



## Timely Information for Personal Success

# Embracing Reverse Mentoring

**D**id you know that by 2030, Millennials will outnumber Boomers by *22 million*? If you don't have very many Millennials in your workplace, rest assured you WILL. We also know Millennials think differently than Boomers, so how can such diverse generations get along?

Mentoring can provide that bridge. Millennials are typically more interested than previous generations in finding a mentor. They have grown up with the notion that one must constantly seek the advice of someone else. This has especially been true since the advent of social media.

But Millennials typically want mentoring to be more of a two-way road than it's been in the past. Today's workplaces have seen the rise of "*reverse mentoring*" in which younger people typically mentor the older worker 20% of the time while the more experienced employee advises the younger person roughly 80% of the time.

Boomers and Millennials need to embrace reverse mentoring. It is part of the postmodern worldview that they have been raised with; they believe that their ideas are important and valuable. If you don't listen, Millennials aren't likely to respect you.

Consider: You have invaluable knowledge that demands to be shared, but in this technological age so do Millennials! They typically understand emerging technologies and social media trends better than older generations, and they can often teach us more than a thing or two.

But reverse mentoring goes well beyond learning technological trends. I have been mentoring a Millennial in my profession for a number of years, and I have found her very eager to learn and good at coming up with ideas I hadn't thought of. On the other hand, mentoring her has made me realize I am aware of many things she is not simply because I have a lot more experience than she does – areas that I've taken for granted that are actually revelations to someone younger! It's been a very reciprocal arrangement in which I have made her aware of

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## Healthy Recipe: Couscous & Fruit Salad

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped shallots
- 2 cups cooked whole-wheat couscous
- 1 cup chopped nectarine
- 1 cup mixed fresh berries, such as blueberries and raspberries
- 2 tablespoons toasted sliced almonds

### NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 259
- Carbohydrates: 40 g.
- Protein: 7 g.
- Sodium: 146 mg.
- Fat: 7 g.
- Saturated fat: 1 g.

### DIRECTIONS:

Whisk oil, orange juice, vinegar, and shallots in a large bowl. Add cooked couscous, nectarines, berries and almonds; gently toss to combine.

**Tip:** To toast sliced almonds, heat a small dry skillet over medium-low heat. Add nuts and cook, stirring, until lightly browned and fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes.



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### Questions and Answers

## Outsmarting Your Smartphone

**Q:** *It seems that more and more of my work-mates are obsessed with their smartphones. Any ideas how to curtail their use?*

**A:** Vicki Milazzo, author of *“Wicked Success Is inside Every Woman”* offers tips to help take back your life from your smartphone. Here are two of them.

❖ **Turn off cyberspace.** How many of us, without even thinking, reply to an email or text as soon as it comes in, even though no award will be handed out at the end of the day for the person who responded the fastest! “If you’re doing nothing but responding to emails and texts, you’re bouncing around like a pinball. It’s important to keep in mind that the purpose of email and texts is not to generate *more* email and texts,” she states. “Unless a response is necessary in order for the sender to move ahead on a task or project, it’s okay to let this person have the last word.”

❖ **Tame the social media beast.** Smartphones make it fun and easy to read friends’ status updates and to see the photos they’ve posted. “But remember, Facebook and Twitter won’t be evaluating your work performance and probably can’t qualify you for a raise either.” ■

### Embracing... *continued from Page 1*

areas she doesn’t know, while she is very good at pumping new ideas and energy into a stale work environment.

Karl Moore, a writer and mentor, adds, “As a manager, I have to make a point of giving more thought to providing more feedback than to previous generations of workers. It used to be more of an afterthought, but today I must more actively spend time thinking about not only a couple of points of feedback, but four or five pieces of feedback.”

Further, Millennials are used to searching for and choosing their own mentors. In fact, mandatory corporate mentoring programs are likely to feel forced and unauthentic. Millennials are more likely to find it difficult to connect with an individual that they do not personally deem relevant.

Rather than focus on your differences, why not join forces? Step up to the plate, embrace a mentoring role, and accept whoever comes forward. Identify and utilize each other’s strengths. Millennials are the inevitable leaders of tomorrow and older workers have the ability to nourish the growth of these young employees. As the saying goes, it’s a real win-win. ■

*Additional source: Mike Jacquart, blogger, frequent LinkedIn contributor, and editor of “Employee Assistance Report.”*