

For most of my life, I have been a self-directed learner, I had a mind of my own and was often ahead of my time. That doesn't mean I was not influenced by others who were my role models, teachers, and people who helped me along the way.

My mother was my first mentor, although she gave up on me at times when I did not take her advice when I specifically asked for it. Mom loved to teach. She was a school teacher from age 17 to 55 and had a strong desire to help people learn. She facilitated my learning mostly by encouragement.

During my school, university and work years, I was determined to learn as much as I could. I took classes, joined groups and clubs, worked on my own, did certifications, took driving lessons, ski lessons, tennis lessons, swimming lessons and joined the ski patrol. I was not singled out to be mentored by anyone in particular. I learned the objectives of the courses and lessons I was taking.

Throughout my life, because of my education and love to teach others, I was the one who was asked to lead a group or club, but I really wasn't a mentor to anyone.

The first real experience of being mentored was by my son, Matt. He, like his grandmother, is a natural teacher. Matt knows what I want to learn and sees the gaps in my understanding of computers, photography, organizing camping trips, travel and maneuvering different aspects of my Samsung phone.

I like to keep up to date with what both my sons, Aaron and Matt, are reading and their understanding of the world around them. Matt encourages me to listen to certain Audible books and gave me a "Masterclass" subscription for my birthday. He takes an interest in what I need to learn, especially about computers and computer software.

Matt and I went on a trip to Ecuador just before Covid 19 changed our world. I didn't take my Sony Camera with me because I thought it would be too cumbersome. Matt, on the other hand, had a backpack designated for his camera equipment. We travelled to bird blinds to take pictures of the Andean Cock of the Rock bird and we joined bird watching tours. Needless to say, I took more pictures of plants than Toucans. The Galapagos Islands were better for me for photography because I could get up close to a turtle or iguana with no problems. Frigatebirds and Blue Footed Boobies were also photogenic.

Matt had an underwater camera, so when he was scuba diving, he took wonderful pictures of monterey's and hammerhead sharks. I was happy to see the colourful fish, small sharks, monterey's and even some small sea horses when I snorkelled.

One evening I was trying to take a picture of the sunset. Matt spent an hour showing me how I could use my Samsung camera to my advantage. There were many features I was not aware of.

During our trip, there were planes to catch, tours to arrange and snorkelling adventures to find. Matt knew a little Spanish to get by. All I could say was “Hola” and “Gracias”. We were a little late arriving at the airport taking us from the mainland of Ecuador to Isle De San Cristobal, one of the Galapagos Islands. We lost the connection to Wifi and we had our tickets on the phone. Matt showed me how to make a “hot spot” on the phone so we were able to get through the Gate on time.

I think as the world gets more complicated, I am going to have to rely on both of my sons for help with new technology whether I like it or not. I find it wonderful to be able to discuss new ideas, trends, and travel with both Aaron and Matt, but I still don’t want to become dependent. I go online to figure out how to do something I can’t figure out before I get help. It is a difficult transition from being a mother and nurturing my children to my children mentoring me.

Matt has been in the role of product manager for many companies including Google since he was just out of University where he specialized in computer science and business. This has given him a broad base of knowledge which he uses freely to help his mother from time to time.

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