?” It may not be ‘your thing’ to be the font-of-information, sympathetic ear, coach, or a mentor. If it is not, you can gently make that clear and try to connect people in other ways.

### *Setting Boundaries*

*“I was doing too much... I let technology be my friend, yes, I screened my calls! At first, I answered calls thinking they were emergencies. They were not. I would let them leave a voicemail and then respond when appropriate. I guarded my evenings and nights to be available to my kids and just for my own well-being! ...It’s up to us to carve out time for ourselves to keep the peace.” —Susan*

Sometimes Army spouses get sucked into the vortex of wanting to be helpful, reaching out, taking care, and passing on knowledge and information. We feel like we need to do it all! But, there are times when our participation may not really be necessary, but appeals to our need to feel needed. Recognizing when it’s good to jump in and when it’s best to hang back can make a huge difference in people’s lives.

*“I knew a General’s wife who had a 24-hour rule. She’d listen to her voicemail, [and] then wait 24 hours to call back. If they hadn’t solved the problem at that time, she’d be in a better position to tell if her involvement as a senior spouse was really needed.” —Debbie*

One big lesson that many of us have learned: keep your friends separate from your acquaintances. You might even want to think of it as a business relationship. Sometimes, if we’re too friendly and open with people, it can have unintended consequences.

*“I [didn’t] use the other person to ‘vent frustrations’. I had to remember to maintain boundaries... And though I had a great relationship with this young lady, using her to vent caused issues when she told others of my frustrations. Though nothing bad was told, I was reminded that I vowed that I would maintain privacy to what she told me.” —Delilah*

Tact is important, especially if you are close to the person.

*“If [the mentor] saw a problem, she would, at an appropriate time pull me aside and coach me through what I did well and what I did wrong... Maybe it sugar-coated what was coming, but I think I took it more constructively!” —Cindy*

While you may want to steer people, try not to push them into anything. Though it can be hard, it is a good idea to accept people for who they are and what they can contribute.

*“She actually accepted me for who I was. She didn’t put expectations on me but let me do what I wanted to do and what I felt I was good at doing.”—Dawn*

If you see someone heading in the wrong direction, you can say something, but recognize that the decision of what to say and do is theirs alone and they will have to manage outcomes.

*“I had an indoor snowball fight at my house at a coffee. Some of the ladies really did not like that and they thought I should be more formal. There was a group of wives who always thought that I should do things the more traditional way and formal way and no matter what I did I could never please them.” —Dawn*

Realize that you have to be yourself and be honest and true about how you ‘operate’. Your style won’t fit everyone, but sincerity and doing your best will bear fruit in the end.

*“So even though my methods failed for some people, I would use them again because they worked for a lot of others and they were a lot of fun for me, too.” —Dawn*

### *Spouses Have Expectations of You*

Whether you’re a senior spouse based on your husband/wives’ rank or you’re part of a Command Team, it’s helpful to be aware that spouses have expectations of you. Before they get to know you, they will create perceptions based on past experiences or how they perceive things should be—which is sometimes based on unrealistic ideas.

*“At one duty station, I had expectations of a senior spouse, to include mentoring. Eventually, I learned that because her husband was in a leadership [position] did not automatically make her a leader. I felt cheated and had to maximize the wealth of resources that my friend afforded me as a senior spouse. This was unfair to all involved because [my expectations] were unrealistic. These expectations were based on my experiences. This experience taught me not to have expectations because this is setting [things] up for failure.” —Carmen*

One tip to remember is that it’s okay to redirect someone or connect them with another Senior Spouse if you don’t mesh with them.

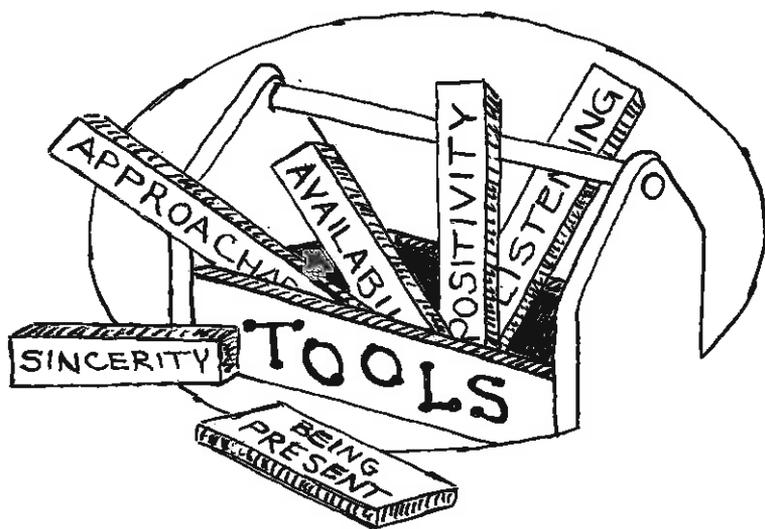
*“When my husband was the Executive Officer (XO), I invited my Battalion Advisor to lunch and asked how she would like me to help. Her response was that this was my time to take it easy. I walked away feeling hurt and confused; I felt left as an outsider. My expectation of being involved and learning from the experience...did not happen.” —Sherri*

One solution to this might have been for the Senior Spouse to have talked with Sherri about volunteering not only with her Family Readiness Group but with another organization on post. Sherri could have learned from other Senior Spouses during that time and possibly connected with a mentor.

*“I got my best tidbits, tips, and strategies from Senior Non-Commissioned Officer and Officer Spouses through volunteering at ACS, Red Cross, and the Spouses’ Club. I’ve often thought they were a bit more relaxed around me because my husband wasn’t in their husband’s chain of command.” —Theresa*

When you can access and use resources to develop your own expectations and set boundaries, you will be a much happier person with your Army life. While it is great to help, making sure you’ve saved time for yourself, your spouse, and your family is a key element for success. Your health and mental well-being may depend on it!

## *Hand Me the Wrench*



*"Continuous efforts—not strength or intelligence —  
is the key to unlocking our potential."  
—Winston Churchill*



Great ideas are wonderful but there is a need to have the tools and tips to help a senior spouse, coach, or mentor put these ideas to work. Hopefully we will help jump-start your thought process to help you find the best way of interacting with spouses. Much of this chapter consists of one-liners from the trenches! Many of our submissions are from military spouses who have many years associated with the military. You might already know some of this, but there is always a time to use something that is new or that you forgot you knew! Here are some “B’s” to get you started:

- ❖ Be Sincere
- ❖ Be Available
- ❖ Be Positive
- ❖ Be a Good Listener
- ❖ Be Approachable
- ❖ Be Present

If someone is interested in learning from you, you will know. They will start ‘picking your brain’, sometimes even coming right out and asking. If you are willing to answer questions and share knowledge, coaching or mentoring has begun in a very organic way.

*“Be a good listener and do not be too judgmental. Teach the younger spouses who want to learn. If you want to make a difference then get involved and do something about it.” —Kathleen*

Setting the conditions for a positive mentoring climate can be a key factor. Strive to create relationships where spouses feel safe to ask questions about the military and their role as a military spouse.

*“I found that just having the ladies over to my home was the best—and that didn’t always mean that I cooked for them. We had open-door gatherings where they brought whatever they wanted to eat and we would just hang out and chat...even watch a movie. I can’t tell you the conversations we had and the interchange of ideas that took place!” —Susan*

Try to put yourself in the other spouse’s shoes; try to understand their perspective. This does not mean you have to agree, just try to understand.

*“Her intellect could be very intimidating to those who were afraid to ask questions. I learned that she would never suggest anything without a resolution or something that she would not do herself. A great quality of hers was to always place herself in the position of whomever she assisted. She viewed situations with several approaches! Her theory was always to take the view of the other party to understand the perspective. This did not mean that she would agree it was just to understand.” —Carmen*

Even in the age of Internet, texting and social media, keep the lines of communication open in person, phone, or email. Although we are used to using electronic devices nowadays, face-to-face every once in a while is always good. Consider meeting someone for a coffee, at the park while kids play, or the dog park are just a few easy ways to have one-on-one time.

If you are finding it hard to connect, use fitness or some other common activity to create a way to connect.

*“She [was] an outgoing person and very positive and that [was] what made it work for her to mentor me while I was reaching my personal fitness goal. She lived to give herself and others around her a healthy lifestyle. She created the walking club for spouses at Ft. Leonard Wood during the 6 months we were there together. That [was] a great way to help spouses become friends.” —Teri*

Try to frame your expectations of the other person based on their reality as you know it. So many people have obligations and burdens that we may never know about; you could unintentionally set things up for failure. Unrealistic and unfulfilled expectations are those that result from lack of communication, information, and understanding.

If you are coaching or mentoring someone, be sure to give them any research that you have compiled or have inherited so your mentee does not have to reinvent the wheel. There is nothing more frustrating than working very hard on something and then when finished, finding someone has done the hard work already!

Guard your time! In a mentoring relationship, both of you have to set boundaries. In the quest for knowledge, your mentee might be so anxious to learn that she feels the need to be at your side constantly. Also, you as the mentor might want to try to impart all your knowledge into your mentee at a pace she may not be accustomed to. Know your audience and how they learn. Don't rush mentoring; it can take time and patience. You also must be mindful that your mentoring time does not look like favoritism to others.

Many young spouses come into the military not knowing anything about this lifestyle. If they were an Army Brat, their idea of the lifestyle may come from a different perspective. It is our responsibility to help them find their way into a comfortable existence within the military.

*"Find something lovely about each person and help them to see what they can excel at" —Dawn*

We all can't do everything so helping someone find his or her niche or talent is beneficial to us all.

Letting those around you know you appreciate them is such a nice way to built up self esteem. Sending notes to helpers and volunteers who gave their time is just one easy, timeless way to reinforce your thanks. Once you start something though, you have to sustain it for everyone.

*"I guess that is what I try to do now...the right things...the good things...the things that fill your life and heart...the things that make it worth getting up to seize the day...and the small things that are random acts that you want no credit or notice for...but carry so much support to others. That is what my mentor taught me. And you know what? She also was not trying to mentor; she just lived her life like what I wrote above...and I followed that...and it has carried me through over 30 years of being an Army spouse." —Melissa*

There are thousands of ‘little bits of someone’ from whom we can glean information. These are but a few from some of the people to whom the Spouses’ Project team reached out. We must remember that connecting, coaching, and mentoring is a two-way street where both parties have to be invested. Self-awareness is imperative. We need to know why we are reaching out. Is it for self preservation, the glory, or to better our young spouses? Hopefully it’s the latter.

## *You've Got the Wrong Hammer!*

As we try to understand the workings of a mentor and emulate the good ones we’ve encountered, we should also recognize what not to emulate. As many know, you can learn just as much from a poor leader as a great one. Unfortunately, many remember the poor leaders much more than the good ones. Let’s try to change that! Here are a few things that our submitters said they found didn’t work or observed negatively.

- ❖ When speaking to a new military spouse “do not belittle the challenges that we all face. Acting like super woman exists is not helpful. When a spouse is fairly new to the military, she could be overwhelmed with all the newness of her life. Throw in a move, a deployment, looking for work, maybe a pregnancy and you have a ticking time bomb. All of us have been there and most of us have survived but it takes time, patience, and perseverance... and someone to listen.” –Christina
- ❖ “Don’t offer too much advice.” -- Christina. We all need to vent and ask for help sometimes but it is not helpful to consistently fix things for everyone. If solutions are always handed over, there will never be any self sufficiency built. Plus, who has the time to fix everyone else’s problems?
- ❖ Most people don’t “respond well to the “let me tell you what you should do” and lectures that go with that statement”. – Tammy.

An example of this:

*“A few young women approached me recently about the subject of mentorship and advising. One in particular was very upset about the perceived “condescending” attitude of another spouse who was trying to advise her. The advisor’s heart was in the right place but her apparent “teacher/student” approach was not well-received by the advisee. Thus, the advice fell on deaf ears.” —Tammy*

- ❖ Attempting to mentor someone who has no interest in the mentoring process doesn’t work. It cannot be a forced relationship.
- ❖ Do as I say not as I do or a senior spouse who feels superior. Our young spouses look to us for answers, whether they ask the questions or just observe us from a distance. Do the right thing all the time. Enough said!!
- ❖ Never assume that a spouse has more time to devote to something than you. “You have more time because your husband is not as senior as mine” is never a reason to delegate an activity to someone else. Along with this is making someone “do it because your spouse works for my spouse”. There is no rank among spouses. There is, however, an unwritten hierarchy but it is bad form to use that structure to make someone feel pressured to volunteer for something.
- ❖ Don’t try to be something you are not. This one really needs no explanation. Most people can see right through a phony!

Trying to force things to work is never the answer! Spouses are always apprehensive when someone comes into a relationship or group with the obvious intent to change things without experiencing how they are first. When you are entering into a new situation, take the time to observe for a while before you begin to offer your ideas for improving a person or group of people. Coming into a situation guns ablazin’ is never perceived as helpful or gracious.



## *Passing On the T-Shirt*



*"Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen,  
and a push in the right direction."*

*– John Crosby*



In Homer's *The Odyssey*, Mentor is an old friend and trusted adviser to King Odysseus. When Odysseus departs for the Trojan War, he leaves his son, Telemakos, in Mentor's care. Thus, Mentor becomes Telemakos' protector, teacher, counselor, and guide.

By now, you are a seasoned military spouse – you have chaired and co-chaired, briefed and facilitated; like Mentor, you've imparted words of wisdom and given advice upon advice. As the saying goes, you've been there, done that, and bought the t-shirt. But occasionally the chance arises to really make a *relationship* out of the experience that is our life. You have the opportunity to be a mentor to a fellow military spouse.

While it may seem like a good idea to jump right in, taking a moment to think about what it is to mentor someone will serve you best in the long run. A mentoring partnership requires a commitment to the relationship—both from the mentor and from the mentee. First ask yourself, “why do I want to mentor?” Make a list of your thoughts. Keep a written list and add to it as the relationship unfurls. Refer to it as time passes. Are you meeting your wants? A few things to think about as you make your list include:

- ✓ this is a learning partnership
- ✓ pay it forward
- ✓ tending to the past and future of military spouses
- ✓ I was mentored and it made all the difference!
- ✓ I *wasn't* mentored and it made all the difference!

Mentoring is a relationship formed for guidance and growth. Therefore, honesty is essential! Carefully consider your strengths and weaknesses; ask your mentee to do the same. Then, take time to share. This is a wonderful first step and can go a long way to establishing openness that will allow for maximum feedback and growth. Take the time to sit down together and discuss:

- ❖ Why are we doing this? The answer may seem obvious: to share information on how to be the best military spouse you can be! But, as in any relationship, each person enters into it for a variety of reasons, some very personal. Friendship, personal growth, opening doors for service—you may be pleasantly surprised to discover these motivations! However, some may place unrealistic expectations on the relationship.

- ❖ How much time am I/are we willing to invest in this relationship? A mentoring partnership is an active relationship; continually evolving as the mentee grows in knowledge and confidence. Consider these two points-of-view:

The young spouse you hope to mentor expects to be at Ft. Bliss for three years. You think very highly of her and she has expressed a desire to be an active Army spouse. You are confident that you can set her on a path to success in 6 months!

Your mentor-to-be assures you that you are off to a great start! She feels that in 6 months you will have as much knowledge as you'll need to succeed. *But*, you are new this whole Army thing and it sure would be great to have a much wiser guide for the duration of this assignment!

- ❖ A discussion is definitely in order for these two! While they're at it, they may also want to discuss how often they will meet (on a regular basis or as the need arises?) and where they will meet (your house, her house, at a coffee shop?)
- ❖ How will this relationship end? Mentoring partnerships have an end. Remember, it is a formal relationship established for guidance and growth. It is not a purely emotional relationship such as a friendship. That's not to say a friendship will not grow out of it, but it should not be an assumption.

The communication style used in a mentoring relationship requires practice and patience and both you and your mentee must be open to it. Active listening is much more than just listening carefully. Active listening requires two-way communication: the listener *listens*, and then provides honest feedback to the speaker. This assures that the intended message was received. The back-and-forth speaking/listening/giving feedback continues until you both have a concrete message. This style of communication can take time to develop and become comfortable with, but it establishes a true interest and sincerity within the relationship. It

ultimately strengthens the relationship and lessens misunderstandings. Often, through active listening, you allow the speaker to find their own solutions to problems or answers to questions.

As the mentor in a relationship, empathy can be one of your most powerful skills. Empathy is the capacity to understand and share feelings with another; it is the “been there, done that” that will clue you in on what wisdom and guidance you should pass on to your mentee. During the past 10 years, military spouses have endured much separation, loss, and hardship.

*“I once received a call from a Lieutenant’s wife. She was frustrated that, at 6:30, her husband wasn’t home from work yet. He hadn’t been home in time for dinner in the past 3 months. About half way through the conversation, she said, “since your husband’s the Battalion Commander you’re probably the wrong person to whom to complain”, and I replied, “no, because I’ve been in your position and felt that same way.” ” –Theresa*

Many prefer to leave the past in the past and keep driving on. Often, these are the same spouses that are quick to offer the “put on your big girl panties” suggestion. But is that really the best advice for a mentor to give? Is that the bit of wisdom (or attitude) by which you want to be remembered? Umm, probably not!

Take frequent mental breaks and practice your empathy ability. Put yourself into her/his shoes, so to speak. Your personal ‘been there, done that’ life-lessons are her *lessons to be learned*. How much easier would some of those military ‘hard knocks’ have been for you to process if you had a trusted guide/teacher by your side, helping you find your way through?

As a mentor, get into the practice of seeking out teachable moments. Make mental notes (or *real* notes if need be!) and discuss them at your next meeting. Your past experiences, as well as the daily offerings of life, will provide an unending source for learning.

The following reflection from an Army wife illustrates the beauty of a mentoring partnership:

*“We didn’t sit together at luncheons, we didn’t hang out at the Officers’ Club, we didn’t play golf together because it was not that kind of relationship. It was truly a teacher/student relationship.*

*“We always met at her house; never at my house. Looking back on it, I think I liked that. I think that would have been uncomfortable for me. I don’t think I would have been as softened to listen to what she had to say if I was worried about having to be a hostess. She seemed to do it without even thinking!*

*“She would show me pictures in photo albums. We would talk about upcoming events and opportunities for me. She would also share the opportunities for her – what she was looking forward to. It gave me a picture of the inside of her mind and the inside of the mind of a Colonel’s wife. Talking to her gave me an idea of how she thought—I learned to see things from her perspective.*

*“When it was time for my husband’s PCS, I hugged her and I thanked her for all she had done for me. I had her address and her phone number, but I never got in touch with her because I didn’t need to. That was the beauty of our relationship. She had given me everything I needed, or, at least everything I was capable of retaining! And the relationship was over. I think about her often, but I never have regrets that we didn’t keep up because we weren’t friends. I didn’t consider her a friend; I had lots of friends. She was in a completely different category, just as important as a friend, if not more so.” —Sally*

## *Resources*

**COMPASS** is a spouse-to-spouse mentoring program that introduces participants to all aspects of the military lifestyle. COMPASS offers military spouses the opportunity to establish a peer network, acquire knowledge and develop skills necessary to successfully meet future challenges of military life. <http://www.gocompass.org/>

For Working Women and Military Spouses...get help from an experienced working woman in your career or with your job search. For Women in the Workplace: Volunteer as a career mentor or share your special expertise with military spouses to help them succeed in the civilian workforce. [www.joiningforcesmentoringplus.org](http://www.joiningforcesmentoringplus.org)

**The MilSpouse eMentor Leadership Program** welcomes mentors and protégés who are spouses or widows/widowers of military members and veterans. Representatives of military spouse-friendly firms also can serve as corporate mentors to assist protégés seeking employment or with other career issues. The program puts military spouses in virtual touch with more experienced spouses and corporate and career mentors for guidance and support with challenges of all kinds and for assistance with finding meaningful employment with longevity and upward mobility. [www.eMentorProgram.org](http://www.eMentorProgram.org)

**Army One Source** Mentor Training is offered through their Online Learning Center. It is an on-line training module that introduces you to the basics of coaching, mentoring and advising. <http://www.myarmyonesource.com>

**Military Spouse Mentoring** offers some tips to get you started with mentoring. <http://militaryspousementoring.com/>

**National Military Spouse Network** is the pre-eminent networking, mentoring and professional development organization committed to the education, empowerment and advancement of military spouses. <http://www.nationalmilitaryspousenetwork.org/public/main.cfm>

**The USAWC Military Family Program** has many spouse and family readiness resources available thru the website <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/mfp/default.cfm>."

USAWC Spouse Project AY12



Military Family Program  
U.S. Army War College  
122 Forbes Ave  
Carlisle, PA 17013  
717-245-4787

<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/mfp/default.cfm>  
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